ABSTRACT

There is an increasing emphasis on children’s perspectives in the urban open space design around the world. Despite the fact that children’s development is greatly influenced by the environment in which they grow up, children hardly have an opportunity to determine or contribute to the shaping of their environment. The next generation’s personal attachment to the landscape is fundamental to build a responsible and sustainable future.

In this paper, a brief overview is given of the efforts that have been made in Hungary to create child-friendly urban open spaces and the opportunities for implementing initiatives in Hungary.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CREATE CHILD-FRIENDLY URBAN LANDSCAPES?

In this paper, we define urban landscape as an organically developing, complex system of man-made and natural elements within the city containing buildings and urban open spaces. Therefore the quality of the urban open spaces in a city contributes a lot to the urban landscape in general. As more and more people are living in cities all around the world, landscape architecture has the pressure to focus more on the urban landscape. It is a trend that children grow up in big cities with limited experience of rural or natural areas. American studies have shown that beyond their time at home, children spend 42% of their free time activities outdoors, however only 9% of this happens in the schoolyards (Dull, 2009). This means that the rest of the outdoor activities happen in public open spaces.

It is proven that the environment where children grow up is essential in their cognitive development. A Swiss research project called The landscape and your health (Paysage à votre santé) outlined the areas where the surroundings have a critical role on the person’s development: physical, psychological, and social health of children and young people. Nature, that can stimulate cognitive, motor, social and emotional skills for children and foster a positive effect on their health in the long term, may be scarce or missing in the urban environment. (Gyimóthy, 2015)

Kevin Lynch, in his book Growing up in Cities from 1977, already emphasized that children have less and less time for free activities in urban public open spaces. He made studies of the spatial environment of adolescence in four nations in six cities, and compiled The Child Friendly Cities Initiative.

This early work is still relevant if we want to understand how the quality of urban open spaces dedicated to children, with standardization and regulation in the focus. This approach aims to create new rules and professional guidelines that can be followed. On the other hand, the other directive focuses more on the coordination of processes and seeks ways to improve playability of the overall urban open space in the city. This approach emphasizes the importance of social engagement and the involvement of young people and children in the processes.

After the theories, the research introduces the Hungarian context, and through the example of Budapest evaluates and interprets various practical strategies for a child-friendly city. Examining the principles that shape child-friendly cities it correlates the general theories with the Hungarian context. Based on the survey of the density and distribution of existing child-friendly elements, the research identifies the most important development opportunities for Budapest. The paper reviews the relevant regulations and legal instruments that determine urban development in Hungary, and points out the most important opportunities where child-friendliness could be supported. In doing so, the research draws attention to the importance of the duality of the systems approach and participation, as these methods can be used to achieve both qualitative and quantitative improvement.

Urban landscapes that put children’s perspectives first are safer, more exciting and active. The presence of children in urban open spaces also facilitates the socialization of parents, increases community interactions, and therefore it can be seen as a social catalyst in the urban environment. What is good for children is also good for adults. When it comes to design, child-friendly urban open spaces need creativity and for the designers to think out of the box.

Thus, the importance of public participation in the development of the urban landscape and the involvement of young people is crucial.

After the theories, the research introduces the Hungarian context, and through the example of Budapest evaluates and interprets various practical strategies for a child-friendly city. Examining the principles that shape child-friendly cities it correlates the general theories with the Hungarian context. Based on the survey of the density and distribution of existing child-friendly elements, the research identifies the most important development opportunities for Budapest. The paper reviews the relevant regulations and legal instruments that determine urban development in Hungary, and points out the most important opportunities where child-friendliness could be supported. In doing so, the research draws attention to the importance of the duality of the systems approach and participation, as these methods can be used to achieve both qualitative and quantitative improvement.

