

Chapter 14

Playing with the Future

This is a book for designers about designing for play. Perhaps in the process of reading and considering what has been written, they will have also come to play with designing. Playing for children is all about living; that attitude to life need not stop when we become adults. A lifelong playful interaction with living is a full life.

“A childhood of play allows the plasticity of the mind and the spirit of the child to unfold freely” (Taylor, 1990)

Adults all too often have discounted the knowledge we have accumulated over the twentieth century about how the child’s mind works. This knowledge has not yet been integrated into educational approaches and certainly not into the ways we provide for play. While the rationale for the provision of public play areas and facilities is to develop the child and assist the educational curriculum in the preparation of the child for adulthood, there is no well thought through programme of communicating to the child from the starting point of the child’s knowledge of the world or what goes on in the child’s mind. Instead we have pushed down on top of childhood another, adult layer of knowledge and skills, squeezing out the child’s world and the child’s confidence in their minds and abilities.

If we instead worked from a starting point of the children’s minds, the children’s competences, and allowed them to add additional skills, not only would the acquisition of adult knowledge be enjoyed by the children; the character of knowledge and knowing could change. Through playing with ideas where the children’s minds and adult way of thinking are set together could result in benefits to both adults and children. In playing with the world, a world that is set out from the children’s knowledge of the world, a new concept of living in this world for all could evolve.

“Think of the investment that evolution has made in the child’s brain.... When I was born, my body was a mere appendage to the head; it weighed only five or six times as much as my brain. For most of history, civilisations have crudely ignored that enormous potential. In fact the longest childhood has been that of civilisation, learning to understand that” (Bronowski, 1973)

The pathway to tomorrow leads through the playground

For many years now wise people have stated that public playgrounds were “dead”, meaning there was no future in making more of the same. Before we throw away

playgrounds we must develop alternative spaces that have good quality play possibilities where childhood is celebrated. One of the dangers of making places for all ages to be together is that the celebration of childhood is downplayed and de-emphasised. These shared places can remain as just one more place where children are sent signals that they aren't really human yet – they must wait until they are grownup before they can really do what they want. We are a society that is fixated with adulthood and adult view points to such a degree that it is almost anti-child. While children are very good at adapting to adults and will sacrifice a lot to please adults, they shouldn't need to so all the time. Children as young citizens, not as becoming adults, should have places of refuge where they can be themselves, away from the demands of the adult world. A civilised society would make it happen.

Today's playgrounds, for the most, could be much better play places. Because adults have not been good at designing for them is no reason to take them away from the children. We need to re-examine our reasons for providing playgrounds. They should be part of the urban landscape not because children need to play but because they are part of what marks a cultured and civilised society. It is necessary to make good playgrounds – for the good of the adults who need to broaden their worldview to include provision for the needs of others, to strengthen society which develops further through play, to foster social and community bonds through playing together in public open spaces. Children too have rights as citizens, even though they do not have the right to vote. In a democratic land, provision for those with less empowerment is a sign of a healthy and developed democracy. And finally childhood and children have such a joy of life there simply must be places where they can celebrate this. It is how we know we are human.

Art on the pathway to tomorrow

This is not a practical book in that there are no guides here wherein an adult will find some recipe for their work with children's playgrounds. The work of the adult designer and the demands of the children make for an interesting and challenging working life, but not an easy life. The easy route is to satisfy the minimal adult demands of the day and do only what political and adult management has determined they are prepared to do for children.

There is a large gap between what the adult western cultures are prepared to do for adult artists – painters, sculptors, opera singers, ballet dancers and others who work in the "fine arts" and what they are prepared to do for children. There is a recognised symbolic value in art that does not exist in society in relation to children's play. We see art work for which very high prices have been paid hanging in art collections that consist of nothing more than the word "HELL". This is high art of the late twentieth century. Many who look at this will think – "Hell, I can do that myself, but no one would pay me to do that." And that is the case – the value of the works of contemporary visual art is often based in the reputation of the artist and has the value it has to society because it is that specific person who has thought out the idea of the

art, who has selected the material and techniques used in the execution of the work. There is not a lot of fine drawing or representational skill involved; there is not a lot of time consuming brushwork or other painterly skill. In contemporary painting and two dimensional art it is no longer an issue of mastering techniques but more an issue of concepts, ideas and of personalities. (Peter Bonde's work "HELL" is in Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen.)

