



Designing for Multigenerational Play

August 26, 2026 • Summer Learning Lineup • Course 2 of 3





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CLARB

ADVANCING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
IN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE





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Earthscape Play

Agenda

01

What is Play

02

Risky Play

03

Multi-Generational Play

04

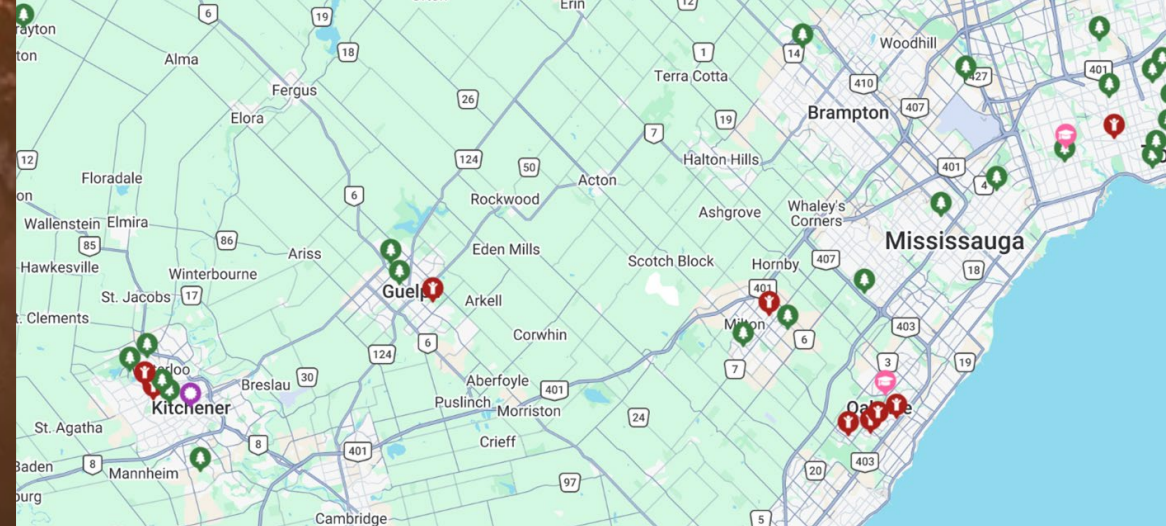
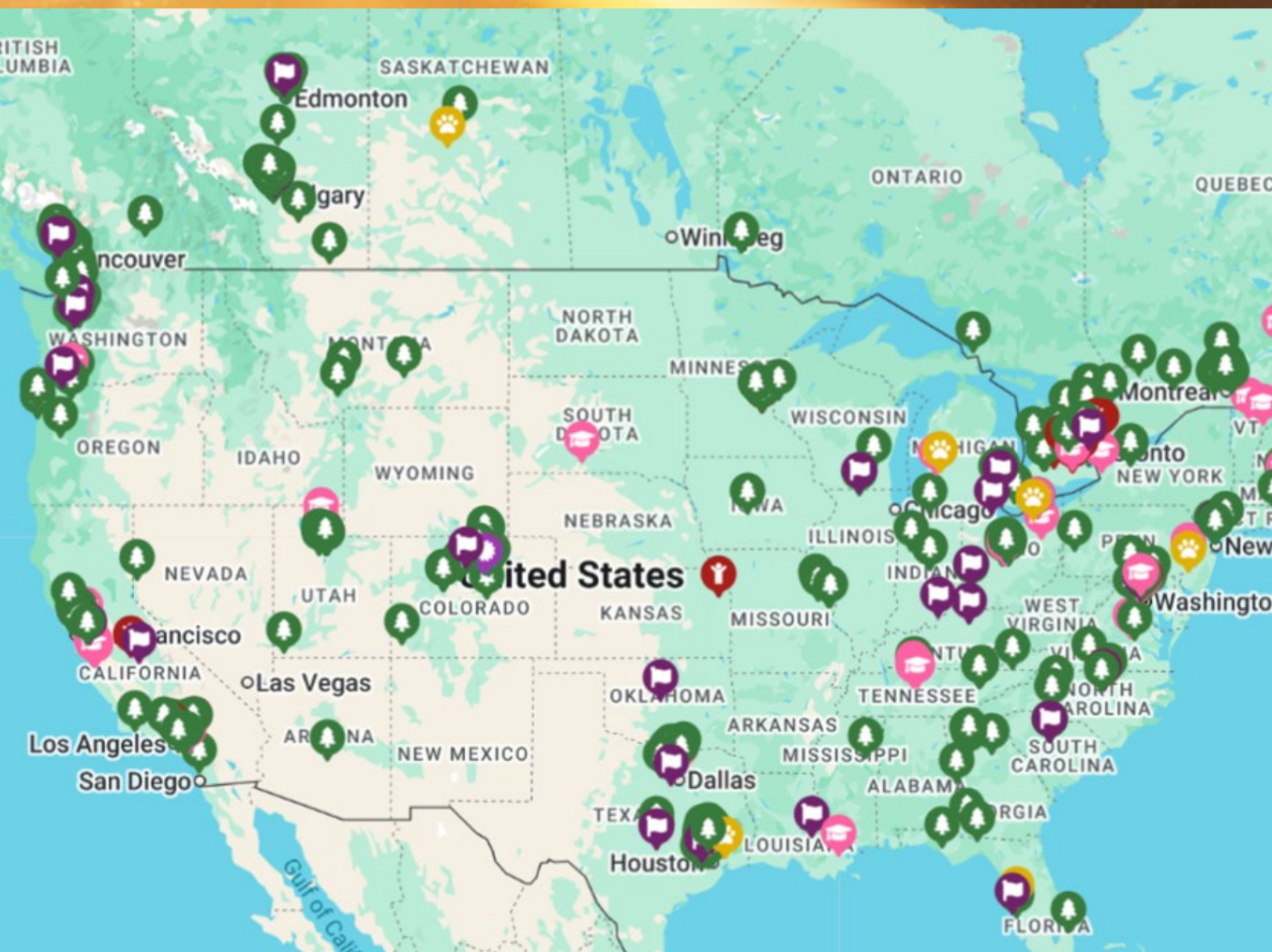
Project Inspiration

