

August 2023



Project Play is a grassroots NGO that aims to provide safe spaces for displaced children in northern France.

169
Children

104
In GS

65
In MA

We work with children in the informal living site in Grande-Synthe (GS), as well as in independently run safe houses and day centres (maisons accueillantes - MA).

This month, we worked with 169 children, and met an additional 56 children who didn't join our sessions. We expect the total number of children-on-the-move in northern France to be higher.

Exposure to violence

We heard many reports of police violence from the children. One child remarked that a toy skittle was "like a bomb those police have!". Another child recalled a time that police had slashed their boat with a knife. We also heard other reports of police arresting the children.



UNCRC Article 19

Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of mental and physical violence. States have an obligation to protect children from harm - not be the source of it.

Food, Water & Physical Health

UNCRC Article 24:

Every child has the right to the highest standard of health attainable for them. Governments must provide good quality health care, clean water, nutritious food, and a clean environment and education on health and well-being so that children can stay healthy.

- Many of the children we encountered this month appeared very thirsty and hungry. We often ran out of our drinking water due to the high demand for hydration.

- Children were often cold and shivering, especially after washing. One child told us: "At home, showers hot. Here showers cold."

- Many children had developed skin diseases. They had visible rashes, skin lesions, and were suffering from multiple mosquito bites as a result of living outside.

- We often noticed that the children were wearing dirty clothing, or had dirt on their faces and arms.

Mental Wellbeing

- Children displayed signs of emotional dysregulation e.g. crying, shouting, an inability to share, clinginess



- Other children that we met presented as being quite disconnected and dissociated, often zoning out and appearing expressionless. We noticed many children not engaging at all and refraining from speaking

No childhood should look like this.
No child should have these experiences.
And yet, the numbers are increasing.



www.project-play.org

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