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of the spatial environment affects youth in urban landscapes. The work attempted to change municipal policies by encouraging the involvement of children’s perspectives in the planning process, and to build a base for shared action amongst community and government-based groups supporting children's rights. (Lynch, 1977)

In the past century, the city has changed a lot: spatial limitations due to urbanization and the automobile culture - and the online world distracts kids and shift their attention, leaving aside and completely ignoring the importance of the outside world. In the last decades, the global trend introduced urban open spaces – it is more common to invite them to indoor areas that are adult-driven activities (like restaurants, shopping malls etc.). Children nowadays adult-centered and are integrated into urban open spaces - like playgrounds. Due to the change in mobility, cities have completely changed - the traffic is more and much faster that creates high risk and loss of space for children. (Krasniqi, 2019). The Child Friendly Cities Initiative (CFCI) launched in 1996 by UNICEF and UN-Habitat aims to make cities liveable for all. It declares that the well-being of children is the ultimate indicator of a healthy habitat, a democratic society and of good governance. This UNICEF-led initiative supports municipal governments in realizing the rights of children at the local level using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as its foundation (UNICEF, 2019).

Due to the above mentioned reasons, the importance of children and their perspective being taken into consideration in the urban landscapes - especially in urban open spaces - is crucial and a current topic for landscape architects. A UN Report shows that by 2050 approximately 60% of all urban dwellers will be under the age of 18 (UN, 2013). Children usually don’t have any right to say in shaping the environment they live in, learn and play. Children need great places to play, learn, and socialize - however children are one of the most vulnerable groups in the city and there is a need for specific solutions and strategies introduced for them. Now it is a new challenge to create cities that emphasize children’s perspective through their interest, needs and rights in the urban environment.

**Free play in the city**

Play itself is an ancient phenomenon, every child plays - regardless of gender, age, culture and social background. We can see that in all early cultures, children's toys are naturally made up games and stories and acted out daily events. They were reflecting their parents' lifestyle in their play. In production communities production-related processes, in hunting communities production-related activities were imitated by children. Racing and competition were always part of the games – as it is also something that adults did in sports or other free time activities.

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Since there were cities, children were always taking advantage of playing on the streets, hanging out with friends together. In the Middle Ages, children were playing in any open spaces in the city and it was quite natural for the community. "After school and chores, children were sent outside to play, unsupervised or in the company of older children. Their main activities were running, jumping, skipping, singing, dancing, hunting, fishing, catching birds, casting stones, climbing trees, wall-walking and other balancing games. Children also played group games like hide-and-seek, blind man’s bluff, leapfrog, horses, piggy-back riding, vaulting, acrobatics, and wrestling. They played with toys like hoops, windmills, balls, throwing sticks, hobby-horses, skip-ropes, Jacks, marbles, tops, stilts, tree swings, seesaws, shuttlecock, quacks, skittles, closh, football, and tennis." (Stüber, 2013)

After the end of the 19th century, cities changed a lot - although medieval cities were surrounded by walls, nearby forests and fields were still accessible for kids. The relation-ship between human and nature was much stronger and the traffic of the streets was less and safer. (Jancsó - Osvát - Sárdy, 1974). Although with the urbanization and motori-zation it was a need to create safer, controlled outdoor spaces for children in cities, the need for free play on the streets never really disappeared.

Structured play spaces in the city

Play is ancient - but playgrounds are the consequences of the 19th-century urbanization. Open spaces of educa-tional institutions were always impor-tant places for structured play. School gardens were the first open-air facil-ities where children were under constant supervision, in an organ-ized manner, and games appeared in parts of the schoolyard. The first designated public open space for chil-dren was created in Vienna in 1863. The Kinder Park was the first urban public park for children. There were no play equipment in the park yet, but it was an important change in atti-tude. With the disadvantages of intensi-fied urbanization, there was a need to keep children together and to provide supervised and organized play for them even after the school time. The first playground in the World was built in 1859 in Manchester, England - although the original idea of formal play-grounds was developed in Germany in the middle of the 19th century (Heap, 2012). The main goal was to create a controlled environment where children can learn how to play safely and fairly with one another. With more and more cars on the roads, it became a constant danger for urban kids to play on the streets. Playgrounds were always meant to be controlled, supervi-sed areas where kids can play, exercise and socialize. (Hart, 2006)

The playground movement in America started in the 1880s in Boston with the introduction of "sand gardens" ([Pic. 4]). They were simple fenced sand boxes placed in public spaces with some simple play equipment. Early play-grounds were supervised and segre-gated by gender (Creative Play, 2020). At the beginning of the 20th century playground associations were formed to promote the idea and help to establish playgrounds, including their layout and design. People were trained as instructors to teach children necessary lessons like equipment lessons, parades, theater productions etc. (O' Shea, 2013).

