

Prospect Park Project

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PSY453F

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The theme of our park will be woodland. To incorporate as much of the natural environment as possible we hoped to involve animals that often live in Canada so children and park goers could see the elements in the park in more than one context. This could be beneficial for their overall language and knowledge development in learning about animals, their environment, and habitats. For example, if a child sees a raccoon in the park setting and then learns about a raccoon in school, they are able to draw on that previous knowledge to better understand what a raccoon is. We chose muted colours and lots of natural materials in general for the park to connect closely to the theme and also to keep the park as sustainable in practice as we could. Overall, the theme of the park permeates each and every aspect with the intention of developing more space for narrative interactions, pretend play, and overall engagement from park goers within the community.

Layout



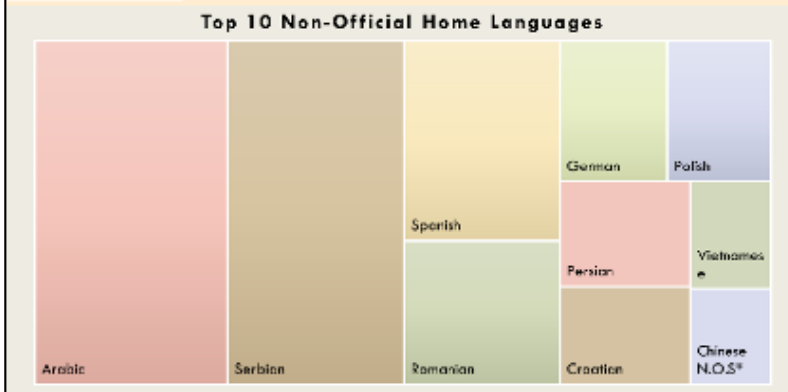
Legend

- Path
- Sign
- Playground
- Scavenger Hunt

Elements of our park



Welcome Sign



WELCOME

Добродошли

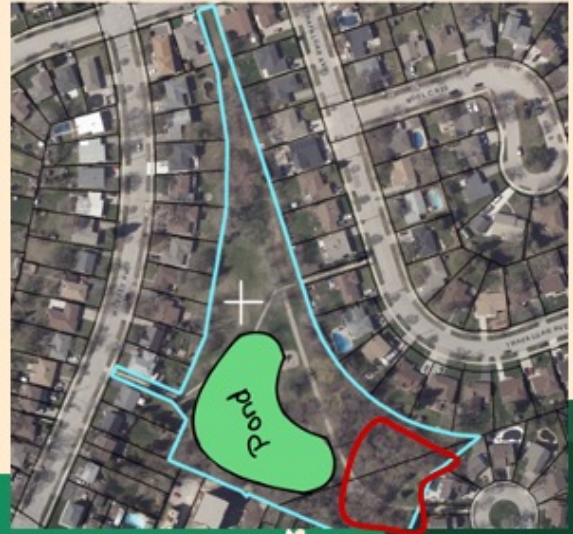
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While looking at the demographic of the neighbourhood near the park area, we noticed that the population was very diverse. The main non-official languages spoken in this area are Arabic and Serbian, followed by Spanish and Romanian. We thought it would be a good idea to include a big welcome sign at the entrance(s) of the park that includes these languages. This would allow individuals who speak these languages to feel welcome in this park and show that it was designed with many cultures in mind. Furthermore, we would like to incorporate a mosaic design on the welcome sign where individuals from each culture can be commissioned to display how their culture says 'welcome.' These signs may include written words, images, symbols, and more. This would ensure that each section is accurate to the culture it is representing, as well as allowing people to feel like they are part of a community. We want to create an environment that is diverse, where people from any background can enjoy themselves.

Scavenger Hunt



“Come Find Me!”

