5 steps for a better place to play


By Marcus Veerman with help from many.
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Please note:
These Materials are offered as concepts only, to be used in close conjunction with

1. Your local playground safety standards/guidelines (as some of these ideas may not be suitable in your location).

2. Your local experienced builders, engineers, and/or NGO’s (as materials, construction styles and cultural norms will be unique in your location). It is your responsibility to ensure that the playground equipment you construct complies with the relevant laws, regulations or standards in your location.

Lastly, maintenance of equipment is extremely important; any material will degrade over time, especially with heavy use from children, so maintenance over time is as important to children’s safety as the initial construction to reduce the inherent risks of a playground.

Introduction

We are so glad that you decided to enrich the lives of the children in your community! This manual has been written from the collected knowledge of hundreds of amazing volunteers and the advice of lawyers, playground safety professionals, teachers and parents. It is the culmination of years of hard work, sweat, successes and failures and we hope it empowers you to go out and create an amazing playspace with your community that nourishes the hearts, minds and bodies of your local children for years to come.

“Children have the right to relax and play, and to join in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.”

UN Convention of the Rights of a Child (Article 31)

PlaygroundIDEAS specialises in community-built, low cost playgrounds. We don't believe in one size fits all spaces for children but places that reflect the local customs, games and individuality of that place. Each project is unique and handcrafted with local materials, tools and people to fit the communities needs and the space provided.

This Manual goes hand in hand with our safety Manual and our website, www.PlaygroundIDEAS.org. The safety manual will arm you with a knowledge of all the major hazards in an easy to follow pictorial style and the website will open your mind to a whole range of play-based resources that will make your space really light up a child's imagination.

The website also has the worlds largest design library of playground elements that you can build by hand. It allows you to add your project and share it with your friends to get support and other volunteers involved.

Please keep in touch, add your project and help us grow this community resource for those in the future.

If you have found this document useful, please consider making a donation to www.playgroundideas.org
Overview

5 Step Community Playground Process

The following are the 5 main steps to building a community playground but you will need to prepare for these steps right from the start so make sure you read this manual right through before you begin.

Listen
First, try to understand your own drives, needs and ideas for this project and try to put them aside for the moment.

Go out and talk to the community about what they are already doing well with their children and understand what they are planning to do.

List these things and workout if a playspace is a good project for the community.

If so, use the checklist to make sure everyone is onboard and clear on what is being planned.

Plan
Planning includes everything before the build. The more preparation you do with the community the easier the project will go.

In this stage you will be organising a tight, happy team, finding materials, tools and builders and creating an amazing design. You may also need to be looking for funds or running a local event as a fundraiser.

All through this process you will be working with your community to...

Design
This stage is where all the research you have done with the community comes together with our design advice and the design section of www.playgroundideas.org. You can select designs and even create a design by using our design tool on the website.

This is also a good time to review our safety guidelines to ensure your design is safe.

Build
This is where it all comes together. The team, the design, the materials, the tools and the lunch to make your dreams real.

Maintain
It may be the last section but maintenance is a huge priority to get right from the start. There must be someone responsible for this and enough funds and/or materials to replace parts over time otherwise the project could potentially cause more harm than good.
Listening to the Community

Deep Listening

Playgrounds do not bring play to children or communities. In every corner of the globe and across all cultures, children are at play.

Children are born with an unstoppable drive to foster their own growth and development: to explore, discover, create, and delight. In every community there are also adults nurturing and encouraging these children, equipping the next generation with the tools to address the challenges tomorrow will bring.

Playgrounds are spaces and structures built to validate and enrich this work already in motion.

“listening is not talking, listening is listening”

The focus of this Listen section is to temporarily set aside whatever “playground agenda” you might have and focus on the community and the children with an open mind. Now is the time to listen carefully to the dreams and aspirations of these nurturing adults. Listen to how the community is already supporting their children and how they are encouraging the learning and development of these young lives. Pay attention to the special games and activities the children in the community have created to fuel their imaginations and develop the skills necessary to thrive in their community. By designing a playground deeply informed by this knowledge, you are not simply building a physical structure for play. You are molding a space that will enrich and support children in a manner that fully respects how local culture and customs address the physical, emotional, and cognitive needs of their young members.

Listen

Find out what the community is already doing (and planning to do) before you do anything else. Make sure you listen to a range of people including children, mothers, and the elderly to get the whole story. This will help to gain a deeper perspective of what to do.

Revisit

Go back to the community regularly throughout the process and refine your ideas.

Think

Throw out your preconceived ideas and really consider the culture you’re in. Consider the answers you are getting and make sure that your work embodies the spirit of the place it is in.
Introduction to the art of listening

This community consultation manual follows an Assets Based Community Development (ABCD) approach, which is founded on the principle of building on community strengths instead of starting from an agenda of fixing problems. To follow this model, it is essential to assume an appropriate attitude towards the community you are working with: patience, a willingness to set aside your own negativity and assumptions of the issues, a high degree of respect for the community, and most importantly, the belief that they have the tools to improve their own lives.

Starting from the vantage point of strength as opposed to weakness is a paradigm-shifting way of changing the conversation from seeing all the problems to instead seeing the strengths and existing solutions. Focusing on trust, respect, and faith in a person or community will yield more confident, positive and creative ideas in the design process. Furthermore, engaging the community in this way will foster strong ownership and maintenance of the play space in the future.

After exploring community assets, this manual will guide you through activities aimed at tapping into the array of games, sports, and play materials unique to individual communities. Different physical environments and cultural contexts have given birth to an incredible variance of play expressions. There is great danger in building play spaces that are globally homogeneous and do not reflect local ways of play, as we risk building spaces that replace and destroy diversity instead of preserving and encouraging it. If local expressions of play are not treasured, we will soon lose this wealth of children's cultures forever.

What's in this section?
The contents of the “Listen section” will assist you in determining whether or not a play space is a community priority at this time, and if so, will provide you with activities aimed at gathering the information necessary to create a space that is unique and relevant to the community.
The consultation activities are divided into four components:

**Taking an Inventory of Community Assets**

What is the current community situation?  
What is working?  
Where it has come from and what is it working toward?  
What are the priorities of the community as it looks towards the future?  
How is the community caring for its children?

**Learning About Local Play**

What does play look like in this context?  
How, where, and with what do the children play?  How does this community foster play?  
What historical ways of play do the adults want to preserve?  
What would the children like their space for play to include?

**Learning About Children’s Lives**

What do the daily lives of children in this community look like?  
How do they currently spend their free time?  
What do they love?  
What do they fear?  
What do they see adults doing?

**Listing Resources and Materials**

Where are the un-utilized spaces in the community?  
What are potential funding sources?  
What materials are available?  
Who can help?
Assemble a discussion group of community members. The group should include community leaders, school directors, local government officials, etc., but be sure to also involve a diversity of members with respect to gender, age, ability, and economic standing. Pay particular attention to including and encouraging participation from those whose may not typically carry weight in community decisions.

Community Mapping

Ask the group to imagine they are a bird flying above their community. Draw a simple map of the community from a bird’s eye view. Mark the major features – roads, schools, markets, etc. Emphasize that scale, detail, or drawing ability is not important.

Referring back to their maps, lead the group in a conversation about their community, focusing on the strengths of the community and using the questions and categories below to guide the discussion and mark where these positive things are happening on their maps. These maps will be used in many of the “Listen” activities, so be sure to collect them, or encourage participants to bring them back to further meetings.

What is working in your community right now?

- What are the good things in it?
- What do you love about this place?
- What in your community makes you proud?
- Where were you at 5 years ago, and what has change since then, for the better?

What is worth cherishing and preserving?

- What common culture or identity do the children in this place share? (could be people group/tribe/country/region/shared experience, etc.)
- What are the positive characteristics of this culture/identity?
- What parts of the community’s past do you hope the children will carry on and preserve?

What do you see looking forward?

- Envision your community in 5 years. What do you see?
- What are community members doing to make this place better for themselves, their families, and their neighbors?
- What are your key priorities for your community?

What is the community doing to care for the children?

- What are the children in your community experiencing and learning in their childhood?
- What do you want the children in your community to experience and learn?
- Imagine your children at your age now. What do you see?
- What are your key priorities for your children?

Who is working to improve the community and where?

- Who is involved in bringing about good things in your community? Who are the key people who drive improvement in the community?
- In which places are these good things happening?
- What are the places of potential in the community? Where are the under-utilized spaces?
OK, I have listened, now what?

To build or not to build?

At this point you should have a good idea of whether or not a space for play is a priority for the community at this time.

If it is not and there are more pressing priorities for the needs of the children, you may want to think about how you could support the community in utilizing their assets to address these priorities, and revisiting the idea of a play space at a later date.

If a play space is identified as a priority, take some time to introduce the idea of working with the community to design and build a unique space for play, using designs and guidance from Playground Ideas website www.playgroundideas.org.

You can then move ahead with the next activities: “Learning About Local Play,” “Learning About Children’s Lives,” and “Mapping Resources and Materials.”

Learning About Local Play

Gathering authentic descriptions of how children play and what they would like their play space to include is no easy task. If you ask directly, the answers you receive will likely revolve around their knowledge of a limited variety of playground equipment – swings, slides, see-saws and merry-go-rounds. Custom designed play spaces that reflect a respect for local ways of play and encourage creative, imaginative play and problem solving are very rare throughout the world. For someone who has never seen one, imagining what this might look like can be difficult.

