

DESIGN ADVISORY SESSION #3 - ELEMENTARY PLAY SPACES

Describe your own favorite childhood play spaces...

- The outdoors! My parents always said “go outside and find something to do!”
- Quiet nook areas where friends could gather
- Hidden, discovery, nature, magical, a little risky, secret
- My terrace at home under the shade of a coconut tree, where moss grew (SAFE, Nature)
- Outside in nature...
- Places to make my own fun and be creative
- A place I felt empowered, free, creative, and confident
- Allowed for active play with a bit of risk involved.
- Tree house, swings, open grass, nature
- Wobbly bridges, monkey bars, jumping among tree stumps and roots
- A playhouse because it was full of imaginative play opportunities
- It's a small mountain, for us to explore, we go up and down every single day to find out more unknown things
- Interactive, messy, water-a play to build, hide, and create (the weeping willow was my favourite on the banks of a creek!)
- Swings, climbing, haystacks
- Private spaces for make pretend areas
- Outdoor playgrounds and indoor creativity areas
- Big enough that you didn't have to wait to “take your turn”
- Being outside, fresh air, open, forests, dirt, discovery, nature, social, friends
- Creating secret hideaways in the backyard, preferably in and under trees
- Open group study areas, outdoor play spaces
- Various components in the playground.. for varied levels of age groups.. helped you challenge yourself with your friends - was fun!
- An obstacle place, which provide more challenges to usual play
- A big rope climbing structure that felt really high
- Hide and go seek in the woods. Foursquare and basketball at school
- Enough place to run around - nicely planned playground..
- Digging, building, dirty, physical
- Hidden nooks to hide away in
- The road into nature where there are lots of trees, flowers, and different kinds of bugs
- Tether ball
- The dirt hill where new houses were were being built
- Didn't have to wait to take your turn and that made it fun
- Being with others
- Water - playing in the creeks in our neighbourhood
- Tag, dodgeball, tether ball, foursquare, handball, trampoline, stilts, unicycle, skateboards, a stream, fairy houses, street football...

As you have considered many possibilities today, what do you most hope that the design team keeps in mind in the next stages of designing elementary play spaces?

- These spots nurture respect for others as well as respect for the nature they are in.
- Play is learning for kids.
- Opportunities for all. Sustainable.
- Sense of space
- Flexibility and multi functionality
- Let the spaces allow for more “yes, it’s allowed” than “no, you can’t do that”
- Small and large scale play areas that allow safe ‘risks’
- Sustainable. Play is important and meaningful learning for students.
- Easy accessibility for kids to enjoy the spaces in their short recess time
- Ensure that the spaces are continuous - so ELC students will have the opportunity to continue playing with their favourite places they had in the ELC as they get older.
- There are kids who like creative messy play and where can this play a role - it doesn’t always need to be “clean.”
- Make sure there is enough to do for all student personas as some are easier to design
- Giving kids a sense of wonder around every corner
- Kids don’t need complicated things to be happy. Simplicity is great. Would love to see the design team plan varied activities.
- Please pay attention to the “over-designed” and thus intimidating landscaping in an attempt to feel “natural”... it is not just the trees but the living ecosystem it comes with...insects, birds, reptiles, mud, dirt.... And to the possibly overwhelming scale of the larger play areas...
- The obstacle course”!!! It fits well for active, creative children, for social kids to tackle together, and hopefully will attract quiet kids too.
- I love the thought about the ability to take risks on the playground and learn from them.
- Make sure whimsy, imagination, intrigue, and the chance to feel fascinated with the environment is as optimised as the play opportunities
- Manipulated play spaces... nature we can touch and mould, getting messy, tactile and sensory
- Yes, For creative kids, just a Conner, with material, for them to free play is enough!
- Structured games where the kids use their bodies as pawns... Snakes and ladders.... Where you move physically...
Get input from kids to see what THEY would like to see in their play spaces
- Green space Gardening space. Digging space. Open-ended play potential. Great marketing tool. Wide variety of varied play options.
- Connections to nature and play areas which are close to learning spaces
- Open space. Games that don’t require infrastructure inspire whimsy and imagination learn from watching others, raise structures to explore and use space
- Excitement about the variety of space, the connection to nature and the outdoors, the idea of creating spaces that promote adventure and challenges (huge climbing structure)

What questions do you have?

- What will happen with the old playground equipment? Artwork that is integrated into the outdoor spaces?
- How will the school achieve a fine balance between a natural look and over landscaped areas.
- How natural is nature vs an over-designed and precise landscaping that indicates “don’t touch”? How can the design find a good balance?
- Will the natural light be sufficient for the growth of the green spaces considering the coverage of the solar panels?
- Is it possible to combine the trees and natural spaces to make more natural play spaces as opposed to manufactured spaces?
- Will the outdoor places be used for learning as well as play?
- In the bus bay -in case of any oil/ water leakage on ground, how do we keep children safe to play around
- Can there be a soccer match viewing area?
- How much thought is there in using design of the outdoor spaces to promote community values as a place where children engage with other students (including others)
- Is there flexibility to segregate play spaces to accommodate the COVID-19 situation?
- What student choice will there be for where students play? How will play spaces interact with nature rather than just view nature?
- Where does the school stand on equipment and safety/allowing the kids to take risks?
- What is the planned logistics for allowing the kids access to the different areas?
- What are the contingency plans for poor air quality?
- Would there be possibility for water play with maybe a tap that goes on and off with different streams? (Potentially can be crossed used with science?) This may be an area that it can be put in at times and taken out at others?
- Is there a possibility for a sand/dirt pit area for digging? I can imagine clothes changes would pose a potential problem, but think this would be developmentally beneficial for some.
- Is there a possibility of adding more time to the school day to add in more play time for the kids? As they go up in grade, they get less and less play time. I understand the balance between academics, specials, etc, but think that we often teach children that as you get older, you don't need as much play. No wonder, adults often lose the sense of play! How many middle school and high schoolers have the time and ability to play that is not structured? I think we are putting together this amazing play space to let the kids look at and pass by, but they get so little time to enjoy it?
- I also mentioned in my exit ticket, that I think continuity of messages and access is important to the kids. Right now, kids in the ELC get to paint on walls, play in sand, build anytime in maker space etc (they play all day) and then go to Kindergarten and lose this access as it becomes very structured.
- I wasn't in the creative group, but a maker space type area would also be good for the creatives.

