



The school playground

'Learning by playing –

A preparation for the real world'



What do school playgrounds have to do with drug use prevention?

- Drug awareness already begins at a child's level
- Build children's social skills and self-confidence
- Children are influenced by their educators, multi-media, advertising and architecture, i.e. the school playground



Be creative-use your imagination

- When playing children get away into a fantasy world
- Children need a lively imagination in order to be immune against addiction as a teenager.
- A child's fantasy can best developed when game playing is spontaneous according to their own set of rules.



Children and their feelings

- They have to learn to quantify and express their emotions, this as well as for the positive as for the negative feelings
- Game-playing is the best way children can express their feelings
- Relaxation is also a key element in expressing their feelings.



Freedom of movement

- Children have to be able to run and rough around freely. Through exercise children get to know their body better.
- It is a known fact that through playing in a natural terrain environment children train their motor function and become more fit and less prone to accidents.
- Motor-sensory function deficits with children are one of the reasons why accidents happen in school playgrounds.



Children should be brought up to have a strong character

- Children are best protected against drug abuse when they are self-confident and mentally strong.
- Therefore conflict-solving and self-confidence are key elements.



Playing is extremely important

- Children grow up to be like they play. They play like their environment allows them to play.
- « Square school playgrounds make square children! » Heinrich Benjes
- A school playground should stimulate a child's senses to allow for creative game-playing. Children then become active and gain confidence in their own skills which helps them to develop social skills.



The implementation of the project

- An innovative and quite risky undertaking is the active participation of the inhabitants of Roodt-Syr in the planning of the new Differentiated Education - Primary School – Cantine Complex along with a new school playground.



The implementation of the project

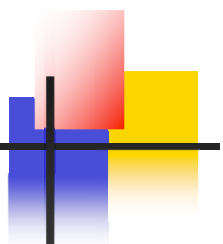
- The municipality authorities had a number of commissions giving them advice: this was of great help. Although this cooperation could only exist because it was based on a tremendous amount of mutual trust. The more people are involved in a process the more different opinions there are. It isn't always easy to agree upon the different suggestions of all parties involved.



The implementation of the project

- The importance of the children's participation:

The municipality authorities and the architects build a school playground which meets the needs of the children. When we do this, then we have educated our children to become consumers!



Children's participation is important

When including children in a decision making procedure:

- ▶ It is important to teach them to think critically and independantly.
- ▶ The children have to be taken seriously.
- ▶ They will develop a stronger karakter when taken seriously.



Children's participation is important

- Nevertheless it is also important to bring the children into the project at the right stage. Bringing them into the project too early could be detrimental to the project!
- It is utmost vital that all the participating decision takers (municipality authorities, educators, teachers, parents, architects) have gone through all possible scenarios of the project before bringing the children into the project.



Children's participation is important

- If this hasn't been done then the project could be at risk, since the children will find out very fast that the decision takers have not done their homework and that they are not decisive of what they really want to do in this project.



Children's participation is important

- Workshops with the children in Roodt-Syr Municipality authorities, the architect and the working group « School Playground » had decided to organise some workshops with the children.



Before the 1st Workshop

- The school teachers together with the children had done a survey during school hours to evaluate the existing school playground. This survey was based on two questions:
 - What do you like about the school playground?
 - What do you not like about the school playground?



Before the 1st workshop

- The results of the survey were posted in the school on a bulletin board for everybody to read.
- The parents were informed about the ongoing school playground project.
- The results of this survey were the basis for the 1st workshop.



The 1st workshop

- Through a brainstorming a hit parade of the children's favourite games was set up and evaluated.
- They imagined their favourite area in the school playground and at the end of the workshop drew this favourite area.



The 2nd Workshop

- The children were asked to represent their ideal school playground on four different 3-D representations.
- All children went about being creative in a very disciplined and concentrated manner.
- They can be very proud of their works of art.



Results of the workshops

- Children have their own thoughts of what a school playground should look like.
- Since their active involvement in the project they can identify themselves with their new school playground!
- They are more likely to respect it, when it has been installed.