Adults have trouble “getting in the shoes” of children and remembering what it was like to be their age. Young children have not yet developed the cognitive abilities to accurately reflect on and articulate their actions. Both adults and children may associate play simply with organized games or built structures (i.e. football or swing sets), rather than open ended activities and materials, (i.e. “playing house” or squishing mud between their toes.)

To address these obstacles to gathering creative ideas for design, it is best to use a variety of approaches. Below are examples of activities you could carry out. You can show them pictures of Playground Ideas designs and ask them which ones they like best, but only do this after they have offered their own ideas.
Learning about Local Play

Mapping Play Activities and Spaces:

Ask adults to draw a map of their communities when they were growing up or add to map from previous exercise. Ask the children to draw a map of their community now. Ask both adults and children to identify all the places in which they played in their drawn map and illustrate/label these on the map. (Ask them which are/were their favorite places to play and why they like/liked playing there - what is/was special about them and what kinds of games they played there - get them to demonstrate if possible, have fun with it). Ask the children what kinds of games they play now. N.B. Some games, like chasing games, may not have a particular place associated with them, but will still need to be taken into account when planning a play environment.)

Identifying Play “Ingredients“:

Ask both children and adults to identify from their maps the key “ingredients” that should be included in their “Play Recipe” (e.g. trees, rocks, cars, grandfather’s shed, cooking etc.) Write each ingredient down on a small piece of paper. Collect the paper into a pile and get the community to organize them into groups or areas. The community may have their own categories or you could organize them into different play types like: sports play, physical movement play, nature play, imaginative, pretend play, social play and place/ cultural play/games. From this list get the community to identify the priorities of what is needed in this playground as opposed to things that already exist in the community. Carefully document this list.

Drawing and Modeling:

Ask children and adults to draw a picture of what they would like their playground to include. Encourage imaginative ideas! Elephants, airplanes, dinosaurs, and birthday cakes are all “acceptable” answers. Alternatively, provide loose materials (sticks, clay, fabric, etc.) and participants can model designs.

Playing Local Games:

Ask children to teach you some of the games unique to their country, culture, or community (ask adults what local games they remember playing as children.) It can be helpful to start by teaching them a game you played as a child that was unique to your own culture (hopscotch, skipping rope, singing games, etc.)

Walking Tour:

Ask a small group of 3 or 4 children of different ages to walk you around their community and point out all the places they play and tell you what they do there. You'll get to know which places are really special and why, and you can incorporate what you learn from the children into the community map. It will also tell you what's missing. You can talk and ask questions as you walk along, and the answers will tell you a lot about play in the community. Make sure you include both boys and girls, children from different backgrounds and children with a disability as each will have different ways of using the same space. If possible, visit schools or existing play spaces and observe their activities and ask them what is happening. (Do not do this alone or in places out of view of the general public)

“Playground Reporter Exercise”

(See Appendix A): This exercise gives older children (12-14 yrs.) responsibility in gathering information from their younger peers about how and where they like to play. Children of this age can be a great resource because they walk the line between child and adult. They have spent many years playing in the spaces of their communities throughout different developmental stages and are young enough to have clear memories of play throughout their childhood. They are also mature enough to be able to accurately reflect on and describe these memories. Unlike adults, younger children do not yet see them as authority figures and are more likely to share honestly with them.
Learning about Childrens Lives

A good playground includes both fanciful elements that inspire children to dream and imagine and realistic elements that connect to children's lived experiences and allow them to develop and practice relevant skills through play.

Below are a few sample questions for children and adults, aimed at getting a good snapshot of children's lived experiences in their community:

- What are some important parts of the history of this community?
- What do you know about the history of this school/centre/space?
- What is the main occupation of the parents of the children in this community?
- What is special and unique to this community? What sets it apart from surrounding communities?
- How do your children spend their free time? At school? At home?
- What do the children say they need?
- Do they have time and space to play outdoors? Does anything prevent this?
- Compete this sentence: “My child is happiest when…”
- Complete this sentence: “What my child fears most is…”

Social Responsibility and Play

Role-play is an important way of learning skills and responsibilities they see exhibited by adults. Ask parent and teachers to map places in the community where children are observing adults modeling responsibility and positive community activities that children need to learn (i.e. saving money at the bank, shopping at the market, caring for children, cooking meals, going to the doctor, etc.) How can these elements be encouraged in the play space? Really focus on the cultural specifics here to create and authentic experience. How are houses built in this community? What do the kitchens look like? What are the names/logos of local businesses? (Maybe they might sponsor you too?)

Trauma and Play

No child experiences a purely positive childhood and play can be a powerful tool for children to understand and deal with emotions, trauma, and confusing situations. If children identify playing games associated with negative experiences (war, violence, sickness, etc.), do not ignore these things. List them down and work with the community to brainstorm places for play that could encourage them to positively work through their questions in play.

Examples:

- For children who experience illness and fear of doctors, injections, or medications, their playground could include a mini hospital shop front with patient bed and pharmacy.
- For children in a community that has experienced war or political upheaval, their playground could include mini round table for peace talks or a pretend radio station for them to broadcast the news they are observing and discuss their ideas and opinions about the events taking place around them.
- For children who live in chaotic or violent home environments, their playground could include peaceful spaces or enclosed nooks to feel safe and protected.
- For young children in a daycare who struggle with separating from their mothers, their playground could include adult seating or interactive elements that would encourage mothers to play with their children on site before they leave.
Mapping Materials and Resources

Map available space, resources, people and time.

If you do not already have a space this will help to identify the space available in the community. This can be done on a community scale or simply within the walls of a school ground.

Space

On the community maps, ask the community members to add or circle any under-utilized spaces in their community and any play areas that need improvement or maintenance. Ask the community to cross-reference the maps of the play activities with their current community maps. Where are the gaps? Ask them to identify spaces that will best serve their play priorities.

When a space has been identified, measure its dimensions accurately. Mark any trees, rocks, or natural features. Take time to do this carefully to save time redoing it later.

Materials

Explore the best materials to use based on availability, price and safety (remember: you will need to find these materials again for future maintenance). Don't forget scrap yards, clean industrial waste, fallen trees, recycled steel and timber, trees and plants from the forest. Think creatively here. Ask the group to identify the other resources they have available, there are always unused resources in communities that can be utilized. Do we have any cheap/free/recycled/donated materials?

Funding

Map out potential funding/sponsorship sources. Map possible local business donations of materials (like tires, soil, sand etc.). Brainstorm potential funding sources like non-profit organizations, businesses, banks, or wealthy individuals. Discuss fundraising ideas like dinners, auctions, or bakes sales.

People

Who are the local skilled workers, artisans, and DIY creatives? Who would be willing to volunteer? How often and when? What skill-gaps does the community have that need to be filled?

Tools

Make a list of all the tools and transport (trucks, earth moving machinery, etc.) you can access through community networks. Consider:

- Electric Circular Saw
- Electric Grinder/Metal Cutter
- Electric Drill
- Hammers
- Chisels
- Machete
- Screwdrivers
- Bolt Cutters
- Hand Saw
- Pliers / Ratchet Spanner Set
- Shovel / hoe / Pick Axe
- Measuring Tools
- Utility Knives (and plenty of new blades)
- Protective Eye Cover, Dust Masks & Gloves
- Paintbrushes
- Trucks and other transport
- Earth moving equipment
- Generators (if Power is unreliable)
- Other __________________________

Map where these tools can be found. Local businesses, factories, workshops, and artisans will all have tools you may be able to borrow or rent for the project.

Time

When will the project start? How long is it going to take? Are there any activities in the calendars that will hinder the timeline of the project? (i.e. public holidays, rainy season, etc.)
Once you have gathered all this information you should have a very clear idea of all the aspects of the project. Please use the Community Agreement overleaf to check you have covered all the parts of this “Listen” section and communicated this clearly with the community. Now you can move on to the “Plan” and “Design” sections of this manual to start making this play space a reality!

**Creating a Community Agreement**

Once the community has decided to go ahead with the playground, below is a checklist designed to help you make sure you have covered everything and have all the information you need.

Check the boxes for each of item as you complete the tasks. All boxes should be checked and the agreement signed before you begin your project.

- **Community Engagement Checklist/Agreement**
  - Do you have a clear, well-defined list of the communities priorities in general?
  - Do you have a clear, well-defined list of the communities priorities for the children?
  - Do you have a Clear list of:
    - Materials
    - Tools
    - Potential Funders
    - Volunteers/Artisans/Labourers
  - Have you taken a tour of the School/community? Walked around the entire grounds and found a space for the playground site?
  - Some important elements to consider:
    - Shade from trees
    - Trees for use in the design
    - Fenced off from roads
    - Easy to supervise
    - Near school buildings

- Ask how old the children at the school are. You want to build a playground that is age-appropriate.
  - Under 5: ________________
  - Between 5-10: ________________
  - Over 10: ________________
  - Total= ____

- Ask who currently funds the school. There will be future maintenance costs and they may need to assist with the project. You also don't want to duplicate or get in the way of other funders' plans. If possible call them and let them know your plans; they may be able to help.
  - Name: ______________________
  - Phone Number: ______________________
  - Name: ______________________
  - Phone Number: ______________________

- Tools: Have you identified all the tools, generators, Trucks/transport available to the community.