Playgrounds were properly introduced to the United States in 1907 when Presi-dent Theodore Roosevelt in a speech weighed the importance of the play-grounds (Heap, 2012; Erickson, 2012). The first city to make playgrounds a priority by creating regulations was New York in 1912. The city decided to ban climbing structures as it seemed too dangerous (Erickson, 2012). However the benefits, because of the designated, safe areas for children were obvious, kids still enjoyed being outside on the calmer so-called "play streets". During the First World War, in America playing on the street was a crime as people believed that could lead to truant behavior (Hart, 2006).

In the beginning of the 1920s a new wave of playground design emerged. Danish architect, C. Th. Sørensen introdu-ced the idea of "adventure or junk playgrounds" that let children create and shape the playground environment (Erickson, 2012). This initiative became more and more popular around the world because children could exper-ience the space on their own without adult instructions and gender splitting.

From the 1960s mass production reached the playgrounds as well, due to some serious lawsuits industry regulations for health and safety standards. With urbanization and industrialization, equipment and play-grounds became uniform, leading to standardized playgrounds.

From the 1980s new forms, bright colours and new materials were intro-duced like plastic, rubber or concrete in order to create safer surfaces and reduce maintenance costs. In the 1990s thematic playgrounds became fash-ionable and they still continue to exist. The aesthetics of the playgrounds have developed a lot in the last decades. However, excessive safety regula-tions to reduce risk at playgrounds often result in equipment boring for the older (Stipo, 2018). Today creative stimulation is a key element for play-grounds and designers are eager to find new ideas for kids to have fun.
Free play is very important for the healthy cognitive development of a child. It is not necessary to put all the pieces together for them as their fantasy is lively and creative and they are happy to use it in every step they take in the city. Stimulating their fantasy and creativity helps them to develop cognitive skills like spatial awareness or decision making that are essential to provide equal opportunities for all. Owing to technology and the spread not only across the architectural and urbanist world, but also in the different fields. UNICEF has a collection from all over the world. It summarises 101 lessons for a better city at eye level for kids, and creates a criteria list for design at the micro scale (neighbourhoods, squares, and parks), at the macro scale (main streets, waterfronts etc.) and finally at the city scale. (Stipo, 2018)

Stipo’s booklet emphasizes the importance of the different age groups, making differentiation between young children and teenagers, paying special attention to girls, reaching out to caregivers, being sensitive to social, economic, cultural and climate context. It stresses and gives support on how to build citywide strategies. Since the living conditions and physical context can vary widely, bringing play beyond playgrounds by integrating play into daily routines and reimagining everyday spaces as mini play destinations is crucial. Stipo also provides Seven Key Steps to Engage Kids and a brief description of 12 Proven Methods.

Designing for and with children
Based on the theory of Sven De Visscher, the Belgian social work lecturer and urbanist there are two paradigms, having a different approach to what a child-friendly city means. The first paradigm is rooted in developmental psychology, and seeks for an objectification of the child-friendly city with universal guidelines for protecting children against the malicious influences of the modern world. Child-friendliness appears, in this paradigm, as an outcome of professional interventions in the best interest of children, which can be translated into common approaches, and thus it is possible to create guidelines and checklist for child-friendly spaces. In contrast, the other paradigm does not lead to more standardisation but instead looks for more contextualisation in understanding child-friendliness. The second paradigm is rooted in sociology and critical pedagogy and aims for a subjectification of the child-friendly city, focusing more on kids’ participation. It aims to strengthen the position of children in the city in general, and assumes that sustainability, liveability and democratic future for our cities depend on how we involve our children in planning for tomorrow. In this sense, this paradigm promotes the quality of the process through which the city is shaped and reshaped and underlines the contextual uniqueness of the community and the local culture. (De Visscher, 2016 & Schepel, 2008)

Indispensable that both models are equally important and have relevance to the topic. Objectification and guidelines are important in order to support city regulations and create norms that are accepted by professional groups. Putting an emphasis on the quality of the processes how we shape our environment is also crucial as it has an important message for everyone in general. “If you plan cities for cars and traffic, you get cars and traffic. If you plan for people and places, you get people and places” – as Fred Kent says (PPS, 2005).