05

Design Tips



We Build Serious Fun



Our Expertise

Tower



PLAY VALUE

NON-PRESCRIBED

Timber



INCLUSIVE

Sculpture



RISK-REWARD

PLACEMAKING

What is Play?



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THINK BACK...



WHAT IS PLAY?

Play: Children's play is any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves; it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise. Caregivers may contribute to the creation of environments in which play takes place, but play itself is non-compulsory, driven by intrinsic motivation and undertaken for its own sake, rather than as a means to an end. Play involves the exercise of autonomy, physical, mental or emotional activity, and has the potential to take infinite forms, either in groups or alone. These forms will change and be adapted throughout the course of childhood. The key characteristics of play are fun, uncertainty, challenge, flexibility and non-productivity. Together, these factors contribute to the enjoyment it produces and the consequent incentive to continue to play. While play is often considered non-essential, the Committee reaffirms that it is a fundamental and vital dimension of the pleasure of childhood.

UN Convention of the Rights of the Child



A diagram illustrating the characteristics of play. It features three large, overlapping circles: a dark teal circle on the left, an olive green circle on the top right, and a grey circle on the bottom right. Each circle contains a characteristic of play in white, bold, uppercase letters. The teal circle is labeled 'FREELY CHOSEN', the olive green circle is labeled 'PERSONALLY DIRECTED', and the grey circle is labeled 'INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED'. Several smaller, light beige circles are scattered around the larger ones, creating a cluster effect.

**FREELY
CHOSEN**

**PERSONALLY
DIRECTED**

**INTRINSICALLY
MOTIVATED**

TYPES OF PLAY

The infographic features a large light beige circle in the top-left corner containing the title 'TYPES OF PLAY'. Six smaller circles are arranged around it, each containing a type of play. The circles are color-coded: Risky Play (dark grey), Imaginative (olive green), Movement (dark teal), Social (dark teal), Object (olive green), and Rough & Tumble (dark grey). There are also several small, semi-transparent beige circles scattered in the background.