- Ask about when is the best time to start building the playground would be (consider public holidays, harvest times etc)

  Around this date:

Continued on next page...
The school is required to supply lunch for the volunteers. PlaygroundIDEAS expects this to be done at a minimum cost and will reimburse the school $____ per person per meal.

The school is required to find a minimum of ___ skilled local builders to volunteer every day of the playground construction.

The school is required to recruit as many volunteers as possible (especially for the first and last days of the build).

The school is required to include $_____ in their budget to their funders for yearly maintenance of the playground.

After the build:

The school agrees to decide on rules for the playground and to explain these rules clearly to the students. We will make a sign at the entrance of the playground explaining these rules. (Show the principal the Playground Rules help sheet.)

To avoid accidents and conflicts, the school agrees that they will have at least one teacher supervising the playground during lunchtime every day of the school year.

To avoid overcrowding and injuries at lunchtime, the school is encouraged to establish a roster for the playground. (Show the principal the Playground Roster help sheet.)

Explain to the school that when __________ (Name of builder/organizer) has finished the construction process, the school/NGO will own the playground and has complete responsibility for its maintenance and repair. (Show the Maintenance Schedule sheet and maintenance checklist at the end of this document.)

The playground builder's responsibility will end at the playground's opening ceremony and will go to ______________ (name of school principal/community representative).

Ask if the school has any questions or concerns. Discuss until you can reach an agreement with the school or community representative. Note: The playground cannot be started until all points of the agreement have been adjusted and agreed upon.

Have all parties sign the agreement.

We are looking forward to making the children happy and healthy! Signed by:

____________________________________
School Principal / Community Representative

____________________________________
Playground Builder
So now you're at the point where you feel pretty clear about what the community is currently doing and that they have decided that the playground is a priority. The planning stage is all about bringing all the right people, tools, materials together into a fun and cooperative team.

Read right through this manual and make a list of everything you need to prepare.

**Gather a Crowd**

Firstly, determine the key people from the school and community and ensure that they are always present when making decisions about the playground.

To recruit other volunteers, like parents, local artists, backpackers, etc., try reaching out to them in community gathering places. Some people don't like to recruit help, but we believe sharing the load with others can be valuable - the more people you have onboard, the broader your skill base is to achieve tasks, generate fresh ideas, and locate resources. You may not get an instant response, but keep going and they will come over time.

- If you haven't done it already, add your project to our website http://playgroundideas.org/content/basic-page/add-project-and-more.
- Hang flyers in restaurants, coffee shops, guest houses etc (this generally attracts a small but steady stream of people to help).
- Talk with the school teachers and parents.
- Put a story in the local newspaper.
- Search the internet for organizations with similar interests.
- Post your story on web forums, blogs, etc.
- Be bold; spread the word!

**Use our resources!**

You don't need to start from scratch, use our knowledge to get you going. Look at PlaygroundIDEAS.org and become familiar with what is possible. Spend some time looking at our design and photo gallery, the safety guidelines, and the links pages in the resources section (they have many links to other great resources).

**Update Project Profile Page**

People who donate will want to know where their money is going, so don't forget to update them via your project profile page. Even if the updates are only short messages about what's going on, your supporters will really appreciate them.

**Celebrate**

When everything is finished, don't forget to have a big party. You will need to work out food, drinks, maybe some speeches and certificates for the volunteers. This should be great fun but is also essential in connecting this space into the community and thanking people for all their hard work.
Plan

(see page numbers for more details)
(tick when complete)

**Listening and Designing**

☐ Read this manual all the way through

☐ Forget the idea of building a playground for a moment, meet with the community and learn about what they are doing already and what their priorities are.

☐ Decide with the community if you will build a playground

☐ Using the ‘Listen’ chapter, work out the community priorities for play and maybe a playground.

☐ Once you are ready to go, work through the community agreement to ensure you have everything


☐ Read the safety manual right through

☐ Create a design with some key community members from mixing the community's ideas, the safety manual guidance, the natural features of the space, the playgroundideas design library and the budget.

☐ Email PlaygroundIDEAS or skype us for a chat

☐ Go back to the community with your plan and get feedback

Make any changes necessary and go back to the community to finalise.

**Materials**

☐ Collect materials and adjust your plan if other interesting materials come along

**Maintenance**

☐ Who will maintain the playground?

☐ Make all staff aware of this maintenance person

☐ Work out a supervision roster with the teachers

**Other things to organise**

☐ Work out who will feed the volunteers

☐ Create playground rules with teachers and students

☐ Work out a playground roster for students if overcrowding is a concern.

☐ Organise a person to prepare an opening day celebration

☐ Call a local paper or email out your story to people who may want to do a story about your project
Funding Advice

Getting funding for a project can seem like a daunting task if you have no experience in fundraising, so we’ve put together some advice on sourcing funds to help build your playground.

**Preparation is Vital**
You must get yourself organized first, before contacting potential funders, businesses or friends. Generally speaking, donors will not be interested until you are organized with a clear proposal and plan. If you don’t have a space, a plan, and a proposal, then you have nothing to get funded!

**Don’t Let Finding Funding Become a Project Roadblock**
Be careful not to make funding your sole focus. There are many elements your team can build that cost nothing but a bit of energy. We definitely suggest building some of these elements first to show your motivation to funders.

You need to think outside the box, getting the playground built is a creative, problem solving process. There will be many people who cannot help with money, but will be happy to help you with time and other resources you need.

**Be Positive**
When talking with potential donors, if you are positive, passionate and confident in what you are trying to achieve; and enthusiastic with your requests, your communication will be more effective, and likely more successful.

Use our website!

Did you know you can start a project page from our website where you can add the budget you need? Then you can share your page and ask your friends, and networks to donate.

Our website also has many links to foundations and other playground funders.

Additional Links
[http://playgroundideas.org/content/basic-page/play-links](http://playgroundideas.org/content/basic-page/play-links)
Main Types of Funding

Your three main potential sources of funding are from local networks, online networks and foundations. We'll talk briefly about all three, and the different approaches required.

Local Funding

Paul Hogan, a playground builder who built playgrounds in many places in the developing world, had a “chicken dinner” policy. If the community couldn't organize a fundraising chicken dinner then the community didn't have enough enthusiasm to get the project done.

Local funding is obtained through your local networks and community events, such as cash donations, bake sales, and local business donations. It can also include in-kind donations of items, for example, timber, nails, and tires.

Ways to Approach Local Funding

These generally involve doing something within your community to raise interest and consciousness about your project. Note: be sure to check for permission with the local council first, if necessary.

Here are some simple suggestions:

- Build a simple element from your playground plan with people from the community to get them personally invested in the project; see what interest and action is generated as a result.
- Hold an event to raise interest and money; setting up stalls with raffles and selling homemade food are popular activities at such events. Perhaps the local school, rotary club, church, temple, mosque, or community center would be interested in hosting an event.

- Talk with any local youth groups and/or local committees to help organize sponsored events to raise money, such as a sponsored walk, run, or sports day, or a football or cricket game. Involving the children in the organization of the fundraising event will not only get them to contribute their efforts but will also increase their sense of ownership in the playground.
- ‘Pass around the hat’ at a local event for contributions.
- Approach local businesses for funding.
- For material donations, visit companies who sell the products that you need. They will most likely be enthusiastic to help a project that will benefit children. You may also need to find a transport company for moving the elements to the site. Offering to add their name on a playground sign can be very attractive to local shops.
- Ask the local council or community committee if they have any equipment available, or old tools to donate.
- Look for used or second-hand playground equipment for sale in your local paper.

Be creative and thrifty, think laterally and you will be amazed at what you can come up with.
Online Funding

Getting your friends to help you source funding online is getting easier and easier every day. Here are some easy suggestions:

Start a Facebook (or other social networking) page and invite all your friends to "like" your page. Add stories about your project and links to your project page on the playground ideas site.

Ask them to tell their friends and to donate. Through this method we have had projects that raised all their funding in a matter of days.

Foundation Funding

Organized foundation funding is a more structured funding arrangement, usually made with foundations, philanthropists, and institutions.

Usually you can raise more money through Foundation funding than through local funding, but it takes much more professionalism on your part to convince the funder to give to your project instead of the other worthy projects you are competing against.

Ways to Approach Foundation Funding

Before starting a grant application, ask yourself if you really need a grant. Funding and grants can seem great, but looks can be deceiving. Below are some of the pros and cons of seeking a grant.

For

- Provides extra money to spend on playground equipment, tools, and/or technology you otherwise cannot afford.
- May offer a long-term grant to cover several projects.

Against

- May create an attitude of dependancy on outside factors instead of using local resources.
- If you get the money now and create a big playground, the money may not be around when repairs are required.
- May require laborious amounts of paperwork and accountability that can distract from the project's progress.
- May restrict how the money can be used (e.g., it's OK to spend on materials, but not on labor).
- May take months for the decision to be made at an annual funding meeting. You may buy many great things that the community cannot maintain or afford to replace.
Plan

Take a look on the resources tab of www.playgroundideas.org to see our funding links for a list of websites with ideas on where to get funding for your playground.

Often your first contact will be via a letter or email. These letters should be polite, professional, direct, and on-point.