Whilst looking at the layout of the park area, we noticed that the space was more limited than we expected it to be. We were forced to think more creatively in order to create a park, with as many activities as possible. One idea came from the wooded area in the park. This area includes many trees, creating a tiny forest. We thought it would be interesting to add a path into this area, so that people could walk through nature. Furthermore, we have decided to place some sculptures of different animals throughout this wooded area that would relate to our theme. This would include sculptures of a raccoon, a rabbit, a deer, etc. At the beginning of the path, we would put a sign with a list of all the animal sculptures children can find throughout the trees, stating ‘Come Find Me!’ This would create a scavenger hunt as a part of this park, which is something unique. Furthermore, this activity is not restricted to young children, and would be something fun for people of all ages to participate in.

Sources for Images:

Pretty Bunny Sitting on Box Sculpture. Pinterest.ca.

<https://www.pinterest.ca/pin/13721973842857482/>

Raccoon Wood Sculpture. Etsy.com.

<https://www.etsy.com/listing/157378354/raccoon-wood->

[sculpture?utm_source=Pinterest&utm_medium=PageTools&utm_campaign=Share](https://www.wayfair.ca/outdoor/pdp/design-toscano-standing-mother-doe-deer-garden-statue-txg7917.html)

Standing Mother Doe Deer Garden Statue. Wayfair.ca.

<https://www.wayfair.ca/outdoor/pdp/design-toscano-standing-mother-doe-deer-garden-statue-txg7917.html>

Path around the pond



“There’s a frog! Look at it’s tracks!”



Another element of the park we are looking to include is a path around the pond. This pond will be curved and also covered in animal print to match the rest of the paths, as we will discuss later on. This time, however, we will be incorporating the kinds of wildlife that would live in a pond. Animals including ducks, dragonfly’s, frogs, etc. Using the same kind of wooden statues as in the scavenger hunt, they would be placed all around the path. The animals footprints would lead to the animals statue to encourage park goers to follow the paths and engage with the statues. This would encourage communication between kids and their caregivers in the park. Whether it is to comment on the statues themselves, ask about the animals, or get the attention of their caregivers to watch as they follow the path, this would be a wonderful way for kids to learn more about local wildlife, engage with the theme of the park, and also develop their communication skills with those around them.

Source for Image:

Istock image. <https://www.pexels.com/search/%20lights%20garden/>

Slide and Web



We are also including various play structures built into the elevation in the park. There is a hill that we will be incorporating into the design of the park itself. On one side we are going to add a slide that is fitted into the side of the hill and on the other we will add a spider-web climbing piece that would allow for children to climb up and slide down as an extension of the park itself. These aspects would be themed as well in the muted tones and colours we are hoping to incorporate throughout the structures to make them feel as natural as possible. We are also including as much natural material as possible, the hope would be that these structures are built from mostly wood and recycled plastics. We also hope that the web and slide together will encourage play between park goers as they can engage in pretend play activities between the two structures.

Sources for Images:

Embankment Slides (3 foot drop to 35 foot drop) photo.

Naturalplaygroundsstore.com.

<https://naturalplaygroundsstore.com/largerimage.php?recid=131>

Climbing web built into elevation. Habitat-systems.com. <https://www.habitat-systems.com/project/queenston-park/>

Spring Riders



"Let's play on this one together"



We are also including spring rider equipment which supports children engaging in group play and conversational turns. Children can play on the equipment in groups where they can ask questions and get to know other park goers in the neighbourhood. Spring riders are a fun, interactive and wonderful opportunity for children to engage with one another.

Source for Images:

BOAT spring rider. Playworld.com. <https://playworld.com/products/boat>

Duck spring rider. Dreamstime.com. <https://www.dreamstime.com/photos-images/duck-playground.html>



Another element of our new park is the addition of a little library. We hope to include two libraries. One that sits lower to the ground that has books made for younger children, while the other would be higher off the ground, closer to mid-height, for older children with books more specific to that age group. We believe that including two separate libraries will offer a more diverse and inclusive means of reading; while also engaging with children in different developmentally relevant ways. Having a library that is small enough for young children can mean that they can choose their own stories, read them alone or with the help of others like a caregiver, and have the independence to engage with the books.

