



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

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National Children's Commissioner

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**Play is more than just having fun: enriching
childhoods**

Network of Community Activities

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Action Aunt Game



Player 1 – My aunt went to town waving all the way (everyone waves)

Player 2 – My aunt went to town waving and nodding her head all the way (everyone waves and nods)

Player 3 – My aunt went to town waving and nodding her head and standing all the way (everyone waves, nods and stands)

“You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation”

(Plato, who lived from 427 to 347 BC)

“The right to play is a child’s first claim on the community. Play is nature’s training for life. No community can infringe that right without doing deep and enduring harm to the minds and bodies of its citizens.”

(David Lloyd George in 1926)

The Right to Play (Article 31)



1. States Parties recognise the right of the child 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.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

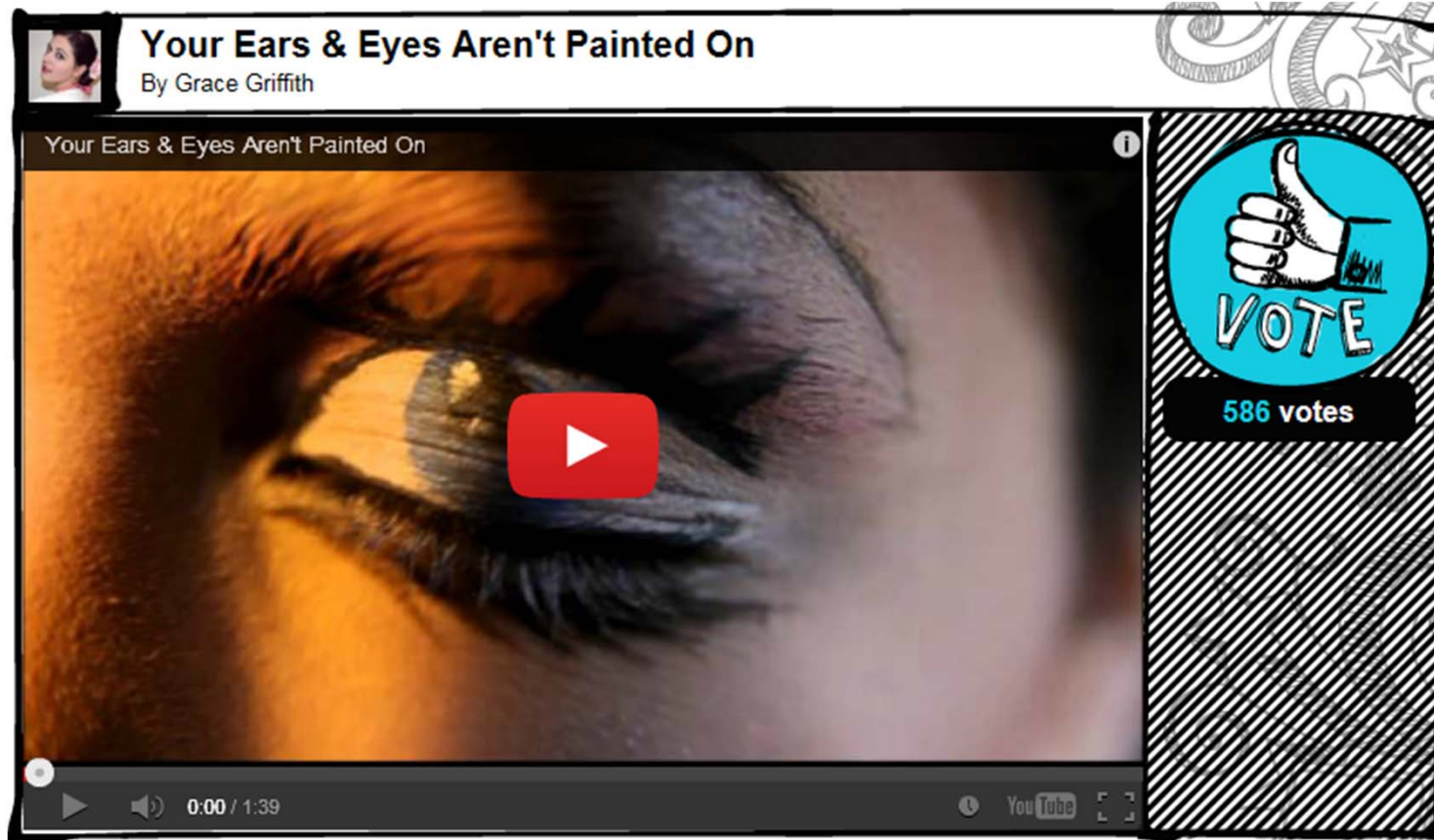
Importance of play



Children's play belongs to children; adults should tread lightly when considering their responsibilities in this regard, being careful not to colonise or destroy children's own places for play through insensitive planning or the pursuit of other adult agendas.

