

# Adventure Playground



The adventure playground was one of the first playgrounds ever designed. They appeared in Denmark at the end of the second world war in response to the children playing in the bombed out ruins in cities.

These junkyard playgrounds (as they were known at the time) were places where children could use materials and tools to create whatever they needed to support their play. There was one or two adults present to make sure that the children knew how to properly use the tools and to make sure there was enough materials. These adults were not leaders of the activities. They were present to answer questions and support the children in their play but certainly not to direct the play.

These types of playgrounds still exist today, mostly in Europe. We did have some in Canada at the end of the 70's and early 80's but these were replaced by the fixed equipment playgrounds that we see today. These fixed equipment playgrounds do not offer the same play value as adventure playgrounds do because the children have little to no possibility to modify these environments in order to meet their play needs. These new playgrounds were in response to an exaggerated focus on safety and measurable outcomes with little to no regard to the play needs of children.

As opposed to purchasing and installing a finished fixed equipment playground, the Adventure Playground evolves over time based on the ever changing play interests of the various children who use the space. In these dynamic spaces, children have the freedom to follow their imagination and nurture their creativity as they construct and deconstruct their play environment.



Adventure playgrounds are enjoying a resurgence of interest in North America because they offer children the opportunity to explore materials and tools on their own terms. It provides them with opportunities to create their play environment, to control what they do, how they do it and with whom. This type of child-directed play is the foundation for all learning. When children are given the time, place and freedom to play in this way they gain the skills they will need to navigate life's challenges. By choosing what they want to do, they will gain decision making skills. By overcoming failures as they build various objects, they will develop problem solving skills, resilience and self-confidence. By playing with others of various ages and backgrounds, they will acquire a sense of belonging and gain a positive sense of self within their world. They will also learn how to negotiate and cooperate with others.