Submission from Play Scotland

Play improves educational attainment. Two paragraphs to supplement the evidence in the Poverty Alliance submission

1. Scotland’s National Play Strategy recognises that children need to play throughout their childhood. The strategy highlights that play is an innate behaviour which contributes to children’s quality of life, their wellbeing and their physical, social and cognitive development. For many children their main opportunity for play is at school. We know from the Growing up in Scotland study that half of children aged between 5 and 10 years never play out on their streets and half of parents think it is unsafe for children to play out. Thankfully more schools are recognising the benefits of their pupils spending longer periods of their school day outside, with research showing that this improves attainment, behaviour, motivation and self-esteem.

2. In 2014 the Children’s Play Policy Forum published a report to strengthen the case for improving play opportunities in school break times and in other settings. The evidence review, *The Play Return: A review of the wider impact of play initiatives* summarises the measurable impact of initiatives to improve play opportunities. The report outlines the strength of the evidence base for play and its ‘real-world impact’. The best evidence is for play initiatives in schools. Playground break times can improve levels of physical activity and are linked to a range of improvements in academic skills, attitudes and behaviour. Developing the playability of school grounds can also lead to improved social skills, and better adjustment to school life. Author Tim Gill explains, “From the perspective of politicians and policy makers, the report highlights that investing in play can, and does lead to multiple benefits including improved educational attainment.”

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