

PLAY IDEAS BANK

Practical Ideas for Creative Play - A comprehensive collection for Playworkers & Playschemes everywhere

No. 22

WHY?

Putting together your own newspaper, magazine or comic is very easy to do and well worth the effort:

- It's exciting
- It reinforces literacy skills
- It's a co-operative effort
- It helps kids to understand the adult media
- It publicises your play project
- It can catch on and become a regular part of your programme
- It can get kids interested in other community activities
- It's great fun!



Getting Organised

If this is something the kids have not done before, the playworkers will probably have to do most of the management and organising at first. To decide what should go in the paper, form an *editorial board*. This can actually consist of all the kids who are interested, as long as you've got some way to reach decisions where necessary. If you decide to appoint or elect a smaller editorial group, there's always the danger that non-members will not bother to get involved. On the other hand, the paper may not need to involve all the kids; it may be something that a small group spend a lot of time on - reporting and recording what everyone else is doing.

As a paper gets going kids may want to manage it for themselves, but playworkers will still be able to provide advice and ideas, solve problems, and may occasionally have to censor unacceptable material (a racist joke, perhaps), but in a case like this, use explanation and discussion as well as your authority.

DESKTOP PUBLISHING

Since the first edition of this leaflet appeared, the computer revolution has brought us "Desk-Top Publishing", where a computer enables you to produce both text and graphics and assemble the lot in neatly laid-out pages. If your group has access to the necessary equipment (computer, printer, DTP software) and someone who understands it, why not give it a try?

PLAYSCHEME NEWS

Making your own Playscheme Newspaper

This leaflet shows how you can help the children themselves produce their own newspaper, magazine or comic. It has been written and drawn by Harry Shier and features material that originally appeared in PLAY-TIMES magazine.

What to put in:

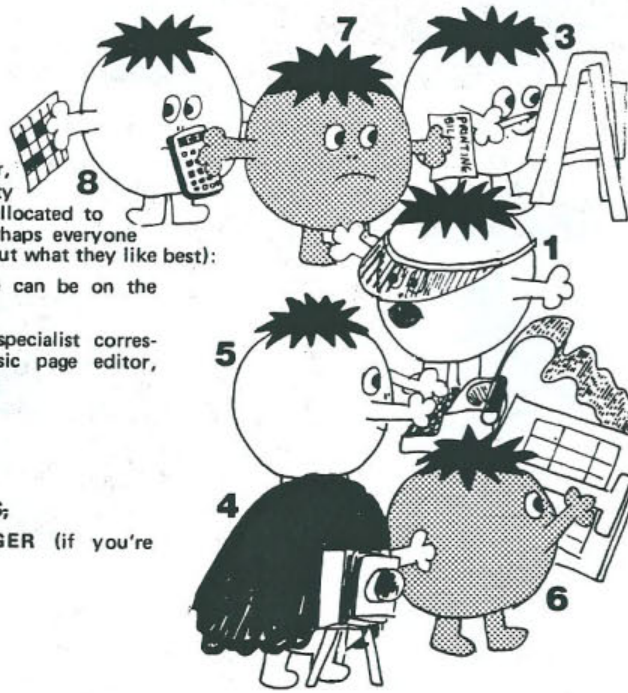
There is so much you can put in a playscheme newspaper, you should have no trouble finding something that will appeal to each child. Here are some ideas, but the kids will probably think of more:

- Playscheme news
 - Local news
 - Coming events/programme of playscheme activities
 - Stories (written and picture stories)
 - Poems
 - Interviews
Why not approach a local celebrity (sports person? pop star? politician?) - and ask nicely for a special interview. You may be lucky.
Interview older people with memories of *your* community many years ago - this is *oral history*.
 - Jokes
 - Special interest features
e.g. fishing, pets, bicycles, whatever the current craze is!
 - Fashion features
 - Book reviews
 - Film and TV reviews
 - Recipes
 - Cartoons
 - Things to make and do
 - Music features: record reviews, playscheme Top Ten?
 - Drawings
 - Photographs
 - Competitions: e.g. Crosswords, word games, mazes and puzzles, riddles, colouring/drawing, spot the difference, spot the ball, quizzes, etc.
 - Questionnaires, surveys, opinion polls.
 - Adverts: sales and wants, swaps.
- Try to get local shops and traders to buy advertising space. It will not bring them much business, but they may like to contribute to a worthwhile local project all the same!
- Sports page: Report on any matches you've organised, amongst yourselves or against other groups.
 - "Planning applications" - for adventure playground structures, or even for new camps and dens.
 - "What's On" for kids locally
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Horoscope
 - A Playworkers' column? Well, perhaps if you asked nicely . .

