



Hello everyone! My name is Maria Becerra (Qaanita: and I'm Qaanita Chadhry), and we will be presenting our proposal for the redevelopment of the 3 Kitchener Parks, prepared by myself and my classmates Qaanita, Monica, and Lauren.

Image credits:

- <https://elizabethandjane.ca/2014/09/ottawa-family-photographer-barnhartfamily-sneakpeek/>

Overall Goals:

Our goals for the parks:

1. Stimulating environment
2. Inclusivity & accessibility
3. Safety
4. Increase community engagement

Through our proposed designs, we wish to achieve several goals. First, we aim to create a fun and stimulating environment for children that provides opportunities for learning and vocabulary growth. We chose our park elements with this in mind, based on the latest research. Second, we seek to create a space that is inclusive to children and families of various cultures, genders, ages, and abilities. Third, we aim to create an environment that is safe and welcoming for children to play. Finally, we wish to increase community engagement with the parks by giving park visitors a variety of things to talk about and explore. All in all, we believe our park designs will provide a memorable play experience for children, while stimulating their mental and physical development.

Image credits:

- Photograph by Daniela O'Neill (2022)



We'll start with Oaten Park!



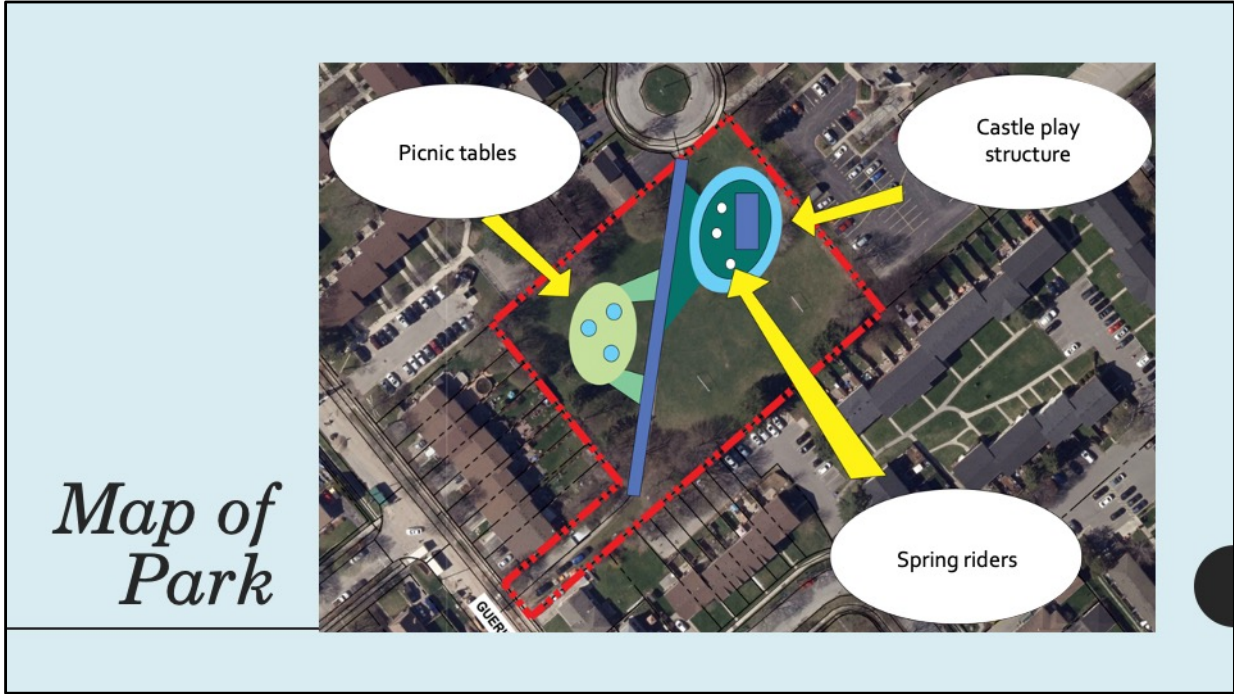
Why fantasy theme?

