

# Playful Futures Strategic Plan 2019 – 2024

Updated:  
Spring 2022

 #chooseplay



**east lothian**  
play association



# Contents

Welcome	3
Vision and mission	7
Update 2020 – COVID response	8
Loose Parts Play – our story	10
You and me – ELPA storybook	12
Play Rangers	14
ELPA Objectives	15
Additional priorities as a result of COVID	19
Principles and Challenges	20
Target Operational Model (TOM)	22
How we developed our strategy	23



# Welcome: ELPA's updated Playful Futures Plan

ELPA's core goal is to promote and enrich the culture of play in East Lothian. In 2022 we transferred to East Lothian Play Association SCIO, helping us to build the strongest possible foundations for our work.

ELPA won the *Positive Support for Play Award* at the Nancy Owen's Trust National Play Awards in 2018, This was followed in 2019

***We could have filled pages with superlatives to describe the work of ELPA.***

(Fraser Falconer, Chair, Nancy of Owen Trust)

when ELPA as shortlisted in the *Raising the Profile* category at the UK Annual Playwork Awards. And in 2020, we were awarded an International Play Association's special awards in response to the COVID pandemic.

In 2020, becoming partners to two European projects - P4P PhD programme and Loose Parts Erasmus+ - brings the prospect of innovative new work over the next few years

# Welcome continued

Our plans are to continue to grow and support play both directly with communities and to promote play at a strategic level.

Play creates opportunities for children with and without additional support needs to enjoy spending time together on an **equal playing field**. We are especially keen to develop our work on play with inclusion at the heart.

Following the success of our loose parts play projects in Musselburgh and Haddington and Lammermuir areas, more areas across East Lothian are keen to work with ELPA to develop and improve play opportunities.

While ELPA is expanding, we will keep our focus on developing relationships with communities and addressing their particular needs.



#chooseplay

# Welcome continued

In East Lothian, we are mindful of the geographical divide between the most deprived and the least deprived areas. Current population forecasts for East Lothian show it is set to grow faster than any other local authority in Scotland with the 0-15 age group rising by 43%.

Identifying this need now and establishing good routes into play, will support these expanding communities to ensure that children and families are not left behind.

We believe our local knowledge, expertise and positive partnerships will contribute to our vision of Playful Futures for children across East Lothian.

2020 undoubtedly brought unprecedented change due to COVID-19. We believe we rose to the challenges as a team with children's right to play closest to our hearts.

**ELPA Board of Trustees, 2020 (brief updates 2022)**

**Scottish Registered Charity, SCO30069**



#chooseplay





# East Lothian Play Association promotes & enriches the culture of play in East Lothian

## Children's right to play

All of our work is underpinned by **article 31 of the Convention on the rights of the child**.

## Play policy and promotion

Our **#chooseplay** campaign of filming and postcards brings East Lothian's play policy to life. **#chooseplay** took the play message to every corner of East Lothian.

## Loose parts play



**Loose parts play**

Our **Loose parts play** projects bring the everyday magic of play into school and community settings, raising attainment and reducing inequalities.

## Play Spaces

Better **play spaces** bring together all the things that are important to ELPA – community, inclusion, people and places. We've dipped our toes into community-built play spaces with our **Tyre Island** project.

## Play people and partnerships

**ELPA is all about people** – our partnerships include the East Lothian Council, local and national organisations. Partnerships allow us to amplify our message, deliver training and embed play in the places children spend time every day.



#chooseplay



# Vision

All children and young people in East Lothian have plentiful opportunities to play every day.

# Mission

To promote and enrich a culture of play in East Lothian by

- promoting children's right to play (article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- sharing the benefits and value of play for all children and young people living in our community
- inspiring and supporting people who work with children.



#chooseplay

# Update 2020 – COVID response

ELPA closed its office and realigned its activities in March 2020 as a result of the COVID pandemic.

**ELPA statement:** ELPA is responding to the impact of Covid-19 to protect:

- our charity, our staff and Trustees
- the ELPA community of children and the adults who care for and work with them
- the ELPA ethos and spirit of creativity, respect and playfulness.

**“We commit to upholding an approach based on children’s human rights in our decision-making and activities throughout and beyond this period of crisis.”**



# Update 2020 – COVID response: funding and activities.

## Thank you!

Between March and November 2020, we received support from:

- ★ Charities Aid Foundation
- ★ Scottish Government Wellbeing Fund
- ★ Organised Community Play Fund
- ★ ELPA Crowdfunder campaign
- ★ Support from the Start
- ★ Recovery and Resilience Fund.
- ★ Essentia Fund

This enabled ELPA to:

- deliver 400 play packs to families, distribute 1400 'You and Me' storybooks & create follow up postcard resources
- provide 339 hours of direct support and play delivery to the Emergency Children's Hubs, working with 226 children and 57 staff/volunteers
- create the #ELPAplayathomechallenges social media campaign and follow up resources
- restart Play Rangers in Tranent and Prestonpans
- provide supportive play sessions to children in schools.

