

RESPONSES TO POSSIBLE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE #PLAYSHAPES CAMPAIGN

What is the #PlayShapes Campaign?

The #PlayShapes is a digital awareness raising campaign that is running in the context of Universal Children's Day 2016. It is aimed at reminding people that every child has the right to play and that play has a positive impact on children's development, health and well-being.

What does the campaign ask for?

We are asking people to help us raise awareness of a child's right to play this Universal Children's Day. They can do this by signing up to the Thunderclap we have launched to declare their support for a child's right to play, and by sharing, reposting and liking the campaign visuals and messages on their social media streams.

All children play - why does awareness need to be raised about the right to play?

All children have the right to play. The increasing economic, social and environmental challenges faced by modern society mean that ensuring this right it is more important than ever.

Play is critical to the development of the abilities children will need as future citizens able to address these challenges. For children in situations of crisis, regular, protected time and space for play support children's mental health and this is crucial when the world around them is in turmoil.

Although the majority of people recognise the positive benefits of play, there are a number of barriers that prevent children from enjoying this right to the full. This includes factors such as: inadequate play spaces; cuts in public funding; changes in the school system; increasing homework; intolerant attitudes to children playing in public spaces; concerns about accidents, strangers and traffic; the perception that play is frivolous, and a general lack of awareness of the benefits of play.

Through the #PlayShapes campaign, we want to remind people just how important it is to make sure that children have the time, space and permission to play – at both the individual and policy level

Why is the Toy Industry running a campaign on children's rights?

Play is a fundamental right and essential to a child's personal development. Within this process toys play a vital role. We are acutely aware of the importance of play, and work actively to champion this awareness with European and national policymakers. The campaign builds on our earlier 2012 report on the Importance of Play and 2014 research into the importance of play for families.

What does TIE hope to achieve with the #playshapes campaign?

Through the #playshapes campaign we want to raise awareness of the right to play and the importance of giving children the time, space and permission to play in the context of Universal Children's Day. We also want to start a conversation about play in the EU policy context, which we hope to build on next year.

Why has #PlayShapes been used as the title of the campaign?

#PlayShapes has been used to capture the centrality of play to children's physical, mental, social and emotional health and well-being, and the way in which it enables children to develop skills for life. The shaping role of play is at the heart of much academic research in this field, and was highlighted by Dr David Whitebread (Senior Lecturer in Psychology and Education at the University of Cambridge) in his [2012 report for TIE on the Importance of Play](#).

What is the design concept of the campaign?

To emphasise the shaping role that play has in growing up, the campaign is based around the quote from the Little Prince that "*all grown-up were children first*"; a sentiment echoed across all campaign materials.

The campaign visuals combine images of children at play with six of the EU's most recognisable leaders in their day to day political life. Accompanying each of the visuals is a phrase highlighting a key benefit of play, and a reminder that play is every child's right.

Why have you used politicians in the #playshapes campaign?

The adults we have used in our campaign are some of Europe's most recognisable leaders at the moment. Their images have been chosen to underline the message that everyone – even global leaders – have been shaped by play. In addition, the campaign is primarily targeted at a Brussels audience, by using familiar figures we hope to generate a discussion about the importance of play.

Other than calling for the right to play and its benefits to be recognised, no other political statements or messages are intended.

Children don't need toys to play – why have you used toys in the visuals?

Toys have been included in the images to provide a visual cue that the campaign is about play. We understand that children can and will play with almost anything. However, research shows that toys have a positive benefit for playing, fuelling children's imaginations and encouraging them to play for longer.

What is the campaign timeline?

The campaign visuals and Thunderclap launch on 16 November. People will be able to sign up to the Thunderclap to show their support for a child's right to play up until the 20 November (Universal Children's Day). We will continue to promote the campaign's messages in the following week. TIE will then use the increased awareness about the right to play and its benefits next year, when TIE will further engage with stakeholders to discuss how play can be taken into account when developing policies that affect children.