1. Promote diversity in vocabulary
2. Stimulate Imagination

We chose to make Oaten park fantasy-themed for a variety of reasons. First, the diversity in stimuli available to children throughout the park encourages the use of a wide variety of vocabulary words that the child may not typically hear at home. Second, the theme was purposefully chosen to foster imagination, pretend play, and storytelling, which plays an important role in vocabulary development in young children (Rowe, 2012).

Image credits:

- <https://www.earthscapeplay.com/project/paul-coffey-park-castle-dragon-sculpture/>

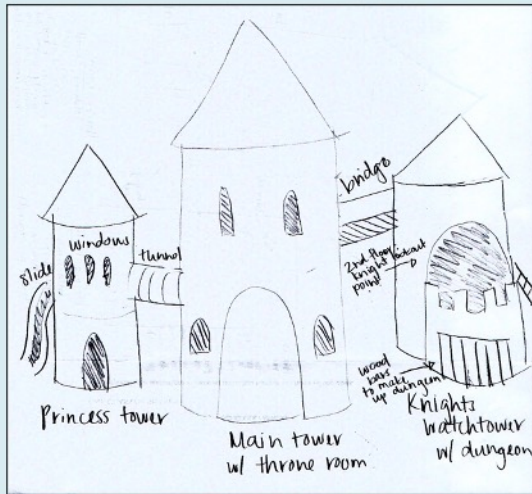


Here we see a bird's eye view of the proposed design. We plan to have a picnic area, spring riders, and a castle as our main play structure. For accessibility purposes, all elements will be situated on poured rubber surfacing.

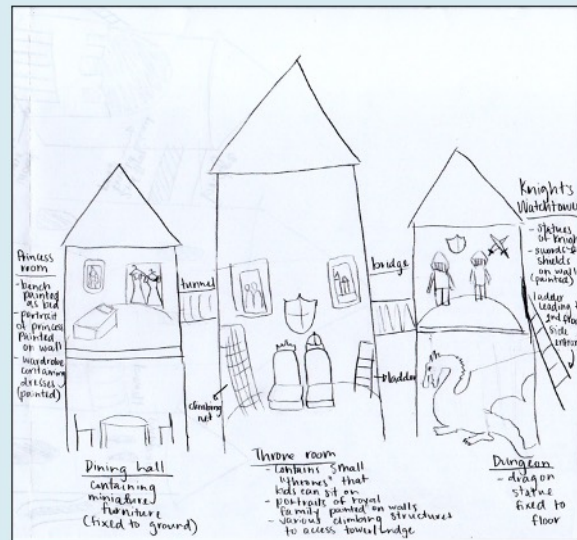
Image credits:

- Original image by Kitchener Infrastructure Services; edited by Lauren DeVos

Castle Concept Art



External view of castle



Internal view

Our main play structure will be a castle. The castle consists of three towers with various themed rooms, such as a knights watch point, a throne room, a dungeon, a royal bedroom, and a dining hall. The rooms contain paintings of objects on the walls, as well as objects fixed to the floor, as illustrated on the diagram. For example, the throne room contains wooden thrones fixed to the floor that children can sit on, while the knight's watch point contains paintings of swords and shields on the wall. The castle is meant to stimulate children's imaginations and foster pretend play. For example, children may imagine themselves as knights who are on a quest to save the castle, looking out for dangerous fire-breathing dragons to imprison in the dungeon below.

Image credits:

- Art by Maria Becerra (2022)

Castle Structure Examples



Paul Coffey Park – Mississauga, ON

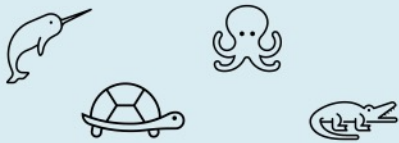
Here are some additional photos to showcase what the castle might look like externally. These are pictures of Paul Coffey park in Mississauga, Ontario.

