



PUBLIC SPACE

WHAT CAN WE DO AT THE LOCAL (SPATIAL) LEVEL TO IMPROVE CHILD–CAREGIVER INTERACTIONS AND CAREGIVER WELL-BEING?

Ideas...

1 Pop-up play	2 Urban stories	3 Safe & public breastfeeding	4 Behavioural prompts	5 Temporary play streets
6 Opening public facilities out of hours	7 Storytelling in public	8 Design for play	9 Nature takeover	10 A tree for every baby
11 Merging green and play spaces	12 Targeted air quality improvements	13 Playworkers and free play		

This category focuses on how cities can maximise positive interactions between young children and caregivers in their experience of space. It focuses on physical design or programming and relates more strongly to the city's Planning and Parks departments.

The experience of space for young children is very dependent on the stage of their sensory, physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and tends to be limited to an extremely local scale. The ideas are therefore either very localised interventions, or about general environmental factors affecting places where young children spend the most time.

At this level, impact can be measured through indicators of caregiving behaviours and caregiver well-being, but also of vibrancy of public life and environmental factors.

Sample outcome areas...

- Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months
- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Increased exposure to nature
- Increased frequency of storytelling, singing and reading
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased connectivity and trust between caregivers and children from different families
- Increased exercise
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Increased sense of safety
- Reduced crime
- Improved air quality
- Increased tree coverage
- Increased profits for local businesses

Idea 1

POP-UP PLAY

Mobile containers of books, toys and games for small children, along with movable benches and chairs, can be easily towed by bicycle or car.

It fills public space with life, engages community members and is an efficient way to test ideas for permanent infrastructure. It can provide moments for parents and children to socialise and may contribute to reducing their stress. It is widely used around the world, but there is a need to develop more experiences that are inclusive of the youngest children.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

● ○ ○

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Parks
- Education
- Planning
- Health
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

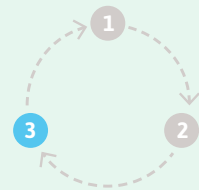


Photo: Courtesy of Cultureghem



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Increased exposure to nature
- Increased connectivity and trust between caregivers and children from different families
- Increased exercise
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Increased sense of safety
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **Canberra, Australia**, an eight-day pop-up park experiment on Garema Place led to a sixfold increase in children and families spending time in public spaces.
- In **Brussels, Belgium**, *Cultureghem's PlayBox* adapts the idea of the play-box to fit the needs of young kids in the city's most deprived neighbourhood, to create a safe and challenging play environment.
- In **Bogotá, Colombia**, the city introduced a pop-up play initiative combined with murals and street closure in a low-income neighbourhood. Young local artists painted a graffiti mural, honouring early childhood by depicting games they remember playing on the streets. This is the first step in a longer process through which the city is planning progressively more permanent interventions.
- Imagination Playground is a mobile block-based play system that can be easily placed in any kind of open space and allows children to creatively build their own playground. Developed in the **USA**, it has also been used in **Turkey, Vietnam, Australia** and **Russia**.
- In **Amman, Jordan**, two architects designed a modular, easy-to-assemble system of wooden street furniture called Stackable Playscapes, to cost-effectively bring play elements to public spaces in cities and refugee camps.



RELATED IDEAS

- 2 Urban stories
- 5 Temporary play streets
- // Merging green and play spaces
- 13 Playworkers and free play
- 4 Safe, interesting and playful transit



RESOURCES

- Playbox – moveable play space in Brussels
- *Play Everywhere Playbook* by KaBOOM

Idea 2

URBAN STORIES

Stories can be disseminated throughout the urban environment as murals, art installations and sculptures.

Apart from a beautification effect, they have potential to trigger learning and curiosity in young children and can be used to foster interactions with caregivers.

Every place has its stories, so it also contributes to strengthening a community and can be adapted to any context.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

● ○ ○

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

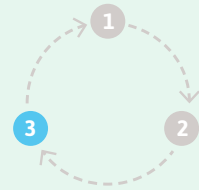


Photo: Courtesy of Fundación Casa de la Infancia



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Increased sense of safety
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **Melbourne, Australia**, a series of images relating a story from the Aboriginal community painted as a mural along a street can be easily interpreted and followed by children as well as used as a support for storytelling interactions between caregivers and children.
- In **Ciudad Bolivar, Bogotá, Colombia**, a local project of neighbourhood improvement named *Crezco con mi barrio* and led by a local community organisation in partnership with the municipal government, has resulted, among other interventions, in a 95-cm-tall mural painted by local inhabitants. It relates to local stories as well as marking out physically the height of a 3 year old, serving as a reminder of their vulnerability to traffic.
- In **Accra, Ghana**, the Playtime in Africa team of the Mmofra Foundation is creating a 'toddler exploration' journey in a park. Some of the play elements use local storytelling features such as local instruments, games or design patterns. Intergenerational and relying on natural structure, the play area also develops social skills, and provides a unique opportunity for children from different socio-economic backgrounds to interact.



RELATED IDEAS

- 4 Behavioural prompts
- 8 Design for play
- 4 Safe, interesting and playful transit



RESOURCES

- Playbox – moveable play space in Brussels
- *Play Everywhere Playbook* by KaBOOM

Idea 3

SAFE & PUBLIC BREASTFEEDING

Exclusive breastfeeding, particularly in the first six months of life, can improve children's health and nutrition, and the bonding experience with their mothers.

