Playful Learning
The city as an enabler of the right to family life, play and leisure
Bo Stjerne Thomsen
Global Head of Research, Vice-President
The LEGO Foundation

16 October 2019
The Five Goal Areas of the CFCI

The right to family life, play and leisure
Playful objectives

- Shared perspective on definitions of play and the importance of play in a child’s development

- Be familiar with good and innovative CFCI practices promoting opportunities and spaces for play

- Understand the importance of including children, young people and their parents in defining appropriate solutions to securing time and place for play.
“Research demonstrates that developmentally appropriate play with parents and peers is a singular opportunity to promote social-emotional, cognitive, language, and self-regulation skills....”

The American Academy of Pediatrics, 2018
Playtime has Decreased Worldwide

United Kingdom

Time playing outside has declined by 50% in a generation

United States

From 1981 to 1997, children’s playtime decreased by 25%
The way we play at home, in school and the community are all affected by the wider structural shifts of how we live.

The Real Play Coalition has identified the following key areas that need to be addressed if we want to tackle the play deficit in children’s lives.

(The Value of Play Report 2018)

- Over-scheduled lives
- Access to play spaces
- Parental safety concerns
- Parental distractions
- Low-play schooling

“An average of 4 out of 10 parents say they don’t play enough as a family.” (LEGO Play Well Report 2018)
Build a Duck - you have 60 seconds
Playing is to be actively engaged in a joyful experience, where you are encouraged to try out ideas together with others.
Learning through Play – what happened?

**self-regulation**
- long-term memory
- attention
- mental imagery
- systems thinking

**executive functioning**
- visual perception
- imitation
- perspective-taking
- self-assessment

**social functioning**

**symbolic representations**
- kinesthetic awareness
- spatial visualization
- sensory-motor skills
- mental rotation
- working memory

**physical and spatial abilities**
- fine motor skills
- short-term memory
- cognitive flexibility
Transforming Cityscapes into Opportunities for Playful Learning

Andres S. Bustamante, Ph.D.
University of California, Irvine
October 16, 2019
Twitter: @Bustamante_AS
Children spend 80% of their time outside of school and early learning centers.
When I was little, I loved to play...
Example 1: How we might enhance learning in everyday “trapped” spaces like supermarkets?

In low-income neighborhoods we increased parent to child language by 33%!
(Ridge, Hirsh-Pasek & Golinkoff, 2015)

This study has now been replicated using STEM signage (Hanner et al. 2019); in laundromats (Neuman, 2019), and in food pantries (Hespos et al., in prep.)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ypylose7buj4f_MTcEGa1ucDjGg0lr4p/view
Example 2: Urban Thinkscape – Transforming a bus stop and adjacent plot of land

https://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/innovation-in-action/urban-thinkscape/
Urban Thinkscape Results

Types of Language Used Pre- and Post-Installation

% Who Used

Language Types

Hassinger-Das et al., (2019)
Example 3: Parkopolis at The Please Touch Museum
Adults used more whole number language, fraction language, reasoning language, talked about patterns, and asked more questions.

Bustamante et al., (under review)
Example 4: Fraction Ball at El Sol
Fraction Ball at El Sol
Fraction Ball Results

Near Transfer Items

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<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Fraction Ball</td>
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% Correct

Fraction to Decimal Conversion

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<td>0.5</td>
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Decimal to Fraction Conversion

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Bustamante et al., (in preparation)
People are joining in the fun!

- Sidewalks in Seattle
- Rethinking jails in Madison, WI
- Can we change low income housing spaces in Denver?
- Hospital waiting rooms in Philadelphia
- Laundromats
Invitation to dream together!

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Fire side discussion
Environment and infrastructure of play
Councillor Stephanie Watt, Prof. Isami Kinoshita, Dr. Peter Apel
Stephanie Watt, Conseillère de la Ville, Montreal
Playful Learning Session
Child Friendly Cities Summit
Cologne 16.10, 2019

Isami KINOSHITA, Prof. Dr.,
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Play Map, about 1920-30s
Play Map in 1982
Play Map, about 1960s
Play Map, 2007
Recent situation of child’s play in Japan from the survey 2016-2018

From the questionnaire studies to 5 municipalities to all children of primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>site</th>
<th>Urban Area</th>
<th>local city</th>
<th>Rural areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date of Research</td>
<td>2018.7</td>
<td>2017.1</td>
<td>2016.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samples</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>1847</td>
<td>394</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ration of response)</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
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</table>

I don’t play in nature 90%  
I have no friend 20%  
I don’t play outdoors 80%  
Why? Prohibition of play?

Why?

Prohibition of play?
Intervention for the Child’s right to play

Mobile Play
Street Play etc.
Peter Apel, Planungsbüro STADTKINDER GmbH
Places to play

As a table consider 3-4 spaces / environments that could better support play.

Which is your table’s favourite?
Fire side discussion:
Time and opportunity to play

Sara Candiracci, ARUP, David Longstaff, Councillor Barnet Borough, London
Sara Candiracci: Reclaiming Play in Cities: Understanding and enhancing the value and experience of play in the built environment

What can contribute to make the *built environment* an *enriching and nurturing play and learning experience for children*, to support their *optimal development*?

... URBAN PLAY GAP FRAMEWORK

Play is a silent emergency and the built environment has a key role to play!
1. **Play assessment** - understanding the state of play in Khayelitsha Township, Cape Town

Understanding before designing
2. Co-creation — engaging children and caregivers in planning, design and decision-making
3. Play activation – enhance opportunities for learning through play in Khayelitsha Township, Cape Town

Creating a network of safe play-spaces and play agents
People and play

As a table, can you consider who will engage in your place-based strategy to make it come to life

How will you engage them?
Manifesto to Play

1. What will you be doing to advance learning through play in your city: one sentence.
2. Your name, organization, City, Country.
Thank you!