Image credits:

- <https://www.earthscapeplay.com/project/paul-coffey-park-castle-dragon-sculpture/>

Poured Rubber

- Safe, soft, durable, and accessible
- Promotes conversation and pretend play
- Bright colours are attention-grabbing



Next, I'll introduce the main playground surface. Poured rubber surfacing is soft, durable, and accessible. Printed on the poured rubber will be a blue moat surrounding our castle structure with colourful animals such as fish and alligators. This is meant to promote conversation between children and parents. For example, a child could state: "Look there is a fish!" and a parent could respond "Yes, a fish! They live in rivers and lakes". Research shows elements of varying colors can enhance pretend play and catch children's attention (Küller et al., 2006), so we wish to add colourful images and creatures on the poured rubber to make it as stimulating as possible.

Image credits:

- <https://www.playgroundoutfitters.com/playground-safety-surfacing/poured-in-place-rubber-surfacing/>
- <https://marathonsurfaces.com/products/rubber-surfacing/#gallery-4>

Spring Riders

- Spring Riders featuring dragons and unicorns
- Promote pretend play and storytelling



Additionally, we propose adding colourful dragon and unicorn spring riders to stimulate pretend play and help children learn new words. Children learn about objects, actions and behaviors through conversation (Wang, 2021). For example, an adult could say “You’re flying on the unicorn! The unicorn flies so high!” or “That’s a dragon! A big dragon! Do you want to ride the dragon?” From this, a young child could not only learn what a unicorn is, but that it can fly or be ridden. The riders also serve to stimulate children’s imaginations. For example, the child can pretend to be a knight taming the dragon, or a prince or princess riding the unicorn.

Image credits:

- <https://www.windycitynovelties.com/unicorn-figures.html>
- https://www.miramareh.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=166361
- <https://www.miracle-recreation.com/product/flippo-offspring-rider/>

Picnic Area



- Across from main play area
- Accessibility
- 3 round tables with distinct themes
 - Dragons
 - Knights of the Round Table
 - Princesses/Princes (Royalty)

Finally, I'll introduce our plan for the picnic area. Each table will have a distinct fantasy-related theme, such as dragons, knights, or royalty. Tables and chairs will be fixed on the poured rubber surface. The circular tables will ensure everyone faces each other so conversations can flow freely. Tables will be spaced far enough apart for those who use mobility aids to pass by and the poured rubber floor will provide a safe and even terrain.

Image credits:

- Art by Qaanita Chaudhry (2022)



That's it for Oaten park! Next, we will be introducing our designs for Kinzie park.