These two issues – what galleries collect in contemporary painting and the low priority of public playgrounds may at first glance seem to be two very separate aspects of modern life. But are they? I see them as a two different positions on the same scale of the values and choices of those in power in western society.

We are living in a time where there is a cult of adulthood, more specifically of younger adulthood with careers. Today is a time where everyone who falls outside of this category: the young, old, sick, unemployed, immigrants from developing countries and refugees, are dealt with in a manner that clearly signals they are second rank. Efficiency and effectiveness rule when these people's needs are to be considered. Under no circumstances are all their needs met, only a few basic ones are minimally satisfied for a time.

The adults who are in power, demand that all their needs be fulfilled, that they have a good life. The good life consists of all the signs of powerful consumption – fashion wardrobes, house at the right address, plenty of space indoors in terms of a big office, big cars, homes with over 150 sq. m of space, the biggest bedroom in the house, big freeways so they can get to work a few seconds faster. They must never have to wait for anything; efficiency and effectiveness take on entirely different meaning in terms of services for this class.

Money is the great equaliser and the great divider. Workers in the service sector should be servile and self sacrificing; they are not equal; they don't earn as much money. After all the demands and wishes of this pampered elite have been somewhat satisfied there is not much money for children along with the other "outsiders". The adults have what they need to make their life easy for them and have little left over either in terms of money or empathy for those who are not positioned like themselves.

Having galleries full of contemporary art is a sign of a well functioning society led by persons of high sophistication and superior tastes.

An examination of art works in art galleries working with an in depth knowledge of the way of thinking and concepts of the individual artist can reveal a very harsh criticism of modern society. Similarly a review of playgrounds that society allocates to children, viewed with a knowledge of what children need, also places this modern society in an negative light. There is money for the fine arts because, although most people do not understand what the artist is doing, fine arts symbolise good taste and ownership of art and having galleries full of contemporary art is a sign of a well functioning society led by persons of high sophistication and superior tastes.

That much of contemporary two dimensional art includes a serious critique of this society seems to be a part of the attraction of the art. Having bought the art and hung it in a fine gallery and paid a huge sum to staff the gallery, hired security and paid insurance on the art work, society now has eased its conscience about what is wrong, and they are very sophisticatedly tolerant as well. The artist message is lost through indulgence and adulation of art by a sector of society which uses the art and artist to promote their own values. Prevailing society is deaf to the artist's message and sees only the symbolic value of the art for their own purposes. Similarly these same groups are deaf to the needs and values of children's play because they do not realise any symbolic value in these things.

Play is a prerequisite to later adult creativity and in turn the creative adult culture is reflected in the play of the people.



Play and high art are two related aspects of human aesthetic expression.

Creating works of art and playing are two related aspects of humanity, the two aspects wherein lies the origins of our western culture and civilisation. Play is a prerequisite to later adult creativity and in turn the creative adult culture is reflected in the play of the people. Play and high art are interrelated and how we deal with these areas of human culture are measures of the quality of our society.

As space designers we have a choice. We can aim to create art that is approved by the adult society and to be entered in art histories to be appreciated by generations of art enthusiasts as a symbol of our cultural period, or we can create art that is lived in and used up while it creates an impression on the users that influences the further development of culture and civilisation.

Function versus expression

Alessi. Interview in *Politiken*, April 9 1999.

“If it is only function that we are talking about – we have achieved that already a thousand years ago. With Alessi it is the form of expression. I would have to close the factory if we only considered function.”

Open space and culture: The search for Paradise

Open space must not be seen as potential building grounds. Rather the space occupied by buildings should be seen to be potential open space. We are sealing off the surface of the planet earth and covering over the only place we know that is capable of supporting life.

The professional bias of architects has dominated the form of our living spaces for centuries – a profession whose income depends on making buildings, and therefore with every decade we build more. We cover the surface of the earth with



Civilisation develops through interaction with society in social setting and public spaces.

boxes, always choosing the best land and locations for these constructions. We cut down trees, drain wetlands to gain access to these lands. What drives us to this – are we still carrying around inside some little cave man that fears attack from wild animals and well armed enemies and who seeks comfort from bad weather? A small cave in the hillside didn't alter the whole ecology of the land. Today our caveman instincts are turning the whole surface of Planet Earth into a labyrinthine series of caves where we can hide from each other. This direction will not lead to any further development in culture or civilisation – such development and innovations arise in social settings, in group values, in highlighting those aspects of life on earth that humans feel most strongly. While we may all need our own personal caves – they should be so small to accommodate only the necessary while the shared open social spaces should be as large as possible. Schools and institutions for children should have a minimum of building space and a maximum of well landscaped outdoor space.