**RISKY
PLAY**

IMAGINATIVE

MOVEMENT

SOCIAL

OBJECT

**ROUGH &
TUMBLE**

Risky Play



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Thrilling and exciting forms of free play involve an uncertainty of outcomes and a possibility of physical injury.

Most often outdoors and in nature.



RISKY PLAY

- Height and elevation
- Speed and momentum
- Rough-and-tumble play
- Play with impact
- Interactions with natural elements
- Play with a chance of “getting lost”
- Using risky or adult tools





WHY IT MATTERS

PHYSICAL BENEFITS

- Strength
- Coordination
- Physical literacy
- Modulating the immune system

MENTAL, SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Children learn to communicate, cooperate, and compromise with others
- Reduces children's risk of elevated anxiety later in life

Beaulieu, E., & Beno, S. (2024, January 25). *Healthy Childhood Development through outdoor risky play: Navigating the balance with injury prevention*. Canadian Paediatric Society. <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/outdoor-risky-play#ref21>



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- Research has shown children are less likely to be injured while engaging in unstructured activities than when playing an organized sport
- Relatively speaking, outdoor risky play is safe
- Provides opportunities and spaces to better kids' mental health

Gill T, Power M, Brussoni M. [Risk Benefit Assessment for Outdoor Play: A Canadian Toolkit](#). Ottawa: Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. 2019 (Accessed January 27, 2025).
Nauta J, Martin-Diener E, Martin BW, van Mechelen W, Verhagen E. [Injury risk during different physical activity behaviours in children: A systematic review with bias assessment](#). Sports Med 2015;45(3):327-336. doi: 10.1007/S40279-014-0289-0.





HAZARD
or
RISK

Multi-Generational Play



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The Power of Play for Adults

- Combats Stress and Protects Mental Health
- Boosts Brain Function and Productivity
- Improves Physical and Cardiovascular Health
- Fosters Social Connection



Benefits of Joint Adult-Child Play

- Drives Cognitive and Emotional Development
- Mitigates Impacts of Adversity
- Reduces Parental Stress and Child Behavioural Issues
- Strengthens Emotional Bonds



Project Inspiration



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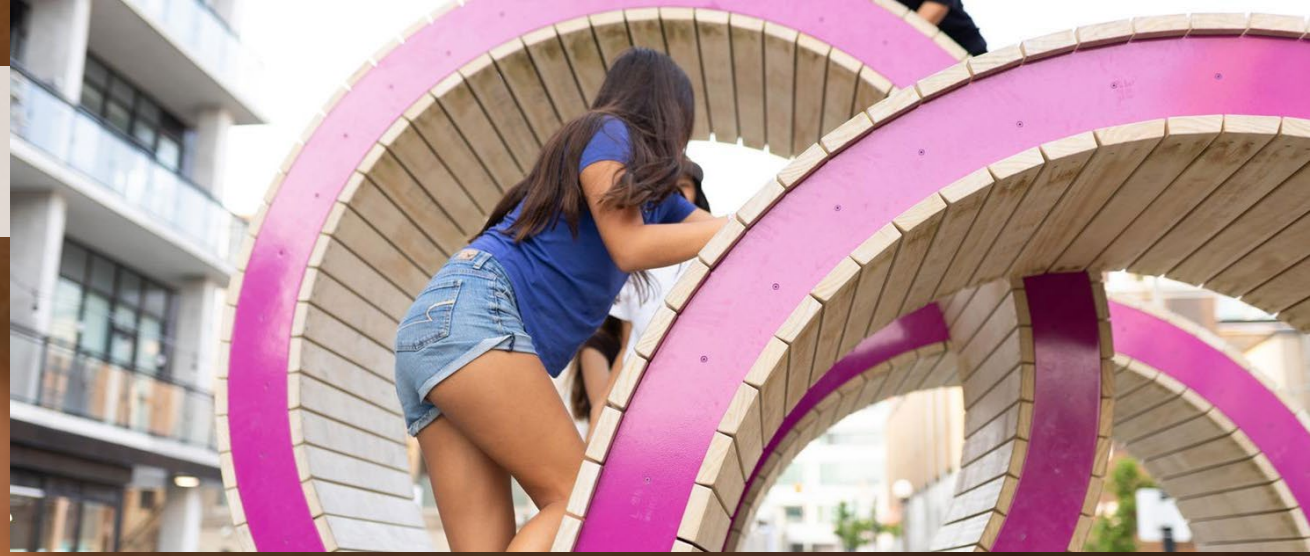
INVITE ABSTRACTION



GRADUATED CHALLENGE



WHO IS INVITED?



