

# ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR OUTDOOR AREAS OF THE SCHOOL

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## PREFACE

*Play is primitive to children's happiness and well-being. The playground is an essential part of a school, children spend many hours of their day occupying themselves with the playground. A playground can be defined as a play area to let children occupy themselves with the layout and recreational equipment such as slides, see-saw, monkey bars, sandbox, mazes and playhouse. The playgrounds with well marked game activities and safe and inviting equipment provide increased motivation for children to participate in physical activities. A playground is an arrangement of the environment that supply proper facilities with a well designed layout that supports the growth of children's activity and their development<sup>(5)</sup>. An attempt has been made through the booklet to provide guidelines for suggesting the essential requirements and design considerations for the outdoor areas of the school which will help the school authorities, layman, interior designers, and landscape architects to work more efficiently and also to create easily accessible and well developed playground.*

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# INTRODUCTION

***“Play is the highest form of research.”***

***~ Albert Einstein<sup>(6)</sup>***

***Play is the child's way of learning. Through play, children receive information from the surrounding environment in order to use it in their development. The playgrounds have an important role in the modern child's world. The ideal outdoor playground should be a replica of the natural outdoor environment which fulfils every child's need. Playgrounds should be designed in a way which allows the children to experiment and control with the surroundings. It is important in playground design to incorporate natural elements and encourage childhood experiences in nature and increase physical activity as children spends significant amount of time in school playground.***

SOURCE 3



# TYPES OF PLAYGROUND

Adventure

Contemporary

Traditional

- ♦ **Adventure Playground:** In this type of playground the children are free to shape their environment in their own way. The children are involved in planning, creating and building the area with loose materials such as tires, wood, crates, toys, etc. Adventure playground enables creativity in terms of play with loose materials. It also needs a storage to store loose materials like hooks for hanging tires, bucket for sand and toys and place to stack art materials<sup>(2)</sup>.



- ♦ **Contemporary Playground:** *These playgrounds are generally planned by architects or landscape architects, they are not commonly used as they are expensive because of large moulding of concrete. Hard construction materials are used to provide durability and easy maintenance. Some pieces are designed by artists which are called “Play Sculptures”. To enhance these playgrounds, special features are added like water jets, climbing hills and tunnels<sup>(2)</sup>.*



- ♦ **Traditional Playground:** *Swings, slides, seesaws and merry-go-round are popular play equipment used on this playground. Traditional playgrounds are common in public places with traditional metal play structures<sup>(2)</sup>.*



# TYPES OF PLAY

## \* FUNCTIONAL PLAY:

In functional play the child deals with simple repetitive movements with or without objects such as rolling a ball or pulling a toy<sup>(1)</sup>.



SOURCE 7



SOURCE 8

## \* SOCIAL PLAY:

Social play involves social interaction in a group with a sense of group identity or any organized activity<sup>(2)</sup>.



\* **CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY:**

Constructive play is a manipulation of certain objects to create or construct something<sup>(1)</sup>.



SOURCE 9



SOURCE 10

\* **PRETEND PLAY:**

Pretend play is when the child transforms the physical environment into a symbol<sup>(2)</sup> like pretending to be a bird, a chef or performing acts as a mother

# AGE APPROPRIATE EQUIPMENTS

## TODDLER—AGE 6-23 MONTHS<sup>(4)</sup>



SOURCE 11

- \* *Climbing equipment under 32" of height*
- \* *Ramps*
- \* *Spiral slides less than 360°*
- \* *Spring rockers*
- \* *Swings with full bucket seats*
- \* *Sand box with secured edges*
- \* *Soft surfacing like sand, grass, rubber tiles*



## PRESCHOOL—AGE 2-5 YEARS<sup>(4)</sup>



SOURCE 12

- \* *Merry-go-round*
- \* *Ramps*
- \* *Rung ladders*
- \* *Spiral slides up to 360°*
- \* *Swings (full bucket seats, rotating tires)*
- \* *See-saw*
- \* *Spring rockets up to 4 feet height*



SOURCE 14

## GRADE SCHOOL—AGE 5-12 YEARS<sup>(4)</sup>



SOURCE 13

- \* *Arch climbers*
- \* *Free standing climbing bars*
- \* *Overhead rings*
- \* *Merry-go-round*
- \* *Spiral slides more than one 360° turn*
- \* *Track rides*
- \* *Vertical sliding poles*
- \* *Chain or cable walks*
- \* *Narrow balancing ramps*





# PLAYGROUND DESIGN PARAMETERS

*There are some factors which should be considered while designing a school playground<sup>(3)</sup>. They are:*

