

Neighbours' Street Play

Guide for adults & children at street parties and beyond

When planning a street party 'giving the kids a chance to play in the street like we used to' is one of the first things that comes to mind. Taking away traffic for a day is the first step towards children playing freely together in their own street.

They also get the opportunity to meet neighbours of all ages – kids are often the oil that loosens up a community.

Street parties encourage *everyone* to play, have fun and be friendly, so promoting positive attitudes towards children playing out, all year round. Good relationships in your street help to make a better place for *all residents* to live in, and a street party is the best way to get things going.



This Guide includes ideas and advice on how you can facilitate play and friendliness for residents of all ages, at your street party *and afterwards*.

Games for Mixing All Ages

The aim is for anyone in the street to join in, young and older. Perhaps have small prizes or medals for winners, or even your own street trophy!

- **Ball games:** Beach-ball volleyball with half of the street each side of a line or string across the road, Kwik cricket with soft ball, swing ball with heats.
- **Wacky Races:** 3 or 5 legged, backwards, onion and spoon, obstacle course, slow cycling slalom, space-hoppers, etc.
- **Tug of war:** Pit different sides of the street against each other!
- **Balloon-toss:** Pairs stand opposite each other in lines and throw water-filled balloons to each other, increasing the distance with each throw.
- **Skills practice:** Hoopla, foam pillow throwing, hula hoop distance rolling.
- **Giant picture chalking:** All ages can transform the street tarmac.
- **Bunting making:** Draw or paint on card, cereal boxes or paper and staple to a string. On a theme?
- **Scrap modelling:** Use materials from fabric or craft shops, or a [scrapstore](#), to help children to decorate bikes or scooters, or make flags, hats or costumes.
- **Loose-parts play:** Put out old boxes, chairs, piping, gutters, rugs, flower pots, wood, netting and see what the children come up with.
- **Street lounge:** Soft area for little ones - bring out a sofa and carpet!



Involving older children and young people

- **Face painting station:** Older children often enjoy painting the younger ones' faces. They could find designs on the internet.
- **Young reporters:** Some teenagers interview residents about the street, and take photos. Results can be shared on a street website or displayed.
- **Cocktail bar (non-alcoholic, of course!):** Children sell mixed juice and lemonade drinks complete with fruit slices and umbrella! Profits to chalk and face paints.
- **Graffiti wall:** Hang up an old sheet or board, give felt-tips and let the kids go.
- **DJ for the day:** some could play music of all tastes – not too loud or long.

Developing play and friendships after a street party

After meeting each other, you can do one or more of the following to support play, on top of visiting each others' houses and gardens:

- **Swapping,** sharing and selling of toys, games and equipment – arrange a day.
- **'Play watch':** Children could be supported to play on pavements or in the street (in a cul de sac or quiet road) at agreed times while one adult keeps an eye out.
- **'Play circle':** Take turns to support children to play at local green spaces and other play facilities. Organise group games for all ages such as rounders or football. Go swimming together.
- **Babysitting circle:** Include older people in return for help in the garden, with shopping or giving lifts.
- **Parent, toddler & elder** coffee mornings, perhaps involving retired residents.
- **More street meets** on pavements, front gardens or parking areas, anytime for a birthday or arrival of new residents. Or pancake sharing/racing on Shrove Tuesday, or celebrating Bonfire night, Halloween, Diwali, Eid or May Day. Before Christmas share mince pies or sing together.
- **Share the school run with other parents/carers,** or even encourage groups of children to travel to school together unsupervised.
- **After school:** If you are in a cul de sac, or can close your street easily in your council area, playingout.net gives guidance on organising after-school play.



Play Kit

Use what you have already and improvise. Or check out a huge range of balls, games, tug of war rope & hula hoops from specialists [Edventure](http://Edventure.com).

All-surface fold-away swing ball and beach ball you can get in local shops or online.



Streets Alive has a **Neighbours' SwapShop Guide** to exchanging things and helping each other. Ask us for a copy via streetparty.org.uk/neighbours.

We promote community spirit through street parties and other neighbourly events and have worked on play with residents, particularly in Bristol, with London Play and in Oxford. These projects, our research and many stories from around the country have shown how street parties boost children's play and good neighbours' relations.

We'd love to hear what you do, so please tell us via streetparty.org.uk.

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