Ocean Explorer Theme

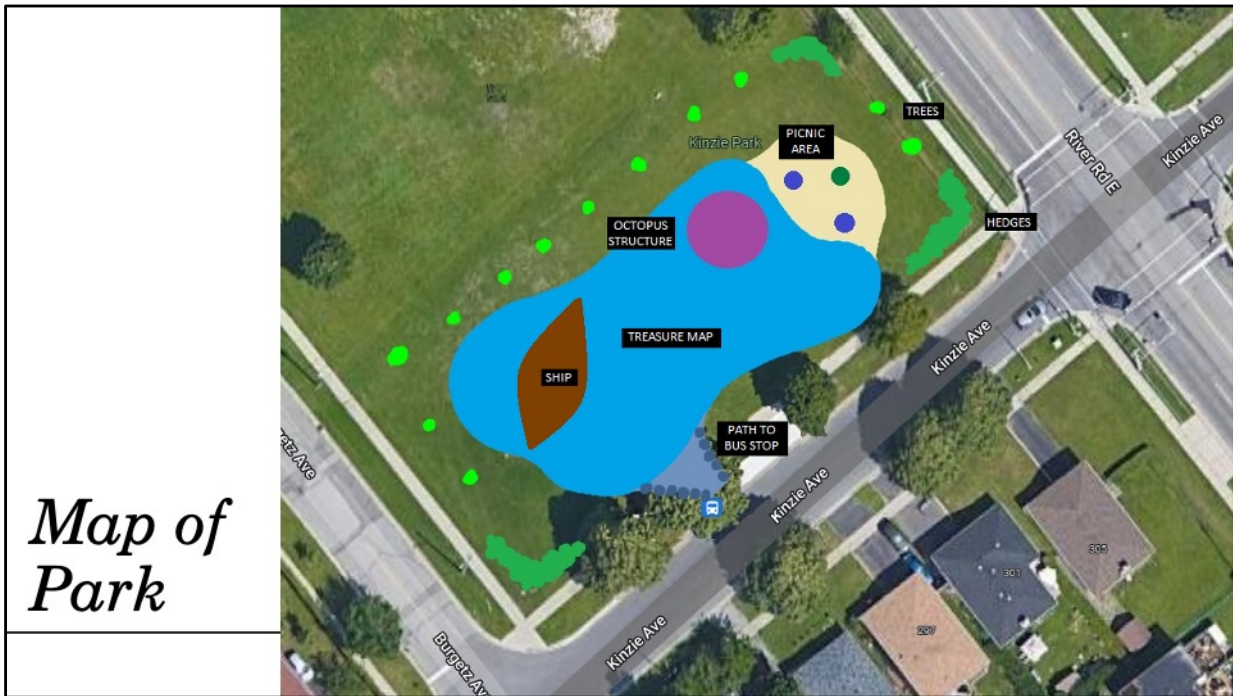
- Theme will act as a foundation for storytelling
- Encourage conversation about familiar things
- Leave room for interpretation from all



For this park, we chose an ocean explorer theme. Our theme was specifically chosen to promote storytelling between children and families, as research shows that storytelling plays a big role in children's language development and social skills (Aram et al., 2013). Second, because the theme does not follow a specific story, it leaves room for interpretation from various cultures, genders and skill levels. Overall, the theme acts as a gateway to learning and exploration through conversation.

Image credits:

- <https://www.pexels.com/photo/caravel-cruise-ship-mediterranean-sea-memories-847147/>



This is a map of our park from an aerial point of view. The green shapes represent trees and hedges. The large blue shape represents the poured rubber surface, which will have images of a treasure map printed on it. Shown in brown and purple are our two main play structures: a ship and an octopus. The sandy-coloured area is the picnic area, with the circles representing tables. The ground of the picnic area will also consist of poured rubber. Finally, at the bottom, there will be a poured rubber path to the bus stop flanked by rocks, shown in a grey-blue colour.

Image credits:

- Google Maps (2022); edited by Maria Becerra

Ship Play Structure

- No polarizing elements (i.e. flags)
- Climbing elements
- Lookout points to spot things on the map



Fairwinds Park – Mississauga, ON

We chose a ship as our main play structure. We excluded polarizing or identifying elements like flags or skull-and-crossbones motifs to be sensitive to families who may have experienced real-life piracy or colonization. This will also allow children to use their imaginations and tailor their play experience to their own unique cultural backgrounds. The ship will have lookout points both at ground level and at an elevation accessible by climbing ropes. Having the lookout points be at different levels of the ship will make the park more accessible.

Pictured on this slide is a real-world example of the structure we have in mind, located at Fairwinds Park in Mississauga, Ontario.