Longitudinal studies have found that breastfeeding has a long-term impact on a range of developmental outcomes. Encouraging breastfeeding in public spaces can be done through safer environments for women to feel secure (lighting, pavements, urban furniture), but also through supportive infrastructure, policies and campaigns. Feeling safe and comfortable to breastfeed can reduce mothers' stress.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

MAINTENANCE

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GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Parks
- Education
- Planning
- Health
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

In experimentation

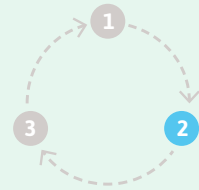


Photo: Courtesy of proyecto aUPA



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Increased sense of safety
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **New York**, the city is providing the most deprived neighbourhoods with 'lactation pods' in health facilities, catering for the needs of young mothers to encourage breastfeeding by providing a safe space.
- In **New Zealand**, the Breastfeeding Friendly Spaces Accreditation is an initiative that creates and sustains breastfeeding-friendly environments with the aim of normalising breastfeeding. *Toi Te Ora* Public Health's breastfeeding-friendly team engage workplaces, early childhood education services, cafes, and health service providers. It supports spaces with breastfeeding policy development, staff training, breastfeeding signage, and education on how to create comfortable spaces for mothers.
- In **Croatia, Hum na Sutli**, a small town in the north, has implemented a breastfeeding bench in a park next to a primary school. The bench has signage and provides shade for mothers. The initiative was led by a group of citizens, supported and funded by the city, and aims at encouraging breastfeeding in public.



RELATED IDEAS

- 7 Storytelling in public
- 4 Safe, interesting and playful transit
- 2 Neighbourhood directories for early childhood services

Idea 4

BEHAVIOURAL PROMPTS

Any place where children linger with their parents can be a place of learning, from a supermarket to a bus stop.

A set of key messages and caregiving behaviours to promote can be identified and spread through behavioural prompts in the physical environment (on walls, in markets, on billboards, on product packaging).

To increase their effect, these messages can be strengthened through mobile phones and online channels, or through coherent messages from other people in parents' lives, such as health professionals, teachers, employers, barbers, imams, bus drivers.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

● ● ○

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

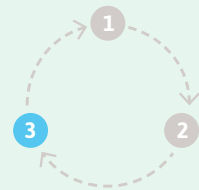
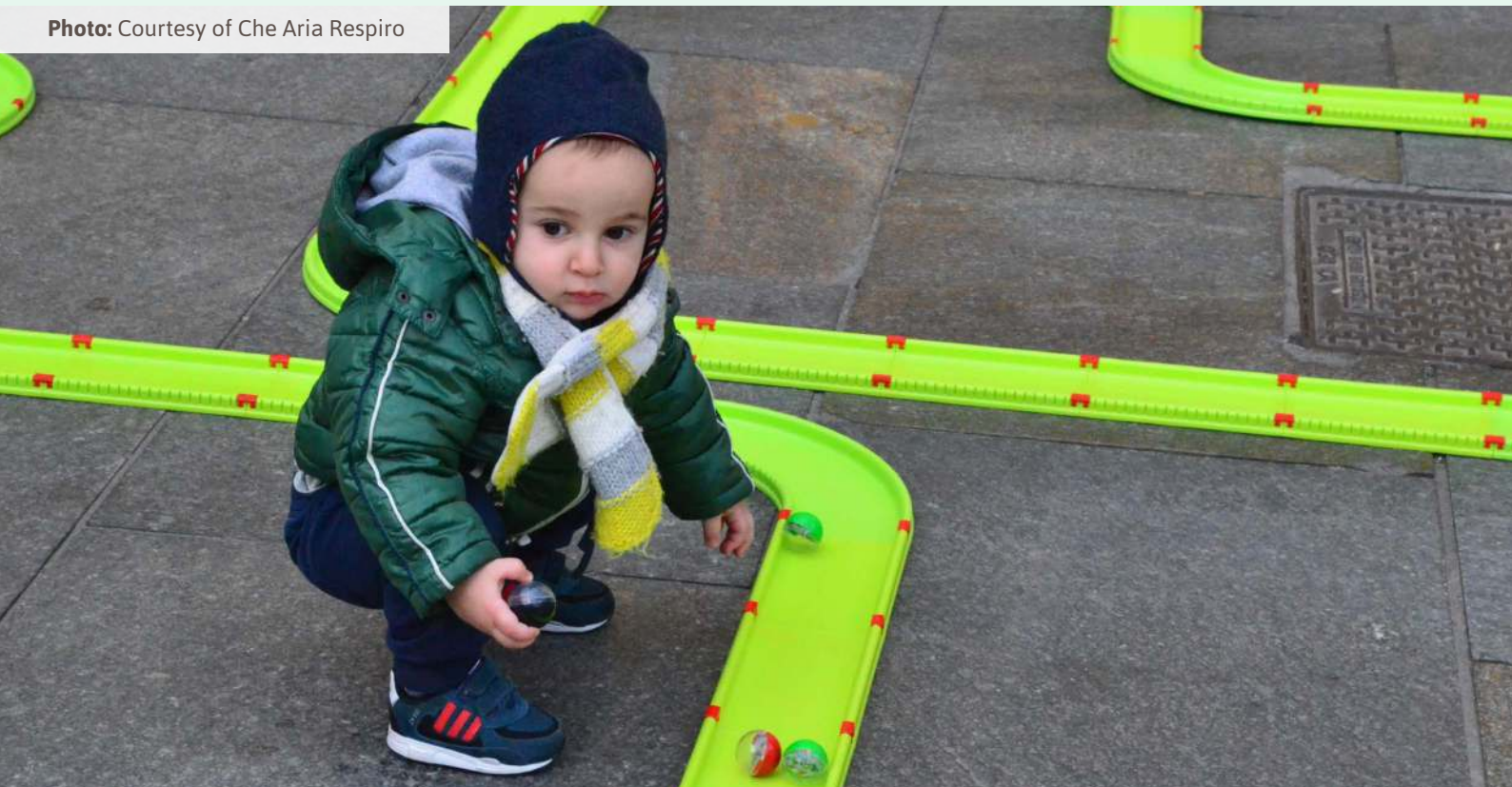


