A Children’s Garden with Seussian Flare:
Inspiring Children to Read Through the Use of Landscape

April Grant ~ LA Comprehensive Project ~ Ball State University ~ Department of Landscape Architecture ~ College of Architecture & Planning
Advisor: Martha Hunt ~ April 2006
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LA 404 - 5th Year Comprehensive Project
Department of Landscape Architecture
College of Architecture and Planning
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America’s ranking as one of the most powerful nations in the world is rapidly decreasing due to falling test scores in today’s youth. Children seem less excited about school and learning and more excited about the latest fashion trends and video games. There isn’t the same passion as before to learn. Reading is a huge factor when considering school test scores, and it has been shown that children who enjoy reading or start reading at an earlier age excel in school. If children can be inspired to read at an earlier age, there is a larger possibility that they will continue to read throughout life. Producing this so-called inspiration is the key to success.

By combining simple principles of play and interaction with a fun piece of literature like Dr. Seuss, children could once again be inspired to read. The Maring-Hunt Library, located on the south side of Muncie, Indiana, has already integrated this boldness into their architecture. By pulling the library’s color and passion for reading into the landscape, a fun and exciting atmosphere would thus be created.

From the activity zones to the many small reading gardens, each part incorporates words and objects from their favorite books, their capacity to retain this information increases.

Providing areas not only for children but for the surrounding community is another aspect to this garden. Incorporating the existing community gardens and creating small spaces for the retirement community to use also factor into this design.

In the end, this garden has multiple uses all combined under one sole purpose: to inspire children to read. Through the use of themes and words from Dr. Seuss, this garden can and will accomplish the goal of inspiring children to learn and to continue reading throughout life.
I would like to take this time to thank the following people:

To Mom and Dad, for always believing in my ability to do great things and always being there with me in mind and spirit. I don’t know how I would have gotten through college without you.

To Martha Hunt, for being a great advisor and that person who could give me advice about my project, but more importantly, a person who could teach me that there are other things more important than studio.

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To all my studio mates, for all the great memories that I will forever take with me wherever I go.
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As from the house your mother sees
You playing round the garden trees
So you may see, if you will look
Through the windows of this book,
   Another child, far, far away,
   And in another garden, play.
But do not think you can at all,
By knocking on the window, call
That child to hear you. He intent
Is all on his play-business bent.
He does not hear; he will not look,
Nor yet be lured out of this book.
For, long ago, the truth to say,
He has grown up and gone away,
   And it is but a child of air
   That lingers in the garden there.

- Robert Louis Stevenson
   *A Child's Garden of Verses*

This poem, a simple excerpt, brings to light the remembrance of what it once was to be a child during play outdoors. We all at one time have felt that feeling of being so immersed in a task that we were oblivious to the real world: only aware of the world that we knew existed in our imaginations. As adults, we must grasp hold of our inner child and revisit our imaginations in order to create an outdoor environment for children.

It has been shown time and again that children learn better and excel in school the more they interact with nature in their early years of development. The question arises, how can an environment help children excel in school? The answer lies in how it is presented to them. Through research of new and innovative ways of designing children’s landscapes, the children will reap the benefits.

In school, the most crucial turning point in learning is reading. If a child can read well, they will excel and progress much faster than a child who either finds reading boring or has a learning disability. The goal for this project was to create an outdoor environment that excites and inspires children to read. Through basic principles of child psychology and teaching, this landscape encourages children to interact with the landscape instead of just viewing it.
Three main topics were studied for a children’s landscape: the land, the activity, and the person. Each category reviewed compared works from child care providers, teachers and professionals in the field. Then each were critically assessed as to their importance to the topic of discussion: creating an outdoor environment for children through the inspiration of children’s literature that explores visual, olfactory, and sensory experiences in the landscape.
When designing outdoor environments for children, creativity of the young mind must be taken into consideration. It has been proven that children learn through play, yet not every child needs to be told how to play. Some of the most creative outdoor spaces give a child the tools to be creative.

