

Children's Playground

Build a World of Play

Keywords:

creativity, collaboration, engineering, design, sustainability, play

Target group:

primary school pupils
(ages 6-11)

Objectives:



This activity invites pupils to design and build their own creative playground, while thinking about sustainability, inclusivity, and the importance of public spaces. Through hands-on construction, teamwork, and guided reflection, pupils will explore the function of playgrounds in community life, and learn how thoughtful planning can lead to joyful, inclusive, and environmentally friendly places for play. By the end of the activity, pupils will be able to identify features of sustainable design, and work collaboratively to present their ideal play space.

General Guideline on Time Allocation:

The duration needed to carry out this activity may vary depending on the specific group of children. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the implementation according to the needs, interests, and dynamics of the group.

In the preparatory phase, teachers may use a variety of activities to introduce and contextualize the chosen topic. These can include discussions, videos, drawings, storytelling, or even a field trip, depending on the age and background knowledge of the children.

The main construction phase, during which children plan and build their urban element using LEGO bricks, should typically not exceed 45 to 60 minutes. However, this phase often stimulates further curiosity and questions among the children, potentially leading to extended engagement or follow-up activities. For more detailed instructions and pedagogical support on how to implement activities of INNO-kids project, please download the Teacher's Methodological Guide.



Materials and Resources Needed:

- LEGO bricks in various sizes, colours, and shapes (including wheels, connectors, base plates)
- Paper, markers, crayons, and coloured pencils, scissors and glue, recycled materials such as cardboard, plastic bottles, bottle caps, or packaging
- Rulers or measuring tape (for estimating space and proportions)
- Reference photos of diverse playgrounds from around the world

Note: Encourage pupils to repurpose available materials creatively. If LEGO bricks are not available, pupils may use basic craft supplies to bring their ideas to life through drawings and handmade models.

Introduction to the Topic:

Begin by asking pupils what their favourite playground is like. What do they like to play on? What makes it exciting, safe, or fun? Use photos of real playgrounds to discuss the wide variety of equipment and layouts—slides, climbing frames, swings, balance beams, shaded areas, and more. Then shift to a sustainability lens: What happens when a playground gets too hot? What if it's not safe for all children? Introduce the idea that a good playground is also designed to respect the environment and include everyone.

Procedure:

Preparation

Start with a short group discussion about playgrounds. What kinds of spaces do they include? Who uses them? Why are they important in cities and towns? Then show examples of sustainable playgrounds—those that use recycled materials, solar lights, natural shade, or include accessible ramps and quiet zones. Ask pupils to imagine how they would make a playground that is fun, eco-friendly, and inclusive.

Construction

Divide pupils into small groups. Each group will:

- Sketch their playground on paper, identifying features they want to include
- Build their design using LEGO and recycled materials
- Include at least one sustainable or inclusive feature (e.g. solar-powered lights, wheelchair ramp, shaded rest zone)
- Think about how children of different ages or abilities would use the space



Details

As groups build, encourage them to think about the layout: Where do people enter? Are there spaces to rest, run, or play quietly? Are climbing and balancing activities safe? Guide them to add signs, trees, benches, or decorative elements that make the space feel complete. Support their thinking by asking: What makes this playground fun? What makes it respectful to nature? What makes it feel welcoming to everyone?

Stories

Invite pupils to create a short story or comic about a child spending the day in their playground. Who are they? What do they do first? What adventures do they have? The story could focus on friendship, discovery, teamwork, or even solving a small challenge (e.g. finding a lost toy or helping a new visitor feel included).

Presentation

Each group presents their LEGO playground model to the class. Pupils should explain the design of their playground—what it includes, how it's used, and what sustainable or inclusive features it offers. After presentations, allow space for questions, feedback, and compliments. Create a classroom "Playground Gallery" where all models are displayed for inspiration.

Tips:

- Encourage pupils to combine fun and function — how can their design support both adventure and rest, action and safety?
- Use open-ended prompts such as "How does your playground welcome everyone?" or "What makes this space eco-friendly?"
- Support creativity by showcasing real-life examples.
- Remind them that playgrounds are more than just structures — they are spaces where imagination, community, and nature come together.



Additional Considerations:

Differentiation:

Provide additional support or simplified instructions for pupils who may require extra assistance. For advanced pupils, offer extension tasks such as researching further sustainable practices or designing more complex models.



Assessment:

Assess pupils based on their participation and engagement during discussions and hands-on activities. Evaluate the creativity, effort, collaboration, depth of understanding demonstrated in their models, critical thinking, ability to provide constructive feedback and presentation skills.

Extension Activities:

- Connect the activity to the school's outdoor spaces — could any new ideas be added there?
- Invite an architect, landscape designer, or city planner to talk about how real playgrounds are built.
- Visit an existing playground and explore its features. Ask pupils to think about how they feel in this playground. What do they like and what do they dislike?

Curriculum Connections:

This activity integrates:

Science (*exploration of materials, physical forces in play structures, and human interaction with outdoor spaces*)

Art (*design, creativity, construction*)

Social Studies (*public spaces, inclusivity, and sustainability*)

Language (*storytelling, discussion, presentation skills*)

Physical Education (*value of movement, physical play, and well-being*)

SDG Connections:

- **SDG 3:** Good Health and Well-being – Pupils design spaces that support physical activity, rest, and joyful play for all children.
- **SDG 4:** Quality Education – Pupils learn through hands-on design, teamwork, and reflection, building awareness of real-world challenges and solutions.
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities – The activity encourages pupils to think about how public spaces can be inclusive, accessible, and environmentally friendly.
- **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production – Pupils consider how to use recycled or natural materials in creative and meaningful ways.