

6-2 How to create a playground

Generally a kindergarten has a playground.

The playgrounds are enclosed by trees and plants or fences, and aim to create a space where children can play safely. Fixed play equipment is, taking account of the children's motor development, is arranged around an open space where children run around freely.

Plants of the play ground



At the surroundings of the play ground, trees are planted, while at the corner of the play ground and around the entrance, flowerbed made by blocks or bricks, a farm and planters are put, and plants and vegetables are raised.



These are good teaching materials familiar to children. They observe the flowering and bearing fruits, and they feel the growth of the plants and the changing of seasons.

Sink

After playing outside, children use this when they wash their hands and feet, put water into a container and carry it to the flowerbed, farm and the sand box.

This is installed near the classroom or the sandbox taking account of children's movement.

Fixed play tools

In the play ground, following fixed play tools are generally installed, taking account of children's safety and their movement.

Sand box

Children are making a mountain and digging a hole.

Near the sand box, there are baskets full of play things like buckets, shovels, plates and cups.

Children can choose their favorite play things and enjoy playing in the sand box.

When children play alone, a teacher sometimes joins them and leads them to the play house, or suggests that they make a tunnel and a river, to encourage them to take part in cooperative play.



Slide

Climbing up the steps and sliding down the opposite side. Children play repeating such actions many times.

When they play with friends, they learn rules, such as waiting for their turn, no pushing other children, no stopping on the way down, no interrupting children who climb up from the bottom and try to slide.

They are not only getting a thrill by sliding from higher place, but also by sliding with several others. Children can develop many different creative ways to use the slide.

If there is no slide, you can use cardboard boxes, which are linked to form a slope. Children can use this as a slide.



Jungle gym

Children climb up to the top little by little.

When they reach the top, they can look down on the playground, and have a different view from higher place.

Children experience thrills by playing in the jungle gym, and they also experience a sense of achievement when climbing up a high place.

Iron bar

At first, children enjoy hanging from a bar and swaying, or they enjoy the upside-down view when hanging by their legs.

When they get used to the bar, they can take a risk and turn forward around the bar, or make a forward upward circle on the bar, or turn around with one leg on the bar.

They copy other children who are good at it, or ask them how to do, or are encouraged by the others. They take time to get a knack of their new skills.

When they succeed, they can feel a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction - "I made it", or "I did it by myself".



Swing

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Net

If there is a rope net, on a wooden and iron frame, children can climb it, hang from it, walk across it, and can play in many ways making different physical movements.



Monkey bar

A 'monkey bar' is like an iron bridge made from a ladder. Children hang from it and go forward by "walking" with their hands and kicking their legs.

Mountain, tunnel

A mountain is created linked with a big sand box, or it is created at the corner of the play ground.

Children run up the mountain all at once and have a race. "Who is the first to climb up to the top of the mountain?"

At the top of the mountain, children play dynamically by calling out to their friends in a loud voice, shouting, sliding down the mountain, or running down.

A tunnel is an attractive, closed narrow space for children.

It is used as a hiding place for hide-and seek, or a secret base, or they play secretly in this enclosed area, or they chase their friends through the tunnel - and try not to bump their heads against the wall.



A small hut



A small hut is built, to make use of branches that have been cut down.

The children are happy and play inside the hut.

Playing house, looking outside through the window, and going in and out of the hut - children enjoy playing both in the open space and the closed space.

Bench, chair, table

It is convenient if benches and tables made of wood are in the playground.

When the children play with colored water and blow soap bubbles, the tables and chairs help them to do the activity carefully without spilling the liquid.

For those who would rather sit and look at the others than play, because of their physical condition on that day, or those who cannot join in with the other children, this is a good place to stay.

Seesaw

Divided into two groups at both ends of the board, children sit on the board and hold the bar. They push down on the ground and bounce up and down in turn, and play on the seesaw.

Children experience that it does work well if the speed of moving up and down becomes different because of the imbalance if the number of children on the seesaw is not the same, or if they are sitting differently.

They enjoy playing and looking at their friend's expressions at the other end.