Case studies found in books written by Sharon Stine, Anne Taylor and George Vlastos illustrate how structures can or cannot hinder a child’s ability to be creative in play. Stine quotes that “natural materials, such as leaves, flowers, sand and water, and spare parts such as boxes and boards” in a child’s realm of play give children the ability to be creative in their own environment unlike being told how to play (Stine, 53). With just these simple items, children create things from their imaginations like houses large enough to play and airplanes that they could fly away in. She also states, in another case study at a school in Kyushu, Japan, that with these same elements present in the play environment, a child will learn more because they are using their hands. For children, getting dirty is fun and shows that they are experiencing the world around them.

These types of outdoor environments allow children to touch and to move objects around in order to create their own environment. By doing so, motor skills are being learned and social skills are being introduced, especially when deciding who will orchestrate the work and who will give instructions. The child’s mind is discovering new things about the environment every time a new leaf, bug, or stick is picked up. The outdoor environment has much to offer in regards to learning and should be used when designing for children.

Learning can be through guided discovery, as well. Taylor and Vlastos suggest that this type of learning can be a better tool than lecturing. Getting children involved in the learning process will produce better results. Examples such as archaeological digs in the form of sandboxes or a water fountain in the classroom, each gives the child an opportunity to engage in the subject being discussed. Like the previous case studies in Japan and California, children are given the chance to touch and to feel these objects. It has been shown that young children learn better through actions, and these types of environments are great examples of children interacting with the environment surrounding them.

Design does not have to be complicated. In another case study about a children’s landscape, C.T. Sorenson, a landscape architect, designed a playground around construction materials. He noticed once on a construction site, after the workers
had left, the children were more intrigued with the left over materials than the finished product. With this idea in mind, he created a different kind of play area using “surplus building materials” (Coates, 196).

This playground shows that play areas can be just as interesting without all the pre-fabricated materials that are typical in the United States. Children, especially small children, seem to be more intrigued with a small box than a plastic toy. This type of playground would best be described as an adventure playground. “It’s only been in the last two decades that particular supervised locales for this activity have begun to be provided in the city” (Coates, 196).

Regarding the types of playgrounds typically seen in the United States, guided play is often the type of construction preferred. Structures that can be ordered out of catalogues and that use the same types of materials-wood, chains, and tires- are mimicked on almost every playground. Children experience these structures in a sterile environment of asphalt and wood chips. Most often, plants, dirt, and natural amenities are far from these areas or are fenced off from the child’s reach. For children to learn about their environment, they must be immersed in it. Learning is not strictly an indoors activity but an outside one, as well. Children, before they are schooled, play outside and learn from their environment, so why shouldn’t areas designated for play be part of the environment?

It is evident that play environments do not have to occur in the typical fashion so often seen on playgrounds throughout America. Engaging children through hands-on activities spurs their developmental growth. Natural materials, when used properly and organized in a manner that initiates child activity can provoke creativity. Creativity in children often emanates from creativity in the environment which surrounds them; therefore, using ideas provided in this project will help to guide design for future play environments.
Since literature is a part of the learning process, children’s literature is another topic of discussion. Reading is taught at a very early age at home and/or in a school setting. Some children find reading difficult or boring and therefore enter into the school environment at a higher or lower level of learning than others. In order to get children excited about reading, an educational landscape could invite the possibilities of higher test scores in younger children.

One set of children’s books, written by Dr. Seuss, are some of the most sought out children’s books in the world. Dr. Seuss used creative graphics alongside a vocabulary that focused on the importance of rhyme and alliteration. Children not only love these books because they are easy to read, but most are intrigued by the illustrations. Keeping interest through color and vibrancy are a few aspects of design that children are drawn to in landscapes and in literature.

