



Seven advantages of having a playground in your community

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In this report, we talk about playgrounds' benefits in your community, how they offer children the opportunity to practice and perfect skills to help their development: motor, social, emotional, cognitive, and sensory skills, constantly learning through play. Below, we will talk about the seven big benefits of having a playground in your community.

1.-Promotes physical activity

Playgrounds offer spaces for children to play and create their own adventures, in addition to helping them develop strength and physical endurance; all of this allows children to have healthy growth. It is important to note that playgrounds also create spaces for adults, involving other community members, fostering participation, and interaction between diverse families.

2.-Create meeting spaces

Playgrounds encourage interaction with other community members, helping children build social skills that will assist in their ability to develop socially and problem-solving skills and increased self-esteem.

3.-Mental benefits

Critical thinking and problem-solving

Playgrounds encourage children to face situations in which creativity pushes them to improve their critical thinking and problem-solving skills. As children play in that environment, they learn what works and what doesn't, how to face (or overcome) an obstacle, and the ability to keep trying to reach a specific goal.

Development of neural connections

When children play outside in a playground, they put their motor and neural skills to the test by doing activities such as climbing, swinging, sliding and digging in the dirt, etc. All these activities help children develop neural connections in their brains, contributing to coordination, reflexes, and the ability to learn new skills.

Capacity of attention

Online social media, electronic devices, and lack of exercise tend to reduce children's attention span, which does not help them perform tasks that require attention or focus for extended periods. Playgrounds allow children to develop their attention span since the different activities in this environment require the child to concentrate on carrying out a specific recreational activity while interacting with his environment; this makes his attention span expand and stimulate. Another benefit is that children who are hyperactive or have difficulty still can do long-term academic tasks more effectively after having had an opportunity to play outside, exercise, and channel a good part of their energy.

4.-Creative benefits

Playgrounds are spaces that allow children to develop their imagination, as they can always be adapted to an imaginary game of a child; for example, a slide, in the child's mind, can be represented as a river, a snake, a mountain hill, or a narrow path. Through play, the child imagines an environment based on the elements around it; in the case of a playground, this is designed to awaken a child's imagination and adapt to the different imaginary and mental processes.

5.-Improvement of communication and verbal skills

Being able to communicate correctly and effectively is essential for a child to express their needs and communicate with other children and adults in the same environment, which will also be useful, not only when playing but also when going to school. Through communication, children learn to behave, mature, wait, understand their feelings and frustrations, but best of all, it allows them to create bonds of friendship with other children, coinciding with them in their development.

6.-Sensory benefits

Cognitive development

The developmental process of any human being begins as soon as you are a baby. By engaging in sensory experiences, you will be sending signals to your brain, and in turn, you will have recorded the incident. It will allow the little one to exercise his brain and guarantee practical development. Sensory play and development go hand in hand as the child grows because he will learn to respond to the different senses according to his growth. For example, the child will develop balance as they know to walk and other activities.

Language development

As we explained before, sensory play and development go together, but the child will need a vocabulary to describe it when recording the experience. The child will describe the essential characteristics of a situation, food, textures, and shapes. In this process, adults' participation is necessary since they will take the time to help children expand their vocabulary to describe their different sensory experiences. One of the significant advantages of sensory play is that children can participate in it alone or with their peers. During this process, children will learn to communicate with the other children to develop necessary communication skills.

Self-Awareness

The child directs this type of experience, so the child will be the one to decide when to start or end, like playing, who will play. It will allow him to determine what he likes and dislikes. When we give children the space to discover their personal preferences, we allow them to understand that they are autonomous beings, which helps them know who they are and affirm their uniqueness in the world.

7.-Leadership

In most playgrounds, many children become natural leaders of their group; these “first steps” in leadership are carried out in activities as simple as explaining the rules of the game, forming teams, influencing other children to achieve a common goal, take care of others, determine who is the winner, etc. the game allows to different children develop their leadership skills by exercising different roles: a member of a team, leader, collaborator, intermediary, etc.

How to finance a playground for my community?

Capital funds from the British Columbia provincial government cover most of the capital costs for the acquisition or construction of playgrounds. Boards of education present capital plans that include details on playground construction priorities in their school districts. The provincial government establishes a general capital budget for schools based on the ministry's capital allocation. Each capital request is analyzed according to specific criteria, and the available resources are assigned to the highest priority projects. Below, we share a list of places where you can request financing for a playground in your community:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/capital/programs>