A “Not So Good” Example

In the next column is a letter we have been given permission to reproduce. It was written to seek funding for playgrounds in the refugee camps on the Thai–Burma border, and was sent to British timber companies.

It did not receive a single reply. Have a read and think if you would have replied. Does this letter make you want to immediately call to donate as much as you can afford? Why? (Or more to the point, why not?)

Reaching Out to Raise Funds

Dear sir or madam,

I have just come back from the Thai, Burma border where I have been building a playground for the Karen refugees (a hill tribe from Burma that for the past 60 years have been slaughtered by the military dictatorship from Burma – you can learn more if you go to youtube and search for Karen Burma war) There are 7 refugee camps along the Thai border.

I am trying to raise funds to build a playground in each camp. The cost is about £2000 each. There is funding for schools and education but not for playgrounds. I have never tried to raise cash before and have no idea how to go about it. All I know is the kids in the camps, most are born there (Mea la camp is 20 years old) have the right to play.

Can you help me? I have been building playgrounds for the last 16 years so I have experience I am not in this for personal gain. I just need enough to cover my expenses, travel, transport and accommodation. My heart has gone out to the Karen people and I really want to help them even in the refugee camps they are not safe.

On the 23/04/09 unknown people (probably Burmese undercover Junta) poisoned the water supply for 60,000 people by pouring gallons of weed killer into the water supply.

Help me put a smile on the kids faces. Thanks.

P.S. I thought a few photos would not go a miss. The PR would be good. I don't know if you get a lot of timber from Thailand or Burma but it would be nice to put something back. Please send this on if you know anyone who can help I can show you a lot more photos of before and after.

All the best,
Key Points That Will Help Secure Organized Funders Trust

You need the donors to trust you. They need to know that you and your team are the right people for the job, that you are responsible, and that they can trust you with their money.

Create a good first impression

First impressions are really important, be it through a telephone call or a letter.

Firstly, call the company (foundation, institution, etc.) and find out who is the marketing, sponsorships, or donations person, in order to address your letter directly to him/her. It is likely the letter alone will not reach the appropriate person. If possible, chat with him/her about your plans on the phone first to build a relationship.

If there is not a person with such responsibility, you may be connected to someone at a senior level, like an associate, director, or partner, which would be to your advantage, as there is no use talking to people who cannot make the final decision.

Be specific

Both on the phone and in writing, be specific in your request. If your letter doesn't say anything explicit about the scale of the project, time frame, or budget it is less likely a person will respond, since they won't know what exactly they would be getting themselves into.

Looking again at the “not so good” example letter above, the following details are the keys points and should be focussed on.

“6 months, 9 camps, 9 playgrounds, 2000 pounds each, one playground every 3 weeks. 16 years of playground building experience”

It is alway good to add a story about the place and the children but it must be about the issue and how your project is trying to address the issue.

Offer to involve the sponsor

In addition you could offer to supply photos and progress updates to the sponsors, and even welcome the sponsors to visit and help out in the overall process.

Write a letter and proposal

Write a separate proposal and attach it to your letter to the appropriate person. Breakdown the costs, time frames, who is involved and who will benefit. Be breif, usually 1-2 pages is enough.

Perhaps a better letter than the example above would be something like:

“After building playgrounds for 16 years in 'developed' countries, I want to use my skills in a place where playgrounds just don't exist. I am looking for others who understand the power of free play (to build problem solving skills, creativity, and social skills) to join with me to make sure children, no matter whether born in a refugee camp or in the UK, have the right to play, develop holistically and enjoy their childhood.

Our team plans to build a playground in each of the 9 refugee camps for the thousands of refugee children over a who have crossed the border from Burma. Each playground costs around $2130 (see attached proposal for breakdown).

Please read the attached proposal and I will get back in contact over the following weeks to discuss this project further.

Warm regards,

XXX XXXX
1 Street Road, Suburb.
Use appropriate language

When writing to funders be sure to use appropriate language, with correct grammar and good sentence structure, and be sure to run it through a spell check. Ask a friend or colleague to proofread it before sending. A well-written fundraising letter, like a CV and cover letter for a job interview, won’t lose you any points, but a poorly written letter definitely will!

Follow up

Generally, funders are very busy so don’t be afraid to call to follow up a couple of days later if you don’t get a response. Based on our experiences, 1 in 10 letters generally is successful, but persistence definitely improves your chances.

Keep the sponsors involved

Once you have some funds (or the promise of funds) your job does not end there. You must keep your new donors informed of what you are doing regularly enough that they feel connected without overloading them. If you are unsure of what kind of contact they want, ask them.

Get in touch after the project

At the end of the project, make sure you send some before-, during-, and after-project photos to your funders – This is essential for long term funding, especially if you want them to help with maintenance costs later on.
Guidelines for Designing a Playground

Designing a playground encompasses much more than simply putting elements in a space. The team at Playground Ideas loves dreaming up new and exciting designs for playgrounds, and this guide is designed to give you some easy to follow concepts which we hope will inspire you.

 advis: Remember the details
For a child, it is as much about the structures and big elements as it is about the little details. Children love the little details that can be discovered whilst playing. Little painted pictures in corners and nooks, handles and levers, peep holes, barrels to drum, talking tubes, and so on all make and keep a playground interesting. While busily building, these details can easily be missed or forgotten. Don't do it; keep your focus on the child's perspective.

 advis: Remember to include safe fall zones
See our Basic Safety Guidelines document for details on how to safely space playground elements


 advis: Important: Remember to use soft fall materials!
Sand, tan bark, coconut husks, and rice husks are the main feature in the playground that can minimize fall injuries, which make up to 80% of injuries on a playground. (U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (2008))

Three Rules
Firstly, here are the three rules that guide the overall designing process.

1. We are designing a space for children. While a good play space can take many forms, it must never lose its focus on the children’s needs. Observe and try to understand the children and their context. remember their responses from your “listen”activities!

2. You are designing a space using local ideas, materials, labor, and tools. This ensures the community will be able to use, maintain, repair, and improve the playground over time.

3. Don't forget to use the natural landscape as an element as much as possible.
Now for the Fun Part: creating the design

Well Done! You have listened and planned and finally you are ready to take all this knowledge to create a design.

From the mapping activities you know what assets already exist in the community and things that needing to be created.

Now its time to put all of these things together with the knowledge you have gathered from Playground Ideas website where you can find over 100 simple designs and plans plus safety manuals and many other resources.

1. From this list you can begin to think about the different areas required in the space and can prioritise elements that fit with this. i.e. A sandpit and some false shop fronts or a pretend kitchen may assist with a lack of imaginative play and role play. Please see the design section of our website for further details. www.playgroundideas.org/DesignLibrary

2. Creating a design is difficult to do in a large group because the options are unlimited. It is best for the project leader or other designer to create a plan with a few creative community members and then to get the community to comment on it.

3. Alternatively, from these lists, Playgroundideas can assist in creating a design, or you can access our manuals and design gallery to choose the designs you like. you can contact us here: www.playgroundideas.org/FAQ

4. You will need to be creative with your designs to ensure they can be created with the local materials, tools and labour that you have available.

5. Don't forget to carefully review the safety guidelines in our manual and adhere to any local building codes and safety guidelines to create a safer project.

6. When you have a draft design you will need to meet again to review and get feedback to ensure the community is completely satisfied before going on with the build.

Making Changes can be good but can have unintended consequences

To create a truly great project in terms of finished product AND process it is essential that you try hard to get the trust, respect and cooperation of the community. It is also paramount that you use a community development model like what we have explained in the “listen” section to deeply understand the communities priorities. Be careful not to think that whatever you do will have a positive impact as community development projects have regularly gone wrong. There is a very close relationship between many children's games and the places where they play them. Some games only occur because of particular elements in the play environment, and in some areas there could be games which have been played in the same place for generations. Understanding this relationship is necessary if the outdoor space is to be altered. Further more, changing the physical environment is likely to have an effect on children’s play in the area. The effect can be positive or negative, depending on the particular circumstances in each community and the types of changes planned.

Take your time, be humble and respectful, get a good translator (if you need one) and proceed with care...
First, work out the details of the space…

How Many People Will Use the Playground?

- The more children you have, the more elements and space you will need.
- Keep in mind, it is unlikely that all children will play on the playground at once.
- A good rule is to plan for 0.25m$^2$ of space per child.\(^1\)

\(^1\) This rule of space does not include extra field space for the children to run and play ball sports, ideally this should also be incorporated into your play space plans also.

Find a Great Space

Walk around the school or community with teachers/principal/students and find a good public area, keeping the following criteria in mind:

Shady areas with trees
These add interest and protect the children (and the playground) from the sun and rain. Furthermore, children naturally gravitate towards places like trees that can be explored and investigated, areas that are less immediately “mapped out” for use.

Unusual spaces
Space beside or between buildings or trees can often force you to think more creatively about how to use that space. Sloped sites can be fantastic because they add different dimensions and levels, which could be expensive to replicate on a flat space.

Remember other activities
Consider all the other activities that go on in the space to ensure everything is catered for. Consider things like football pitches and other activities, such as school assemblies, community meetings, and markets.

Refer to page 14 for more information on this.