Dr. Seuss illustrates real life objects such as animals, food, and other items found around the house. Entering into the child’s mind like Dr. Seuss does, the environments and story lines created could evolve into some very interesting spaces conducive to learning for children. Children learn through the five senses of sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound. A very dynamic environment with the alliteration and creativity of his books in mind could create an environment that even adults would want to engage in. His illustrations and topics are simple yet refined to a degree that makes them fun to read.
Books and literature are important factors to consider when designing for a children’s landscape. But, discovering how children will use the space and how they will learn from the activities they engage in are more important. Theories about children and play are illustrated in the following books and reviews.

In books written by Vivian Paley, Olivia Saracho and Bernard Spodek, and edited by Edward Zigler, the importance of play and how it affects a child’s ability to be creative are discussed. In the book, “A Child’s Work: The Importance of Fantasy Play”, Paley addresses issues of a child’s readiness to enter into the structured world of school. She states that parents and teachers are holding children back a grade for fear that they will not be able to perform at the higher learning standards for fear of rejection. She also argues that children, regardless of how old they are when they enter the first grade, will continue to use fantasy play during playtime.

In the older days of schooling, a child’s inability to sit still and concentrate for hours while at school was seen as attention deficit. Now, it is understood that children young enough need more time to be active and to play. “The children themselves continually reminded us that play was still their most usable context. It was not the monsters they invented that frightened them in kindergarten; it was being told to sit still and pay attention for long periods of time” (Paley, 43).

Paley’s observations as a school teacher help others to understand that young children need this time in their lives to create character and to live other lives through their imaginations. It is especially important in a school setting that young children are given the chance to be creative.

An outlet for this type of play could be useful in any setting where young children are gathering, especially in a school. Children need structure to learn, but they also need the activity of play to learn, as well. Every adult at one time or another can remember their fantasy play as a child. Whether it is a queen in a castle or a dog in a doghouse, children will act out their characters. An environment which lends itself to interpretation has great potential for the younger years because of their enormous imaginations.

Regarding how play can contribute to a child’s literacy capacity, Saracho and Spodek expand on these theories in their book, “Multiple Perspectives on Play in Early Childhood Education”. They state that play stimulates the use of language and a variety of verbs. If play is organized in the right way, these verbal skills can
increase. They also state that in regards to types of play, “art and role play had both strong appeal and high holding power” for young children (Saracho and Spodek, 102). With respect to what Paley has observed in her classrooms, this seems to hold true for any type of atmosphere; therefore, art and role play, as types of play, should be designed for when considering an environment for young children. Role play offers a variety of actions and art offers a timeline of progression for the child to go by. These, “literacy-enriched settings create opportunities for children to behave as if writers and readers, thus allowing them to rehearse literacy roles and routines that are beyond them in any real sense” (Saracho and Spodek, 103). If environments meant for child play can increase a child’s capacity to learn, then value should be attached to these specific environments. The contents of play, toys, friends, and a place to play, may contribute to a child’s ability to be creative more than most adults might think.

Play, as stated earlier, helps to evolve motor and social skills. An article written by Brian Vandenberg and edited by Zigler states that play helps children who are growing up in a world where education starts typically before first grade to “acquire some of the necessary skills for academic survival” (Vandenberg, 57). One way in which to help children achieve these necessary skills is through a “play curriculum”. The curriculum is met through the organization of the adult, which sometimes can have its downfalls. Children no longer associate play as fun when it is orchestrated by an adult, thus defeating the purpose of the play session.

Play should be free of structure if children see a “play curriculum” no longer fun. If the whole intent of the play session is to increase a child’s motor, social, and verbal skills, then objects and tasks for the child should be arranged and located in such a manner that contributes to this kind of academic survival.

After reviewing these articles and suggestions by the authors, it has become apparent that various types of play; role play, fantasy play, and creative projects all contribute to the continuation of a child’s motor, social, and verbal skills. Many observations have been made by teachers and professionals, and all have stated that significant improvements have been seen in children who play more frequently than those who do not. Creating an environment that uses these “literacy-enriched settings” to provoke a child’s like for reading and learning will enhance a child’s ability to learn faster in the school setting and create a passion for higher education.