Image credits:

- <https://www.earthscapeplay.com/project/fairwinds-park-mississauga-ship-wreck-themed-playground/>

Treasure Map

- Map printed on poured rubber surface
- Dotted line guides park-goers through park



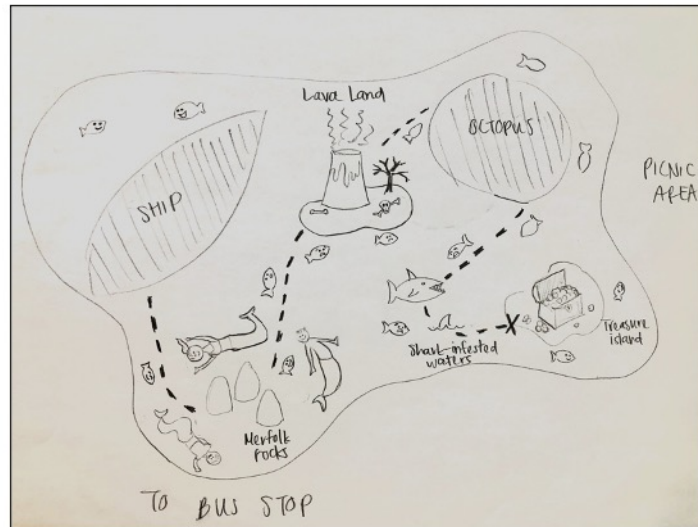
The next main feature I'll go over is the poured rubber surface that will cover most of the playground area. The poured rubber will have a treasure map drawn on it with a dotted line that guides children and their caregivers on an adventure through the park.

Image credits:

- <https://www.spectrurf.com/blog/santana-park/>

Treasure Map (Concept Art)

- Images printed on poured rubber surface
- Caregivers can engage children in storytelling via questioning



Here is some concept art of the treasure map. All the images shown here (excluding the ship and octopus structures) will be printed onto the poured rubber. The adventure begins at the ship. The dotted line then guides park-goers to the Merfolk Rocks. Here, depicted on the poured rubber, will be some rocks surrounded by some merfolk of various ethnicities and genders. Next, the dotted line will guide park-goers to Lava Island, then to the octopus structure, and then through the Shark-Infested Waters. The dotted line finally ends at Treasure Island. Using the map, children, along with their caregivers or with other children, can construct a story in which they are ocean explorers who embark on a treacherous ocean adventure in which they befriend some merfolk, slay some angry sharks, and discover some valuable treasure.

Image credits:

- Art by Maria Becerra (2022)

Landscaping

- Colourful hedges on corners of park
- Trees along River Road
- Stone edged pathway connecting to main play section



Next, we'll cover the landscaping of the park. We want to add trees along the side of the park that faces River Road, behind where the picnic area would be. This will create shade and create a barrier from oncoming traffic. We would like to add colourful high hedges on all 3 corners of the park to block busy traffic noises, so parents and children can hear one another when communicating.

Off the main play area, we would like to extend the poured rubber to the picnic and bus stop areas. The poured rubber path connecting the park and bus stop will be lined with rocks and plants.

Image credits:

- <https://www.brighterblooms.com/products/ever-red-loropetalum>
- <https://www.indiamart.com/proddetail/landscape-design-services-17149573333.html>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vs/34802460/>



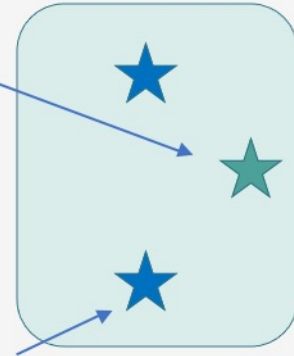
We would like to have Jumping Feet within the poured rubber along the path to the bus stop. Jumping Feet are imprints of footprints for children to jump along. The goal of them is to get children moving and promote active engagement while waiting for the bus.

Image credits:

- <https://kaboom.org/play-everywhere/gallery/urban-thinkscape>
- <https://playfullearninglandscapes.com/project/urban-thinkscape/>

Picnic Area: Sitting Sands

- Circular to foster connectedness
- Accessibility



Sitting Sands will be our picnic area off the coast of the main treasure map. It will allow for parents and children to rest or share a meal together at the picnic tables. These tables are round to allow for easy conversation (Snow & Beals, 2009). The tables will be shaped like a ship wheel (pictured on the bottom left), to continue with the explorer theme.