Photo: Courtesy of Che Aria Respiro



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased exercise
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **São Paulo, Brazil**, the city government developed key messages about the importance of talking, singing and playing with babies and toddlers and is spreading them through digital advertising billboards throughout the city.
- In **Tulsa, USA**, small signs were placed in the dairy and vegetable sections of supermarkets encouraging caregivers to start conversations with kids. One prompt, for example, encouraged caregivers to ask children ‘where does milk come from?’ There were 33% more conversations as a result. Similar results were observed in a project in Duncan Village, South Africa.
- In **Boston, USA**, a team at Harvard University’s Achievement Gap Initiative developed five caregiving principles (‘the basics’), and trained staff from more than 40 local organisations to deliver them – in person and through media – in their daily work. This initiative showed a significant increase in awareness of the five caregiving principles.
- **Amsterdam, Netherlands**, developed and scaled a First 1000 Days strategy promoting healthy caregiving (such as breastfeeding, food choices, placing small children on bikes, eating dinner as a family). While the health sector drove the strategy, they also used other sectors such as education and sport, as well as partnerships with private organisations to deliver key messages on- and offline.
- In **Ghana**, the MAP (Market, Mothers & Parks) initiative seeks to improve literary and cognitive outcomes for small children by building a partnership between two key urban community sites – the marketplace and the park. It does so partly by seeding the market with intentionally designed items that will readily lend themselves to informal playful learning.



RELATED IDEAS

- 2 Urban stories
- 8 Design for play
- 4 Safe, interesting and playful transit
- 3 ICT-enabled coaching

Idea 5

TEMPORARY PLAY STREETS

Closing a network of streets at regular intervals allows people of all ages to have a safe public space to play, meet, and be active.

Temporary closures are a step toward permanent solutions, which can be difficult to implement without first building citizen support. Temporary closures also give everyone a chance to breathe cleaner air, increasing motivation for more regular closures.

These events increase parental perception of safety, reducing their stress and allowing more outdoor play time for children, and more socialisation between neighbours.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

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GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

Street



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

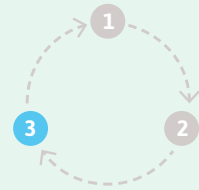


Photo: © iStock.com/darrya



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Increased exposure to nature
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- Increased sense of safety
- Reduced crime
- Improved air quality
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **Mexico City**, LabCDMX is regularly closing streets in front of schools in some of the most deprived neighbourhoods to provide outdoor play opportunities.
- In **Libreville, Gabon**, Closing Streets for Children to Play creates a safe space for children to play where outdoor play space is lacking. It also fits into a broader tradition of reclaiming the streets for social events, such as weddings.
- **New York City** created a programme of closing streets adjacent to schools that lacked playgrounds during school break times. With teacher supervision and traffic signs, the streets are used as playgrounds.
- In **Brazil**, the city of **Manaus** has created a programme to close the streets during certain hours of the day and transform them into playground areas.
- In **Santiago, Chile**, the *Paseo Bandera* project turned a busy street in the centre into a pedestrianised thoroughfare, including facilities to rest, meet, and enjoy the colourful art by local artists. It also includes more green spaces. The tactical urbanism intervention is temporary and has been paid for by local business owners (USD 550,000).



RELATED IDEAS

- 1 Pop-up play
- 6 Opening public facilities out of hours
- 7 Storytelling in public
- 8 Design for play
- 12 Targeted air quality improvements
- 3 Children routes
- 4 Safe, interesting and playful transit
- 6 Traffic calming



RESOURCES

- *Play Everywhere Playbook* by KaBOOM
- *Playing Out*, UK
- *The Play Street* toolkit

Idea 6

OPENING PUBLIC FACILITIES OUT OF HOURS

Placing play facilities within existing public facilities, such as schools or healthcare centres, ensures a degree of care and maintenance.

They can then be opened out of hours for the community, increasing access for young children and their caregivers to a nearby play space.