Achieving higher education has become a primary aspiration for our society as a
whole. In order to be successful in a world that thrives on continuing competition, children of today’s society must become more adept. The earlier children can develop these skills, the better prepared for today’s obstacles they will become. Creating an environment rich in activities and creativity will allow children to become better problem solvers and hone their social and verbal skills. Through literature like Dr. Seuss, which almost every child has been exposed to, simple alliteration and creative expression will help keep children’s interest in the environment to be designed. Structures should be as creative as the subject being addressed and should not conform to typical play structures. By doing so, interest will be kept, and children will leave with a better sense of the world around them.
PROBLEM STATEMENT
To analyze the affects of outdoor play and fantasy on a child’s ability to learn and be creative, and to apply these findings to an outdoor landscape for a library through the inspiration of children’s literature such as Dr. Suess. This study will explore visual, olfactory, and sensory experiences in the landscape.

**Problem:**

To analyze the affects of outdoor play and fantasy on a child’s ability to learn and be creative, and to apply these findings to an outdoor landscape for a library through the inspiration of children’s literature such as Dr. Suess. This study will explore visual, olfactory, and sensory experiences in the landscape.

**Subproblems:**

1. Identify the relationship between a child’s learning ability and the environment and the steps that can be taken to enhance this relationship.

2. Determine how children’s literature can be used to enhance a child’s ability to learn and then interpret these findings into a landscape conducive to learning.

3. Analyze the importance of play and how children of different ages react to play environments.
Children need color and excitement in order to exert their wild energy and an environment in which to do so. Studies have shown that children who experience nature on a daily basis do better in school and have fewer disciplinary problems. Studies have even show that children who have been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) that could not be medicated showed signs of improvement when exposed to nature.

Since nature has such a strong influence on the behaviors of young children, then it should be used in many ways to encourage their intellectual development. Creating an environment that allows children to discover their fantasies that are written about in books and that encourages reading could have tremendous effects on their learning abilities. Since this site is located adjacent to a school and a library, children of all ages will be able to explore and learn from this designed landscape.
The goal of this project is to analyze the affects of outdoor play and fantasy on a child’s ability to be creative and to apply these findings to an outdoor landscape for the Maring Hunt Library in Muncie, Indiana. This landscape is meant to encourage children to become excited about reading and provide a place in which to do so. Areas for play and interaction with the landscape become an integral part of a child’s learning experience and will be a main feature of this children’s landscape. Also, children will be able to interact with the landscape through visual, olfactory, and sensory experiences. The following goals and objectives have been developed for this outdoor landscape.
GOAL #1
Encourage hands-on learning experiences for children

Objective 1: Integrate color and movable objects in developed spaces
Objective 2: Utilize natural materials into the landscape elements (i.e., limbs, leaves, soil, sand)

GOAL #2
Introduce reading into child activities

Objective 1: Provide private to semi-private spaces for quiet reading
Objective 2: Integrate words and objects as game pieces into the landscape
Objective 3: Illustrate themes and scenarios from Dr. Seuss in the landscape

GOAL #3
Encourage play and interaction

Objective 1: Establish a network of paths with multiple intersections
Objective 2: Integrate small group activities
CLIENT DESCRIPTION

Children will be the primary users, but the residents of the senior apartments, patrons of the library, and people of the community will also be encouraged to view or participate in the environment.

Ginny Nilles, the director for the library, will be my primary contact about the site and the library’s future goals. She has previously consulted with Ball State’s Department of Landscape Architecture in generating design ideas for this space. These designs have spurred interest for the library and actions have been taken to implement pieces of these designs.
FEATURES & IMPROVEMENTS

Garden Edges: To create boundaries with plants in order to prevent children from climbing onto the railroad tracks and into the streets

Activity Spaces: To incorporate the community garden into the final design and to accommodate it for children
   Include artwork that encourages group activities

Reading Spaces: Small niches or hide-aways designed with benches and overhead canopies
   Tree house-like spaces for observation

Storage: Re-locate storage garage and parking

Entrance: Create a stronger entrance to main drive and to garden space

Pathways: Specify type and material- winding throughout entire garden space
DESIGN PROCESS
The library opened its doors on March 18, 2002 in order to provide more room for the learning environment. The building in which the library resides was originally the newer part of the Wilson Middle School building which had been converted into senior apartments. Its name is derived from two previous neighborhood libraries, Webb Hunt Library and Grace Maring Library, and currently sits adjacent to a primary school. It is boardered by Memorial Drive, Liberty Street, and a railroad.

