


PLAY TOGETHER: A DESIGN MANIFESTO


Designing play spaces to give all children
the confidence to play outside




combine
beauty and
playability



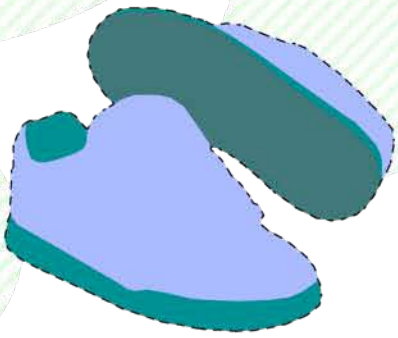
provide
playable
routes




build
positive
associations



include
individual
and communal
activity



keep boundaries
playable with
multiple exits



make all
children
welcome



let
children
personalise

4546 children talked to us about their play experiences ... some children reported that they felt susceptible to bullying ... we wanted to address this ... read on... ▶▶▶

PLAY TOGETHER: A DESIGN MANIFESTO

Designing play spaces
to give all children the
confidence to play outside

Many children feel excluded from play spaces and provision. This includes those who are bullied, who may be less confident with other children as a result.

Some children report that they are disproportionately susceptible to bullying, including disabled children, those in care and those who are carers. These are the children least likely to use play spaces.

Building on research into bullying by the Dudley Play Pathfinder team, the following design principles have been developed to encourage children who feel vulnerable or tentative to enjoy outdoor play spaces.

Join in!

Make all children welcome

Understand your local context. Engage local children and their families in the process: they are your experts in how children feel. Include those with small voices, and from different parts of the community. Ensure that the design of the place makes all children feel welcome, confident and safe.

Entice children with playable routes to playable destinations

Provide children with a taster of what lies ahead, and acknowledge that the edge of the park might feel more accessible than the designated play area.

Ensure beauty as well as playability

Be ambitious about the attractiveness of the place in its own right, motivating those accompanying children to take them there, and encouraging them to stay longer. Use different textures, fragrances and noises to provide sensory experiences. Recognise the poverty of the built environment for many and provide beauty on their doorstep.

Provide a balance of 'space' and 'stuff'

Acknowledge the value of the incidental activity that evolves in the spaces 'in-between'. Allow children the opportunity to position themselves in a part of the setting that feels safe to them. Provide 'loose parts' for personalised and individual play.

If you decide on boundaries, make them playable, and ensure multiple exits

A built boundary is not essential, but if it is needed, consider playable elements built into it. Boundary enclosure may feel important to some children and their carers, but be aware that a child who feels intimidated needs to be able to slide in and out of a setting without 'threshold fear'.

Allow children to watch before joining in – provide for individual as well as communal activity

Recognise that tentative children may welcome the opportunity to play on the periphery before finding the confidence to join in with their peers – and that some children will choose to play alone.

Build positive associations and a sense of place

Make use of play rangers and other staff to support children's engagement with a place. Foster local links with Friends Groups, schools and clubs. Make it a venue for bonfire night, summer play week, and other local activities. Involve local designers and artists to help children identify with a place, and to make it unique.

4546 children and young people in Dudley talked to us about their experiences and we have used what they told us to develop this manifesto.

The design principles defined in this manifesto are intended to supplement the ten design principles enshrined in Design for Play published by DCSF and Play England, and complement the guidance given in Inclusion by Design published by KIDS.

This manifesto has been adopted across the Black Country and endorsed by MADE, Play England and KIDS.

MADE 



Dudley
Metropolitan Borough Council



**Play
England** 

Making space for play



Youthworks

Reg. Company No 6555609

Manifesto developed by Alison Davies (Groundworks Architects LLP and MADE Enabler), building on research by Adrienne Katz (Youthworks Consulting Ltd), under the Dudley Play Pathfinder programme.

MADE, the Midlands architecture centre is a Registered Charity
www.made.org.uk 0121 633 9333

artwork designed by Groundworks Architects LLP