



**PLAY** <sup>CE</sup> <sup>®</sup>

Placemaking through **play**

**Powering Community through  
Playful Placemaking**



# Learning Objectives

- Understand the barriers found in traditional community engagement
- Summarize how the benefits of play directly align with playful placemaking methodologies designed to support community engagement
- Outline the types of play and how they are used to empower communities
- Experience first hand various engagement activities that you can use in your community





# We Cannot Do It Alone

Please meet Ray and Yaya





A photograph showing two individuals, a man and a woman, working together outdoors on a wooden pallet. The man, wearing an orange jacket and safety glasses, is using a power drill on a piece of wood. The woman, wearing a bright yellow-green jacket and a purple hoodie, is assisting him. They are in a grassy area with a house and a tent in the background under a clear blue sky.

**Purpose Declaration**

**Empowering  
collaboration among  
communities, their  
agents, and designers to  
create meaningful built  
environments for  
everyone.**



# Limitations in Engagement

- The process can be intimidating
- There is a strong disconnect between the research around the value of engagement, versus the practice of engagement
- The “Check the Box” attitude, reinforces lack of trust
- Imbalances of power and perception of expertise
- A sense of forced collaboration leading to unsuccessful outcomes
- Interest limitations and lack of bandwidth
- Contesting viewpoints cause challenges
- There is prevalence of “hard to reach groups”
- There is no common language between designers, municipal leaders, and community members



# Definitions of Play



“Play is voluntary, and takes one out of the sense of time, has improvisational potential, and while it may appear to have no purpose, is engagingly Fun!”

- *Dr. Stuart Brown, National Institute for Play*



“A free activity, standing apart from ordinary life as being “not serious” but at the same time absorbing. Not connected to any material interest or profit.”

- *Johan Huizinga, Dutch cultural historian*



“In a world continuously presenting unique challenges and ambiguity, play prepares these bears (humans) for an evolving planet.”

- *Bob Fagen, Ronin Institute researcher*



“A ‘give and take’ experience, the playing back and forth with an idea, without any expectation of finding a solution, but engaged in the inquiry.”

- *Joy Kuebler, President, Joy Kuebler Landscape Architect and PLAYCE Studio*



# How is play related to social science?

- Play strengthens the mind and body, without play we are limited to how we interact with the world around us
- Play research shows that every human plays regardless of their age, ability, culture, or language
- In play, every participant is a collaborative problem solver
- Trust and empathy is required for communities as they explore the possibilities of design

All people play, and lack of play limits how we interact with the world around us and our capacity to shape it.



# Case Study: Baily Green

- Traditional engagement and planning process only got them so far
- Community had very little interest in moving anything forward
- Joy asked to join teaching team at UB; agreed only if they would play

## Four Play events

- Winter Tour
- Neighborhood workshop at the library
- Prop Play at the site
- Community Faire





# The Heart of Playful Placemaking

**Trust**

**Empathy**

**Optimism**

**Flexibility**

**Attunement**

**Problem  
Solving**

**Perseverance**

**Emotional  
regulation**

**Joy in  
Movement**

**Three-  
dimensional  
Thinking**

**Openness**

**Cognitive  
growth**

**Belonging**



# Utilizing Social Science

**“In play we can imagine and experience situations we have never encountered before and learn from them.**

**We can create possibilities that have never existed but may in the future.**

**We make new cognitive connections that find their way into our everyday lives.**

**We can learn lessons and skills without being directly at risk.”**





# Suspending risk: A champion is born

Please meet Ayana





# Creative Play



- Through creative play, people use their playfulness to innovate and create
- Creative play stays with us throughout our lifetime and forms the backbone of creative endeavors
- Creative Play Experiences
  - Collage as visioning
  - Community art activities
  - Try It On- tactical urbanism activities and programing opportunities
  - Community Conversations with music and food



# Object Play



- **Joy and value in object play**
- **Early manipulation skills lead to more complex brain circuits**
- **Object Play Experiences**
  - Team building and kick-off games
  - Exploring the site with toys and props
  - Try It On- tactical urbanism activities