It is important to see the relevance and threats of both the approaches. While

### Table 1: Main differences between playgrounds and playscapes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Formal child-friendly urban open spaces (playgrounds and institutional gardens)</th>
<th>Informal child-friendly urban open spaces (playscapes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designed specially for kids</td>
<td>Designed for all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has boundaries</td>
<td>No boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated from other functions</td>
<td>Integrated into city functions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has play equipments</td>
<td>Does not necessarily have play equipments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned and limited activities</td>
<td>Spontaneous, unlimited activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structured play with equipment required</td>
<td>Play activity is free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organized and suggested supervision</td>
<td>Supervision is not organized / necessary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety in first (special regulations)</td>
<td>General safety requirements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
regulations and guidelines are useful for municipalities and the bureaucratic world, they can lead to boring and homogeneous designs. The institutional approach is important but not enough. Situational approach, on the other hand, needs some guidelines and facilitations in order to create long-term, sustainable solutions and successful designs.

Overview of formal and informal play spaces in urban landscapes

In the urban landscape, we can talk about formal and informal child-friendly open spaces. Formal child-friendly urban open spaces are playgrounds and institutional gardens (gardens of educational, social or health-care institutions). These spaces are designed for specific target groups, are of mostly limited access, and allow only certain behavior or activities. Formal child-friendly urban landscapes always have boundaries and specific equipment that encourage kids to play, learn, or socialize. Informal child-friendly urban landscapes are called playscapes and they are not limited in use or activities. There is a difference between a ground to play at and a playground. Playscapes are grounds to play at – in contrast with playgrounds – are part of the urban landscape without excluding any user groups or having formal boundaries. These open spaces stimulate children’s creativity and imagination and allow free, spontaneous play. They are invisible playgrounds that attract kids while serving the rest of the community. Of course, it is never a matter of black and white, there might be some places in the city, which have no boundaries but do have some play equipment (Pics. 6-7), or we can find playgrounds that do not have prefabricated play equipment (Pics. 8-10).

Analytical in Budapest and the Hungarian context

Overview of the Hungarian context

In 1777, Ratio Educationis was the first law that affected children and their play in Hungary. This law was pioneering in Europe as it initiated the provision of outdoor spaces for physical exercise and play for all educational institutions. In this period, the school environment belonged to the topic of public health in Hungary. In the end of the 1880s, the first reports were published that put an emphasis on the quality of the school environment and the open spaces around schools. (Klagyivik, 2018)

The evolution of playgrounds in Hungary was similar to the European trends. In the socialist era, landscape architecture and urbanism were also very sensitive to social issues, which was also relevant to playground design. With the construction of social housing estates, play spaces for children were also created as parts of the development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green Infrastructure Category</th>
<th>Area (ha)</th>
<th>Accessibility (m)</th>
<th>Limited accessibility (m)</th>
<th>Land Use Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>regional park</td>
<td>about 150</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
<td>forests, green spaces, agricultural areas, hills, water management areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>city park</td>
<td>30-150</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neighborhood park</td>
<td>10-30</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public park</td>
<td>3-10</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>local gardens</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>200</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>public gardens</td>
<td>0.83-1</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>green space.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Free play in the city was part of children’s life in the last century. The legendary The Paul Street Boys written by Ferenc Molnár is one of the greatest examples of how kids spent their free time in urban open spaces in the 1880s in Hungary.