Architects, the modern day cavemen, have their place but not as urban planners. Not only do we carry within us the heritage of the caveman we also carry with us the heritage of the gardens of Paradise. Much of human history and culture has been touched by our very human dream and longing to Paradise, and Paradise is always a garden, never a building. Human beings are also gardeners, creators of Paradise on earth, and the urge to construct must be balanced with the urge to create gardens and forests and open air living spaces as well as well balanced outdoor ecosystems. In this way our civilisations will grow and thrive. If we cover the earth with buildings, we have no possibility to create Paradise.

Children lost the struggle for space before they could walk

Space, land, is one of the signs of power and wealth. Wars all over the globe are fought over land and who controls it. Democratic countries have tried to develop tools for discussion and debate amongst themselves where there are territorial disputes but this is such an emotional issue that violence often arises. The media and public relations people work to realign the citizen's perception of events so that those in power can find a widely based agreement for their viewpoint. Dictators also use the media and their armies to enforce their visions of enough space to satisfy their egos. A huge amount of wealth and peoples' lives are sacrificed every year to satisfy the needs of a few men for power over space. The whole problem is that there is a limited amount of land on Planet Earth – and with all our technology we really can't make much more. Yes, we can build high rise buildings so there is more living space by increasing density, but down on the ground there is a limited supply. Yes, we can build amazing islands like at Dubai however these things are reservation for the wealthy.

Space is also one of the absolutely essential elements in quality outdoor play provision for children. Children need room and play requires space for the big arm movements, for jumping, for running. A report published in a Danish newspaper in March 1999 stated that the amount of indoor space per person in the homes of Danes had been increasing over the century. First because families are smaller today and

secondly because modern families demand larger homes. Today, there is an average of 55 sq. metres per person in the Danish private home, and less than 4 sq. metres per child in a pre-school institution where the children spend most of their waking time. The home stand empty from 7.30 in the morning until 4 in the afternoon. Outdoors it is a similar story. If only we could get 55 sq. metres per child in the outdoor play area!

Some cities now have more than 50 per cent of their total land area paved and devoted to roadways, freeways, access road and parking lots. While there are more streets and street have been a traditionally preferred play space by children however for the most streets are too dangerous for children to use for play – the adults need to go fast. Some innovative work is being done in German and other European towns on street-sharing. This kind of approach should be used in all communities everywhere.

Outdoor parkland is threatened and much of it is no longer open space but built up space with covered tennis courts, pools, centres and of course – parking lots. There is little informal, semi-wild or wild lands left within easy access for children of middle school years to find their own play space. While land inventories may show that there is still the same amount of recreation and park land in the community as there was earlier in the century the spaces have been highly organised and often taken over by one interest group and are not available for other activities. The result is that there are few places where children can play and the amount of space available per child for playing is very limited – usually just the designated playground. Here there is far less than 55 sq. metres per child in the neighbourhood. Most communities allocate much less than 10 sq. metres per child resident as designated outdoors space for play – when in fact they should have 50 sq. metres (excluding pre-school institutional spaces) depending on their age and where else they can play.



Adult disregard for adequate open space for playing results in situations such as here where the little outdoor space is filled with a structure which is used mostly for storage.

Most adults in society will immediately react with the statement that their community cannot afford to provide this kind of space for children's play. They are wrong – we can't afford not to do it. The costs of health care, special education as well as dealing with youth crime, gangs and so forth all will continue to increase unless we get children out playing in better quality play spaces. This space provision is only met in rural and very unorganised districts. In the urban centres planners don't even give the children a chance to have quality in play spaces, and children have no power to lobby for their needs. They need, and we all need, political leaders with a vision for further development of civilisation and culture.

One hundred and fifty years ago, when western cultures began providing public park spaces for ordinary citizens, the arguments for this provision were based in the health benefits and the improvement in character of the ordinary person as well as the creation of a sense of community and citizenship. Zuylen writes

Napoleon III knew full well that the oases of greenery he inserted in the restless city of Paris were much more than pleasure grounds, they were part of a political agenda. Public parks held out the prospect of social harmony, or the illusion of it. The aesthetic rationale of modern city parks harks back to the timeless theme of the garden of Eden, in this brilliant variation, it was hoped that relaxation and diversion in a natural setting would act as a safety valve for the tensions of urban life and perhaps neutralize its harmful effects. (p.113)



Time spent in high quality garden-like settings serve as a neutraliser to the stresses of modern city life.