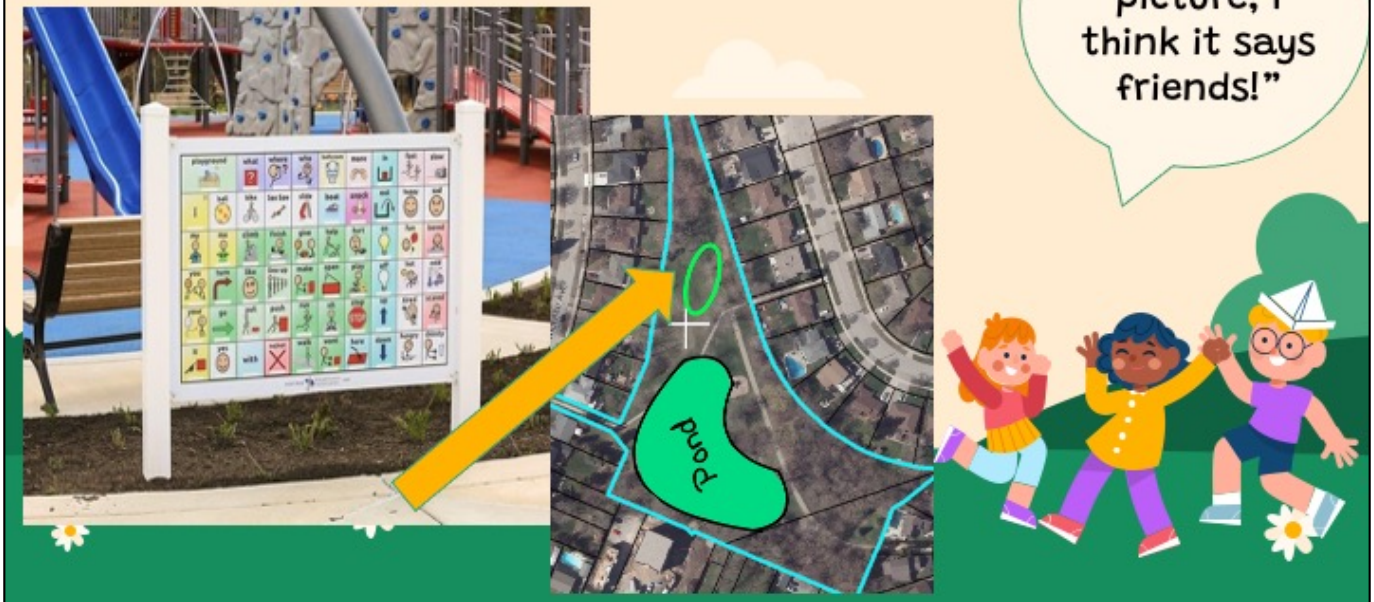
Sources for Images:

Little Red Library. Streetlibrary.org. <https://streetlibrary.org.au/libraries-writ-small-the-new-york-times>

A Little Library in Minneapolis. Courtesy of Little Free Library.
<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-friday-edition-1.4101525/after-toronto-librarian-takes-aim-at-little-free-libraries-its-co-founder-pushes-back->

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Communication Board



Another element of our park is to including a communication board. This would include various images of theme related elements including “trees” and “deer.” While also having common words for children to communicate with other park goers including “friend” and “play”. The images will be accompanied by English words so that caregivers can help their children learn new words, and kids can engage with new words along with their elements. These signs are meant to not only engage children with the overarching theme of the park, but also encourage their learning of different natural elements that can become pre-existing knowledge for future. Incorporating elements of language knowledge that children can use as foundation for future learning like the English words for common forest animals they may interact with at the park, can help support their future language learning and vocabulary development with similar topics. The communication board, being theme specific, can incorporate background knowledge conversations between not only caregivers and children but also between children. For example, showing children what common words are they can use with other children can facilitate question asking, knowledge development, and group play.

Source for Image:

Nonverbal communication board. Patch.com.

