



## 12 Ideas to Begin Advocating for Play

### **Form a playground watch**

Put parents at ease and encourage more playground use by gathering a group of volunteers to rotate shifts on a playground watch. Not only does this ensure that a responsible adult is always at the playground, but it protects against vandalism and crime. And don't forget to add the playground to the KaBOOM! Playspace Finder so you can easily organize the community around the park. Learn about resources from the National Crime Prevention Council on playground and neighborhood watches, too.

### **Spruce up your playground**

A playground needs care and attention to thrive—an ill-maintained park becomes vulnerable to vandalism and crime. Organize a playground clean-up and consider other done-in-a-day improvement projects, such as planting flowers, painting a mural, or building a bench. Take a free online training about creating an Adopt-a-Park or a Friends Of group at your local park or playspace.

### **Build a playground**

Don't have a playground in your neighborhood or school? Build one yourself! Use the online KaBOOM! Project Planner, which will take you through every part of the playspace building process, from idea to fundraising to ongoing maintenance. The planner gives you all the tools you need to follow our unique done-in-a-day, community-led build model.

### **Turn your front lawn into a neighborhood playspace**

Be the place of fun! Open up your yard to the neighbors and throw together some loose and found parts and let the kids have a ball! Read about Mike Lanza's efforts at creating a Playborhood for inspiration.

### **Organize a play street**

Work with your neighborhood and your city to close the street on a regular basis (maybe once a week like Jackson Heights in Queens, NY) and open it up for play! Use the Police Athletic League's summer play streets in New York City as a guide.

### **Form an outdoor playgroup**

Find tons of ideas for activities in any weather, tips for organizing, and an online forum at [ActiveKidsClub.com](http://ActiveKidsClub.com).

## **Take on the Park-A-Day summer challenge**

Challenge your kids to find as many local playgrounds as possible this summer and get around your community, spending each day at a different park. Invite other families to join the fun and create passports for the Park-A-Day challenge earning stickers for each one that you visit.

## **Hold a Play Day**

Organize a Play Day, a chance to gather your neighbors, teach children new outdoor games, improve your local park or playground, and be part of a week-long national Play Day campaign in the US. Playmaker Pat Rumbaugh has taken it a step forward and tours the Play Day around to different parks all year round. Look for ideas in photos and games from Play Days in 2010 at [kaboom.org](http://kaboom.org). Search for games, courtesy of Playworks. Read about the Ultimate Block Party in New York (over 50,000 people participated!) and how organizers illustrated for parents the learning that results from play. Or model yourself on UK's national campaign, Playday, where each year thousands of families play at locally organized events.

## **Convene local support around the cause of play**

Rally to make your city a Playful City USA! There are many local departments, committees, organizations, and individuals who can help you advocate for play. These include your Parks & Recreation Department, PTA, PTO, school board, city councils, school teachers, school principal, YMCA, Boys & Girls Club, and hometown mayor. Write emails, make phone calls, and attend meetings. Connect with community members to make your city a Playful City USA in 2011—just like Spartanburg, SC!

## **Form a Play Committee**

Take your outreach one step further by inviting individuals from these various entities to join a Play Committee and take concrete actions for play. You can form a Play Committee at your child's school, in your neighborhood, or on a city-wide level to advocate for more time, space, and resources for play. Atlanta's Task Force on Play and Spartanburg's Childhood Obesity Task Force are great examples.

## **Use your writing skills and your voice to advocate for play**

Write about play and use social media to get the word out to a national audience and rally locally. Letters to the editor and op-eds in your local paper are a great way to start a public conversation about how to improve the state of play in your community. Whether you're concerned about the lack of recess in local schools, childhood obesity, or closed or ill-maintained playgrounds and parks, writing is a powerful tool to rally your community. Use the KaBOOM! online training and examples from Liza Sullivan as helpful resources.

## **Make recess and play an integral part of children's school days**

Use Peaceful Playgrounds' Right to Recess Campaign as a guide to starting your own campaign. Join the International Play Association/USA. Read "Crisis in the Kindergarten" from the Alliance for Childhood.