MAP-ing a New Way to Play: Lessons learned from the Mobile Adventure Playground

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City of Calgary
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Our Adventure Playground

• The City of Calgary is creating a new way to play – one that encourages inclusive, independent, unstructured, creative, ‘risky play’ with its Mobile Adventure Playground.
• In 2016, the City of Calgary received funding from the Lawson Foundation to help increase active, outdoor play in Calgary… and the Adventure Playground was born!
Locations

- Topography
- Community Access
- Geography
- Attraction
What are some challenges you would expect to come across with a Mobile Adventure Playground?
Challenges - Mobile

Welcome parents and caregivers!

This is a Mobile Adventure Playground – a space for kids to play in a new way. In here, they are free to explore, build, imagine and learn in their own way. Our staff are here to help your kids be safe and have fun. Your child’s participation acknowledges your understanding and acceptance of the risks associated with playing here. Stay and watch them play!

calgary.ca/play
Challenges - Weather
Challenges – Parents

I. Inform & Educate

II. In Play
Challenges - Internal
Challenges - Staffing

Re. Mobile Adventure Playground & Play Ambassadors I LOVE that the City is providing new interesting ways to keep kids moving & playing outside. However, the programs are not accurately represented. The staff at both programs do NOT engage with the children or facilitate participation. They sit/stand to the side and chat with each other or look on their phones the WHOLE time. I have attended MAP numerous times and a PA activity once and it was the same every time. Please hire staff that are outgoing & interested in engaging with children, plus willing to do the job they were hired for.
How did we evaluate the MAP?

**ACTIVE LIVING RESEARCH**
http://activelivingresearch.org/

- SOPARC
- SOMAP
- SOPLAY
- SOFIT

System for Observing Play and Recreation in Communities
System for Observing Play and Leisure Activity in Youth
System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time
System for Observing Physical Activity and Recreation in Natural Areas
Variables

1. Activity levels
   - Sedentary
   - Moderate
   - Vigorous

2. Risk
   - Heights
   - Speed
   - Tools
   - Rough & Tumble play
   - Hiding/ Disappearing

3. Social
   - Solo
   - Group (kids)
   - Adults

4. Engagement
   - Creative play
   - Building
   - Free play
   - Other
Activity Levels

boys

- Winter:
  - Sedentary: 26%
  - Moderate: 62%
  - Vigorous: 12%

- Summer:
  - Sedentary: 34%
  - Moderate: 59%
  - Vigorous: 7%

girls

- Winter:
  - Sedentary: 22%
  - Moderate: 64%
  - Vigorous: 13%

- Summer:
  - Sedentary: 30%
  - Moderate: 65%
  - Vigorous: 5%
Lots of Free Play, Little Risk, and mixed social groups
Parental Feedback

Positive experience

We would return!
Social Media – friend or foe?

Has anyone gone to the City's Mobile Playground? We went today and I'm curious what other experiences were.

Today's looked like they picked up a bunch of trash and brought it for kids to play with- ripped cardboard, old tires, broken toys, metal pipes with duct tape, old gross pieces of fabric... I was excited about this project but really disappointed when we arrived.
Kiddos and I chanced upon this pilot program last summer, and are so happy that it's back... if your kids are found of outdoor, imaginative play check it out.


The City of Calgary - Mobile Adventure Playground
The City’s mobile adventure playground is back this summer in a park near you. The playground runs May 4 until September 29.

The mobile adventure playground at Canmore Park was SOOO cool, make sure you check one out this summer! We headed over to the spray park after to cool down. 3 families (5 kids) that we could count, probably more out there, but so many people it was hard to keep track! And no photos today- we were too busy playing!!!!
Will my son need a tetanus shot after playing here?
CITY OF CALGARY MOBILE ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

June 25, 2016

Remember being a kid and discovering the endless possibilities and play options of a simple cardboard box? Sometimes it was a race car, a rocket ship, a castle, or a hidden fort. The City of Calgary is bringing the joy of discovering, building, and playing with minimal supervision by introducing the Mobile Adventure Playground pilot program. Even though this is new to the city, Adventure Playgrounds have been around since 1943. The first one opened in Denmark, followed by one in England.
MAP-ing a new way to play:

Lessons learned from the Mobile Adventure Playground