# Loose parts play – our story

ELPA is known for its Loose Parts Play Projects in Musselburgh, Haddington and Lammermuir, developed with the partnership of the Area Partnerships and Support from the Start.

**Quality play experiences** - introducing loose parts play improves the quality of play experience with a positive impact on children's wellbeing

**Improved knowledge and relationships** – ELPA ensures everyone feels part of the process, providing information and support to introduce loose parts play with confidence.

**Community involvement** - we consult with children and have created play spaces with the involvement of the whole community.

**Environmental benefits** - loose parts are largely items that have diverted from recycling and landfill.



*The noise of play has changed.  
Instead of screaming, we've got  
chatter, laughter, percussion.  
There's a happy buzz.*

*(Teacher, Musselburgh Burgh Primary School)*



# Loose parts play – UPDATE 2020



**East Lothian Play Association and Windygoul Primary School go to Europe!**

**“Loose Parts Play joins the dots between schools, community and social and environment responsibilities.”**

ELPA and Windygoul Primary School, with six partners from Poland, Hungary and Slovakia have been awarded **368,965 EUR** in the EU's Erasmus+ programme.

This new project introduces recycled, waste and discarded items ('loose parts') into school playgrounds and classrooms as resources for play and education.

Linking play and the 'circular economy', the 30-month project will assist schools to enhance school play environments and foster the quality play and creativity of pupils, while increasing environmental awareness.



#chooseplay





# 'You and Me' storybook & play packs

## Crash!

Yippee! That was fun.  
Again! Again!





# 'You and Me' storybook and play packs

The 'You and Me' storybook was created to encourage and support families to play, every day.

The story was developed with families at Wallyford Community Centre through observations of children's play and conversations with parents.

It was in development when the COVID-19 crisis hit, closing schools, nurseries and workplaces. ELPA quickly realised its potential as a resource to support families at home.

With the help of an ELPA Crowdfunder campaign was able to go to print and create play packs to provide to for families across East Lothian.

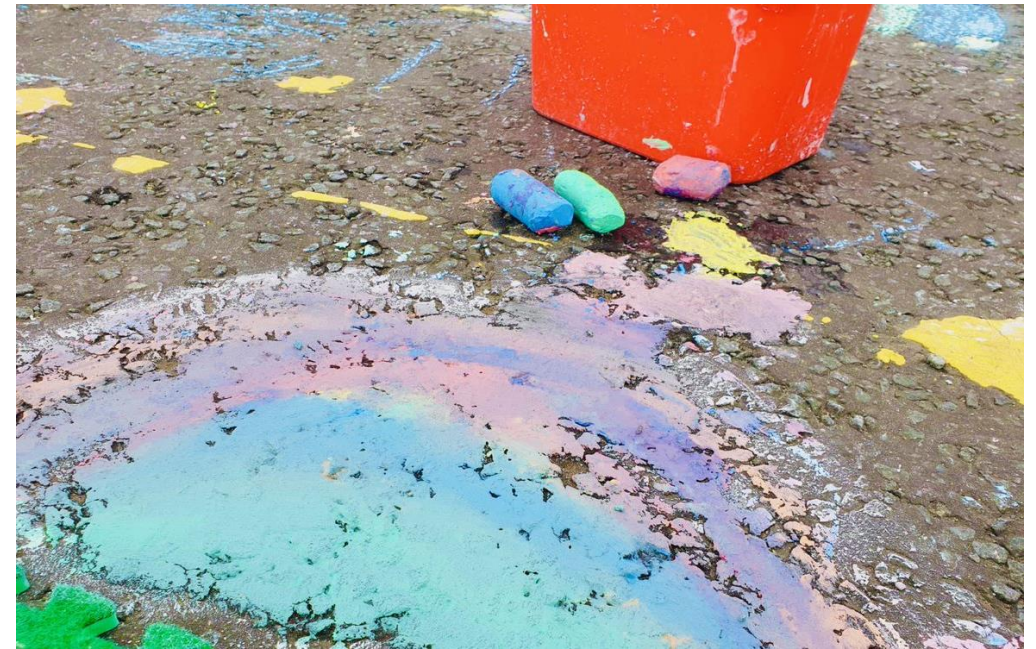
We worked in partnership with local organisations and support networks to ensure the book and packs reached families who needed them most.



# ELPA Play Rangers

Our Play Rangers projects help to bring a strong sense of play to communities, particularly those which have been adversely affected by COVID.

Many children have spent months in restricted circumstances with evidence suggesting that COVID has exacerbated existing inequalities (CYPCS, 2020). With funding from the Scottish Government 'Organized Community Play Fund', our fantastic team of Play Rangers has been out in East Lothian streets and parks helping children get back out to play!





# ELPA Objectives at a glance

1. We will be a voice across all East Lothian for the importance of play.

We will continue to hold children's right to play at the heart of what we do. We will work for and with children and young people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. We will bring children's voices

2. We will be an established provider of training and consultancy for play.

As experts in children's play and play rights, we will work with other providers and key decision-makers to improve play opportunities and play spaces across East Lothian.

