DFC play consultation: deliberative online workshops

Total time: 45 min
Participants: Children & young people; parents/carers; professionals working with children and young people (CYP)
Workshop platform/ formats: Online via Zoom or Teams
Available/ usable in-platform props: share screen, sketch probes
Props: 8 sketches representing the qualities of free play. Each includes tensions (e.g. who designs the space/ game? Risky play vs adult protection? Boundaries)
Group size: 4-8 participants (children) / 4-12 participants (adult)
Format: deliberative workshops online involving:
1. Ice breaker to elicit initial thoughts about play
2. Sketch-probes depicting the qualities of play (offline) to elicit opinions and values
3. Deliberation about digital play to identify barriers, enablers and calls for change

Introduction and icebreaker (10 minutes): greetings, confirm consent, share examples of play to get everyone talking and elicit initial ideas.

Moderator 1:
- Welcome and thanks for joining this discussion hosted by the Digital Futures Commission, an applied research project funded by the 5Rights Foundation.
- Today we'll spend 45 minutes together talking about why play matters for children and young people, what opportunities you/they have for digital play, and how these could be made better.
- As you know, we're going to record this event so that we don't have to write everything down. Afterwards, we'll delete the video, and we'll only keep the audio for our research. We will keep your participation anonymous and will not share the information you provide beyond our research team unless you tell us anything that suggest that you are at risk of harm.
- In a moment I'm going to turn on the recording, if that's ok? PAUSE. You're all free to leave now or any time, of course.
- OK I'm turning the recording on now (**RECORD!**)
- Please take turns to say your name, that it's ok for us to record, and then share one experience in the last week when you played something, or felt playful.
- For example, my name is Sonia, I'm here today with Kruakae, we're happy for the event to be recorded, and we both love playing with our cats! In fact, I think having pets helps adults to play ☺

Go round the group…

Then ask follow up questions:

- **Who?** Was anyone playing with you?
- **Where?** Physical space or online space, back garden or public park or bedroom?
- **Why?** Why was this activity meaningful; in what way was this a good experience?
    - If you didn't get to play like this would you miss it? Why?
    - What happens when you play?

Moderator 2: Take private notes on their answer to the 'Why' question, and be ready to make comparisons across participants, or across offline/online, so as to ask questions now or later, to bring out points of deliberation or to help bring in silent participants e.g. earlier you mentioned that….).

Offer an encouraging summary (not too conclusive) to show we're listening and interested. Then introduce the idea of showing some pictures of children playing.

We asked someone to review the research about play for us. And based on that, we got someone to sketch out what play might look like.

Sketch-probes (15 minutes) – purpose is value formation (NB from now, ask about children and young people playing, whether the participants are CYP or adults)

So, I'm now going to show you some of these sketches and as you a couple of questions.

For 16+, parents and professionals working with CYP
Moderator 2: Show slide with all pictures (over 16 slide)

For under 16 or family units
Moderator 2: Show 3-4 pictures one by one (under 16 slide)

Moderator 1:
(To 16+ CYP):
- What are they doing in the pictures?
- Do you have fun in similar ways?
- What makes you want to have fun in that way?
- What will you miss if you don't get to have fun in that way/ in the ways kids in the pictures do?
- What do you think are the benefits of these kinds of play?
- What do you need/ want to be able to have fun like the kids in the pictures?

(To parents, teachers and professionals):
- You see children play all the time. Is this what their play or playful moment look like to you?
- Do your children/ students play like this at home or in school?
- What is/ are the significance of the kinds of play that you see in the pictures?
- What do you see as the benefits of these kinds of play?
- What do you think make children want to play in that way?
- What have you done or think you will do to support children to enjoy the kids of play you see in the pictures?

(To under 16 CYP):
- **What** are they doing in the pictures?
- Do you also play like this?
- **Why** do you think they are doing this?

- **What helps** children and young people act (play) like this?
  - To be able to play like this, what do you need/want? From whom?

  Follow up questions:
  - **01 Intrinsically motivated:** Are they interested in what they are doing? What if someone else is telling them they must act like this?
  - **02 Voluntary:** Can they start and stop what they are doing when they want to?
  - **03 Open ended:** Are there rules for this activity? Who makes these rules? Can the rules be broken?
  - **04 Imaginative:** What world of imagination are these children in? How are the things around them brought into the game?
  - **05 Diverse in forms:** Does everyone play in the same way, or each in their own way? Is it good to experiment?
  - **06 Emotional resonance:** Do you think they can act out their feelings as they play? Do they need to do that?
  - **07 Social:** How important is it to be able to play with others, or to share the experience with others?
  - **08 Stimulating:** Is this activity stimulating? Do they feel challenged? In control?

Moderator 2: Take notes on **what resources** participants say helps support play (e.g. plenty of time/ no adults about / good imagination/ can choose for yourself...). **Say – from what you're saying, children need XYZ (specify) resources to play freely.**

Deliberation (10 minutes) – purpose is analysis and problem definition

(To 16+ CYP):

Moderator 1: We've talked about different ways you and others your age do for fun and what you and the others need to have fun in your own ways. Do you relate to any of these things that help them/you play freely when they/you play online/ using digital devices like your phones or apps? What are the possibilities you see for you to have fun online? Go around and collect examples.

(To 16+ CYP):

Moderator 1: We've talked about different ways children and young people play traditionally and what they need to play freely. Do you relate to any of these things that help them play freely when they play with digital devices like your phones or apps? What are the possibilities you see for children and young people to have fun online or with digital technologies? Go around and collect examples.

(To under 16):

Moderator 1: We've talked about different ways you do for fun and what you need to have fun in your own ways. Do you see any of these things that help you have fun the

way you like when you play with digital devices like your phones or apps? Go around and collect examples.

Moderator 2: take notes…prompt or give own example if needed.

- **Why?** Why was this activity meaningful, or a good experience?
- **How?** What is it about these digital devices, apps or games that helps you/ children and young people have fun the way they like?
  - o Is it being able to do something just for fun?
  - o Is it not being told what to do or having to plan for it?
  - o Is it being able to make your own rules?
  - o Is it being able to let your imagination run wild? Or is it being able to create your own world and stories?
  - o Is it being allowed to experiment and find a way to play with whatever you have?
  - o Is it being able to act out your feelings?
  - o Is it being able to play with or relate with others?
  - o Is it feeling stimulated?
- Can you give me examples? **[only ask if time]**

- What's tricky or difficult for children and young people about playing freely in a digital world? (Barriers)
  - What do children and young people need to watch out for?
  - [ask the opposite of the above questions]
  - Can you give me examples?

Closing (5 mins) – purpose is to identify priorities for change

Identify priorities and calls for change: Moderator 1 to say:

> We're nearly at the end of our time. Before we stop, I'd love to hear from everyone what you most want to see changed and perhaps how, so that children and young people can play more freely with digital technologies.

Go round and ask each in turn to identify one thing. Moderator 2 to write these into the powerpoint as each point is made, so that participants can see their demands building up.

Last words. Moderator 1 to say:

Thanks so much everyone. Our time's up. We're going to think about everything you said when we write our report. And we'll tell your list of the changes to the organisations that can really make digital play better for children and young people. In case there's more you want to say, please complete the quick feedback sheets that we will send you after this discussion and return them to us in the next few days.