



Play Therapy: Unlocking Brighter Futures

With Kids 3 Year Strategic Plan 2026 – 2029

With Kids Mission Statement

We provide specialist Play Therapy to children whose mental wellbeing is affected by adversity. With the child at the centre, we work collaboratively with the important people in the child's family and community.

We are committed to promoting Play Therapy through awareness raising, education and by developing a skilled workforce that can deliver Play Therapy across Scotland to reach and make a difference to every child who needs it.

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With Kids is a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status.
Company number SC343897, Charity number SC022467. Registered
address is With Kids, 15 Annfield Place, Glasgow, G31 2XE.
www.withkids.org.uk



Introduction

As a children's mental health and wellbeing charity, our trained specialists give children the freedom to express their difficulties on their own terms using the one form of communication that comes naturally to them – *play*.

Play Therapy empowers children to understand themselves better, to process life events, and to build confidence and self-esteem so they can better regulate their emotions, build stronger relationships with their families and peers, and learn to cope with life's many challenges. We work alongside the children from an early age, along with their parents, carers, schools and communities – aiming to build long term, self-supporting networks.

- **Compassionate** – we're accepting and empathetic. We don't judge people, or their circumstances.
- **Down to Earth** – we're professional with great expertise, but we're warm, everyday people.
- **Creative** – Children don't open up to stern authority figures, we connect with them on their level with a sense of fun and imagination.
- **Reliable** – We're always there for children, their families, and communities when they need us.

We work to build a better future for children and families by going beyond mental health support. Our strategy centres on early intervention and prevention, starting with our growing focus on perinatal and infant mental health. We address child poverty and increase learning engagement. We collaborate with stakeholders and partner with communities to improve support systems for long-term change.

With Kids priorities are underpinned by our Values and by the vision and ambition of The Promise, which is that care experienced children and young people grow up loved, safe, and respected. With Kids respects and values the uniqueness and diversity of each child's personality, family circumstances and social structure. For our full set of Values **see Appendix 1**.

As a children's mental health charity, inclusivity and acceptance are at the heart of our ethos and a core element of our work. We recognise that there is always work to do. Structural and systemic racism exists and is harmful. We accept our responsibility to work towards a better understanding and unlearning of our individual biases and those that exist systemically within our organisation. We will continue to challenge discrimination and develop and promote antiracist practice.

With Kids recognises that our staff are our greatest asset, we are committed to providing fair working practices and advancing Fair Work First criteria.

In developing this three-year strategy, we have also considered the political and economic challenges, and the long-term strategies of the Scottish Government, health, social care, education and social work.

OUR PRIORITIES

Priority 1:
Widen access
to Specialist
Mental Health
Support



Priority 2:
Collaborate
with Parents
& Carers



Priority 3:
Champion
Play Therapy in
Scotland



Priority 4:
Train &
Educate



Priority 5
Promote
staff Well-
being



Priority 6:
Drive
organisational
Sustainability



OUTCOMES

Increased
numbers of
children have
improved
mental health.

Parents have
increased
confidence in
parenting,
strengthened
attachments
with infants and
children, and
mental well-
being has
improved for the
whole family.

There is an
increased
awareness of
the benefits of
Play Therapy.
Investment in
Play Therapy
increases in
Scotland,
widening
access.

The children's
sector
workforce are
better
equipped to
respond to
children's
emotional
needs.

With Kids staff
team are
valued,
motivated and
equipped to
deliver high
quality services
to improve
mental health
outcomes for
children and
their families.

With Kids has
good
governance
and internal
systems to
manage
economic,
financial and
reputational risk
to ensure
organisational
sustainability.

OUR ACTIONS

Priority 1:
**Widen access to
Specialist Support**

- Extend our reach by to provide more therapeutic services to children who have experienced adversity
- Seek out opportunities to develop our work and maintain a high quality in our services
- Increase our work with nursery age children
- Further develop work in perinatal and infant mental health
- Champion the importance of earliest opportunity for play therapy intervention and preventative work
- Strengthen collaboration with statutory services and schools and build stronger multi-agency partnerships

Priority 2:
**Collaborate with
Parents and Carers**

- Aim to involve parents/carers closely in our work with children, taking a whole family approach
- Engage with parents pre-birth
- Build and sustain collaborative relationships with parent support organisations
- Provide placements for counselling trainees
- Further develop With Kids parent and carer support services

Priority 3:
**Champion Play Therapy
in Scotland**

- Develop clear messaging for different audiences and strengthen use of social media
- Provide compelling evidence of impact of Play Therapy on children's mental well-being
- Continue to support and develop the Play Therapy Forum in Scotland
- Establish ambassador initiatives
- Strengthen community outreach and events

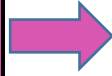
Priority 4:
Train and Educate

- Develop and deliver high quality relevant training that reflects the needs of the children's sector workforce and parents/carers and expand training for corporates
- Increase capacity to deliver training
- Increase diversity and number of people able to access our MSc Play Therapy to build capacity within the workforce

Priority 5:
**Promote staff well-
being**

- Ensure our team has the skills and resources they need to continue to deliver high quality interventions
- Continue to ensure staff have access to and are encouraged to attend relevant training and support
- Maintain excellent & robust standards of respectful, professional and supportive management
- Ensure With Kids is a place where people want to work

Priority 6:
**Drive Organisational
Sustainability**



- Maintain excellent standards of governance, financial and risk management
- Take a strategic approach to fundraising, ensuring diversity of income streams
- Develop relationships and partnerships with funders and other stakeholders
- Enhance communication and messaging about the success of With Kids and Play Therapy
- Drive environmental sustainability in all aspects of With Kids activities and impact of operations
- Review and align internal systems and best practice in service delivery in order to #KeepThePromise

Our Values

With Kids respects and values the uniqueness and diversity of each child's personality, family circumstances and social structure.

Rights
In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) we promote and protect the rights of all children to access whatever they need' "to survive, grow, participate and fulfil their potential".
Love
As well as being 'rights based' our work is profoundly influenced by the neuroscience of early brain development. We believe that early intervention can prevent long term chronic difficulties. Our vision is that all children feel a sense of belonging – and are loved and valued.
Voice
We believe that play is the best means of accessing and understanding the emotional life of children. We work with children, not just for them, we believe that every child has the right to a voice on matters that affect them; and to have their views taken seriously – in accordance with age and maturity.
Equality
All families can struggle from time to time' but many of those we work with also live with the harsh realities of long-term poverty. We believe that all a child's needs are part of their story – and require to be addressed; practical, physical, emotional and social.

Respect

We know that our relationship with children is temporary – only every supplementary to the role of parents and carers. We try to work with respect, alongside families, exchanging understanding in plain language – building confidence. We believe in the child's innate ability to resolve their difficulties given appropriate support.

Independence

We carefully protect our separateness from the 'state system'. Advocacy of a particular child's rights could potentially place us in opposition to officialdom; or even on occasion to a child's primary carer.

Community

We believe in being accessible and visible within the communities we serve. Our relationship with schools, families and children influence our work. We aim to build long-term, self-supporting networks.

Collaboration

We will seek to work with like-minded individuals and agencies, to build confidence of our sector and to incubate new initiatives. We will continue to value the partnerships we have with local schools and teachers, showing our recognition of the important role that these relationships play in our organisation.