These places tend to be trusted by caregivers and opening them longer increases opportunities for gathering after work, reducing parental stress related to limited time and space for play.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE



GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Parks
- Education
- Planning
- Health
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

In experimentation

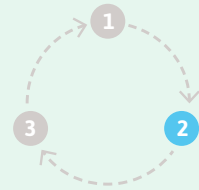


Photo: Eleazar Cuadros/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
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REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- **New York, USA**, created a programme to transform school parking lots into playgrounds. Design and construction are done with help of the community and children. They remain open for the community to use after school hours.
- In **Bangladesh**, the local government implemented a project to provide playground facilities for children and make primary education livelier. Playgrounds are on school grounds, but stay open to the community after school hours. Results indicate a 10% increase in attendance. Children started to arrive earlier at school to play and by the time classes began they were happier, more peaceful and attentive to class.



RELATED IDEAS

- 8 Design for play
- 8 Everything nearby
- 2 Neighbourhood directories for early childhood services

Idea 7

STORYTELLING IN PUBLIC

Storytelling is one of the best ways to improve language development and get children ready for learning to read and write.

It is also a medium to improve social and emotional bonding between caregivers and children. It contributes to caregiver well-being and reduces their stress. Every community has stories, so it can easily draw on local resources.

Creating storytelling activities for young kids reinforces the idea that language development starts long before children are talking and that simple techniques can have a positive impact on early brain development.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

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GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

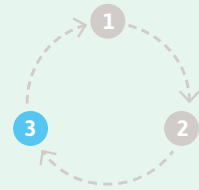


Photo: Jon Spaul/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased frequency of storytelling, singing and reading
- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased connectivity and trust between caregivers and children from different families
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- **Tel Aviv, Israel**, recently adapted its storytelling in the park to focus on young children, and combines it with information on how best to tell stories to children to encourage vibrant caregiver–child interactions at home.
- In **Bengaluru, India**, the *Kagakka Gubakka* initiative uses storytelling to relay myths in the Kannada language, thus also contributing to passing on local identity to children, fostering social and cultural cohesion and healthy brain development for the youngest. Sessions take place in public spaces and encourage the adoption of traditional games for outdoor play.
- In **Jakarta, Indonesia**, 38 Child-Friendly Integrated Public Space (RPTRA programme) managers were trained in 2016 to use storytelling for young children as a method of improving school readiness. These spaces have formed a network of social and green infrastructure in densely populated areas since 2014. They are opened to all, but focus on the needs of children through programming, play spaces, staff and design.



RELATED IDEAS

- 1 Pop-up play
- 2 Urban stories
- 5 Temporary play streets

Idea 8

DESIGN FOR PLAY

Playgrounds – or designated play spaces – are bounded in space and not evenly spread. When possible, it is better to think of the whole city as a playground.

Use behavioural prompts and design to encourage play during the walk along the street, at the bus stop, in plazas and waiting areas. Undesignated play spaces like these offer additional play opportunities and a more diverse learning environment for young children. And remember to include benches and other areas where people can stop and rest, as young children and caregivers are especially likely to need a break along the way.

In some contexts, negative parental behaviours towards outdoor play remain a challenge. Improving parents' and caregivers' perception of safety will also foster more play, and contribute to reducing their levels of stress.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE



GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

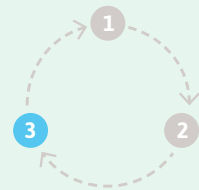
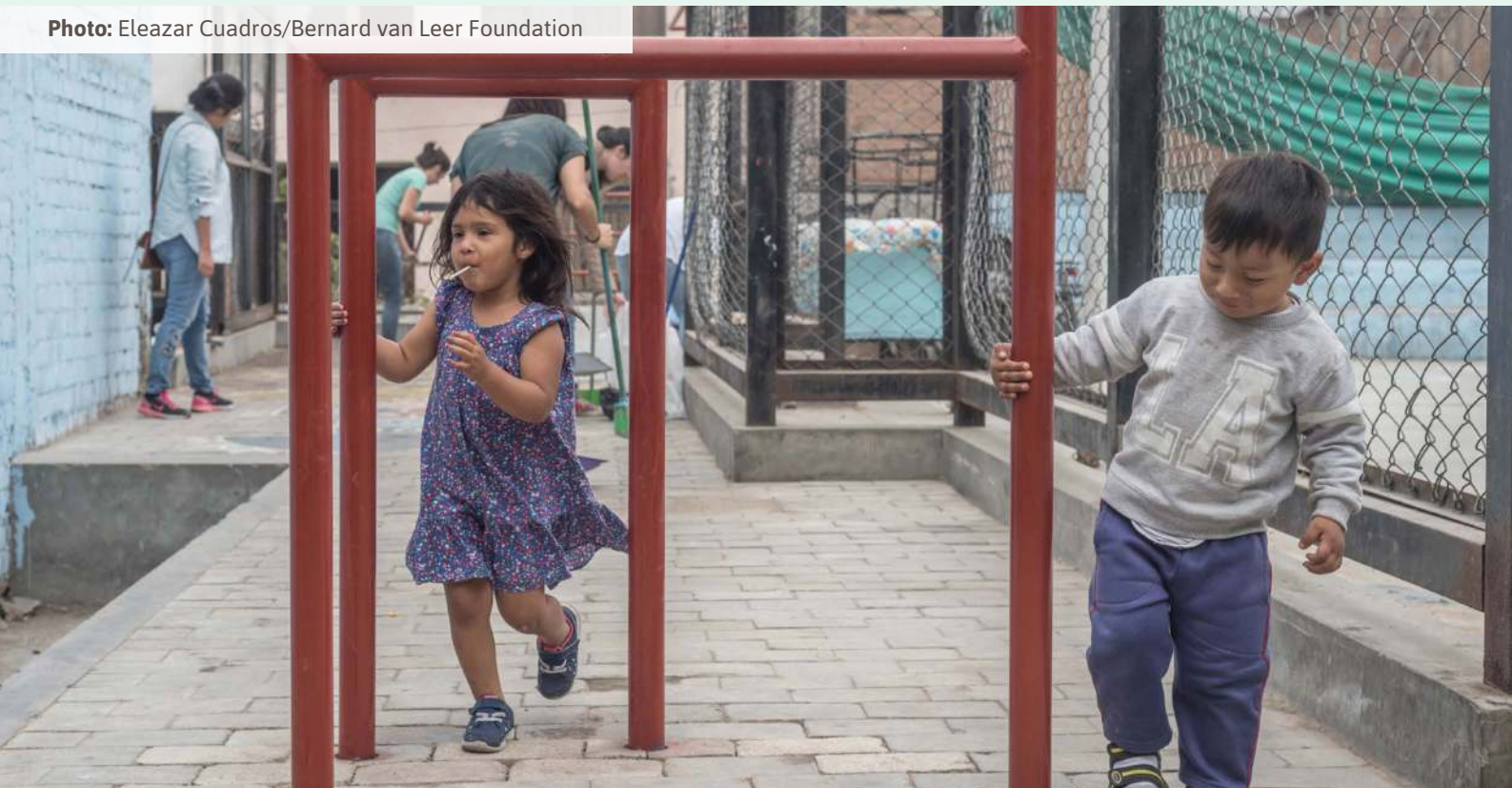