Measure Your Space

Mark the exact positions of trees, shrubs, fences, and so on. Pay particular attention to shady areas. Since shade moves, the best time to record shade is in the middle of the day when the children go out to play and the sun is strongest.

Take several photos as you will need them when doing your design later.

Next, mark on your sketch with arrows the flow of movement of children and adults through the area. Notice where the children enter from to play; where are the doors from the classes and gates to the car park? Do you need a “corridor” for children/teachers to pass through the space? Consider any other movement patterns of individuals, cars, bicycles, animals, etc.

Now you should have a good clean site map that you can start to fill. If possible it can be good to photocopy this map a few times so you can experiment with different designs.
Now it's time to think about what to put into your space ...

Design for Different Types of Play

Children use different types of play to understand the world around them and to master life skills.

On the right is a four-quadrant diagram containing lists of ways children play. Most playgrounds focus only on the top two squares, Active Play and Sports Play and although these types of play are extremely important (especially for developing physical and social abilities), Free Play and Imaginative Play help children's brain's develop in other ways and should be incorporated into your playground designs.

By having some of the Free Play elements in your play space you are giving children a whole raft of new creative outlets to explore. When a child can take one element and join it with another the opportunities for imagination are endless. The list of Free Play parts above are inexpensive and available in most places, thus making them less likely to be stolen, and easily replaced if broken.

Having Imaginative or Role Play elements (For example, cars, cubbies, or kitchens) enables children to take on roles and act out different stories. Research has suggested that this kind of experimentation can be very therapeutic for children - acting out stories from their lives, imagining varied endings to the stories, and seeing how others respond.

Keep these four quadrants in mind as you design activities and elements for the playground; seek community input for other activities that can be added to the lists above. The best playground designs not only incorporate all four play types, but do so by having spaces, that mix the play types as opposed to having a defined space for each play type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active Play</th>
<th>Sports/Game Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swings</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>Football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seesaws</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladders</td>
<td>Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bridges</td>
<td>Netball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lookouts</td>
<td>Four square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monkey bars</td>
<td>Wall ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running</td>
<td>Skipping rope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping</td>
<td>Elastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rolling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somersaults</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Free Play</th>
<th>Imaginative/Role Play</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Using Parts</td>
<td>Fishing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boxes</td>
<td>Gardening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crates</td>
<td>Animal sculptures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tires</td>
<td>Shops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blocks</td>
<td>Cars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction - building</td>
<td>Trucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- stacking</td>
<td>Boats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk drawing</td>
<td>Chalkboards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden hoses</td>
<td>Kitchens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water bottles</td>
<td>Tree houses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scoops</td>
<td>Cubbies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovels</td>
<td>Castles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckets</td>
<td>Forts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Read more about children's play and good designs in the Research section of our website.

Refer to the Basic Safety Guidelines for ways to avoid injuries when mixing activities.
Design

Good Planning and Layout

• Space elements far enough from each other to allow for safe fall zones. (see the Safety Guidelines at www.playgroundideas.org).
• Isolate fast-moving elements from other elements / areas of high activity. (e.g. swings and slide exits)
• Separate toddler elements from the areas for older children.
• Enable movement between elements without crossing through the safe fall zones of fast moving elements like swings.

Remember to Provide the Basics

• Shade
• Water to drink
• Seating for supervisors
• Trash cans
• Playground rules/signage

Think about the Playground's Environment

• Sun and shade patterns during main play times. (Will the children be at risk for sunburn or the equipment be hot?)
• Natural contours of the land
• Flow of people through the space
• Sight lines. (Where is the best supervision point? Put the teachers seating there.)

Place is Important

“We built a playground once based around the theme of a castle, when it was nearly finished one of the builders came to me and said 'What is a castle?' The playground looked great and the kids loved it, but deep down I knew we had missed something important.” – volunteer

It is important to design a great playground that stimulates children's minds and bodies, and it's great to spark a child's imagination and ingenuity. But how to capture their spirit? How do you design a play space that is not generic, but speaks to the child and the community about 'who they are?' This is not easy but now you have the knowledge from the “listen” section of this manual to guide you, you are well on the way.

Having a strong sense of the place and culture you live in is key to many positive outcomes for children, but also importantly for the whole community, it fosters a sense of civic pride and love of place. The stories we tell, the yearly celebrations, the floods, the people, the weather, the jokes, and so on all combine into a connection and safety you feel when in your 'place'. This is strongly connected to positive wellbeing for the community, and the way you design the play space can help to add to this spirit.

When thinking about what type of playground to make, it can be good to start with local stories or myth as a driving idea. The aim is for a playground to become a special place, a unique symbol of the community. A playground is an expression of local imagination and spirit.

So, when talking with communities, don't forget to ask about stories, customs, and anything particular to that area. Ask about people's experiences, and where and how they played as children. Then take these stories and work with the school to find ways to embed these ideas into the play space.

For more information about age appropriate elements, please refer to page 7 of the U.S. Public Playground Safety Handbook.
Design

Think about the Materials

Before finalizing the plan, give some thought to the types of materials available and their costs relative to your budget.

If you have a small budget, now is the time to get really creative. Whenever you are traveling around, keep an eye out for piles of steel at the back of a factory, stacks of wooden pallets from a building site, and, of course, car, motorbike or truck tires from motor mechanics, who almost always have a ready supply. (In some countries there is a cost for removing tires so mechanics are happy for you to take them away; you may even be paid to take them!)

Our plans use only materials available locally and for a cost that the school can afford to replace when necessary. Generally speaking, local materials don't last as long as factory-built playgrounds, but they are significantly less expensive to build and to maintain for the community over time.

Meet with the Community Again

Present your sketches to the community and get their agreement, or redo the above steps until there is a plan to which the community agrees.

Create a Playground Package

When the community is happy with the plan create a building package with a final, detailed, scale plan of the playground, download the step by step plans for each of the elements you will use from our design webpages and you save some photos from the site to show builders what each element looks like.

Make good connections

Children in a natural state of play do not move in straight lines so having a playground that “flows” well involves having all the components of the playground well-connected. For example, say there is a path leading from the playground entrance to the rope bridge, cargo net, and monkey bars, but in between these you can divert off to the hopscotch, slide, or tree house. Good “flow” will give the child different directions to explore each time they step into the play space. Check out the Whole playground pictures in the gallery on our website for examples of playgrounds with many pathways and connections between each element.

Make a plan of your design

To move on to the next stages, knowing how much to buy and how to build, you need to sketch your elements into your site plan to scale. You can also use our Playground Designer tool in the design section of our website, or using Google SketchUp.

Playground Designs
http://www.playgroundideas.org/
DesignLibrary

Google Sketchup
http://sketchup.google.com/
Almost a quarter of playground injuries are caused in some way by the equipment.

Using the appropriate materials in a playground is extremely important to ensure a quality job that is high in safety. The U.S. consumer product safety commission states that “equipment-related hazards, such as breakage, tip over, design, and assembly” are attributed to “23%” of injuries in playgrounds.\(^1\) By using quality materials, solid construction and with proper maintenance much of this could be avoided.

The ‘Right’ Materials

There is no correct set of materials to use worldwide. Environments with ice and snow will require different materials than tropical regions, and different materials have different availability.

Your location and particular situation will have certain unique aspects that will guide you about the right materials to use for the safest and best result. You may also have building or playground standards in your location that will need to be adhered to.

We have made some suggestions as to the range of materials that may work for your context but in all cases you will need to consult with local experienced builders or engineers to make informed choices.

As every country has different materials available to them it is important to consider which materials are suitably strong and appropriate for the task, now and into the future.

It is always important that skilled local builders and/or engineers are consulted about appropriate materials, as local knowledge is essential to deal with unseen issues like termites, weather, and choosing the right timber.

When using recycled materials be mindful of the possibility of contamination from substances such as lead, chemicals, contaminants, or asbestos. Also, consider your choice of recycled materials carefully, as they may have suffered wear and tear that affect their strength or endurance. All of these are potential factors that could result in injury or illness for those using the playground.

It is also important to note that even if the playground you build (or buy) is built to the highest possible standard, without regular maintenance it will eventually fall into disrepair – meaning that the best playgrounds are a match of appropriate materials and regular maintenance.

Some advice on choosing materials is offered in the U.S. Public Playground Safety Handbook – see sections “2.5 Equipment Materials” and “2.4 Surfacing”.

Factors in Choosing Materials

Money
If every project had an unlimited amount of funding they would, of course, choose the highest quality materials that lasted the longest amount of time. But as this is unlikely to be the case, decisions need to be made as to how to allocate your finances to make the best possible playground – one that is safe and within your budget.

This may mean it’s best to build a smaller playground at first and add to it over time. It may also be possible to use less expensive or shorter lived materials in less critical places, as long as this is coupled with more regular maintenance. These decisions can only be made by the local community, based on their needs and resources.

Wear and Tear
Similar pieces of timber or steel may last for very different amounts of time. For example, timber used for seesaws or swings may age much faster (from the constant stresses) than timbers used in a cubby house. Materials sheltered from rain and sun will last significantly longer than those that are out in the open and subject to the elements.

It is best to prioritize high stress areas; make sure that these stresses are catered for and be prepared to check and promptly repair or replace those parts as soon as they

Maintenance/Repair/Replacement
All materials – no matter how much they cost – will need maintenance and eventually replacement. So it is best to think about a playground as evolving over time, as opposed to having a “one-off” cost.