Today we think people have adjusted to the tensions of city life. Political leaders have overlooked the importance of time spent in a high quality garden-like setting as a neutraliser to the stress of the city life. We have neglected how important it is for our children to be outside and in contact with planet Earth.

Instead we rely more and more on chemistry to neutralise the harmful effects. Children are given pills so they can concentrate better and anyone can take a “happy” pill if they feel depressed. We have forgotten how very, very essential it is to the health and well being of the human spirit, for our brain and our body to move about in pleasant outdoor surroundings – often and everyday. In the twenty-first century we also need outdoor places where we can find, not only refreshment, but also the sense of social harmony and feeling of being part of a community. Rather than investing in maintaining a land base of well designed parks within cities we have refocused public funds into health care and medication of the population, including our children. We can and must do better than this. It is civilising to enjoy park-like settings in the company of our fellows in a way that taking a pill is not; it is even more civilising to struggle, to suffer the twinge of minor inconvenience, in order to make life better for our children. Children will not wage war on us because we fail to give them quality spaces for play, they love us and, when young, think of adults as all powerful and almost godlike. We should not fail them, not only for their sake but to civilise ourselves.

Our childhood stays with us for a lifetime.

The future and technology

Many adults repeat the phrase “the future is technology”. This is not much of a vision for our future. The twentieth century was defined and shaped by machines, with many improvements and conveniences in life for wealthy western adults. The early twenty first century continues this focus. But the costs have been tremendous. Poor people in developing countries are cut off from most benefits of this technological culture as there are not enough resources for everyone to have these things. In the west, the small amount of funding the politicians will allocate for children are channelled into computers, based in the argument that today’s children must be computer literate to be able to work in adulthood. Computer technology is changing so fast that by the time these children are adults computers will be worlds apart from what they are today. Children of today, to prepare for tomorrow’s work life, do not need to spend a lot of time with today’s computers; for the sake of a good adult life they should be practising to use their brain in all its facilities and competences. More than anything else they should be developing skills to deal with the new and the unknown.

Life and culture in the twenty first century must integrate more consideration for a balance in living conditions for all beings in all places. Bronowski has

written that “the longest childhood has been that of civilisation” in learning to understand the enormous investment evolution has made in the brain. Technology today aims at replicating the brain or at least the performance of the adult brain. There is a much better future for our culture if we were to focus on developing the huge potential in the child’s brain. The resources of this planet are finite while the potential in the child’s brain is almost infinite. Let the children play.

Today’s children must learn to understand how real-life situations are different from computer simulated conditions.



Our future on this planet will be affected by the way we interact with each other and our surroundings.

Today’s children must learn to understand how real-life situations are different from computer simulated conditions. In the computer all is programmed, all games and projects have a precise solution like that of chess or engineering. This is the heritage of the twentieth century machine age – where all problems were

solvable if we just put all the tiny pieces together in the right way. Real life doesn't work that way. Real-life is not a chess game, nor is it engineered. It is not a series of pre-programmed events. Real-life means interacting with the forces of life on this planet – people, and living things. More than anything our future on this planet will be affected by the way we interact with each other and with nature.

Children on the pathway to adulthood in tomorrow must understand that real life situations do not have precise, pre-programmed solutions but that they are a living part of the solution. Johnny von Neumann, in his theory of competitive games states “real life consists of bluffing, of little tactics of deception, of asking yourself what is the other man going to think I mean to do.” An understanding of real life and an ability to find workable real-life solutions comes from learning about how people behave, how people think. This is not something we learn from a computer, we develop these skills through playing with people.

As the concern for the future of humankind on Earth grows due to the threat of global warming and overpopulation, today's children are growing into responsibility for a very messed up place. Today there is a great need to develop problem solving skills and skills to adapt and find new solutions. This will happen through providing children with quality play opportunities not by increasing the number of hours they are in school.

“Good for computers; no good for life”, sayings of a Ukrainian–Canadian grandmother.