<https://patch.com/maryland/columbia/nonverbal-communication-boards-installed-new-hoco-playground>

Tandem Swings

Face-to-face

Various seating options



An important part of our new park design is shared experiences. We want to foster as much two-way communication as we can through the features of our playground, while also keeping the fun elements that children look for at a park. For example, we are looking to add tandem swings which allow for either a child and a parent, or two children, to use a swing together and face one another. This would allow them to engage in a conversation and share joint attention while enjoying a shared experience of swinging. The inclusion of tandem swings is a method of increasing conversational turns between parents and children. Children who engage in more conversations with their parents have better later language skills such as vocabulary and academic language abilities (Leech and Rowe, 2021). By incorporating elements into the park that involve two participants in order for them to work at their full capacity, children are more likely to ask other park goers to play with, talk about their ideas and have conversations.

Source for image: <https://littletikescommercial.com/product/generation-swing-seat/?lang=can>

Footprints on the Paths



Another element of our park design that promotes this two-way communication would be the incorporation of footprints as part of the pathways into and around the park. Rather than just having a plain sidewalk-style path, we plan to add animal footprints to the various pathways we are adding to the park, including on the way into or out of the park space. This will act as both a fun way for children to navigate what may typically be a boring part of their park experience, and act as a prompt for children and their caregivers to engage in conversation. It may also make it more fun when children have to leave the park! Children and caregivers can attempt to step only on the footprints or perhaps to walk like the animal that the prints belong to, thus making this a physical as well as visual experience. They can also discuss what type of animal they believe goes with which footprints, as well as characteristics of that animal, such as having webbed feet in the case of duck prints or claws in the case of a bear. We would like to write "Who Am I?" at the beginning of every footprint path, with the name of the animal who made the prints at the end.

Climbing Tower

“Look how high up we are!”

Climb, hide out, and talk!



The park space we are given does not have a large flat space where a sizable playground can be built, therefore our design takes advantage of the vertical space by building up. Our design features a tall tower-style structure for children to enter and engage in climbing and discussions with others. This tower feature will be built so that children are unable to climb very high on the outside for safety reasons, but are encouraged to use the ropes, netting, and benches inside to engage in climbing behaviors and rest with others or perhaps even a book from the little libraries. This tower will provide the illusion of a shelter for children to gather for discussions while allowing enough visibility for caregivers to keep an eye on the children and ensure their safety. An engaging feature of this tower is a look out window where children can safely observe the rest of the park from this high vantage point and therefore engage with the space from a new perspective. Including a tower that involves challenge but is safe can support children’s growth of facing challenges while still being safe.

Another feature that this tower includes is theme based images on the inside walls designed to prompt discussions between children who enter the tower. Children can ask each other questions about the animals including “Which animal is that?” or

“Where do you think that animal lives?” Conversations like these could create more opportunity for conversational turns, open questions, and overall children interacting more with one another.

Sources for images:

Left: <https://www.earthscapeplay.com/project/log-tower-playground-frisco-texas/>

Middle & Right: <https://www.earthscapeplay.com/project/timber-grove-natural-playground-tower-texas/>

Seating and lighting



Including more seating and lighting allows for more intergenerational visits and accessibility. Grandparents and people with mobility issues may need to have more seating options in and around the park setting and including these can support those community elements around the park. It also allows for more safety in terms of older children visiting on their own. More light supports more community care for members who may feel unsafe at night when there was less lighting. We hope to include lighting around the paths from all areas and every entrance into the park that can help with comfortability but also with recognizing the bounds of the park for families.