Labor Costs
The cost of labor may influence your choice of materials. If labor costs are low (or free, from volunteers) using high-maintenance materials such as bamboo may be appropriate, as the cost of regular upkeep and replacement is inexpensive. If labor costs are high, and timber or steel costs are low, it may make sense to build in a way that reduces labor and repairs to an absolute minimum.
Tips on Specific Materials

These tips on using specific materials are designed to help you get started in planning your project, but they cannot replace expert local advice and local knowledge. In all cases it is best to consult local building experts as to the appropriate materials to use.

There are many fantastic materials that can be used in a playground, once careful consideration is given to the longevity, strength, and other properties involved. We look forward to hearing from you about other materials that work well in play space construction.

Timber

There are literally thousands of different varieties of timber used throughout the world, and all timbers have different properties such as flexibility, rigidity, warping, potential to cause splinters, and so on. However they generally fall into two types: hardwood and softwood.

Both timber types have their uses, but generally hardwood will last longer and be less susceptible to rot and termites. Hardwood is particularly important for use in areas of high stress, such as the top pole of a swing set, seesaw poles, bridges, and any other places where there are long spans and high loads.

Bamboo

Again, there are thousands of varieties of bamboo, with all sorts of different structures, densities, diameters, and rot and insect resistance. In some areas particular giant bamboo species are used to build huge span bridges and multi-level buildings.

It's often assumed that bamboo can be used in the same way as timber, but this is not the case. It's highly susceptible to powder beetles and rot, and certain thin-walled varieties can lose a good deal of their strength if the tubes are cracked or split. The varieties of bamboo near you may look perfect for your needs, but local knowledge is always the best judge.

Steel (chain, bolts, screws, nails, cable)

Most steel looks the same but it is important to know what you are using. There is an enormous difference in the strength, durability, and flexibility of steel depending on whether it is plain, hardened, spring, galvanized, or stainless steel.

In hollow steel, wall thickness can be an important factor. One steel 2” pipe may look much like another, but the wall thickness will be the difference between a great set of monkey bars and one that bends and breaks in a matter of months.

Hardened, coated (galvanized, powder-coated or painted) steel parts are important for elements with high loads such as swing chains, swing hangers and fittings, hanging bridges, and merry-go-rounds and other spinners. (See Paint/Coatings for more details about this.)

Beware of sub-standard items such as unhardened and hand-welded chain, or bolts, screws, made from unhardened steel and cable that look strong but has a non-steel core, making them unsuitable for heavy duty work.
Cement/Concrete

It’s important to always follow the directions given on the packaging when using cement or concrete. Cement takes up to a month to fully set, and should not be over-stressed during this time especially the first few days. Concrete becomes hardest if it is kept moist during its setting time.

Generally speaking the footings of elements need to be around 40cm deep or more, particularly for elements with high loads such as swings, cubbies, elements connected to bridges, and seesaw frames. In certain soils and conditions you may need other footing types or ways to fix your elements to the ground.

Tires

Tires are a long-lasting, soft, cheap material that are great for playgrounds.

Tires may need to be washed before use, since the environments they’re frequently sourced from are places where it’s common for them to come into contact with potentially hazardous chemicals.

It’s important that tires are thoroughly inspected before being used, to make sure none of the steel wires are exposed; this is especially common in the center and shoulder of the tire. If only a small section of wire is exposed in a tire, it can be used with the damaged section buried in the ground, or the sidewall of the tire can be used once the damaged section is removed.

Care must be taken when joining tires together, or when joining tires to timber or steel, to create a solid connection that will not rip out. Please see our tire connection information on specific car tire designs, which is based on the work of Jimmi Jolley.

Rope

Generally rope is not a great material for playgrounds especially in high wear areas. Rope rubbing on elements such as wood or steel can cause it to weaken rapidly.

If not UV treated, plastic ropes can breakdown in the sun, and hemp/ natural ropes can rot in the rain. However to our surprise heavy-duty Plastic/ nylon rope, has in some cases, shown to be extremely hardy given it’s low cost and ability to be easily replaced regularly, as needed.

Paint/Coatings

Paint and other coatings can make a simple playground look amazing, but they also serve a very important function. They stop moisture (rain), sun, and insects from degrading the material they are covering. Choosing high quality, UV-protected paints or galvanized steel will significantly reduce maintenance and prolong the life of your playground.

Paint or other coatings with insecticides in them are harmful to children and should never be used in places that children can touch. Read the label to ensure that you use paints that are suitable for use around children.

Grease/Lubrication

Grease and other lubricants will significantly prolong the life of swing hangers, seesaw brackets, merry- go-rounds, and similar playground elements where materials rub against each other.

Grease and lubricants can be messy and should not be placed excessively in places where a child could consume them.

Soft Fall Materials

Information on sand types and other materials appropriate for soft fall can be found in the soft fall section of our safety manual with links to the US guidelines.
# Sample Budget and Price

## Playground Construction Budget

Sample of a construction budget from a playground project in Central Thailand. Completed by Peace Corps Volunteer Cameron Miller.

Exchange rate: 32 Baht / US$1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item/Description</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
<th>FoT Funding</th>
<th>Community Contribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thai Baht</td>
<td>Thai Baht</td>
<td>$USD</td>
<td>Baht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour*</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>$312.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food*</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9,000</td>
<td>$281.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Tires</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>$156.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8,200</td>
<td>8,200</td>
<td>$256.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas (transportation)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof Materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>$93.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nails, Hammer, Brushes, Bolts, &amp; Other Construction Materials</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
<td>$187.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paint (buckets)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>4,380</td>
<td>$136.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sand</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playground Slide</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>$125.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope and chain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>$31.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Budget</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>56,580</td>
<td>18,580</td>
<td>$580.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentages</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total used from FoT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>18,580</td>
<td>$580.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 10 community workers worked on the playground for an estimated 10 days, 3 meals per day.
Below is an example of a material price list gathered in Peru to work out what could be built with the NGO’s budget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Amount needed</th>
<th>Unit Prices</th>
<th>Total S/ (local prices by amount)</th>
<th>Total US$ (local prices by amount)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wood Logs</strong></td>
<td>Eucalyptus Wood</td>
<td>4m long x 4” diameter</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>180.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eucalyptus Wood</td>
<td>4m long x 6” diameter</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eucalyptus Wood</td>
<td>2m long x 5” diameter</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eucalyptus Wood</td>
<td>2m long x 4” diameter</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamboo</td>
<td>Poles</td>
<td>4m long x 4” diameter</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>350.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roofing Materials</strong></td>
<td>Leaf for roof; corregated panels; something waterproof</td>
<td>Calamina ondulada 1.83x .85</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>220.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paint</strong></td>
<td>Oil based enamel paint</td>
<td>Esmalte Tekno sintetico/ galon</td>
<td>30 litres 8 gallons</td>
<td>61.50</td>
<td>492.00</td>
<td><strong>$176.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metal Primer</strong></td>
<td>Needed for all metal parts (usually in red colour)</td>
<td>Esmalte Tekno epoxica negra/galon</td>
<td>4 litres 1 gallon</td>
<td>137.00</td>
<td>137.00</td>
<td><strong>$49.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paint Thinner</strong></td>
<td>Also called Mineral Spirits</td>
<td>Thinner TKD Tekno/galon</td>
<td>4 litres 1 gallon</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td><strong>$12.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turpentine</strong></td>
<td>Teknodur Parafinico/ galon</td>
<td>4 litres 1 gallon</td>
<td>124.00</td>
<td>124.00</td>
<td><strong>$44.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nails 5”</strong></td>
<td>clavos de 3”/kg</td>
<td>5” long 22 pounds</td>
<td>10kg</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>60.30</td>
<td><strong>$22.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nails 4”</strong></td>
<td>clavos de 4”/kg</td>
<td>4” long 22 pounds</td>
<td>10kg</td>
<td>6.03</td>
<td>60.30</td>
<td><strong>$22.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nails 3”</strong></td>
<td>clavos de 3”/kg</td>
<td>3” long 11 pounds</td>
<td>5kg</td>
<td>5.21</td>
<td>26.05</td>
<td><strong>$9.00</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Screws</strong></td>
<td>4.5 pounds</td>
<td>2kg</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td><strong>$11.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cement</strong></td>
<td>Cemento Portland tipo I / bolsa</td>
<td>5 bags 5 bags</td>
<td>13.55</td>
<td>67.75</td>
<td><strong>$24.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sand</strong></td>
<td>Arena gruesa/m³</td>
<td>10 bags 4 cube</td>
<td>34.50</td>
<td>138.00</td>
<td><strong>$49.00</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued on next page
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Amount needed</th>
<th>Unit Prices</th>
<th>Total S/. (local prices by amount)</th>
<th>Total US$ (local prices by amount)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gravel</td>
<td>Piedra chancada 1/2” /m³</td>
<td>20 bags</td>
<td>half cube</td>
<td>33.50</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>$6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rope</td>
<td>Soga / 5mts</td>
<td>15 feet</td>
<td>5m</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>$14.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motorbike Tires</td>
<td>Usadas</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>1,000.00</td>
<td>$358.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Tires</td>
<td>Usadas</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>$179.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck</td>
<td>Usadas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheet Metal</td>
<td>For Slide: If metal is too expensive, alternatives exist</td>
<td>1.5mm thick, 2.4m x 1.2m</td>
<td>1 sheet</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td>$36.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel Tube</td>
<td>For Slide: If metal is too expensive, alternatives exist</td>
<td>40cm long x 4cm diameter</td>
<td>2 pieces</td>
<td>80cm</td>
<td>41.95</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel tube</td>
<td>For Slide: If metal is too expensive, alternatives exist</td>
<td>6m long x 4cm diameter</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>6m</td>
<td>41.95</td>
<td>41.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel tube</td>
<td>For see-saws</td>
<td>90 cm long x 2.5cm diameter</td>
<td>2 pieces</td>
<td>1.80m</td>
<td>41.95</td>
<td>12.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel tube</td>
<td>For see-saws</td>
<td>18-20 cm long x 2.5cm diameter</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>41.95</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel plate</td>
<td>For see-saws</td>
<td>2cm thick x 36cm long x 10cm wide</td>
<td>1 piece</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steel rebar</td>
<td>For see-saws</td>
<td>15cm long</td>
<td>6 pieces</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Currency (Peruvian Sole)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,709.13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 S = 2.80 soles
Process for Building a Playground