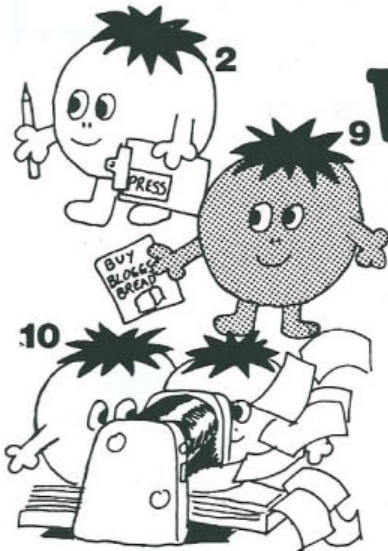
Jobs for Everyone:

Now you've got some ideas together, it's time to get to work. There are plenty of jobs to be tackled, and these can be allocated to different members of the group (or perhaps everyone can have a go at all the jobs to find out what they like best):

- An **EDITOR** is optional. Everyone can be on the Editorial Board!
- **REPORTERS/Writers** including specialist correspondents e.g. sports reporter, music page editor, cookery correspondent.
- **ARTISTS**
- **PHOTOGRAPHERS**
- **TYPISTS**
- **DESIGNERS and LAYOUT ARTISTS,**
- **ACCOUNTANT/BUSINESS MANAGER** (if you're selling the paper)
- **COMPETITION ORGANISER**
- **ADVERTISING MANAGER**
- **PRINTERS**
- **SALES AND DISTRIBUTION TEAM**



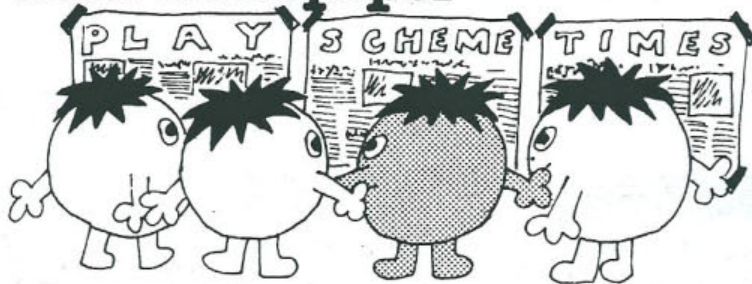
Why not provide clip-boards and even official playscheme press-cards to inspire your reporters



Which Method?

What you do now depends on the technology available. Here are a variety of alternative production methods and some of their advantages and disadvantages. Whatever kind of printing machine you use, get someone who understands it to tell you what it can and cannot do before you start preparing your material. All the methods described can be very effective if you make the most of their strengths and are aware of their limitations from the start.

A Wall Newspaper

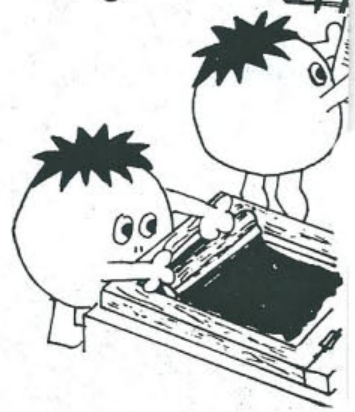


You do not need access to any printing or duplicating equipment at all. You can make a giant wall newspaper. (Have you seen pictures from China, where crowds of people gather to read the latest news and views from wall newspapers pasted up on billboards.) For this you need big sheets of paper, big felt-tips (or crayons will do) and you can of course, stick pictures and photos

in the newspaper. Anything you can put in a printed newspaper can go on a wall paper, although you cannot have anything that people have to fill in and send back.