In the spring of 2003, German Cruz, John Motlock, and their Park Design studio from Ball State University provided the library with designs for a future garden for this site. Goals to incorporate a trail for the seniors and a community garden were just a few of the elements meant for the design. Since then, the library has planted eight pine trees and twenty-four plus native trees, such as ash and sycamore near the garage. Ms. Nilles commented that many of the designs called for water or a water feature, which is not feasible for the library because of liability concerns.
The Maring-Hunt Library is located on the south side of Muncie directly south of downtown. It resides in a low income community and currently has vacant property in which they wish to develop. Here you can see the library and its relationship to Ball State and Downtown.

LOCATION MAP

The Maring-Hunt Library is located on the south side of Muncie directly south of downtown. It resides in a low income community and currently has vacant property in which they wish to develop. Here you can see the library and its relationship to Ball State and Downtown.
The project site is surrounded by two roads, Memorial Drive and Liberty St., and is directly east of a railroad. Memorial Drive is a main artery for the south side of Muncie with a heavy traffic volume.

The majority of the buildings surrounding the site are single-family homes with a concentration of businesses to the north end of the site near Memorial Drive.

The large building to the east of the site is used for senior apartments and the Maring-Hunt Library. Southeast of the site is South View Elementary.
These are the two areas where visitors will be able to cross safely into the garden. The entrance to the north would be utilized more by the surrounding community because of its proximity to the traffic light at Memorial Dr. and Liberty St. The entrance to the south would be utilized more by the elementary school and patrons of the library.

It is important to remember that pedestrian crossings be put in place between the Library and the parking and the road. This could be done with plantings while also maintaining the fire lane.
The reason this has not been cleared is for child safety. It prevents children from entering the railroad, but also poses a challenge to any design. The railroad sprays the fence every year in order to keep the lanes clear of any vegetation, so any new plantings need to be placed a good distance away from the fence. This could be a good opportunity to use artificial plantings in keeping with the Dr. Seuss theme.

Behind the storage garage is a lower area that collects water during heavy rain periods. This would be a poor site for any structures in the garden, but may be utilized with plantings.

The reason for the location of the community garden was for visibility. Also, as a result of a soil survey, the current location was best suited for growing vegetables.

The senior apartments extend three floors high. It is important for this garden to be stimulating from above as well as on the ground plain. The senior apartments also provide a sense of security for this garden being that they can view who is entering and exiting the garden.
The Dr. Seuss theme is present in every aspect of this garden including the paving pattern. The inspiration came from the book, One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, and is an irregular path in width and in length. By following the lines of the character’s hair, this helped to create small pockets where Seuss statues could be placed. The paving surface would be a combination of regular and colored concrete to keep with the bright colors of the garden.
The primary focus of this concept was a curvilinear circulation pattern with a focus on play and reading. With the centralized green space, adults can view many of the activity areas of the garden while children explore the Seuss landscape.

After some consideration, three of the play areas were re-designed to better fit the program of a reading garden. There was too much focus before on play and not enough on reading.
A Children’s Garden with Seussian Flare

FINAL RESULTS

MASTER PLAN  3.2 acres

Passive
- Sitting Gardens
  - Green Eggs & Ham
  - Red Fish Plaza
  - Seuss Cottage
- Prairie Garden

Active
- Seuss Swing
- Community Garden
- Stage with Central
- Gathering Space
- Ring the Gack
This is the child’s first taste of Dr. Seuss as soon as they exit the library. With the help of footprints in the paving pattern, the path to the garden has become safer by guiding the children to the crosswalks. Seuss characters point the way to the garden as well.
Each entrance has two openings which are small enough to accommodate a fence. Upon entering, there are information panels each detailing the events taking place in the garden, and once inside, there are two large maps for visitors who might not be familiar with the layout of the garden.