# Storytelling-Narrative Play

- **Storytelling is directly related to brain function**
- **More information is retained when we can personally relate to a story**
- **Storytelling-Narrative Play Experiences**
  - **Draw a Moment Games**
  - **Collaging as storytelling**
  - **Card Games as story**
  - **Cover Story Visioning Game**





# Movement Play

- **Movement is primal and accompanies all the elements of play**
- **Movement fosters learning, innovation, flexibility, adaptability, and resilience**
- **Movement Play Experiences**
  - **Team building and kick-off games**
  - **Site tours on foot, bike or boat**
  - **Exploring the site with toys and props**
  - **Markets, festivals, community events**





# Social Play

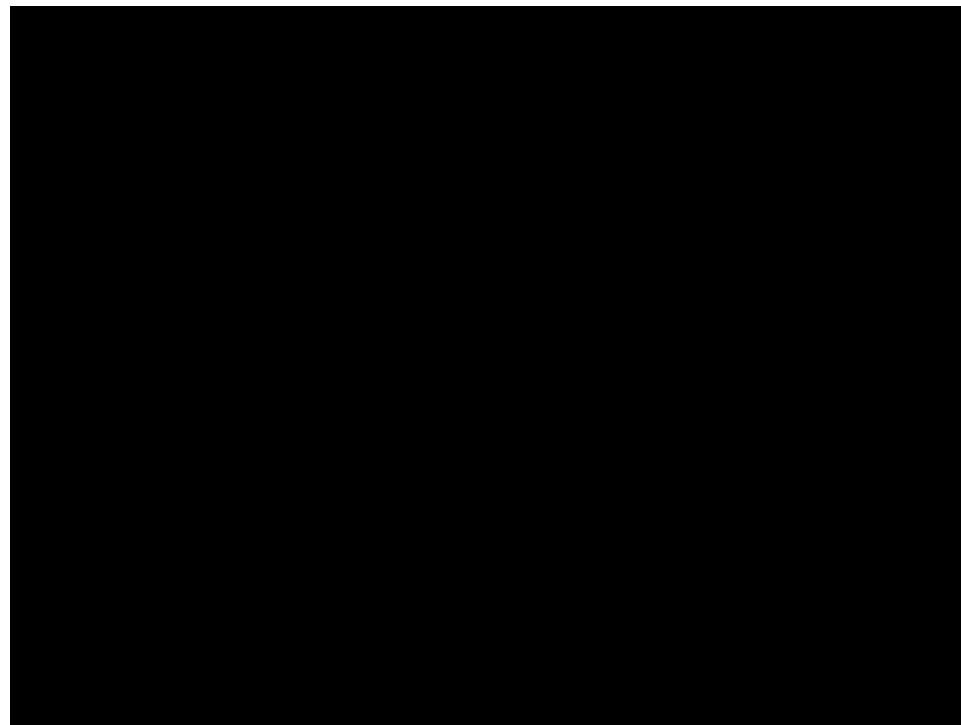
- **Parallel play & cooperative play**
- **Being able to jump to different mutual play opportunities is the backbone of developing empathy**
- **Social Play Experiences**
  - **Team building and kick-off games**
  - **Exploring the site with toys and props**
  - **Try It On- tactical urbanism activities**
  - **Recognizing and acknowledging your play partners**





# Building a Champion

- Ayana came to discuss “what could be next”
- May 14, 2022
- What got created for June, July, August, September





# Interacting with the Public



**Identify and invite all stakeholders to play together**



**Go to where your community is already gathering**



**Change up program and content to support more play**



**Short presentations with workshop activities and a chance for community-led inquiries**



**Activities that support community relationship development, authentic sharing, and open dialogues**





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**<https://www.playcore.com/programs/playful-placemaking>**





Group 1-

Seed to Salsa A food Revolution

-grow all the ingredients, bottle it, sell and  
entrepreneur

Dance night

Salsa Sustainable Gardening

Image: bowl holding the ingredients



Group 2-

Headline: Blooming Community

Neighbors coming together

Nourishment from the Community

“Collection of homes to a community”

Food source,

Birds Return!!





**Let's Play!**


**Accessing Healthy  
Food Through  
Community Gardens**





# Contact Us

**We would love to hear from you!**

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