There will be two types of picnic tables present – one having three seats, accessible for those who use wheelchairs (pictured in green) and two having four seats (pictured in blue). The picnic tables will be oriented in a semicircle facing the park area, pictured to the right.

Image credits:

- <https://www.globalindustrial.ca/p/46-ada-round-expanded-metal-picnic-table-green>
- <https://www.belson.com/Traditional-Style-Round-Picnic-Tables-with-Steel-Frame>
- <https://www.gianhien.net/model/woodpro/all/NF0003W.htm>

Sea Creature Structure

- Tentacles with slides and climbing elements
- Encourages imaginative play



The last play structure will be a sea creature structure featuring an octopus. On its tentacles will be several slides and climbing elements for children to play on. Children can use their imaginations to determine how the octopus fits in with the stories they tell. For example, it may be a creature they have to slay to get to the treasure, or a friend who helps them along their way.

Image credits:

- <https://weburbanist.com/2015/11/22/suckers-japans-ubiquitous-octopus-playground-slides/>
- <https://www.tinyme.com/blog/10-ridiculously-cool-playgrounds-part-6/#foobox-1/8/10-Ridiculously-Cool-Playgrounds-Part-6-9.jpg>



That's it for Kinzie park. Finally, we will move on to Idlewood park.

Jungle Theme

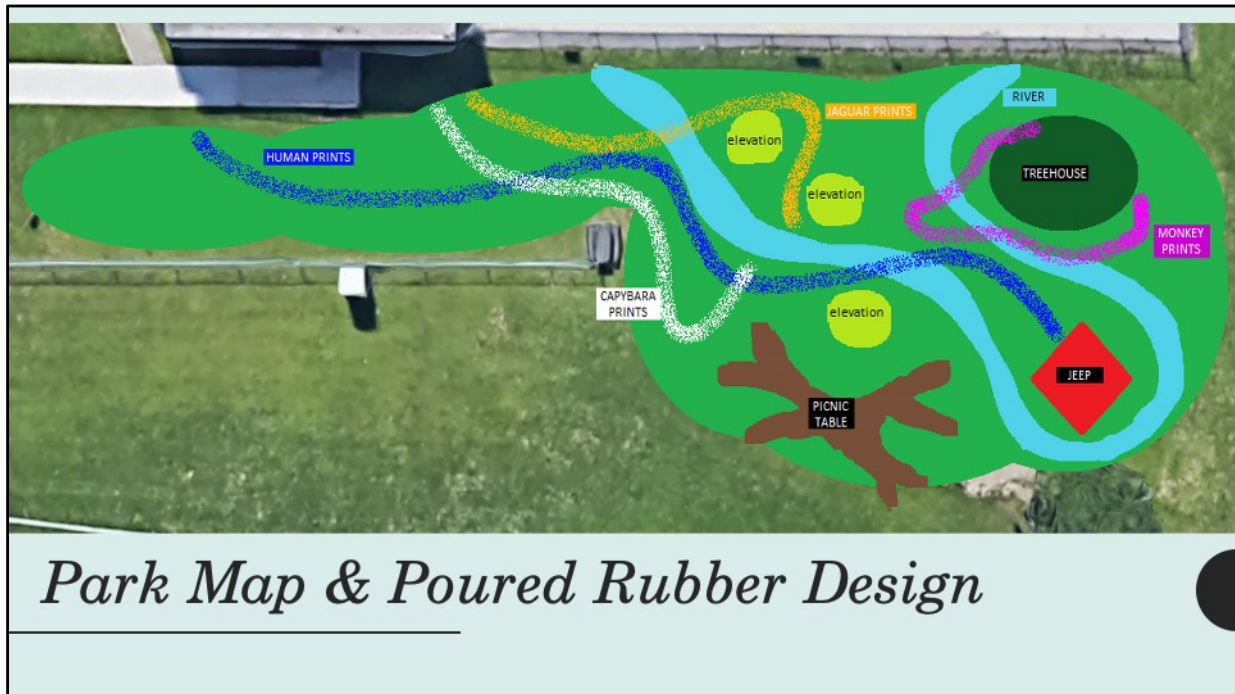
- Colourful and inviting
- Provide opportunities for learning