3. We will have a sustainable organisational structure.

We will manage our charity effectively and efficiently. To deliver our plan, we will maintain a clear focus on good governance, realistic and achievable goals, partnerships and investing in our team.



forward.  
#chooseplay



# Objective 1. We will be a voice across all East Lothian for the importance of play.

We will continue to hold children's right to play at the heart of what we do.

We will work for and with children and young people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. We will bring forward children's voices.

How will we do it? *At a glance:*

- We will establish and facilitate a county-wide forum for play, led by the voices of children and young people.
- We will support the development of play champions models, for both adults and children and young people.
- We will introduce and test the European Erasmus Play-friendly schools model.
- We will continue our focus on loose parts play as a vehicle for more play, for more children, more of the time.
- We will share the stories of play in East Lothian through creative and innovative media projects.
- We will make sure what we do makes a difference through monitoring, evaluation.



#chooseplay

# Objective 2. We will be an established provider of training and consultancy for play.

As the experts in children's play and play rights, we will work with other providers and key decision-makers to improve play opportunities and play spaces across East Lothian.

How will we do it? *At a glance:*

- We will establish an ongoing programme of training opportunities.
- We will continue to provide free training twice a year as a service to ELPA members and a valuable way of building relationships.
- We will further develop our income generation model of training.
- We will expand our pool of associate trainers, facilitators and expert consultants.
- We will explore models for creating space for play programme.



#chooseplay



# Objective 3. We will have a sustainable organisational structure.

We will manage our charity effectively and efficiently. To deliver our plan, we will maintain a clear focus on good governance, realistic and achievable goals, partnerships and investing in our team.

How will we do it? *At a glance:*

- We will be a SCIO by the end of 2019.
- We will fundraise for, and employ, a core member of staff for ELPA management and development.
- We will invest in our Fundraising Strategy.
- We will continue to develop our membership structure.
- We will continue to build our close ties with East Lothian Council and other partners.



#chooseplay

# As a result of COVID, ELPA has identified additional priorities.

1. We will support children to get back out to play in their communities so they can benefit from all the health and wellbeing advantages that outdoor play offers.

How will we do it? *At a glance:*

- We will deliver Play Rangers projects in local communities.
- We will expand the ELPA pool of sessional play rangers/playworkers.
- We will run outdoor play events when regulations allow.

2. We will support the therapeutic and restorative qualities of play especially for children who have experienced stress, anxiety, loss and trauma (and continue to).

How will we do it? *At a glance:*

- Seek funding to run supported play sessions
- Seek funding to support adults to support children's play (in settings and communities)

3. We will be a source of trusted information, guidance and ideas about play and COVID-related issues.

How will we do it? *At a glance:*

- Produce sets of materials for public use based on most up-to-date guidance and evidence.
- Produce sets of materials for ELPA staff use and to share with partners we work.

# Principles

ELPA has adopted the principles of the East Lothian Play Policy.

1. All children and young people have a right to play.
2. Children and young people will be listened to and their views on playing and free time taken into account.
3. Adults should positively promote & support children and young people's right to play.



#chooseplay



# Challenges

- Geographical divide between the most and the least deprived areas in East Lothian.
- Changing demographics in East Lothian, the fastest growing local authority in Scotland.
- Rising demand for support and services.
- Raising funds for our organisational base.
- Rural and transport poverty within the county.

**Update 2020:** the dramatic impact of COVID on children, families and community life.

## References

- *Scotland's Population 2015 - The Registrar General's Annual Review of Demographic Trends*
- *East Lothian Play Policy, 2017*
- *Challenging perceptions. Overcoming poverty, East Lothian Poverty Commission, 2017*
- *Independent Children's Rights Impact Assessment, Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland (2020)*



#chooseplay



# Target Operational Model (TOM) Principles

In 2020, ELPA developed these principles to describe the way we want to work.

We aim for:

- **Purposeful partnerships** and strong, effective connections to achieve objectives.
- **Collaboration over hierarchy**, supported by clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- **High quality work** which embeds and delivers our core values and principles.
- **Sustainable income** coming into the charity.
- **Flexibility** to respond to projects and opportunities.

Update: 2020 Strategy Day 2

# How we developed our strategy

To arrive at our Playful Futures Plan we:

- created opportunities to participate
- invested time and planning
- listened.



We ran an open evening attended by local play champions, ELPA members and interested others.

We held the 'most playful AGM ever'.

We gathered feedback from participants in our free training events and through online surveys.

We created a Theory of Change model.

We received pro bono support for ELPA team strategy days (2019, 2020, 2022).



#chooseplay

# Contact



**east lothian**  
play association

If you would like to know more about the work we do and how you can help, please contact us:

email: [info@elpa.org.uk](mailto:info@elpa.org.uk)  
visit: [www.elpa.org.uk](http://www.elpa.org.uk)



[EastLothianPlayAssociation/](https://www.facebook.com/EastLothianPlayAssociation/)



[@EastLothianPlay/](https://twitter.com/EastLothianPlay/)

**Registered Office: The Fraser Centre, 3A Winton Place, Tranent EH33 1AF**

**East Lothian Play Association SCIO SC050202**



[#chooseplay](https://twitter.com/chooseplay)