

RUGBY RELICS

From: " RUGBY RELICS" <sales@rugbyrelics.com>
To: <Huw.Irranca-Davies@assembly.wales>
Sent: 24 July 2018 02:30 AM
Subject: Play Wales are teaching children to play with fire

Dear Minister,

I have recently attended a Level 2 Award in Playwork practice course provided by Adult Learning Wales and I was deeply disturbed by the content of the course. These are the things I learnt:

- It's OK for children to play with fire.
- You should give a child a hammer before you give them a paint brush.
- You should let them learn how to use a hammer by themselves by trial and error.
- If you see children bullying others you should allow them to work it out for themselves and only intervene if necessary.
- If you see children threatening others with a hammer you should allow them to work it out for themselves and only intervene if necessary.
- A Play worker is taught to Stop, Look, Listen, Reflect, React, Reflect and Practice.
- There should always a first aider on hand in case a play worker doesn't get to 'React' in time.
- A child should know when play begins and where it ends and when the rules change back to everyday life.
- Play has nothing to do with adults. - Adults should not be seen or heard.
 - Children should be allowed to swear unchallenged.
 - Scrapes, bumps and bruises, minor cuts and small burns are all part of growing up.
 - Welsh children are incompetent and incapable.
 - Welsh people do not trust their children.
- All Play workers should be insured against claims for compensation.
- That it is highly unlikely a play worker will be taken to court and successfully prosecuted.

- It is assumed that every Play worker has common sense and will apply it to their job.
 - Fire is part of the Playwork curriculum.
 - Children do get excited about fires.
- If fires happen regularly then it becomes common place and no-one gets giddy.
 - Fires can be lit indoors.
 - No organisation in Wales has been prosecuted for allowing children to burn.
 - Each Play worker should consider the balance of risk, of good against serious harm****

**** Serious harm: is defined as: Children dying, children being seriously and permanently injured or physically impaired, the onset of life threatening illness, children experiencing long term mental trauma.

The Play Wales policy on risk is:

"Children can only learn to assess risk, and avoid unnecessary risks, if they know what risk is and have some experience of it."

Whilst I am not against risk, it has a time and a place for children and Play Wales are encouraging young people to provide equipment to children in order to take risks and then to stand back and let injuries and burns happen as part of the learning process.

Play Wales policies are dangerous to the children of this country and I urge you to immediately put an end to this lunacy. I am qualified to make this judgment on the following grounds:

- I have written a book that includes a definition play
- I have 4 children. The biggest risk taker of the 4 is a double Great Britain international in risky sports (kayaking and white water rafting) as well as a world champion in one, she has a doctorate in chemistry and speaks 5 languages. She is a risk taker and extremely intelligent and has sufficient life experiences in the subject to be considered an expert. She agrees with me as do my 3 other children, all of whom took risks in childhood, they can also be viewed as successful in their own fields.
- I have started several children's sports clubs and children I have coached children as young as 5 who are now representing Wales and

Great Britain at sport.

- I am a world champion athlete who has represented Wales at 6 sports and at the age of 58 I still have fun and still take risks in play (not in a sporting context)

My background is sport but my definition of play is not sport, my definition is 'positive fun'. At the sports clubs I have run we always placed our emphasis on having fun around the structure of sport. Free play was always an important part of my coaching style. Allowing children to explore their boundaries in a safe environment has always worked. The children who have previously been in my care have all had positive play experiences which they have taken into adulthood.

Risk has a place in society, but what Play Wales are promoting is unnecessary risk for our children with fire and hammers and the Playworkers to observe rather than intervene in situations of conflict. I work with children in Merthyr and their policies would cause chaos and serious harm to many families if we followed them. There is no mention of the negative effects of bullying or of the influence of positive role models in the course learning materials. The course lacks integrity, it is dangerous and I was not the only person taking it of this opinion. A leading professional in the play industry stated that incidents relating to fire had increased amongst his play facilities after the introduction of a course training film. The film features children chasing each other with burning materials. Play Wales believe this is natural child's play. I am in process of making a full analysis of the course but this will take a couple of months. Meanwhile Play Wales are teaching bad practice and dangerous methods of play to care workers. This will impact not only on the children of country but on the country as a whole. I urge you to immediately suspend the activities of Play Wales and place the organisation under review.

I am available for consultation on identifying how their policies will cause harm and also how children can be allowed to play and flourish through positive play. I could help you restructure the organisation or replace it with one that works and champions the children of Wales. I'd suggest doing this in a controlled manner because this information is damaging to the country itself. We will be viewed as idiots by the rest of the world.

Wales - a country of idiots that teach children to play with fire.

However, whilst I don't want the world to view us as idiots, I do realise that there are a number of idiots who have positions of responsibility in this country who deserve to be labelled as such, so I have created the a-better.wales website to highlight these people. If you are one of these people and you fail to act on this information then we will highlight this.

My first action should you fail to address this issue is to share this information with my family and friends on Facebook, I have over 40 nieces and nephews so that will give you some extent of it's size. The post will go viral within 24 hours and will cause chaos to childcare facilities in the country. It will also have an impact on tourism with many families considering not allowing their children to attend holiday clubs. I don't want that, Do you?

More information is available on website.

<http://www.a-better.wales/pages/play-wales/play-wales.htm>

A full analysis will be added to the website as soon as it is completed.

regards - Dai Richards

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