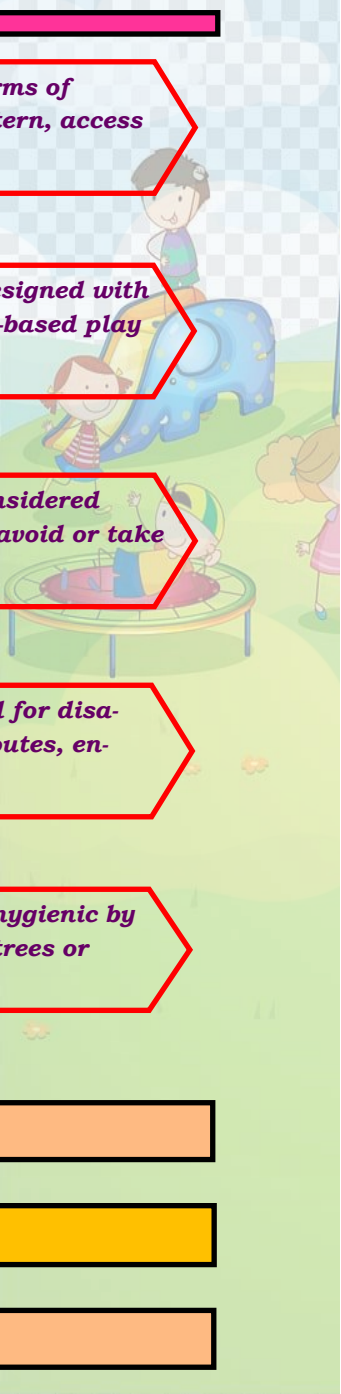
**LOCATION:** *The location of the playground should be analysed in terms of vehicular density, noise and air pollution.*

**SECURITY:** *Security must be considered in designing a security cabin. Installing cameras, or by designing separate visitor's ar-*

**SOCIAL INTERACTION:** *A well-designed seating and gathering area in which children interacts with each other like benches, decks, group seating or circle seating.*

**ACTIVITIES:** *The playground for various activities must be separated in order to minimize level of risk among children.*

**CARE & REPAIR:** *The maintenance and care of the playground should be analysed to ensure that the play area is safe for children, it may include litter-picking or checking equipment hazards*



**FLEXIBILITY:** The playgrounds must be flexible in terms of designing and separating areas such as activity pattern, access points or playground equipment.


**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:** The playground must be designed with suitable landscape and creating new types of nature-based play activities.

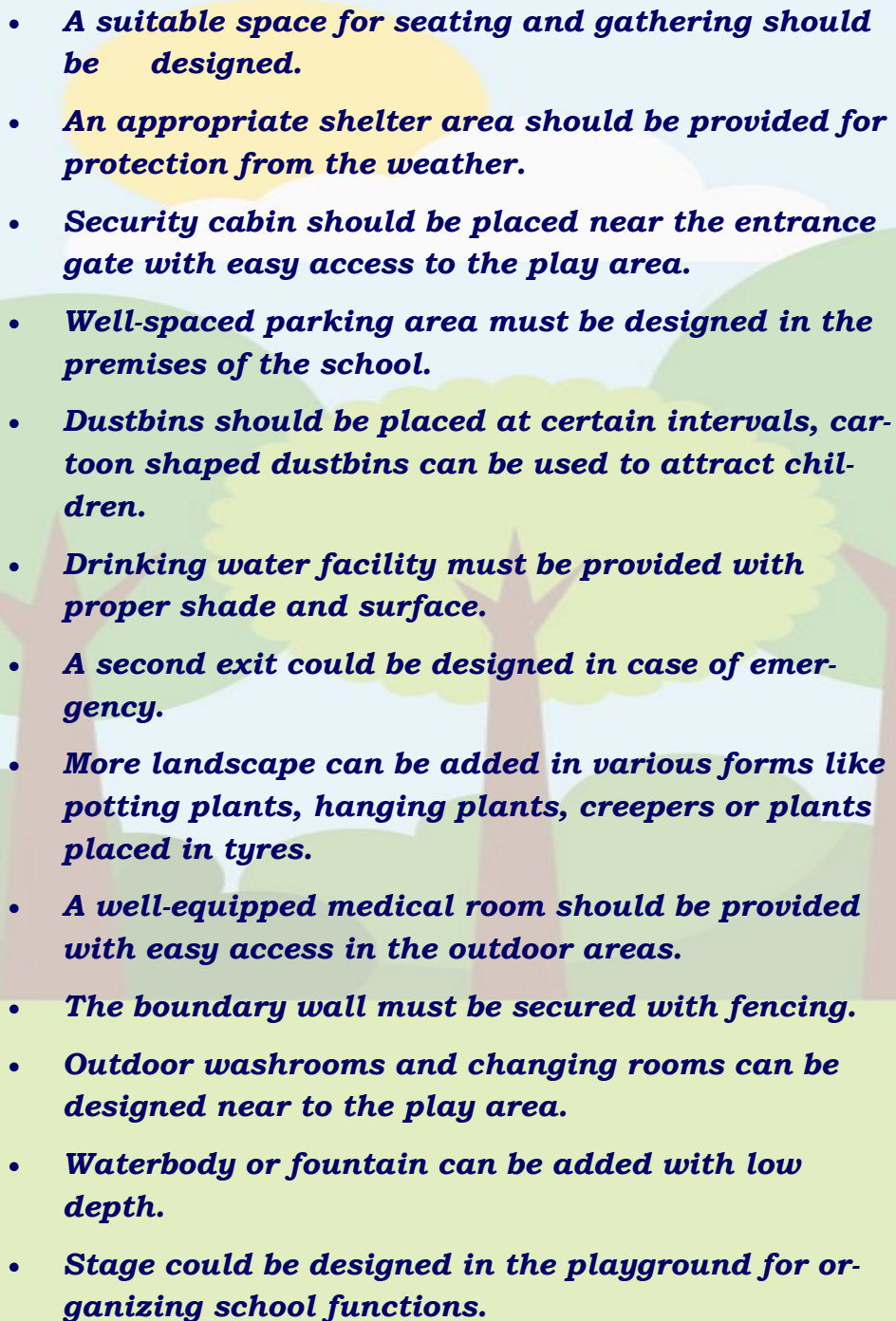
**CLIMATE:** The local climate of the area should be considered when designing and separating play areas to either avoid or take advantage of the shading effect of building of trees.