Photo: Eleazar Cuadros/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased connectivity and trust between caregivers and children from different families
- Increased exercise
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- Increased sense of safety
- Reduced crime
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- The city of **Richmond, USA**, is working with KaBOOM! to install free retractable jump ropes on sidewalks for play along the way.
- In **Nashville** and **San Francisco, USA**, movable wall instruments such as xylophones, or colourful game instructions on the walls encourage children to engage in physical and creative exercise in the public space. In **Copenhagen, Denmark**, trampoline sidewalks encourage play and physical activity for all ages.
- In **Gwangju, South Korea**, the architecture firm MVRDV has redesigned a street into a pedestrian area with the word 'Love' spelled on the pavement with a variety of textures, including grass, sand, water features and trampolines. Allowing for gathering and play, the intervention has been popular among the local children and families, and is being replicated across the city.
- Across **India**, the NGO Anthill Creations supports communities by co-designing playgrounds in public spaces, following a five-day Do-It-Yourself methodology. They have reached 10,000 kids since their first pilot in **Kharagpur** in 2015.



RELATED IDEAS

- 5 Temporary play streets
- // Merging green and play spaces
- 4 Safe, interesting and playful transit
- 6 Traffic calming



RESOURCES

- *Play Everywhere Playbook* by KaBOOM

Idea 9

NATURE TAKEOVER

Turning unused or dilapidated infrastructure into community gardens, small parks or natural playgrounds has increased spaces where children can play and families can meet.

This gives babies and toddlers access to nature, creates a stronger sense of community and improves environmental awareness. It also improves children's self-efficacy – or their sense of achievement, their sense of cause–effect and their nutrition and understanding of where food comes from.

Exposure to nature on a regular basis has a positive impact on mental health for both children and caregivers, in addition to improving self-regulation skills and physical development in children.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

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GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