S Lester & W Russell, *Play for a Change: Play, Policy and Practice – A review of contemporary perspectives*, Play England (2008)

Adults must protect play



There are many types of play

Imaginative play and social drama have transformative potential



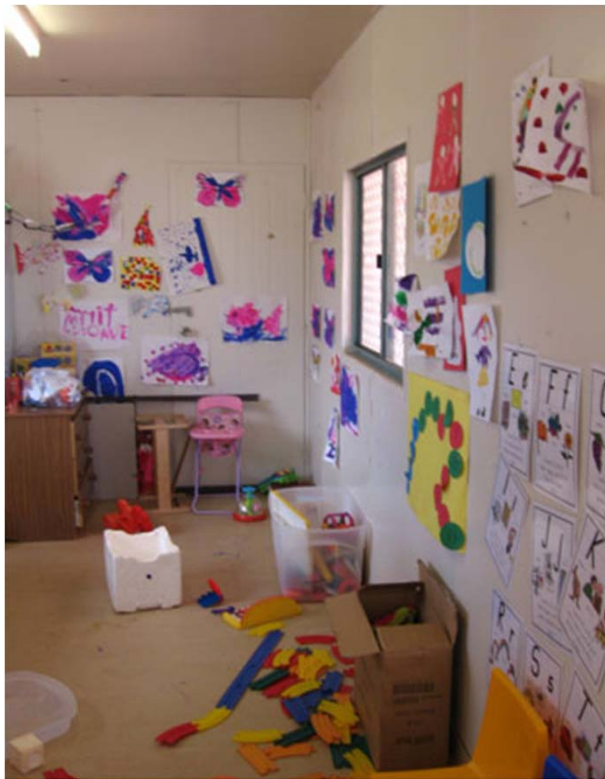
Play and the built environment



Opportunities for children's play are reduced because of the negative relationship between low cost housing and disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, *Housing and children's development and wellbeing: a scoping study*, Report No 149 (2010)

Children in immigration detention face special developmental challenges



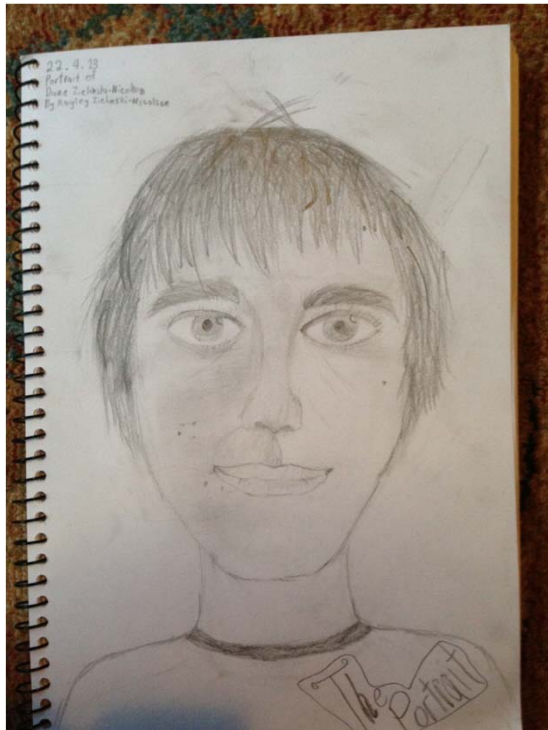
Australian Human Rights Commission, *Summary of observations from visit to immigration detention facility in Leonora* (2011).

Risks and play must be balanced



Sydney Morning Herald: Emma and her grandfather Leo were questioned by police at Balmoral Beach. Photo: Tamara Dean

Children need to be trusted to explore their world



Yeah it is important. It makes you feel good and it makes you feel you can do stuff and it gives you the ability, if that is the right word, to be able to do it. Helps you on your way to greatness.

NSW Commission for Children and Young People, *Ask the Children: Overview of Children's Understandings of Well-being*, (2007, p 6.

The Big Banter



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