The Seuss inspiration is apparent in the window treatments and the colors of the entrances. By using bold colors, children will be attracted to explore this space.
According to my research, children’s gardens should consist of a combination of miniature, average, and colossal objects in order to stimulate the mind. By implementing these large objects, children will feel like they are in a fantasy land—fully immersing them in the Seuss landscape.

The Story-Time Chair, located next to the stage and the grassy mound, serves as an area for group readings. The teacher can sit in the chair while the children gather together along the slope of the grassy mound. This area would be used the most during the summer months of the summer reading programs issued by the Maring-Hunt Library.
COLOSSAL OBJECTS

FISH BOWL

One of many fish items in the garden, this colossal object materializes a scene from one of Dr. Seuss’s books. The words from the scene are embossed on the front of the tea pot located low enough for children to touch and to read. By imposing words on many of the objects in the garden, children are forced to read about the scenes created, thus helping them to learn to read.
Elevation changes in a garden create interest and areas for children to climb. In keeping with the Dr. Seuss theme, this stage incorporates Seuss structures, giving it an interesting backdrop. With a wheelchair ramp north of the stage, it is accessible to all, as well.
As a precautionary device, this wall acts as a barrier between the railroad and the children. At a minimum of 4ft in height and a maximum of 6ft, the curvilinear pattern of Dr. Seuss is repeated along the western and northern edges of the garden. Burming of soil against the wall helps to invite children to come in direct contact with it. Also, 4in. square holes have been cut through the wall in order for children to peak through to see what lies on the other side.

The story wall theme illustrates an entire book equipped with Seuss drawings and words directly from one of his books.
A typical section of the Story Wall is shown here. Because of the annual pesticides sprayed along this fence by the railroad company, it is difficult for living plants to grow here. In order to keep the Dr. Seuss theme of the garden, artificial plantings have been proposed for this area.

One of the star features are the Seuss-inspired trees that appear to grow outward from the wall. These have been transformed into swings for children to play on, making this an area of activity. Being too wet for structures, this design allows for more liberal plantings to be placed in the center of the pathway and creates pockets for rest and relaxation while walking the garden.
One of three sitting gardens, this Seuss inspired space creates areas of activity and reading. Designed for children, the entire space caters to the comfort levels of the child. The egg seatings are at a comfortable height for children while adult seating is reserved for the edges of this space.

Maximum height of the ham tunnel does not exceed 4ft. and is equipped with Plexiglas windows to allow light to enter into this piece of art. Once children finish climbing out of the tunnel, they are directed to the prairie garden by large stepping stones.
The prairie garden not only acts as a learning tool for young children, but also as a natural barrier between the road and the garden. By interweaving the exterior fence in and out of the prairie plants, the edge will be visually pleasing while continuing to act as a defense against vandals.
The second sitting garden located in the northwest corner is again designed solely for children. This small play structure hidden amidst the plantings will entice children to play or to read in this area. More so than some of the other areas of the garden, perennials and flowering shrubs have been planted in order to enhance the olfactory senses of the learning process. Smell is the sense most closely related to memory, and if children can learn to associate smells with different types of plants, they are learning.

As said before, fish have been scattered throughout this garden as a type of treasure hunt. Here one of the themed fish peaks through the plantings for the children to find.
This space located at the north entrance serves as a casual gathering space for all. Movable tables and chairs evoke the Seuss theme through their bright colors and allow visitors to create social spaces of their own.

Being located near the community garden, visitors have the opportunity to sit and eat lunch after they have picked their vegetables from their garden. Adults can also watch their children apply their green thumb gene to the garden spaces while sitting in this plaza.

