



# Planning

the

perfect

playground

Does planning a playground sound like anything BUT fun?  
We know it can be daunting, so we're here to help!

Use this list to bring excitement and ease to the process. It'll also help you keep your eye on the prize: an awesome play space that's perfect for your stakeholders, budget and purpose.

Remember, you don't need to know all the answers: we can walk you through it and give the right advice along the way.

1

## Who needs what?

Decide who you need to consult up-front and how you'll keep them informed. Planning a school playground means considering the needs and hopes of:

- students (current and future)
- parents
- teachers
- the school board
- maintenance staff
- relevant committees.

2

## Do you need to call in the experts?

Decide if you need advice and practical help from a professional, like a landscape architect or Playground Centre design consultant. It can save time, money and frustration down the track – especially for complex projects.

3

## What are your objectives?

Make the purpose of your playground crystal clear so you create a brilliant play experience for everyone.

- Who do you want to play there: ages, abilities?
- How many people will use it at once?
- Will adults be watching/observing play (so do you need bench seating and other amenities around)?
- What experience and opportunities do you want to provide: active play, social interaction, imaginative play, sensory play, challenges, adventures? Knowing this will help ensure you install the right equipment.



## 4 What are the site considerations?

Get to know your site well, so you get the most from it.

- What are the exact dimensions of the space available?
- What are the drainage and soil conditions?
- How exposed is it to the elements (wind, heat, snow)?
- What can you use to your advantage, such as existing trees for shade?
- Are there any particular challenges or constrictions (eg slopes)?

## 5 Budget, design & equipment

Your next step is to determine your budget, design your playground and choose your equipment.

- Do you want the design process to be consultative involving ideas and feedback from users and other stakeholders?
- Who will you choose to supply your equipment? Quality, durability and safety should be paramount along with fantastic service and trusted, expert advice.
- What 'look' do you want: modern, edgy, colourful, warm, natural?
- What equipment and design elements will meet your objectives? They need to appeal to your students while providing the right experiences and developmental opportunities.
- How can you make your playground accessible, so that children of all abilities can play together (eg specific equipment, colours, textures, safety surfacing)?
- If budget is tight, can you choose equipment that allows you to expand as more funding becomes available (eg Playground Centre's portable play systems)?
- What safety standards and requirements must be met?
- How much additional shading is needed (eg shelters or shade sails)?
- Appropriate surfacing is mandatory: what are you considering (eg sand, wood mulch, rubber padding)?

## 6 Build it!

With your budget, resources and project in mind, decide the best way to prepare your site and build your playground.

It might be volunteers (supervised by a professional), an installation team provided by your equipment supplier, or a local contractor. Just ensure you have the right mix of expertise, experience and labour to get it right.

## 7 Have fun!

This is the best part: celebrate your new playground and keep having fun!

Working with a partner like Playground Centre brings unbeatable after-sales support, maintenance advice and spare parts – so you can keep enjoying your playground happily and safely, year after year.



Need more advice? At Playground Centre we pride ourselves on developing the perfect solutions for your site, safety requirements, user ages and needs, and budget.

# Your pre-chat checklist

If you're calling in the experts, a simple checklist can help focus your first chat. Tick off what applies, talk it over ... and watch your playground take off!

## Approval & agreement

1. The final decisionmakers on our playground's budget and design are:

Names + Positions:

.....

.....

.....

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2. Is there consensus that a new playground / upgrade is needed?

- Yes
- Almost
- No, it's just a new idea

## Budget

1. We're aiming for a total budget (including equipment, site preparation, installation, surfacing and any additional shading) of:

- \$20,000 – \$30,000
- \$31,000 – \$40,000
- \$41,000 – \$50,000
- \$51,000 – \$60,000
- Up to \$100,000
- Other: please specify .....
- No idea: please help!

2. In terms of funding:

- We have it now
- We have some but need to fundraise
- We're yet to secure any funding

3. We plan to save money by involving:

- Volunteers
- Our own maintenance staff
- Other: .....

## Timeframe

1. We want the project completed within:

- 3–6 months
- 6–12 months
- Don't know: just scoping ideas

## Site

1. When it comes to space for our 'ideal' playground [tick all applicable]:

- We're all set: the ideal space exists
- We need help deciding on the size of our playground
- We can provide 4–6 photos of the area (attached or email)
- We can sketch the site with rough measurements (space provided at end of form)

## Equipment & look

1. We need equipment that's focused on [tick all applicable]:

- Kids' play
- Teenage fun
- Adult fitness
- Accessibility, to include kids of all abilities

2. The look we're after is:

- Simple and fun
- Quirky and colourful
- Modern and edgy
- Natural
- Other: .....

## Planning inspiration

1. To help with designing and planning our perfect playground, we want [tick all applicable]:

- To see view some of your most popular designs
- To see a selection of similar 'real' case studies
- Our students to help

## Sketch your playground