The advantage is it is so cheap and easy to organise. Also reading and responding to it become a collective, rather than an individual activity. But it's not quite the same as a "proper" newspaper.

Make your own



Stencil Duplicator

This is the *Roneo* machine, found in all school offices and community projects, and familiar nearly everyone.

Typing or drawing on the special stencil sheet makes holes through which ink can pass. The stencil is attached to a rotating drum, and as the paper is fed through, ink is passed through the stencil to print an image on the paper.

These machines are the easiest to find, and there is a good chance you will be able to borrow one and use it on your scheme. The print quality isn't always very good and it's not easy to get drawing or handwriting to come out well on stencils. But it is cheap and efficient and many excellent playscheme newspapers have been made this way over the years.

Stencil Scanner

These two machines (using different processes) are both able to copy black and white artwork to a duplicator stencil, which can then be put on an ordinary duplicator.

This makes life much easier because you put together all your material on ordinary paper — no need to type or draw on stencils — and

ORIGINAL ARTWORK
HERE, IS COPIED ON TO
STENCIL HERE



Spirit Duplicator

Sometimes known as a *Banda* machine, they are commonly found in schools and also in offices. Some are extremely simple machines and can be bought secondhand very cheap (of course, scrounged).

You type, write or draw on shiny paper ("master") backed with a special sheet coated with coloured dye. Dye is transferred on to the other side of the master (like when you put carbon paper the wrong way round). This is then attached to a rotating drum and as the paper is fed through, the dye is slightly moistened with a special fluid. The dye is dissolved a little at a time and prints off the paper.

Quality is invariably rather poor, but the process is very quick and cheap. The wonderful and unique thing about it is that, by changing the dye sheet as you prepare the master, you can make it print in a whole rainbow of colours in one simultaneous operation. This effect can be very impressive and is really worth trying.

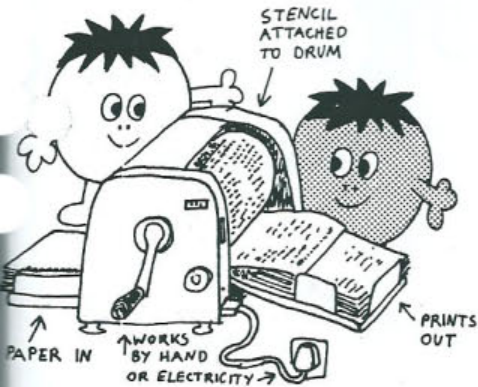
Press



If you have a screen-printing frame and squeegee, or can make them (see *PLAY TIMES* p. 25, green pages) you can use these to print on ordinary paper. Prepare your material on ordinary duplicator stencils, then use these in the same way as you would use a cut-out silk-screen stencil.

This is a very simple and cheap method, and you do not need to cope with machinery. On the other hand it is very slow, and the quality is not so good.

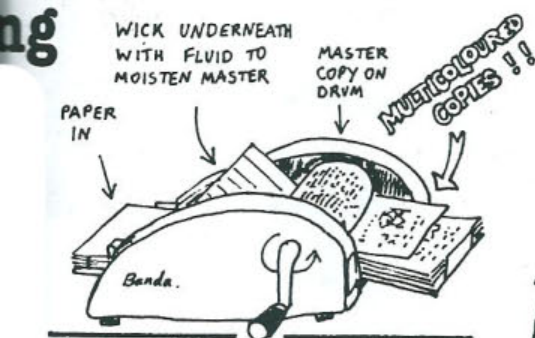
Printing



and Heat Copier

enables you to produce a better looking result (see section on off-set litho).

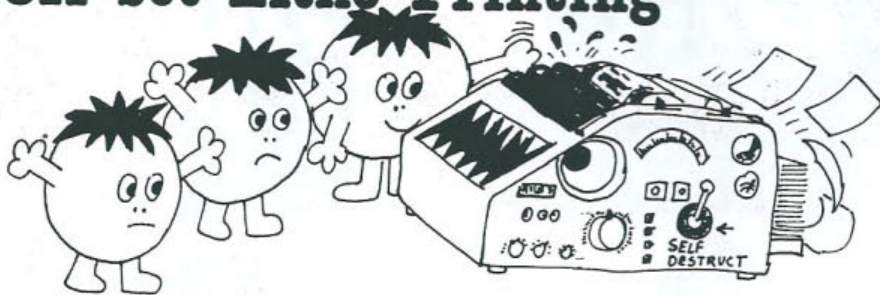
The machines, however, are not as common as duplicators, and difficult to borrow, so you would probably have to take your artwork away somewhere to have stencils made.