Our main goal for Idlewood Park are to make it more inviting for caregivers and children, using bright visuals and engaging elements that foster imagination. To facilitate this, we've chosen to center our park around a jungle or rainforest theme, complete with a variety of animal imagery, a treehouse, and a safari jeep. The park contains a variety of novel stimuli throughout the park which provide an opportunity for vocabulary growth and learning (Rowe, 2012).

Image credits:

- <http://uk.anygator.com/search/rainforest+animals>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/39997856@N03/7595398952>
- <https://www.flickr.com/photos/jamesxv7/5287556940>



Here is our proposed design for the poured rubber. The poured rubber will contain images of a jungle floor, including a river and various animal footprints. The animal prints chosen were inspired by the animals of the Amazon rainforest. Coming from the mural will be capybara and jaguar footprints (shown in white and orange). Human footprints (shown in blue) come from the path, ending at the jeep. Monkey footprints (pink) will be around the treehouse. These footprints encourage children to ask questions about the animals and tell stories about where the animals are going.

The poured rubber surface will contain three elevations, shown in the image in lime green. I will elaborate more about these on the next slide.

Image credits:

- Google Images (2022); edited by Maria Becerra

Elevations Within Poured Rubber

- Tunnel, climbing holds, logs
- Physical activity and pretend play



The elevations within the poured rubber will have various features, such as tunnels, climbing holds, and logs, shown above. These will encourage physical activity, as well as provide opportunities for pretend play. For example, children can pretend to be jungle explorers who must cross a treacherous river using a bridge made of wobbly logs.

Image credits:

- <https://www.totturf.com/gallery/>
- <https://recwest.com/surfacing/>
- <https://crstudiodesign.com/playful-landscapes-water/>

Community Centre



- Painted by community members
- Animal footprints lead onto poured rubber

We plan to have a mural on the side of the community centre, painted by community volunteers to encourage the public to engage with the park. The mural will consist of a rainforest with various animals. Footprints of the animals painted on the mural will be printed onto the poured rubber, leading to the park.

Image credits:

- <https://www.deviantart.com/kchan27/art/Rainforest-Mural-55559789>
- Photograph by Daniela O'Neill (2022)

Tree House Structure

- Treehouse with monkey-themed climbing structure attached at rear



We want to give children different ways to play even within a smaller space. Our main play structure will be a treehouse. The treehouse will have stairs leading up to it, an open slide, and an attached climbing structure with images of climbing monkeys on it. We chose to keep the slide open to enhance the safety of the surface.

Image credits:

- <https://playgroundsetc.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/dennis-menace-park-blog-midland-tx-treehouse-theme.jpg>
- <https://www.aaastateofplay.com/playground-climbers/>
- <https://www.publicdomainpictures.net/view-image.php?image=111571&picture=&jazyk=DE>

Safari Jeep

- Imaginative Play
- Conversation Initiation



Our last element is a safari play Jeep which promotes conversation around jungle exploration as well as providing an opportunity for parallel play. Children can pretend to drive the jeep while exploring the jungle together. They might say: "Look at all the animal footprints we see as we are going through the jungle," and another child could reply "Yes! There are lots of animals like monkeys and jaguars."