ZONE DIFFERENTIATION



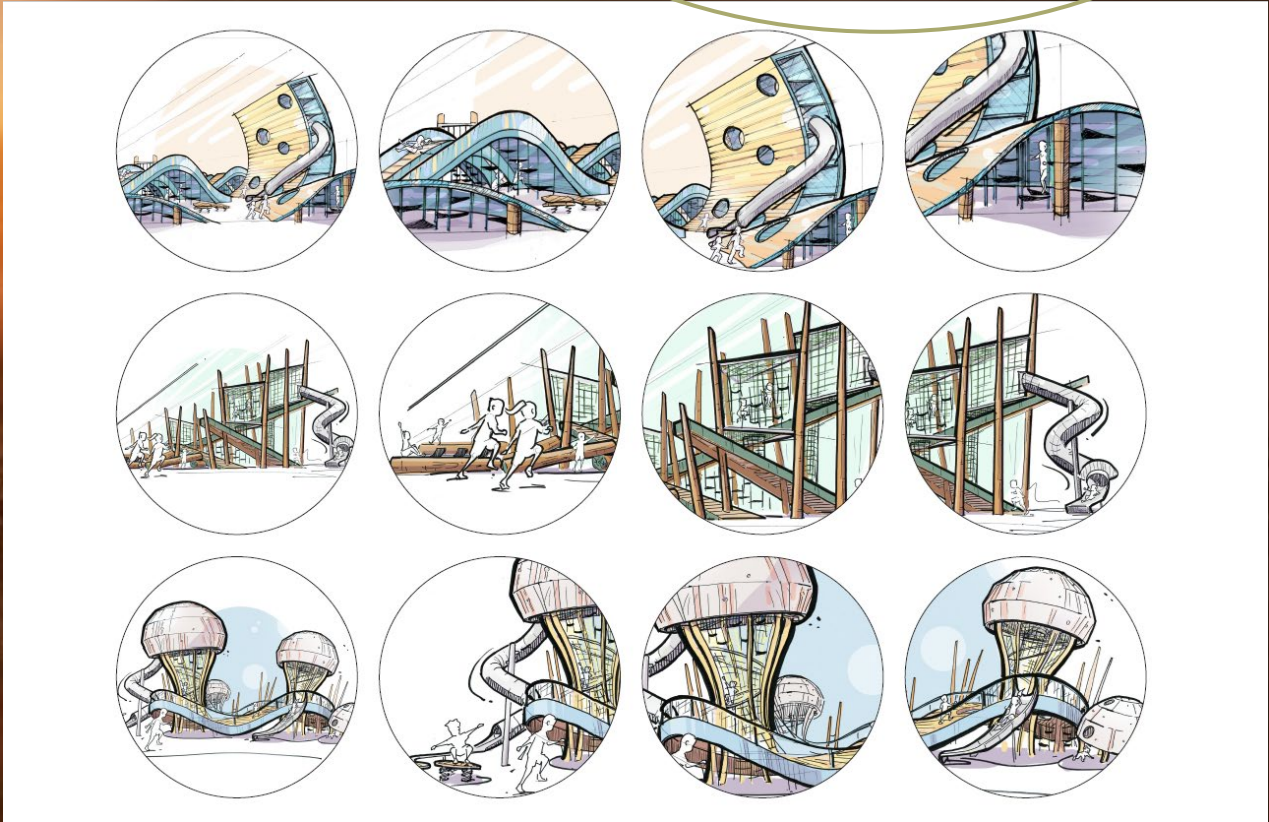
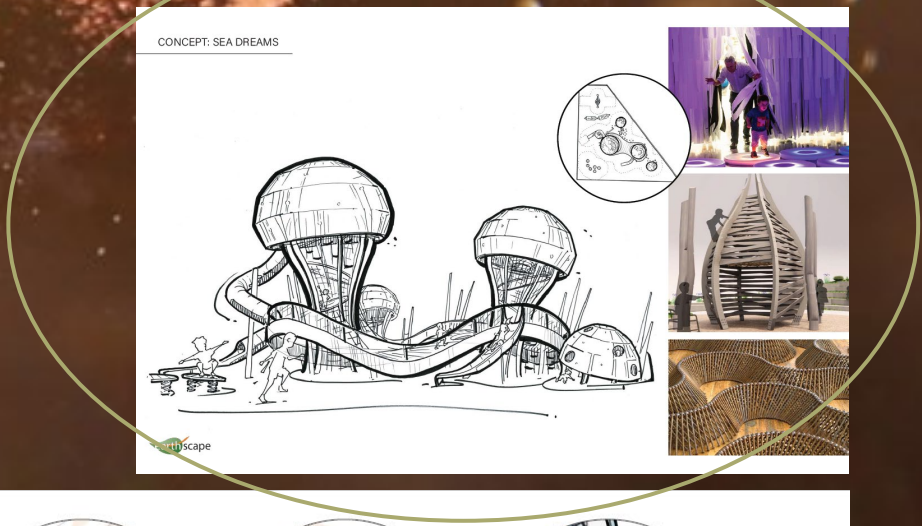
