Potential space? Play, parents and streets

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Playing Out and Everyday Relationships

• What do parents hope for as they create playful spaces on their streets?
• What is important about play?
• Does play create a potential space, following Donald Winnicott, for the creation of transformed everyday relationships?

• A small-scale, qualitative, (auto)ethnographic and participatory project, developed with the existing North Tyneside street play organisers
  • Questionnaires (local and national), interviews with seven street activators in North Tyneside, participant observation, running my own street play sessions, and organising PlayMeetStreet North Tyneside
Winnicott and Potential Space

“an inviting and safe interpersonal field in which one can be spontaneously playful while at the same time connected to others” (Casement, 1985, 162)
“Oh, it feels lovely, it feels wide, I mean that’s the first thing we all noticed the first time we did it, was how wide the street was ... it’s quite a big space, normally it feels quite cramped and restrictive and dangerous. So, yeah, I think the feeling of space was the first thing” (Carol)
## Knowing Your Neighbours

### What sorts of changes have you seen in your street since street play started?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Showing all 18 responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People stop and say hello to each other. The Facebook group has been used to alert each other to issues outside of streetplay (security on the street)</td>
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<tr>
<td>More friendly, more community</td>
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<tr>
<td>More communication between adults and children Knowing more people on our street</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbours knowledge each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbours talk to each other more and help each other out Children going to each other’s houses to play Children playing out on pavements and in each other’s front gardens</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m not sure I have seen any. n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better community, people seem to know each other better, &amp; help each other out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Better relationships and communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>A greater sense of community. I now know many neighbours in the street which is fantastic! I know people by name that I might not have known before, which promotes a friendly atmosphere. People talk to each other more in the street and people know more of the people on the street, not just their immediate neighbours. We haven’t done regular street play sessions—summer, Halloweens, Christmas mainly—so it is hard to tell but it’s definitely given the neighbours an opportunity to discuss plans for building work /extensions! Knowing and chatting to more neighbours</td>
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<td>More neighbour interactions, more social</td>
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<td>Neighbours chat more awareness of the children’s names who I live on the street</td>
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<td>I wasn’t here before it started. However, I did used to live on a busy road where the neighbours did not speak to each other. I didn’t know anyone more than two doors away. Here, I know most of the people in the cul de sac at least by sight and that happened quickly. More community spirit</td>
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### How have your relationships with your neighbours changed since street play started?

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<tr>
<th>Showing all 20 responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes - as above more familiarity and ease with each other</td>
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<tr>
<td>More friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>We know each other more, socialise more and communicate more</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improved</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Much better</td>
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<tr>
<td>I know more of the neighbours and their children which is good. It was a great way to meet people when we moved to the area</td>
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<tr>
<td>I've gotten to know people in Alma place better! Shame there wouldn’t be the support on our street as not enough families</td>
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<tr>
<td>I need to be brave and come more to meet more people. The kids mix well. My little one has enjoyed it on each of the 3 occasions we've been improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aside from knowing more people since street play commenced, relationships with some neighbours have become strengthened and more meaningful. I know many more people than I would, we have become more friendly, I have definitely got to know the neighbours more. It is a good opportunity to chat as usually everyone is dashing about to work/school. Have made friends with other mums Better mostly - getting to know them whilst out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes improved although they were quite good anyway, Improved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes, I speak much more with the parents of other kids and we’re closer. Improved. More social.</td>
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Crossing Boundaries
Imagined Futures
“So we’ve been in this huge dilemma of, do we stay or do we move, do we extend, do we just buy a house and get a bigger bedroom, err bigger, more bedrooms and things but, errm, it’s the neighbours and it’s the area and you just think well actually it’s so important, erm, so we’ll look at some point we’ll probably end up doing an extension so we can stay and so we can be here...” (Amy)
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