



What SA Kids Have Told us About Play

Commissioner for
Children & Young People
September 2019



Play is very important to children and young people, particularly those of a younger age. Play is how children engage with their peers, their neighbourhoods, cities, towns, and the world around them.

Access to team sports and outdoor activities was consistently brought up during the Commissioner's consultations. They want to be able to do their favourite sports in their own local communities, saying they feel their happiest when they play sports with their friends. They also acknowledge the importance of outdoor play to both their physical and mental health.

Other children brought up that there are few opportunities for play for children under 18 but over the age at which traditional playgrounds are fun. They feel marginalised in public spaces which largely cater to adults and view groups of young people as disruptive.

Additionally, video games are seen by young people as an important and creative way to connect with their peers. Video games are the fastest growing form of entertainment and a vital part of youth culture. They say that these games help them to relax, express frustration, or make friends across the world. Children and young people want them to be taken seriously in the same way that physical sports and other forms of play are.

- “ ‘More parks with free activities – new attractions to visit – places to drive to and visit – when you drive you have something like a park to do. Basketball. Bike riding. Everyone can be in one place but do what they like.’ ”
- “ ‘After school we like to go to the youth centre and play all the games that are there. And going to the netball courts and shooting goals and going to people's houses.’ ”
- “ ‘More activities around the city for young people would be nice, and you get to meet new people as well.’ ”
- “ ‘Playground for older kids because us older kids can't do much in Port Lincoln. Free wi-fi. Paintball. Bowling. Go carts. Laser tag. Bounce. Upgraded jetty.’ ”
- “ ‘Everything closes too early in the city. Shops, cafes, restaurants-only clubs for 18+. It is a dead city on the weekends for under 18. Open to later times – more stuff to do at night-music events/food events – hang out spots.’ ”
- “ ‘Youth Groups for the community. More sporting groups. More opportunities for youth to be engaged in. Easier access to youth counselling, and support groups.’ ”

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Youthfulness, particularly in terms of institutions and public spaces, means creative ways of being. It means including young people in the design of spaces, programs, and facilities that they will use.

Children and Young people told the Commissioner that they feel marginalised in public spaces which largely cater to adults and view groups of young people as disruptive. They instead want public spaces that are vibrant, filled with art and colour, close to transport options, and welcoming to young people.

As digital natives, young people see the internet as an extension of their daily lives, and want that to be reflected in their education and the spaces they inhabit. They want to be engaged through digital devices, and for public spaces to prioritise facilities such as WiFi, chargers, and augmented reality. They want a 24 hour community more in line with global trends. Finally, they told The Commissioner that they want spaces set aside specifically for young people to meet, network, and 'hang out.'

- “ ‘Unpaid work experience/internships/clerkships. Students are expected to do them to gain employment but many can't afford to give up this time for unpaid experience or even afford to travel to the required location. Even subsidised or honorary amount would be better than nothing.’
- “ ‘TAFE – better massive campus offering more courses. More courses. More ... other than uni (Universities).’