Miniature objects such as the fish seats scattered around the red fish pattern invite children to this plaza creating a space built just for them. The bright colors and the alternating patterns of the paving help to create interest on the ground plain.

Words are also integrated into this plaza through the ground plain. The text associated with fish from the book, *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish* is stamped into the paving for children to engage in reading as well.
Play and the use of motor skills is an important part of the learning process. More children than not begin by learning through play, so in a garden inspired by Dr. Seuss, this type of play is well suited.

In one of his books, a game called ring-the-gack was illustrated where children throw rings onto this object’s antlers. As a playful use of sculpture, this piece creates a fun game that all kids can participate in.

Within this same area, ground plain games are also part of the learning process. A large checkerboard full of words and numbers allows children to spell words by jumping on a letter. This is a game that requires more than one person, thus forcing children to interact with each other.
Through my research and design development, I believe that this garden will become an asset to the surrounding community and an icon for the south side of Muncie. There are few outdoor spaces that are safe for children to play and many result in vandalism. With the continuing observation of the seniors living in the senior apartments, I believe that the security for this space will increase and vandalism will happen less.

By creating a landscape such as this, we are encouraging children to hold onto their dreams and creativity and to never let go of it. This creativity is what helps fuel the world and inspire some of the greatest minds.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Drive to library: looking North

Gravel path: 5ft. wide

Drive to library: looking North

Entrance sign with landscaping
Library and senior apartment parking: looking North

Community garden: looking West

Entrance sign and garage: looking South West
APENDIX B: DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Fantasy Play**: The action of children’s manifestations through role play.

**Adventure Playground**: A playground that uses unconventional methods and construction materials for the play area. A playground that has a new twist around every corner. Not pre-fabricated.

**Guided Discovery**: A form of teaching through the act of discovery. When a child is engaged in an activity that might pertain to the area of study being discussed. ie: Archaelogical dig
APPENDIX C: ELEMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS


ELEMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. WATER: “Even the smallest city garden can accommodate a fountain or a small pool to feed children’s primal need to see, hear, and feel water’s clear, cool essence” (p.18).

2. CREATURES: “An environmentally sensitive backyard will attract wild visitors” (p.20).

3. REFUGES: “One of the most universal activities of childhood is to create caves, houses, dens, and fortresses from found materials” (p.20).

4. DIRT: “Dirt, sand, sticks, and stones.... according to playground theorists, these ‘loose parts’ of nature are among children’s favorite things” (p.20).

5. HEIGHTS: “Children’s gardens should have climbing trees, tree houses, or rooftop perches to satisfy this need to be on the top of their world” (p.20).

6. MOVEMENT: “Grassy play areas, winding pathways, and places for jumping” (p.20).

7. MAKE-BELIEVE: “Only through play can children visualize themselves as the adventurers, explorers, nurtureres, discoverers, and artists they will eventually become” (p.20).

8. NURTURE: “Planting spaces can range from containers on balconies or decks, to rectangular plots in a yard, to free-range seed scattered throughout an entire outdoor space” (p.21).

9. LEARNING: “Theme gardens with plants related to something that holds a particular fascination for children can seduce them into hours of self-propelled nature study” (p.23).
SAFETY CONCERNS:

1. CREATURES: Outdoor environments will invite pests as well as creatures whose habitats you are designing for. Children should be made aware of the dangers of some of these creatures and taught how to safely approach/avoid them.

2. TOXIC PLANTS: Children’s death from ingestion of toxic plants is rare, but never the less, children should be taught which ones present this problem. These plants do not need to be totally removed from the plant list because they could open the possibilities of creating a botanic lesson.

3. THORNY ISSUES: These types of plants may be useful in a children’s garden because of their ability to stop movement. They could be used as a natural barrier rather than a fence.

4. DANGEROUS HEIGHTS: There is a fine line between a hazard and a challenge. A hazard is something that the child does not see; whereas, a challenge is something that a child sees but chooses to proceed. Children should be taught about safety, but not discouraged to try new things.
APPENDIX D: SOURCES FOR PHOTOGRAPHS


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