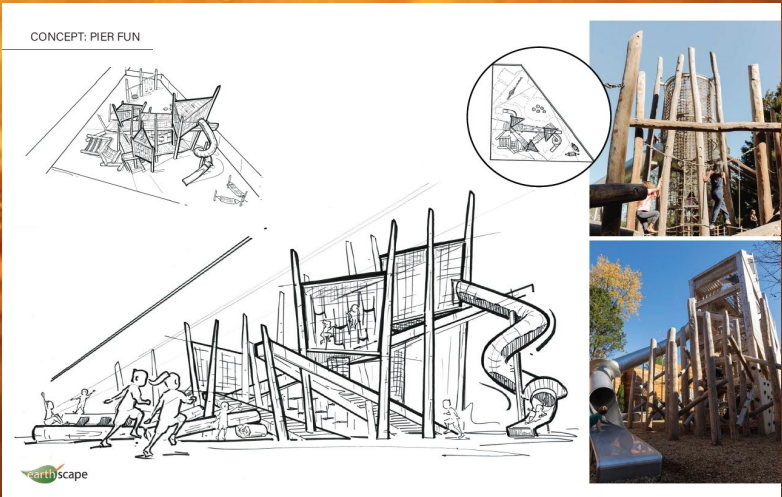
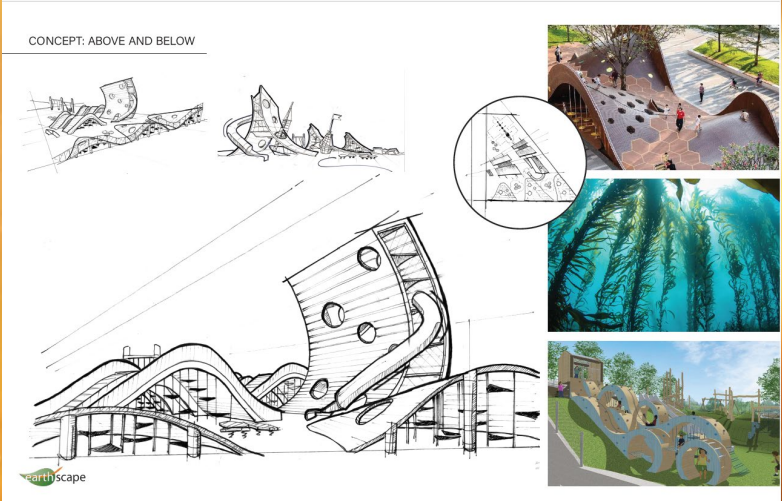
LOOSE PARTS PLAY