Set-up

Make sure that you keep good, consistent communication with the school and/or community throughout the planning, designing, and building stages of the project. The community will have the resources and solutions you need, since they face the challenges of building with the local materials daily.

Collect materials and tools well in advance to ensure everything is ready on the first build day.

Specify the number of volunteers you will need, and make sure the days and times you need them are clear.

Arrange for a cook to buy and prepare food for the volunteers each day.

Think about the order of the elements and their building instructions. What needs to be done first, second, third? For example, you will need to cut and prepare the tire tread seats before attaching them to the swing chains. Also, think about tasks that can be done at any time; these can be assigned to people who have nothing to do, keeping everyone productive.

Tips

- As the project leader, don't get too focused on one particular element. Keep moving around and checking on different elements’ progress, particularly as new elements are started, to avoid missing any mistakes. If teams are getting scattered and disorganized, help them to regroup and focus on the tasks at hand.

- Look after yourself and your team. Drink lots of water and make sure there is plenty of food.

- Conflicting opinions are likely to surface occasionally - resolve issues quickly to keep the team positive and motivated.

- Expect problems to occur and be prepared for the process of trial-and-error. Learn from mistakes and move on.
First Steps

- Get everyone together and run through the design and answer any questions.
- Clear the site of rubbish, glass, high grass, and other obstacles and hazards.
- Rope off the area and tell the children they cannot play there until the play space is finished and safe.
- Using your plan, mark the site with another person and double check everything (relocating elements later is wasted work and energy).
- Triple check your measurements with someone else to ensure everything lines up and is the correct distance apart.

Hard Work

Strip the bark from the wood and protect the timber with paint or lacquer if required.

Dig holes the appropriate depth in the right places, and do one final check.

Assign different elements to different teams of people. Using pictures and plans, explain thoroughly what they should do, where and in what order. Try to get each team to stay with their assignment until the element is completed.

Particular attention will need to be paid to load-bearing parts of structures, which, if not built properly, could pose serious risks to users (e.g., by falling on users or breaking under the weight of users). It should also be kept in mind that children are likely to use equipment in ways that are not intended and that designs have to take such misuse into account.

As you go along, think about how small details make a playground more interesting, for example, peep-holes, earthen mounds, buckets on a rope to a platform, small murals, and so on.

The keys to building are to think ahead and to take the time to stop and plan!

Before the Opening

Before the children can play all the equipment needs to be thoroughly checked for strength and workmanship. Go around and inspect all the welding, bolts screws, nails, and other connections.

Children will play on the equipment in unexpected ways and will regularly overload the elements (for example, three children on a one-person swing). Using sacks of heavy grains or sand that exceed the expected loads you can simulate the loads and check how much movements and warping happens. If this warping is excessive you will need to add more bracing or other strengthening elements to ensure the playground is strong enough now and into the future. If you are unsure, use local experienced builders or engineers to assist you.

Lastly

Don't give up! The building stage takes a lot of energy and self-motivation. No matter what obstacles you face, be it funding or no-show volunteers, you really need to believe in the importance of play and the positive difference you are going to make. For extra motivation, check out our pictures and videos of the school children around Mae Sot, Thailand.

We need only to watch them step into the playground to know all the hard work, tiredness, and long days were worthwhile.
Tools for Playground

This is a reasonably comprehensive list of the kinds of tools that may be required for different aspects of playground construction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hand Tools</th>
<th>Electric Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hammers (8)</td>
<td>Electric Circular Saw (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machete (7)</td>
<td>Electric Grinder (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Saw (2)</td>
<td>Electric Drill (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clamps (2)</td>
<td>Welder (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisels</td>
<td>Drill bits (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screwdrivers</td>
<td>Extension leads (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolt Cutters</td>
<td>Metal Cutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pliers</td>
<td>Protective Gear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratchet Spanner Set</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shovel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick Axe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measuring Tools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley Knives (spare blades)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Eye Covers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dust Masks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paintbrushes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggested Tool Quantitites

Every project will differ in scope and the number of workers available, but the following list may be a helpful guide in estimating the number of tools that may be required to maintain productivity.

The sample list included in the table above, (with the suggested amounts in brackets) was compiled for a project that had around 8-15 builders/volunteers onsite building a playground of approximately 15 x 25 meters.
Children will hurt themselves on even the safest and softest of playgrounds; grazed knees, bumps and scratches are a normal part of the process of growing up. There is, however, a big difference between these little aches and serious injuries from unsafe conditions.

‘All unmaintained playgrounds will eventually become unsafe.’

Playground checks
Basic daily visual checks should be done by adults when supervising children, and any issues should be reported to the maintenance person immediately. Teachers need to be made aware of who to speak to about this.

Generally, playgrounds need to be checked every three months and will nearly always need something fixed or adjusted. Soft fall material will get compressed, washed away, or moved by thousands of tiny feet. Swing pivots will wear out over time etc. Remember, building a playground is not a one-off event; it is an ongoing commitment from the community.

If elements are damaged, children need to be forbidden from using these until they’re fixed.

Below is a maintenance checklist that can be used as an example to ensure that all parts of the playground are being regularly checked. Depending on your playground there may be other parts that need to be added to this list.
Maintenance Resources

Maintenance involves more than just checking if the bolts are still tight. Good playground rules, an organized roster, and good supervision will not only reduce the number of injuries but also the amount of maintenance required.

The following pages offer some tips on how to put together these items to ensure a good safe space over time.

Please use these resources to create your own and be sure to train the children and the school staff in these simple systems.

Further suggestions:

- Pay close attention to any timber or steel that horizontally spans more than 2m (6’) (such as bridges or the top swing pole on swing sets) for signs of wear. The failure of these parts could cause injury, and they must be inspected regularly.

- Note that increased wear in these areas can be caused by having too many children use the swing or bridge at the same time. Swings should have rules advising the children that they must not be overloaded.
Playground Roster Advice

PlaygroundIDEAS recommends that you have a playground roster. Too many children on the playground at one time can be dangerous, and can lead to accidents. A roster helps manage the playground activity so that it operates smoothly, and within its intended capacity.

A roster is also a good tool for separating older children from younger children, which reduces collisions. The size of the school, the number of students, the age of the students, and the students classes will all have an effect on what the roster looks like.

Here is an example of a simple student roster, which gives everyone equal time on the playground. Use this template to create a roster to suit your needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Recess</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Grade 4+5+6</td>
<td>Grade 1+2+3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Playground Rules

Below is a list of sample rules that cover the main issues within playgrounds. This is just a guide and should be changed to suit your needs.

1. Only do what you feel confident to do.
2. Be kind and gentle. Don't hurt anybody.
3. Play well with others. Don't spoil others' games.
4. Be a good friend and let others join your games.
5. Be honest. Don't cover up the truth.
6. Listen to others and teachers. Don't interrupt people.
7. Play safe and tell a teacher if someone is hurt.
8. Care for the playground. Don't damage equipment.
9. Look after the plants and trees in the playground.
10. No throwing sand.
11. If something is broken, tell a teacher.
12. Put your rubbish in the bin.
13. Drink lots of water.
14. No bare feet.
Playground Guidelines for Teachers

Fighting between children in the playground is something that unfortunately can occur. The below strategies can help teachers to reduce conflicts but they can also use these tools to teach children some basic conflict management skills that will help them to manage these situations on their own.

1. Always have a teacher supervising at lunchtime and recess.
   The teacher’s job is to teach the children the playground rules, and to show the children how to resolve disputes. Most importantly, a teacher needs to be on hand to enforce playground safety and to provide first aid, if needed.

2. Display the playground rules prominently.
   The playground rules should be put in a prominent place, so that they can easily be referred to. (You can use our sample playground rules to develop the rules for your own playground.)

3. Regularly reinforce the playground rules.
   Some children will need to hear the rules many times before they can remember on their own. The children will need to be reminded of the rules every time there is a fight in the playground; keep teaching the rules to children who are misbehaving.

4. Teach different games and activities.
   You can keep children engaged by teaching different games to play and things to do, which will give the children plenty of options and activities.