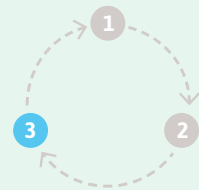
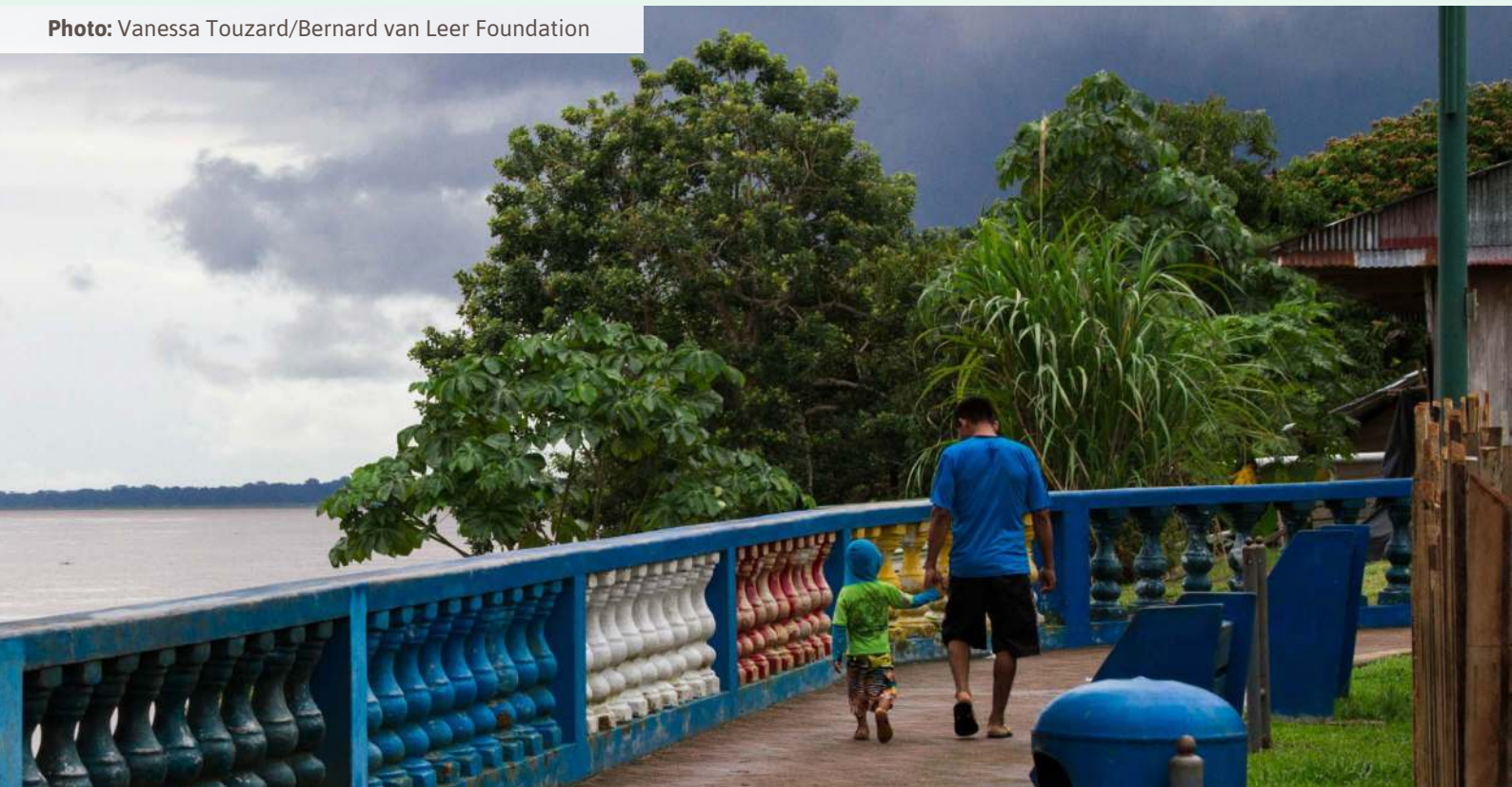


Photo: Vanessa Touzard/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
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- Improved air quality
- Increased tree coverage



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **Antwerp, Belgium**, *Kind en Samenleving* is turning small, sterile plots of land in front of homes into green zones where young children can play and learn gardening activities.
- In **Recife, Brazil**, the *Comunidade dos Pequenos Profetas* is an urban farming project on a rooftop, which produces healthy food and hires local young people. The project has educational, vocational and nutritional impacts on local families, while providing 400 square metres of green space.
- In **Sydney, Australia**, Waverley council's Urban Interventions programme received an award for 'best planning idea' for their parklet project – turning car parking space into pop-up parks – from the Planning Institute of Australia in 2014. The idea, originating in **San Francisco, USA**, has since spread and is now a common sight in most western countries.



RELATED IDEAS

- 8 Design for play
- 10 A tree for every baby
- 11 Merging green and play spaces
- 12 Targeted air quality improvements

Idea 10

A TREE FOR EVERY BABY

A way to increase tree coverage could be to plant a tree for each newborn, prioritising the neighbourhood where the child is born.

When done with a communications component, this initiative provides an opportunity to connect the issues of air quality, nature and child development.

The tree canopy can improve local air quality and provides natural areas for children to play in. Increased green coverage has also been associated with better mental health for all.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE

● ● ○

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Parks
- Education
- Planning
- Health
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

