URBAN PLAYGROUNDS:
How we can find a compromise between children’s needs and city’s possibilities?

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PLAY SPACE: PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN AND EVALUATION OF PLAY VALUE
“Paradoxically, play is supposedly to be freely chosen, but provision for play has in recent decades become highly managed with architects, developers, engineers, and numerous actors having an involvement”

B. Spiegel, T. Gill, H. Harbottle
DESIGN VS PLAY VALUE

Create a place, not a design
“It’s hard to design a space that will not attract people. What is remarkable is how often this has been accomplished”

William H. Whyte
CHILD NEEDS VS CITY POSSIBILITIES

Is it possible to put this high valued play structure into the modern district?

>
CHILD NEEDS VS CITY POSSIBILITIES

Is it really the best money investment? Is there any play value?
CHILD NEEDS VS PARENTS NEEDS

According to the parents’ opinion, children need:

- Free play
- Communication
- Exploring
- Movement
- Rest and joy

But when was the last time your child asked to go to the playground to practice manners, improve cooperation, self-concept, physical strength and coordination?
CHILD NEEDS VS PARENTS NEEDS

Parents needs:

- Rest
- Place for supervision
- Possibility to play together with children
- Communication
- Food, water, wc

> We have to take into attention both children and adults needs.
CITY’S POSSIBILITIES

- Place for play
- Barrier free access to playground
- Contact with nature in the city

Child-friendly city – the goal of joint project of designers, psychologists, teachers, landscape architects.

Child-friendly city has a number of places which inspire free child play and their own initiatives and activities. The outdoor playground can be such a place.
QUESTIONS

• Play value?
• Different ages and needs?
• Levels of activities?
• Correspondance to district design?
• Quantity and quality of play possibilities?
• Maximum new and exciting play objects?
• Good balanced set of play traps?
THE RESULTS OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS
THE METHOD

The method of analysis of Children`s Playground Attractiveness (CPA) was developed in 2017 by psychologists of MSUPE I.Kotliar and M.Sokolova with the support of «Buninskie Luga, PIK group»

Data collection of empirical research 08.2017
Non-participant observation of playground (4 parts):
- every 15 min\per hour for one part
- from 09.00 am to 21.00 pm (12 times a day)
- during two workdays and two days off
The playground was observed 96 times.
THE METHOD

List of observation contains:
- time
- weather conditions
- visitors age, gender
- type of activity
- conflicts
- risk situations
- set of play equipment
- comments
- photo and video fixation

> After observation we made an interview with children and parents.
THE METHOD

PLAN OF PLAYSCAPE
AGE OF VISITORS, %

- Infants: 1.02%
- Toddlers: 6.33%
- Preschoolers: 44.89%
- Mothers: 11.84%
- Fathers: 9.14%
- Teenagers: 7.72%
- Grandmothers and grandfathers: 0.99%
- Pupils: 16.96%
POPULARITY OF PLAY ZONES, %

- pyramid play zone: 26, 49
- stream: 22, 23
- rubber court: 13, 33
- lawn of babies: 7, 20
- sand pit: 9, 46
- play ramp: 21, 29
POPULARITY OF PLAY ZONES, %
STREAM

- water pumps: 10,92%
- water dams: 16,98%
- watercourse: 8,86%
- hubbles: 6,76%
- source: 21,01%
- water wheel: 10,26%
POPULARITY OF PLAY ZONES, %

PLAY RAMP

- ramp: 18, 76
- stream tunnel: 9, 17
- picnic zone: 12, 48
- play rest holes: 8, 82
- chaise-longue: 10, 71
- net bridge: 10, 28
MAIN CHILDREN ACTIVITIES AT THE PLAYGROUND, %

- Moving: 67, 66
- Experiment: 24, 35
- Playing: 18, 38
- Recreation, communication, eating: 18, 38
- Cooperation: 10, 09
- Risk, danger: 5, 27

Legend:
- Recreation
- Communication
- Eating
- Cooperation
- Risk, danger
- Moving
- Experiment
- Playing
HIGH PLAY VALUE OBJECTS, %

p < 0.01

excavator
puddle
sand snake
sand transport system
sand pit
stream source
HIGH COOPERATION VALUE OBJECTS, %

$ p < 0.01 $ and $ p < 0.001 $
HIGH EXPERIMENT VALUE OBJECTS, %

\( p < 0.001 \)
ATTRACTION OF OBJECTS, INTERVIEW %

- Pebble
- Water system
- Chaise-longues
- Sand system
- Excavator
- Play ramp
- Slides
- Cafe
- Pyramid
- Swings

0
5
10
15
20
25
30

Number of respondents

children
parents
SOLUTION
URBAN PLAYGROUNDS
CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAY SPACE

• bespoke atmosphere of playspace
• split-level landscape (hills, ramps, holes, slopes, meadows, channels)
• different play type zones and dialog of zones (‘home’ zone and places for investigation, designing of ‘activity loops’)
URBAN PLAYGROUNDS

CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAY SPACE

• open-ended play equipment (open to different types of children activities) and loose parts (leaves, bark, cones)
• the possibility of transformation and mastering of playspace
• places for risk
• different level of visitor’s activity (quiet places for rest, recreation and active areas)
The space should be comfortable and have a good image, and that it should be an important place where people want to be. It should instill a sense of pride in the people who live and work in the surrounding area.

> These principles we have to put into project and then check, how is works.
CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAYSCAPE

• play is longer and more varied;
• experimentation has wide range with mixing elements, loose parts;
• equipment and landscape suggest communication between children and child and adults;
• investigation of nature, physics, biology laws etc.
THANK YOU!
WELCOME TO RUSSIA!

http://afa-group.ru/

http://playspaces.ru/