

open access play - a definition

Open Access play provision can be permanent or short-term provision, located in a variety of settings with or without premises including play centres, adventure playgrounds, playschemes and parks. Whilst the term Open Access applies to registered provision for children under 8 years, such provision usually caters for a wide age range of children, including those over 7 years.

The purpose of the provision is to provide staffed play opportunities for children in the absence of their parents. Children are not restricted in their movements, other than where related to safety matters and are not prevented from coming and going as and when they wish. Children have the freedom of choice as to what range of play activity they wish to undertake and with whom they play.

The Welsh Assembly Government defines play as behaviour which is: freely chosen, personally directed and intrinsically motivated and performed for no external goal or reward. That is, children and young people determine and control the content and intent

of their play, by following their own instincts, ideas and interests, in their own way for their own reasons.

Prior to the 1989 Children Act staffed play provision was staffed play provision. As a consequence of the implementation of the Act play provision for children under 8 years became defined by the level care provided and play provision generally became described as open access provision.

As a result of the confusion with respect to play and child care, Open Access is often used incorrectly to also describe play provision that is un-staffed. But the term Open Access only applies to the level of care provided to children within a staffed setting.

Play Wales believes that in Wales the UNCRC Article 31 should be upheld and that as a right children's access to provision should not be determined by ability to pay and that there should be no other entry conditions other than these pertaining to safety and welfare of self and others.

www.playwales.org.uk

mail@playwales.org.uk

029 2048 6050