In order to understand and identify what are the most important urban areas for children, studies in developmental environmental psychology has to be taken into account. According to today’s environmental psychological research, under the age of six, children’s existence and orientation in the physical environment is primarily based on their home environment and only indirectly influenced by the characteristics of the neighborhood. The potential activities, impacts and dangers learned in this environment will become part of the child’s social, emotional and cognitive experiences. Touching and grasping objects and surfaces plays an extremely important role in human development and in establishing identity (Dúll, 2009).

One of the most important research areas of environmental psychology are the institutional places of education, the so-called educational environments, as these spaces are primarily designed for the education and socialization of children. There are basically two types: formal and informal educational environments. Formal educational environments like kindergartens, schools, nurseries etc. are controlled and limited in use, while informal educational environments like zoos, museums etc. are special recreational and leisure spaces. Besides playgrounds and playscapes, these are very important open spaces in the city, which can be part of child-friendly urban open spaces.

Before analysing, it is also important to introduce the Hungarian classification of green spaces (public gardens, public parks, city parks etc.). Based on Balázs Almási’s work, six different types of green spaces can be defined in urban landscapes, according to their size and accessibility (Almási, 2007; Table 2). Playgrounds can be found in all six types of green spaces, but when we talk about local needs, public gardens and local public parks matter the most. Accessible within a distance of 200-400 meters, public gardens and local parks are supposed to primarily serve the needs of the local residents - in the case of children, the need for daily play.

Spatial distribution of child-friendly urban open spaces in Budapest

Based on the available data from the Budapest City Development Concept, Situational Analysis (2011) this paper attempts to define children’s spatial use in Budapest. The purpose of the analysis is to identify urban open spaces where the so-called child-friendly design considerations are of primary importance. In this research, the study area is Budapest - but the method can be adapted to any other cities.

In the study, only formal educational environments (nurseries, daycares, and elementary schools) are presented. Nevertheless, it can also be extended to informal educational environments. Because of the different size
and accessibility, nurseries, daycares, and playgrounds as formal child-friendly urban open spaces are represented with a radius of 500 meters, while elementary schools are shown with a radius of 500 meters showing the walkable distance around the facility. In Figure 1, the population density of 0–14 years old children can be seen in Budapest. Based on this figure, it is clear that there are some areas which have higher need for child-friendly initiatives. These areas are mostly social housing estates or dense urban neighbourhoods in the inner part of the city.

In Figure 2, we can see the distribution of formal educational environments in Budapest. In Figure 3, the distribution of outdoor playgrounds is shown. It is clearly visible that the two figures do not correlate - although the needs are the same. Making a comparison with Figure 1, it can be said that the distribution of formal educational and the outdoor playgrounds are elements and the spatial connection between them is not developed well in the city. Linear elements like streets, boulevards and greenways should be considered as important playscape options. In order to improve the quality of child-friendly urban open spaces in Budapest (or elsewhere) it is crucial to focus on the links between designated child-friendly destinations. A systematic approach is essential when we work towards developing the child-friendliness of Budapest.

Finally, Figure 4 was created by overlaying the population density and the accessible child-oriented urban environments. Analyzing Figure 4 closely, we can point out some interesting correlations. It is visible that the density of the needs is not in line with the facilities provided. As it was also seen in Figure 1, the inner districts and the high density residential areas should have a priority in child-friendly initiatives as their population of children is higher than that in other areas.

The other important conclusion we can take from the figures is that both the formal educational and the outdoor playgrounds can be considered as parts of the urban public open space network - however they operate with restricted use only. In contrast with the formal educational environments, playgrounds can be well integrated into the urban public open space network (Pic. 13), and thus provide sufficient recreational green spaces for the whole population, especially but not limited to children (Pic. 13).

Young children prefer to stay in their close environment, they use the same routes and tend to stay in close proximity to their home and school routes (Ongroe, Edgü és Taluğ, 2015). Therefore building a network of playscapes and creating links between children destinations is extremely important when improving child-friendliness in a city. Networking between block elements is important in order to achieve good functionality, so that we must consider the paths between them as important as the element itself. Better connections can be realized by constructing greeways and alternative routes (pedestrian, bicycle, roller) or by transforming existing infrastructure into connecting structures. It would be important to designate the pedestrian promenade as another structural element in the local plan for the sake of spatial security and functional connection, and to include it as a pedestrian zone into the planning policies.

