

Creating a Playful Learning Environment

1 Build on Community Expertise and Experience

Communities know what they need and want for their children. Playful Learning Landscapes builds on the expertise and experiences of community members to customize each space.

2 Start with an Idea

Do you have underutilized space at a bus stop? Perhaps you want to create a safe route to school? Maybe you want to enhance literacy in the neighborhood?

3 Identify Partners and Build a Team

Who is the champion for the idea? Who should be sitting at the table with you? How will the team work together and allocate responsibilities?

4 Define the Learning Goal with the Community

The goal of playful learning might be to foster collaboration between adults and children or to build STEM learning into a walk to school. Regardless, the learning goal drives the activity.

5 Maximize Playful Learning Principles

Test your ideas against the rubric for "how" children learn and "what" they learn to make sure the learning is intentional.

6 Create Easy-To-Follow Prompts

Prompts can draw attention to intentional learning goals and create exciting opportunities for caregiver-child interaction. A simple prompt can inspire content-related talk around an activity.

7 Plan for Needs

Is the site appropriate and available for use? Does your design require materials? What regulations govern the work? Will you need permissions to proceed? How will the activity be maintained?

8 Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Share your project with the larger community. Communicate often and clearly.

9 Test Performance

Is the activity in the space intuitive? Observe how families use and interact with the space.

10 Refine for Future Iterations

Adjust your project and the space based on feedback from the community. Share your experiences

11 Maintain and Rejuvenate

Ensure that there are plans to maintain the site and to update the activities as needed.