Photocopying

Photocopying is good for single copies of things, but is usually much too expensive for a whole magazine. It might be useful to produce a couple of "proofs" of artwork for the editorial board to check.

Off-set Litho Printing



This is "proper printing" and will produce a much more exact copy of your original work than any other method. (This is how *PLAY TIMES* is printed).

Off-set litho machines are getting smaller and simpler, and although all are expensive to buy, some are surprisingly cheap to use. You will almost certainly find it impossible to bring an off-set litho machine to your project, but you may know of a local community organisation, Resource Centre or printshop that has one you can use cheaply enough to be affordable.

When using off-set litho, prepare your artwork in black on white paper. You can use black ink, felt-tip, typing (but use a new ribbon to ensure blackness of type), Letraset, cut-outs from newspapers and magazines and photographs (but see section on photography). You can also paste different bits together to make up each page, because when it's printed the edges won't show.

All this flexibility opens up plenty of opportunity for creative design and imaginative artwork, or alternatively enables you to make something very like a "real" magazine.

ADVANTAGES:

High quality reproduction and therefore a classy-looking product that kids will feel is a real achievement.

A NOTE ON TYPING:

You can make a newspaper with completely hand-written material, but a typed one will look more sophisticated, and most kids love using a typewriter anyway. It should be quite easy to borrow or scrounge an old typewriter for the kids to use. Ask local firms or typewriter dealers who may have old traded-in machines, or advertise for one.

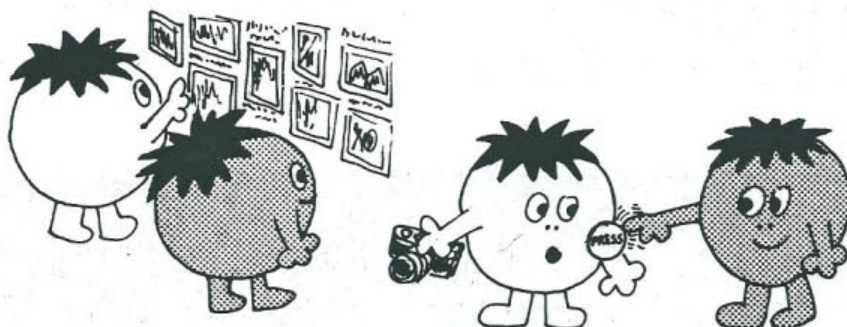


Photography

A stencil scanner will reproduce photographs that are just about recognisable, as will an off-set litho machine. To print photographs effectively, however, requires the use of more sophisticated equipment to "screen" the photograph. This involves time and money.

So if the kids are really into photo-journalism, either try the Wall Newspaper (see above), or go for a fullscale photographic exhibition on a relevant theme. There are several ways to produce photographs:

- By far the best is to set up a darkroom, or get access to one, to produce your own large size black and white prints (you will also need these if you want to try printing them in your newspaper).
- You can easily make an exhibition using commercially processed prints — either colour or black and white. But the big enlargements that are best for an exhibition are incredibly expensive.
- Polaroid or instant-picture cameras are great for instant results and for getting kids interested in using photography, but they can work out very expensive and are a bit small for exhibitions.