According to the principles of human-centered urban planning (Gehl, 2014), short distances to reach events should be sought, and integration of function can achieve social sustainability and a general sense of security. Inspiring urban spaces for outdoor activities, walking and cycling need to be created, and it is especially important to provide gradual transition between buildings and outdoor spaces. In order to enhance urban life in cities, public open spaces should be designed in a way that people can use them most of the time of the day or the year. Authors of this paper propose to summarize the child-friendly interpretation of the general principles according to Table 9. Within the framework of local public affairs, the task of the local government is to develop the settlements pursuant to the Act on Local Authorities in Hungary (Településrendezési Tervek) and Local Plans (Településrendezési Tervek) and Townscape Initiatives (Településképi Tervek) are regulatory tools that can be used to comply with the above mentioned...
In order to achieve that, child-friendliness can be described in order to achieve these documents. Long, medium, and short-term development directions, defining goals, will be added as a goal into these documents. Child-friendliness can be described in order to achieve that, based on the survey, it is possible to achieve that. Efforts should be made to create urban spaces of human scale, urban integration, and environmental sensitivity (e.g., narrow streets, greenbelts, fields should be added).

The most important functions for the development of children should be integrated as much as possible in one place. The most important functions for the development of children should be integrated as much as possible in one place.

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Urban Development Plans

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In addition to the mandatory urban development plans, if their capabilities allow, local governments may also prepare other sectoral plans for the implementation of complex environmental, social, and economic objectives, on a voluntary basis. When preparing additional strategic plans that support mandatory urban development plans, it is worth being aware of international trends and good practices. Extending the possible usage of urban outdoor spaces

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There are some good examples in Hungary where children were engaged from the very early stage even to the implementation and maintenance of public space developments - however, these projects are usually related to institutional gardens (Pic. 14-19). Municipalities are realizing more and more the advantages of participation and engagement of the younger generation, but it is still a long way ahead to popularize these methods in the development of urban public open spaces, which can serve long-term sustainability of the urban landscape and the community who lives in it. Vandalization can be reduced, local identity and the sense of belonging can be encouraged by engagement. Community planting, painting and crafting or doing minor construction works with kids can develop a lot of social and cognitive skills and can raise awareness. These engagement processes are extremely valuable for the younger generation while they can contribute to community building in general.

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CONCLUSIONS
To conclude the paper, if we would like to improve child-friendly urban landscapes, a systematic approach is essential. Creating strong links between the child-friendly destinations, formal or informal educational environments, is crucial in order to achieve improvements that children can really benefit from. Playscapes are especially important for streets, boulevards, greenways or other linear urban open space elements. Another important message is that we need to develop the tools for engaging children. Landscape architects should be more open to related professions (teachers, sociologists, psychologists etc.) in order to gain knowledge that is useful for understanding the needs and interests of this special user group. A democratic approach is essential to create successful child-friendly cities. The way we deal with our environment gives a message to the future generations. Paying more attention to our kids is important not only for their healthy development but also serves the long-term goals of our communities. For example, playgrounds - in addition to serving the needs of children - are important places for socializing for the different generations (Belenyi, 2011). Placing children at the heart of urban planning and design will lead to more lovable, livable, sustainable, safe and inclusive cities for all. The fundamental principle is now more real than ever: “A city good for children, is a city good for all.” (Bétes, 2018)

No doubts that designers, planners, and developers have responsibilities in creating more child-friendly urban landscapes. The first step is to fight the ignorance towards children’s rights and needs and to understand their different way of perception. Being open to this special user group will help us to build a better world that is more sensitive to minorities, and a more creative, playful, tolerant, healthier, greener, and safer environment. A better place to live in.
ÖSSZEFOGLALÓ

Gyermekbarát városi szabadterek - szabádterek - a gyermekbarát város elérésére szükséges feltételeik és megvalósítása

Azok a városi szabadterek, amelyek előttételeként helyezik el a gyerekeket szemben biztonságosabban, igazságszerűen és igazságtalanul.

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