Aesthetics and play – summary

In a book on designing for play the issue of aesthetics cannot be ignored. To further develop design for play it can be helpful to look at the origins of art and aesthetics. Art and aesthetics have their origins in the human urge to create, in human fantasy, in the human sense of magic and mysticism. Art and belief are closely connected and art and religion have the same origins. In a time when mankind has discovered that the replacement of spiritual belief with belief in science is not fulfilling, we have turned to art as a element of expression which can move us, and we find identity in consumption of trendy goods and services. Will the twenty first century person be the perennial tourist searching for newer and more exotic experiences? And will they feel empty after has all been done? “Been there, done that, bought it all.” Today's children are new “tourists” in a world full of ordinary wonders. The whole world is exotic to a baby. Like the child, we can all benefit from looking again at the ordinary and seeing the wonders of life on this planet.

Good art, however, is more than an expression or an acquisition to express status. Good art gives insight to the individual on life, beauty and the human condition. Good art gives insight on real life conditions. Good art for children must touch and communicate to the children.

Playing at Designing #3

The advantage of playing is that you can test out actions and emotions that would be too dangerous to act out in real life. For a designer playing means he or she can take risks that might otherwise affect their professional reputation. When we play we can take enough risk that we can actually invent something new. When we risk enough we learn and make this new knowledge our own.

Artists play with design elements and ideas as a method of creation. Play for creative adults is a tool for inventiveness. Similarly children's play includes kernels of creation, ingenuity, and holds the potential for future cultural developments. The human urge to play with things is the source of our culture and future developments of our culture will only come about as a result of playful interactions and discoveries. Playing with ideas has been a technique used by inventors and creators as a problem solving technique, such a methodology can also be applied to many other aspects of our culture.

Good design in the children's play spaces would be designs that communicate some insight into life on this planet and the conceptual and imagination's worlds. The design should add to the quality of playfulness of the space and something more – a unique communication between the site, the designer and the players. Playing is living for the young child and for the future.

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Appendix 1

Suggestions for the Layout of Playgrounds

The best way to address playground safety is by providing adequate stimulation and challenge for the children to develop competence through play. Playgrounds which meet the developmental needs of the children and are fun to play on are safer than those which fail to meet the needs of the children.

Childhood is long because it is the time for young humans to practise making decisions and finding out about things. The children of today will need every ounce of competence, innovation and resilience to deal with the messy world we are passing on to them. Let's give them a good start by offering better play opportunities than those that have been available to the past several generations.

Items placed in the playground with the intention that children will use them as play equipment should comply with national or international guidelines such as EN1176 or similar guidelines for playground equipment safety. This appendix addresses some of the other elements to be included in or related to making a safe and challenging play area. Play safety is more than play items that comply with safety guidelines; the essential aspect of safe play is ensuring that the children have choices and play possibilities that suit their abilities and interests.

1. Location and climate

Playgrounds should not be located in areas where there are environmental hazards – check the soil conditions, overhead electrical lines and other possible sources of health hazards.

Play activities made possible by local climatic conditions should be considered as well as considering the impact of local climatic conditions on the comfort of the players. Play based in climatic conditions can include play with snow and ice, playing with the effects of wind and playing with water during and after the rain.

Considerations for comfort can include protection from heat, sun and wind. Shade is one method of protection, however additional consideration should be given to the quality of the surfacing in locations with very hot summers. Avoid asphalt and rubber surfacing in such climates or at least keep such surfaces to a minimum and offer alternative surfaces such as sand filled synthetic turf to reduce temperature build up in the play area. (Asphalt and rubber can become so hot they can actually cause burns on small children.) Plans should be made for the comfort of the adults on the playground as well with seating and places to watch the children integrated

into the play space and not placed along the edges as in the stereotype playground..

2. Ancillary items

Ancillary items are made elements such as fences, litter bins, cycle racks, pergolas, seating, planting bins, signs and sculptures that are placed within or around a playground and are not intended for use in play. Some natural elements such as plants and stones may also be placed in the playground. These items are not covered by playground equipment safety guidelines. However, good practice would indicate that protrusions and sharp edges should be eliminated from these items for the comfort and safety of all users. None of these elements should intrude within the free space falling space (minimum use zone) of the play equipment.

3. Circulation

Children moving around the playground should have sufficient space to move around the playground and equipment. The space used for circulation should not normally intrude into the free space and/or falling space that composes the minimum use zones around the play equipment. Children should not need to go through these safety spaces to get to another piece of equipment.

4. Pathways and circulation areas where there is a forced direction of movement

For example, a bicycle or tricycle path on a slope, a snow sledding runway, a grassy slope for rolling or similar should have provision for a free space around the player in movement similar to that described as free space in EN1176. This free space should be provided to ensure that the user can complete the movement.