**UNIVERSAL DESIGN:** Some facilities must be provided for disabled in features like height and weight, pathways, routes, entrance, equipment or landscape.

**HEALTH & HYGIENE:** The playgrounds must be kept hygienic by cleaning the surface of the playground, trimming of trees or equipment cleaning.

## SUGGESTIONS BY THE RESEARCHER

- 
- *Acceptable and suitable space should be provided for performing various activities.*
  - *Storage space and lockers should be provided to store play equipment.*
  - *Canteen should be provided with appropriate seating area.*
  - *Add designs and symbols of various games on surface of the pathways and walkways.*
  - *Various flowering plants and trees with colourful leaves should be planted in the playground.*
  - *Playhouse and sand pit should be provided in the play area for preschool children.*
  - *The walls facing the playground area should be painted in bright colours which attracts the children.*
  - *The play equipment should be painted in bright colours which is visible from a distance.*
  - *The surface of the playground under or around any equipment must be of sand, recycled rubber mulch or grass.*

- 
- *A suitable space for seating and gathering should be designed.*
  - *An appropriate shelter area should be provided for protection from the weather.*
  - *Security cabin should be placed near the entrance gate with easy access to the play area.*
  - *Well-spaced parking area must be designed in the premises of the school.*
  - *Dustbins should be placed at certain intervals, cartoon shaped dustbins can be used to attract children.*
  - *Drinking water facility must be provided with proper shade and surface.*
  - *A second exit could be designed in case of emergency.*
  - *More landscape can be added in various forms like potting plants, hanging plants, creepers or plants placed in tyres.*
  - *A well-equipped medical room should be provided with easy access in the outdoor areas.*
  - *The boundary wall must be secured with fencing.*
  - *Outdoor washrooms and changing rooms can be designed near to the play area.*
  - *Waterbody or fountain can be added with low depth.*
  - *Stage could be designed in the playground for organizing school functions.*



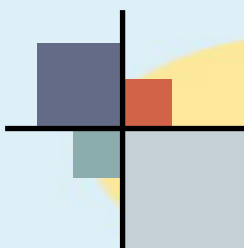
## CONCLUSION

*The exterior environment of the school affects its operational quality and has a profound impact on the behaviour and development of the children. The outdoor areas of the school should be designed in such a way that it fulfils every desire of the children and suitable to their environment. This booklet contains the basic suggestions which one need to consider while developing an outdoor area of the school. This booklet also contains the types of playgrounds, types of play, age appropriate equipment's, playground design parameters for the outdoor areas of the school. This booklet will be helpful to school authorities while developing the playground. These guidelines will be helpful for fulfilling the essential requirements which are needed in a well-developed playground. A well-developed playground helps children develop their skills and learning abilities.*

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