BACK PAGE NEWS

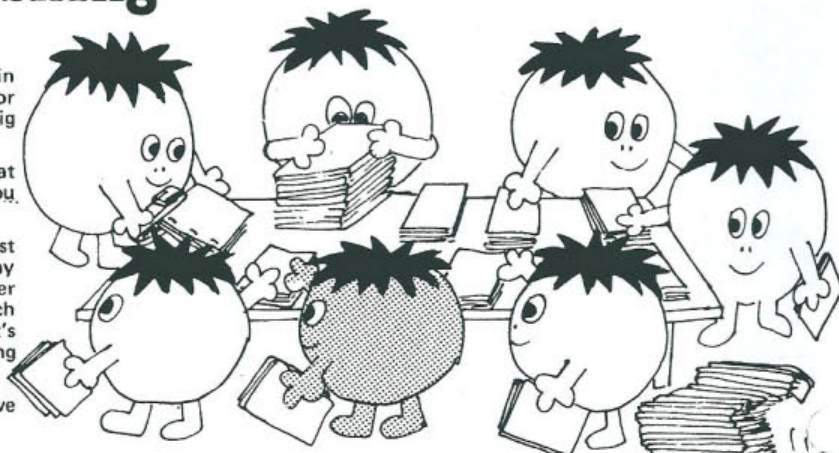
Collating and Finishing

Collating means putting all the pages together in order to make the complete newspaper. It's a job for as many helpers as possible, especially if it's a big print run.

You will already have decided what sort of format to use before printing. Depending on the format you can

EITHER fold all the sheets in the middle like most newspapers and magazines (if you do it this way it's worth making up a "dummy" newspaper before you start printing, to work out which pages go on each sheet, because otherwise it's very easy to end up with pages in the wrong order.)

OR Use the sheets flat, in which case you'll have to staple them at the edge.



Distribution

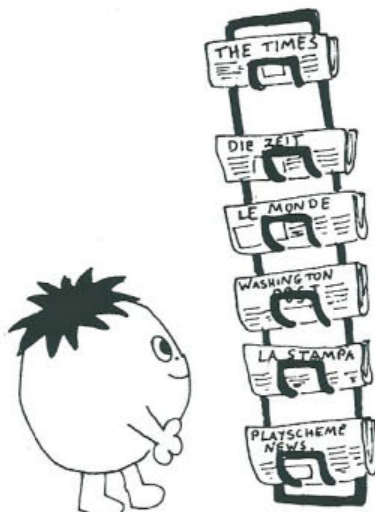
Making a newspaper is fun and rewarding in itself, but it's not much use unless people **READ** it. This involves **DISTRIBUTION**.

- *Is it free, or how much does it cost?* (And if you sell it, what will you do with the money?)
- *Who is it for?*
 - Just the kids on the scheme?
 - Other kids as well?
 - Parents as well?
 - All the local community?
- *Can you get the local newsagent to sell it?* That's a real breakthrough.

Even if the paper is aimed at other kids, it's a good idea to show the adult community what you've done, to help generate interest and support for the scheme. Send it to funding agencies, local councillors and anyone else you want to impress.

AND THEN ...

When everyone sees the first issue, they will all want to join in to make the second issue even better. Maybe in a few years' time that first edition will be a valuable collector's item!



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: BOOKS ETC.

PRINT – HOW YOU CAN DO IT YOURSELF: Jonathan Zeitlyn. Inter-Action. £1.90.

COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS: HOW YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN NEWSPAPER: John Rety. Inter-Action. 75p

THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER KIT, a practical aid to anyone who wants to start their own newspaper. Directory of Social Change Publications. £1.25

SCREEN PRINTING: Harry Shier. In *PLAY TIMES* no. 25.

PLAY PRESS, A NEWSPAPER PROJECT FOR KIDS: The whole process of writing, laying out, printing and distributing their own paper. Leaflet from **Islington Bus Co., Palmer Place, London, N1.**

PUBLICITY INFORMATION GUIDE: Handbook on getting your message across, including community Newspapers (Some of the information relates specifically to the Islington area). From **Islington Bus Co.** (as above). 40p

MAGAZINE PRODUCTION FOR SCHOOLS: Melville Hardiment. Macdonald (try the library for this and other books on school magazines).

And now you've got a newspaper, why not go out and make your own news to put in it? There are lots of ideas in **WORKOUT – COMMUNITY ACTION FOR KIDS.** By Susie Parsons, Lynda Haddock and Suzan Harrison, Prism Press, £1.25.



For more Play Ideas Bank leaflets go to:

www.grcltd.org