

National Playday: “Let’s get our children out playing!” – Huw Irranca-Davies

Huw Irranca-Davies is using this year’s National Playday (Wednesday 1st August) to urge children and parents to get out and play, either in their own community or by attending one of the many community events are taking place in parks and other open spaces across Wales.

The importance of physical activity for children and young people is clear. It has multiple benefits for children’s physical, mental and social needs and aids strong growth, co-ordination and helps to reduce the risk of children becoming overweight or obese.

Research shows that by the age of 11, more than 40% of Welsh children are either obese or overweight.

Minister for Children, Huw Irranca-Davies said:

“These days, children and young people spend a lot of their time indoors playing computer games and using their mobile phones and other electronic devices to socialise with their friends. But the amount of time they spend outdoors, being physically active, is falling. This is one of the reasons why 40% of Welsh children are either obese or overweight by the time they reach the age of 11.

“The Welsh Government places great value on play and its importance in the lives of our children. We believe children have a fundamental right to be able to play and that play is central to their enjoyment of life.

“As well as a celebration of children’s right to play, National Playday is a great way of focussing on the important role play should have in children’s lives. Play is essential for the growth in children’s cognitive, physical, social and emotional development. It also contributes to their and their families’ health and well-being, as well as their future life chances.

“I want to urge parents to use this year’s National Playday as an opportunity to get their children out to play.”

During term time, there are a number of programmes such as Active Journeys to Schools, Daily Mile, and School Sport to empower children and young people to build more activity into their daily routines.

Over the summer holidays, there are a range of summer play schemes and other community activities for example Streetgames and Parkrun operating which

children and young people can access. The Welsh Government is continuing to support and invest in community-based approaches.

Mike Greenaway, Director of Play Wales added:

“Today and over the last thirty-one years there have been thousands of great events across Wales celebrating Playday and children’s right to play. Playing is important to children and it makes a significant positive impact on their physical and mental health, wellbeing and happiness.

“As a society – adults, organisations and governments – we need to continue working together to ensure everyone values the child’s right to play and that it’s provided for by making certain that every child in Wales has enough time, space and permission to play outdoors every day of the year.”