5. Surfacing

Surfaces have different slip characteristics and attention should be paid to the interface between surfaces with two different slip characteristics. Loose fill surfaces spilling out onto paved surfaces used for circulation can be particularly hazardous and the layout of the play area should consider means to eliminate or reduce this hazard. One way to do this is to use synthetic sand filled turf as a buffer between sand play areas and paved spaces.

6. Plants in the playground

Selection of plant material in the playground should be made bearing in mind that children will be playing with it. This means using plant material that is quite vigorous and can withstand pulling off of leaves and twigs.

Wherever possible integrate local/native plant materials and add simple easy to read labels to help parents and children learn about their local plant life.

Like other aspects of safety – the only way to protect children from plant poisoning is to ensure they know which plant parts they can eat. Rules like “no toxic plants on the playground” are nonsense. Many plants like tomatoes, rhubarb, potatoes, parsley and even cherries have elements or parts that are potentially toxic. We have survived because we know which parts to eat and which to leave alone. The next generation also needs to learn this lesson as young as possible.

Avoid being put into a panic by those who worry about poisonous plants on the playground. Unless this is a supervised space for infants, most local and landscape plants can be used, even ones with barbs like roses and those with low level toxicity in roots and stems – as one would need to consume huge amounts of these plants to be made ill. Never remove a full grown tree such as yew or cherry because someone tells you it is toxic to children. The tree does more for the children. It is best that children learn early on not to put anything in their mouths unless it is something that they know to be edible. Who knows what is growing on the roadside just outside the playground.

7. Access

Access to the play area should be clearly visible at a distance and well marked. At the entry there should be room enough to pause and look around and a place to park bikes and mobility devices, baby push carts and so forth.

Where there is a raised perimeter edging, provision should be made for ease of access into those areas intended for use by young children, for example by adding a step or platform that will assist in accessing the area.

8. Separation of play activities

Separation by age and user skill

Equipment designed to provide challenging physical play for older children should be placed in the playground in a way that is clearly separate from the play opportunities for the younger children. It should be clear to all who come to the play area that the items which are physically challenging for older children are not part of the young children’s play area.

Separation by play type

Some forms of play such as the quieter, creative and manipulative play activities should be kept separate from those play items where physical movement predominates. This will avoid some aspects of bullying behaviour.

9. Sun orientation

Consideration should be given to sun orientation and shade when placing metal slides, cable rides, some swings and other relevant items in the playground. Slides should face north in the northern hemisphere or be shaded at midday to reduce heat build up. Cable rides and swings should be oriented so that the low setting sun does not blind the user so they cannot see if anyone comes into the movement area of the play item.

10. Special needs

Consideration should be given to the needs of children who have physical disabilities and special layouts and equipment may be called for to meet their movement requirements. For example, children who use mobility devices or have some motor control challenges benefit from larger free spaces than those called for in safety standards for ease of movement and circulation around play items.

11. Play safety happens when children are competent

Children need risk and challenge to develop skills and competence. Competent children can understand about risks and deal with them.

Most children will not undertake a movement activity they know they cannot manage. However parents too often urge young children to go beyond their competence by helping them up onto equipment that is inappropriate for their age. Injuries may then occur because the child has not had sufficient opportunity to develop competence in this kind of movement. To avoid this, ensure that there are challenging movement play possibilities for the youngest children and that play items for older children are clearly signed in accordance with the recommended age of user.

12. Reducing bullying on the playground

Playground bullying can be a serious problem especially for the development of self confidence of children.

An effective technique to reduce bullying is by spreading the “goodies” across the available play space. This means avoiding using a central multi play structure intended to be used by all ages. Instead lay out a number

of smaller play structures that will disburse the children. Ensure that these items all have a high level of play interest and challenge for smaller segments of the age range. In this way you avoid the possibility of one group of players dominating the playground and bullying the other children.

Another way of reducing bullying is to offer a wide variety of play spaces, furnished or landscaped, so that the child who may be bullied can find a place to be away from the potential bully.

13. Providing for a wide variety of play interests

Most adults think of purpose-built play items when they think of a playground. However these places should be much more than a collection of made play items. Naturally planted spaces and/or forests, gardens, open grass for games, and areas for manipulating loose and found materials, dancing stages, and cultural/arts spaces should also be part of the play provision.