



## **Press release – embargoed until 00.00hrs 7/8/24**

7<sup>th</sup> August 2024

### **Play Day**

Today is the national day for play. Play is crucial for a child's physical and mental health, happiness, learning and development through which infants and children can make friends and achieve their key developmental milestones. Play enables children to build relationships, develop skills, learn about themselves and the world around them.

Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the importance of play stating that every child has a right to *'rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts'*.

The importance of play should not be underestimated, including in hospital and other health care environments. Through play children can forget they are frightened or in pain, be reassured and distracted in otherwise traumatic situations. Play allows children to explore and gain an understanding about what is happening to them, reduce anxiety, aid recovery and rehabilitation.

The ABPN pays tribute to health play specialists for the important work they do to prepare children for a visit or a stay in hospital to undergo investigations, painful procedures and operations.

“Play is universal and key to the lives of children it is core to their development, their communication and meaning making. Play helps children prepare for transitions, imagine possibilities and it can be therapeutic. We should never underestimate the importance of play and we should advocate for children's play to be integral to health care”

Professor Bernie Carter, President

## Notes for editors

The term child refers to infants, children, young people and young adults up to 25 years of age

The ABPN is a network of children's nurses with a wide membership of experts in clinical practice, education, leadership and research. It is the oldest children's nursing association in the world, established in 1938.

[www.abpn-uk.com](http://www.abpn-uk.com)

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