Image credits:

- <https://www.pwap.com/cmsstatic/img/856/p-14493-blue-playground-jeep-structure-clean.jpg>
- <https://www.pwap.com/playgrounds/gross-motor/bouncing/safari-truck>



Seating

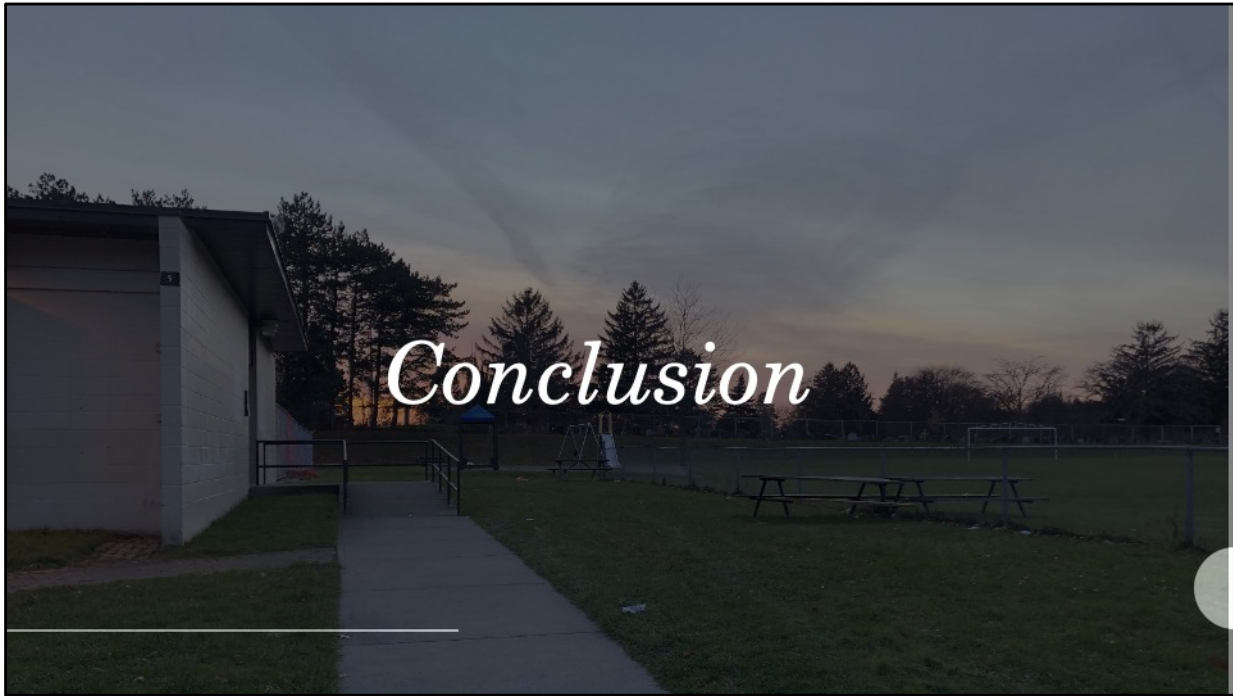
- Branched leafless tree design
- Open ends for wheelchair access
- Fosters connectedness

With the picnic tables, our aim is to create an inclusive seating area where community members can gather. The leafless tree design promotes accessibility and conversation, as everyone is seated in close proximity.

The ends of the table will be widened, and sections of the bench will be taken out to allow for those with mobility aids to sit at the table. It also provides a rare seating experience that will leave children wanting to return to the park!

Image credits:

- <https://mymodernmet.com/tree-picnic-table-michael-beitz/>



With our designs, we hope that we can create play environments for children and families that are stimulating, inclusive, safe, and welcoming. We've chosen our designs with careful consideration based on the latest developmental psychology research. We hope to see some of our ideas incorporated in the near future!

Thank you for listening!

Image credits:

- Photograph by Daniela O'Neill (2022)

References

- Aram, D., Fine, Y., & Ziv, M. (2013). Enhancing parent-child shared book reading interactions: Promoting references to the book's plot and socio-cognitive themes. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 28*(1), 111-122. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2012.03.005>
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- Snow, C. E., & Beals, D. E. (2006). Mealtime talk that supports literacy development. *New directions for child and adolescent development, 111*, 51-66. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.155>
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