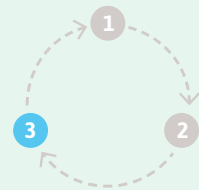
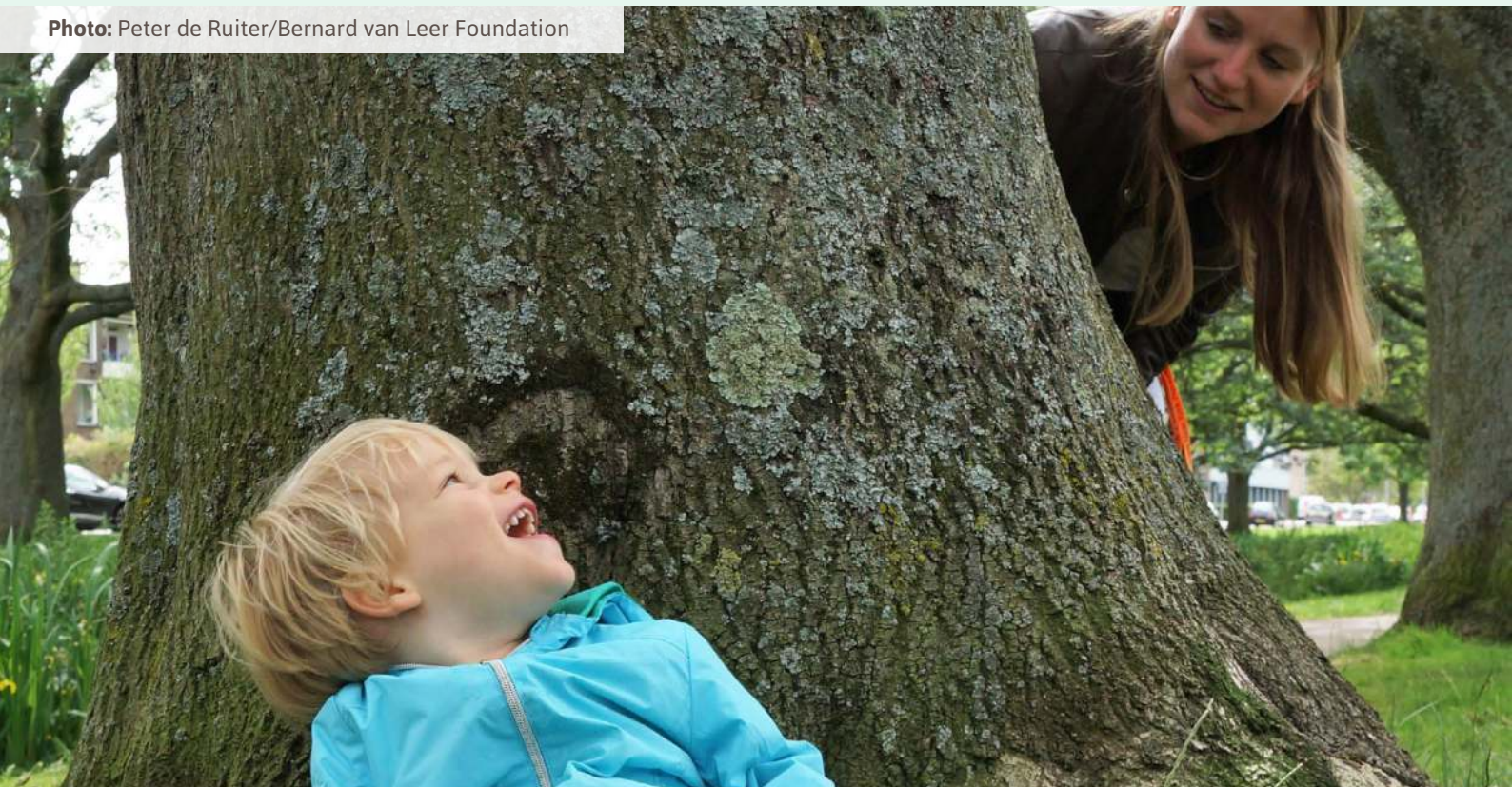


Photo: Peter de Ruiter/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased exposure to nature
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Improved air quality
- Increased tree coverage



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In **Wales, UK**, a reforestation strategy was initiated following the suggestion of an 8-year-old girl. For each baby born or adopted in Wales, a tree is planted, and the child receives information about the exact location. The tree planting is done by children from local schools and is used to teach children about gardening.
- In **Rotterdam, Netherlands**, parents can ‘adopt’ – or pay for – a tree after the birth of their baby. This programme resulted in a tree planted for every 100 newborns, with an average of 800 trees a year.
- In **Cambridge, UK**, parents can order a tree for free from the city for the birth of a child. Trees are from local species and must be planted in a private space (garden, nursery, school, office) within the city limits.



RELATED IDEAS

- 9 Nature takeover
- 11 Merging green and play spaces
- 12 Targeted air quality improvements



LEARN MORE

- The Nature Conservancy on urban trees

Idea 11

MERGING GREEN AND PLAY SPACES

Park design that integrates play or playground design based on natural elements fosters better development for young children.

It increases their motor skills, but also their creativity and contact with nature. Exposure to nature on a regular basis has a positive impact on mental health, self-regulation and physical development.

Rolling hills in a park can provide play opportunities without integrating any specific play elements, while integrating 1-metre-tall ferns in a playground can lead to endless hide-and-seek fun. It also provides a pleasant experience to caregivers who can receive mental health benefits from a heightened connection to nature.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$\$ \$\$\$

MAINTENANCE



GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

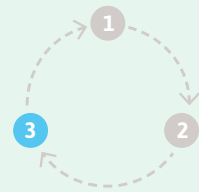


Photo: Courtesy of Think Playgrounds



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Increased exposure to nature
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REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- The Tumbling Bay playground in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, **London, UK**, has been designed entirely in natural elements, both in terms of materials and the play features themselves. Apart from traditional climbing nets and swings, it includes water flowing through a landscape, sand, tall ferns, hills and shrubs, all providing opportunities for play.
- **Bhubaneshwar, India**, is building a child-friendly smart park. Located in a central part of the city with a large concentration of schools, the park will incorporate accessible, creative, and interactive spaces, including play areas, community gardens, butterfly gardens, seating areas for parents, social spaces for individuals and groups, pop-up theatres, and splash parks.
- The Simón Bolívar park in **Bogotá, Colombia**, has an area designed with small hills, suitable for families with young children to gather and children to play. The park has been conceived for intergenerational use. Older children can play soccer on the flat part while the younger ones explore the hills. The terrain prevents this part of the park being taken over by soccer play, ensuring a diversity of use.
- In **Ghana**, the MAP (Markets, Mothers & Parks) initiative seeks to improve literary and cognitive outcomes for small children by linking important urban community sites: the marketplace and the park. The park is one of the few places where children from different backgrounds play together. It calls for careful design of the park for playful learning through plant selection and minor design interventions.