Where possible, add more activities to your playground using free resources, such as chalk games on concrete, cardboard boxes, old sheets or wooden blocks etc.

Conflict Resolution

Simple playground conflicts can often be resolved using the Walk, Talk, Paper Scissors Rock method. This method teaches children that they have the power to resolve a conflict and is based around a tool from “peaceful playgrounds” a US based playground organisation.

Specifically, this method concentrates on giving the students three options to solve a conflict situation themselves:

1. They can walk away and find something else to do, or someone else to play with.
2. They can talk with another student, who can help solve the problem.
3. They can play “Rock Paper Scissors” (or a similar game), with the winner of the game getting to resolve the conflict (e.g. by deciding who gets the ball that was being argued over).

The important point to these methods is view these disagreements as a chance for children to learn to solve their own conflicts instead of the usual methods used where the child is not engaged in a learning opportunity but simply punished. These above methods try to reduce the teachers load in the long run by empowering children with new skills.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>SCHEDULED</th>
<th>COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHECKPOINTS</td>
<td>Yes, No or n/a</td>
<td>If &quot;no&quot;, what is the reason?</td>
<td>Write the action to be taken, and timing.</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Date and by whom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the gate(s) in sound Condition? Check hinges and closing devices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the perimeter fence free from any damage, e.g. missing or loose sections?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all borders secured and free of splinters and protruding nails, etc.?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the playground free of sharp objects, including twigs, branches, syringes and glass?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the playground free of graffiti, dog droppings and rubbish?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this soft fall / sand under surfacing at least 200mm deep?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Inspect _Maintain_  

Inspector ___________________________  Date of Inspection ___________________________

Equipment Location ___________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQUIPMENT CHECK</th>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>SCHEDULED</th>
<th>COMPLETED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is the equipment complete, with no missing parts?</td>
<td>Yes, No or n/a</td>
<td>If “no”, what is the reason?</td>
<td>Write the action to be taken, and timing.</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all components fastened and secure?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all components (timber, fiberglass or metal) free of excessive warping, splintering, splitting, bent, vandalized or cracked?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all bolt heads and nuts recessed, flush, rounded or covered with protective caps?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is equipment free from excessive rust, or evidence of broken members or cracked welds?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all tires free from broken or exposed wires, or other protruding reinforced wires?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the protective paint (timber and steel) or coating (metal) in good condition?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are all fixed structures (including the footings) stable? Even when in use?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are shackles, bearings and moving parts operating smoothly, lubricated and free from wear and tear?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do swing chains / panels / hand grips comply with entrapment standards?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are rope nets sound, including attachment and anchor points?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the area free from other problems during the audit?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Attention: Marcus Veerman

Dear Marcus,

PlaygroundIDEAS 'The Community Playground Manual' Review

Play DMC has reviewed PlaygroundIDEAS' 'The Community Playground Manual' and are satisfied that the information provided is reasonable.

Note that the Introduction of EN1176.11 indicates, "Risk-taking is an essential feature of play provision and of all environments in which children legitimately spend time playing. Play provision aims to offer children the chance to encounter acceptable risks as part of a stimulating, challenging and controlled learning environment. Play provision should aim at managing the balance between the need to offer risk and the need to keep children safe from serious harm."

This document and the adoption of any of the recommendations listed is not a guarantee that an incident will not occur. Safety in play provision is not absolute and accidents do occur (as they do anywhere) regardless of design be it through misuse, stalling, rough play, poor supervision, use by inappropriate age groups, misfortune, vandalism or poor maintenance, etc.

However, when playgrounds are designed, potential injury risk situations should be assessed and if they are deemed moderate, high or extreme Level of Risk, changes may be required to ameliorate the risk, depending on the structure type and subject to benefits assessment. The matrix below could be used as the basis for risk assessment with the following taken into consideration:

- The likelihood of an accident occurring (ie. no chance to highly probable).
- The expected consequences of the accident (eg. minor to permanent injury).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood</th>
<th>Injury Type</th>
<th>Little/None</th>
<th>Minor</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Serious</th>
<th>Permanent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly unlikely</td>
<td>E (1)</td>
<td>Very Low (1)</td>
<td>Very Low (2)</td>
<td>Low (3)</td>
<td>Low (4)</td>
<td>Moderate (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlikely</td>
<td>D (2)</td>
<td>Very Low (2)</td>
<td>Low (4)</td>
<td>Moderate (5)</td>
<td>Moderate (6)</td>
<td>Moderate (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possible</td>
<td>C (3)</td>
<td>Low (3)</td>
<td>Moderate (5)</td>
<td>Moderate (6)</td>
<td>High (12)</td>
<td>High (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely</td>
<td>B (4)</td>
<td>Low (4)</td>
<td>Moderate (8)</td>
<td>High (12)</td>
<td>High (16)</td>
<td>Extreme (20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very likely</td>
<td>A (5)</td>
<td>Moderate (5)</td>
<td>High (10)</td>
<td>High (15)</td>
<td>Extreme (20)</td>
<td>Extreme (25)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ultimately, it is the decision of the owner of the installation as to what Levels of Risk they deem acceptable taking into account the benefits and intended use of the item.

Yours sincerely

Alison Curtis
BE (Materials), BSc (Physiology)

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1 EN1176 (set), 2003, Playground equipment and surfaces, safety requirements and test methods.
Appendix A

“Playground Reporter” Lesson Plan

Participants: Class or group of children approximately 12-14 yrs.

Materials:
• Chalkboard
• Paper (one sheet for each child in the school)
• Printout of “Playground Reporter Notes” for each class in the school
• Sign for each class at school (P.1, P.2, P.3, etc.)

Time: Half-Full Day

Introduction
Good morning! My name is __________ and I am visiting you today from Playground Ideas. Our group builds playgrounds at schools just like yours. Who can tell me what a playground is?

A playground is a space to play in, a playground has swings and slides, a playground is a place for children, etc.

Very soon, some workers from Playground ideas will be coming to your school to build a new playground. Before we begin, the playground designers, parents, and teachers need the help of the older children in designing a good playground for your community. We know that you have been playing in this community for a long time and have important knowledge about how and where kids like to play. Can you help us?

Playground Reporter Training

Today you have a special assignment. You have all been appointed as “Playground Reporters.” Who can tell me what a reporter is?

A reporter works for a news station, a newspaper. A reporter tells the news, etc.

How does the reporter get their information?
From watching, from asking sources, from reading, etc.

A reporter gathers information from many sources and describes on what they've learned. That's what we'll be doing today. This is your reporter assignment:

Write, “How and where do the children at ________ like to play?”

To report on this question, we need to divide into groups for each class at the school.

Divide students into small groups for each grade at the school. Let students pick if they desire. Give each group a sign with their assigned grade.

The class you have been assigned to is the group of children you will be reporting on. Do you remember when you were in P.___? The way we play changes as we grow up. Can you remember how you liked to play when you were in P.___?

Let class tell a few stories about how they used to play.

Today at break-time, we'll be taking notes about how and where the kids in your class like to play. You can watch them play and ask them questions.
Hand out “Playground Reporter Worksheet.” Read through questions.

On the back of your sheet, you can draw a map of your school grounds. When you are watching the children in your class play during break-time, mark on your map where the children like to play best and what they do there?

Another way we will get information is by letting the children tell us how and where they like to play. The children in each class will do this by drawing pictures of how they like to play and telling stories.

Once you have gathered all your information, we will be using it to help in creating a design for your play space.

Take one group at a time to each school classroom. Explain that we will be building a playground soon and we want to know how they like to play. Distribute paper and ask kids to draw a picture of how they like to play best. The other playground reporter groups can remain in their class to draw their compound maps. Have a teacher help you take student groups to each class to save on time.

When all classrooms have been visited, reporter groups can review the drawings and pick 2 they would like to present to the larger group.

Remind reporters of their break-time assignment before leaving. During break-time, let the reporters do their work! Check in with groups to make sure they are on task.

After break-time, give each group time to complete the worksheet and discuss it amongst themselves. Then it’s time to watch the news! Give a representative from each group time to give a presentation of their findin
Name:
School:
Assigned Class:

What do you see the kids in your class doing during break-time?

What kinds of materials or elements do they play with?

Do you see them pretending or creating stories? What are they pretending?

Are the boys and girls playing different games or in different places?

Where on the compound do the kids spend time during break-time?

On the map of the compound you have drawn on the back, mark some of the places you saw the kids playing most.
A good playground will light a spark in a child. Our research showed that children are happier and learn more, teachers are less stressed and the community bonds are strengthened. We hope that this manual will give you the confidence to take the next step in creating a playground in your local community. For further reading about playground design, construction and safety issues, please see www.playgroundideas.org.

Whats next?
If you plan to build a playground we strongly suggest you add your project to the www.playgroundideas.org website and share your plans with the wider community so we can continue the learning.

It is also strongly suggested that you read our “PlaygroundIDEAS safety manual” to familiarise yourself with the basics of playground safety. This manual is available free from the ‘resources’ tab on www.playgroundideas.org.

PlaygroundIDEAS is a non-profit organisation, fully funded by people just like you. It is expensive to create quality resources and it is only generous donations that keep us going. If this manual has been useful to you please consider a donation to help us help others. Donations can be made in any currency from the website.

Thank you.

www.playgroundideas.org