



Play streets: Active Travel

Play streets are regular, short, resident-led road closures, creating safe space for children to play and communities to come together. Here we present the evidence demonstrating their impact on **Active Travel**

- For councils, a play street policy is a low cost, high impact route to supporting active travel
 - Over 1,600 street communities have 'played out' with 100 councils to date actively supporting the playing out model*
 - Around 48,900 children and 24,450 adults have been directly involved on their street
 - Residents do the bulk of the work (with support where needed) - councils just need to make it easy for them
- * (Numbers accurate for January 2024)

Impact of traffic dangers for children



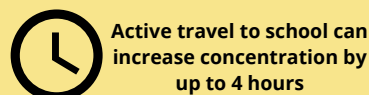
For children, walking and cycling are the only means of independent travel. Traffic danger is the main barrier to children's independent mobility and outdoor play, which have both declined sharply over the generations. The percentage of parents who would let their children travel independently to primary school fell from 86% in 1971 to just 25% in 2010.



Benefits of active travel for children

vs.
Children who switch to walking and cycling to school have healthier body weights than those who travel by car.

- National Institute for health Research (2021)



Independent mobility is an important factor in the health and physical, social and mental development of children.

- Shaw (2015)

A step towards permanent change

Being involved with play streets has led residents to:

- shop for my elderly neighbour
 - walk to school together
 - getting a bike hanger on the street
 - planting more flowers in front gardens
- Playing Out Survey (2023)

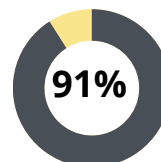
"I became a local activist to tackle traffic and air pollution outside my kids school."

- Play street organiser Bristol

[Play streets] serve as a spring-board for ideas that might bring about longer-term changes to routine behaviour - such as speed limits, traffic filtering systems, or design features in streets.

- Griffin (2015)

Creating a vision



My street feels like a safer, friendlier place to live

- Playing Out Survey (2023)

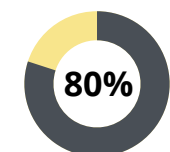
The play street movement itself also works as representation, demonstrating an alternative vision of what streets are for.

- Griffin (2015)

"[Play streets] changes the character of our street and helps people to think of it as more than a space to get from a to b."

- Play street organiser Bristol

Play streets build skills and confidence



Play streets have allowed children to learn or improve riding a bike

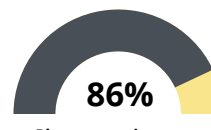
- Playing Out survey (2017)

Play Streets support the development of physical literacy in children.

- University of La Trobe (2020)

"My boy has been practising cycling during our playing out sessions. He's now independently cycling."

- Play street steward Bristol



Play streets increase children's confidence in street play

- Playing Out survey (2023)

The play street provided an open space [...] ideal to experiment with active travel

- MSc researcher University of Amsterdam

"[My] son is more keen to scoot to school, having seen other kids doing this."

- Play street steward North Tyneside