Sources for image:

Classic Garden Bench. Wikipedia.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bench_\(furniture\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bench_(furniture))

Garden Lights. <https://www.pexels.com/search/%20lights%20garden/>

Consideration of All Ages

Concepts & Ideas

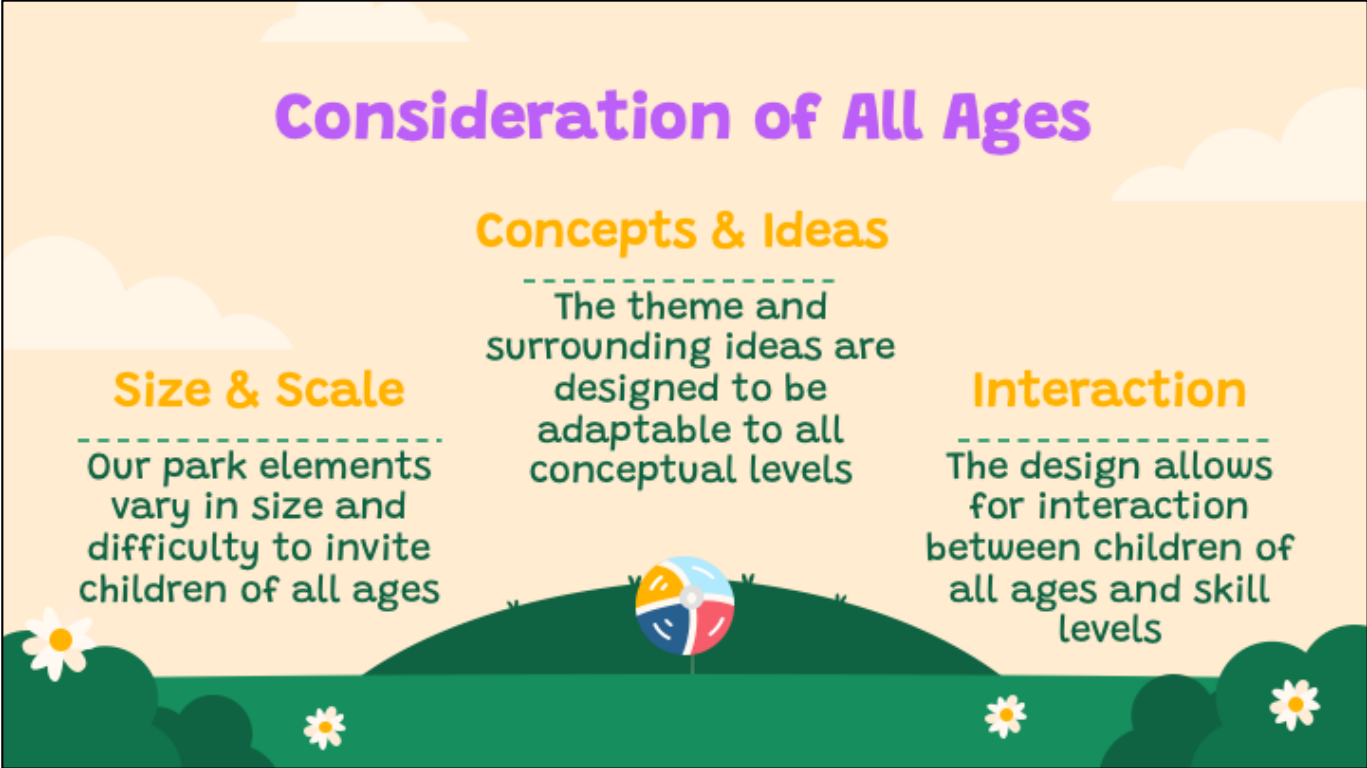
The theme and surrounding ideas are designed to be adaptable to all conceptual levels

Size & Scale

Our park elements vary in size and difficulty to invite children of all ages

Interaction

The design allows for interaction between children of all ages and skill levels



The best part of our park is that it is open to children of all ages. Any child can come to our park and have something fun to do. Families, or different groups of friends will be able to come, relax, and enjoy themselves. There is even allowance for interaction between children of different ages to have fun together. We took great thought into this when designing every aspect of our park.

THANK YOU!



References

Leech, K. A., & Rowe, M. L. (2020). An intervention to increase conversational turns between parents and young children. *Journal of Child Language*, 48, 399–412. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305000920000252>

References

Leech, K. A., & Rowe, M. L. (2020). An intervention to increase conversational turns between parents and young children. *Journal of Child Language*, 48, 399–412. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0305000920000252>