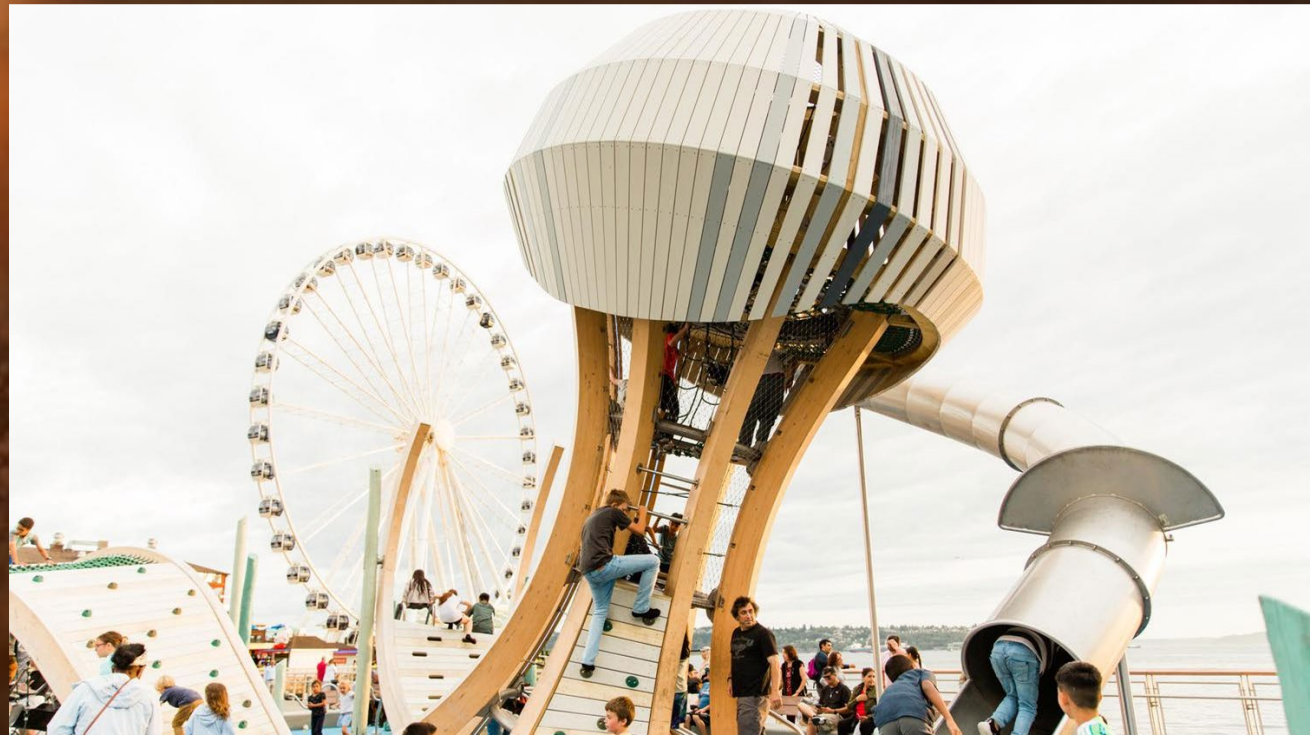
SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



SITE ACTIVATION



INTEGRATED LIGHTING



Design Tips



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DESIGNING PLAY SPACES FOR ALL AGES

- Welcome abstraction
- Graduated challenge
- Invite with intention
- Zone differentiation
- Loose parts play
- Integrate social opportunities
- Activate the surroundings
- Community collaboration
- Program the space
- Integrated Lighting



**WE DON'T STOP PLAYING BECAUSE
WE GROW OLD; WE GROW OLD
BECAUSE WE STOP PLAYING**

- GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



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Questions?



Earning course credit

In-person attendees

Scan the QR code located on your table to sign the attendance form and complete the evaluation

Virtual attendees

Complete two steps by September 11:

- Take the post-session quiz
- Submit the session evaluation

Follow-up email to all registrants will include recording plus links to quiz, evaluation and slides

Complete by September 11, 2026



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1. Post-session quiz (75% or higher)
2. Evaluation form (share your feedback)



**Course
quiz**



Evaluation