RELATED IDEAS

- 6 Opening public facilities out of hours
- 8 Design for play
- 9 Nature takeover
- 10 A tree for every baby



LEARN MORE

- *London Study of Playgrounds* by Studio Ludo

Idea 12

TARGETED AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENTS

Air quality is hyper-local: while it is a global problem, short distances can make a difference.

Targeted interventions around the places where pregnant women, young children and caregivers spend the most time have great potential. However, while the effects of pollution on pregnant women, babies and toddlers have been well proven, there has been less experimentation around targeted improvements and most child-focused interventions have centred around schools, which are not relevant for babies. More testing is needed.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

MAINTENANCE

● ● ○

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Education
- Health
- Parks
- Planning
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

A few square meters



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

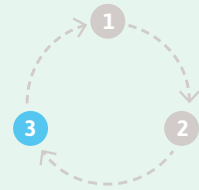


Photo: Oded Antman/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Reduced caregiver stress and isolation
- Increased exercise
- Increased frequency and efficiency of public space usage
- Increased sense of safety
- Improved air quality
- Increased tree coverage
- Increased profits for local businesses



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- Idling vehicles pollute air. The state of **Arizona, USA** works with schools to test a no idling policy that includes having school buses park at least 100 feet away from an active air intake, and obliges drivers to shut off the engine when they arrive.
- **London, UK**, has started introducing in 2017 some traffic calming measures around schools, in order to reduce exposure of children to vehicle emissions. Results have not yet been published.
- In **North Richmond, California, USA** diesel trucks were using local streets and polluting air. The city is working to re-route trucks away from the local elementary school and residential areas through signage and fines.
- Greening the childcare centres, schools, health clinics and playground can help improve air quality. One unique way to do this in the future, could be to introduce technologies like the City Tree, developed by Green City Solutions in **Germany**. It is an air-purifying plant wall that has the absorptive of power of 275 trees in 99 per cent less space and has been integrated into the design of public benches in **London, Oslo, Paris, Amsterdam** and **Hong Kong**.
- In **Turin, Italy**, the citizen organisation *Che aria Respiro* is pushing for better cycling infrastructure and is developing ways to measure pollution in areas that children use daily, such as routes to kindergartens. The end goal is to influence municipal policy towards better air quality.



RELATED IDEAS

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 5 | Temporary play streets | 6 | Traffic calming |
| 9 | Nature takeover | 3 | Data dashboards |
| 10 | A tree for every baby | | |
| 11 | Merging green and play spaces | | |

Idea 13

PLAYWORKERS AND FREE PLAY

Free play is crucial for learning and brain development, as children learn to evaluate and navigate risk. It also helps them to develop creativity and their motor and social skills.

Free play happens when children are not under parental supervision or restrictions. Playworkers – or trained play staff – and adventure playgrounds allow this without placing young children in dangerous situations.

Playworkers are available to assist a child if needed, but strive to be as inconspicuous as possible to allow children to direct their own play.

At a glance...

COST

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

MAINTENANCE



GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT

- Social Services
- Parks
- Education
- Planning
- Health
- Transport

MINIMUM SCALE

Neighbourhood



EXISTING IMPLEMENTATION LEVEL

Tested and implemented

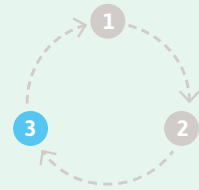


Photo: Eleazar Cuadros/Bernard van Leer Foundation



More info...



OUTCOME AREAS

- Increased time spent outdoors together by caregivers and children
- Increased exposure to nature
- Increased connectivity and trust between caregivers and children from different families
- Increased exercise



REAL WORLD EXAMPLES

- In the **UK**, adventure playgrounds are spaces where children are free from parental supervision and spend their time in absolute free play. Children are encouraged and supported by playworkers – trained play staff – who ensure their safety without preventing play.
- Playrangers in the **UK** are local government employees who visit parks and public spaces and provide guidance along with equipment to help children enjoy the space in a playful way. They can be considered as a combination of park ranger and playworker.
- *Waldkindergarten* – or forest preschools – in **Germany** use play in woodlands and forest areas as part of the preschool curriculum. The children spend most of their time in nature, and their free play is supported by trained staff. There are about 2000 such kindergartens across the country. The idea originated in **Denmark**, but has now spread, with about 40% of all **South Korean** preschoolers now exposed to some form of outdoor learning as a result of the creation of the Korean Forest Kindergarten Association in 2011. This type of preschool significantly improves readiness for school.
- **Copenhagen, Denmark**, has a network of 26 *Bemandede Legeplads* or staffed playgrounds, in addition to regular public playgrounds. The staffed playgrounds are manned during open hours with staff who provide help with homework, manage play equipment, and organise other activities. The playgrounds are themed and can specialise in subjects such as traffic, nature or gardening.



RELATED IDEAS

- 5 Temporary play streets
- 8 Design for play
- 9 Nature takeover
- // Merging green and play spaces



LEARN MORE

- Play England on playwork