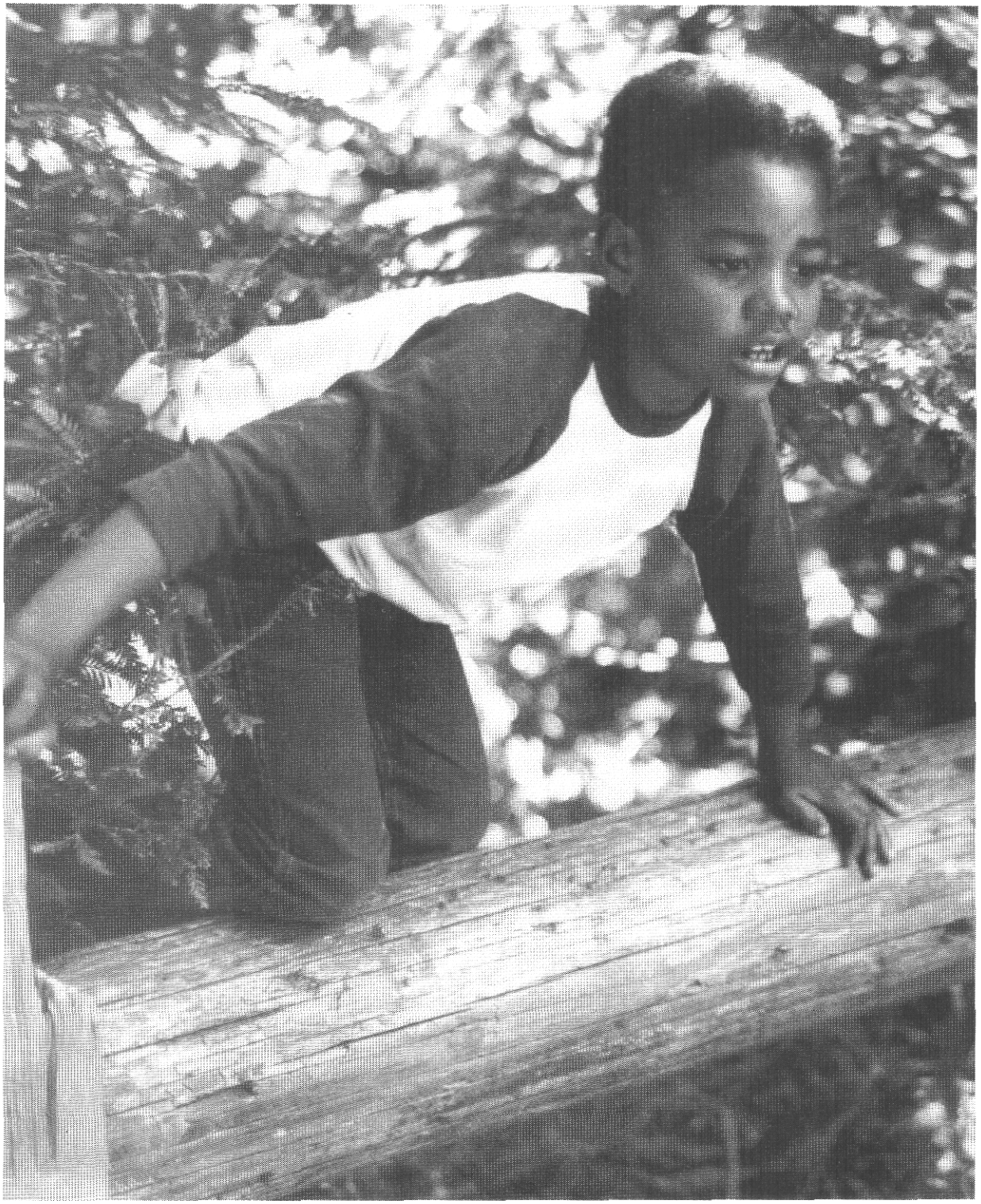
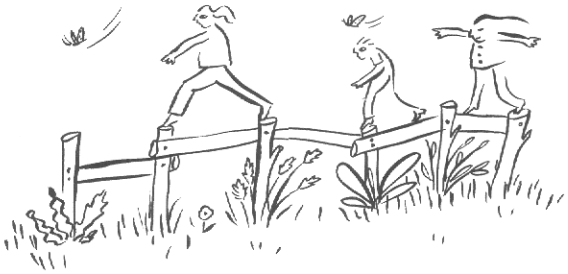
CHAPTER 8

Moving



Part II:
Developing the Whole Child



Moving stimulates the kinesthetic, proprioceptive, and vestibular senses. It is a critical part of normal child development. Given access, opportunity, and adult encouragement, children will naturally explore their surroundings. The need for movement provides a rationale for creating quality environments capable of sustaining positive learning and physical and mental growth. This is particularly important in highly industrialized societies where children's opportunities for movement are becoming restricted by television viewing and issues of safety and liability.

Too many children today have stopped moving. In industrialized countries and in affluent, middle-class communities across the world, children are spending too much of their time indoors with television, computers, and video games, rather than exercising their bodies in outdoor, free-play activity. In the United States, where these trends are the most advanced, childhood obesity has become a major health issue.[1]

The increase in sedentary, indoor activities has been driven in part by a decrease in opportunities for outdoor play. The growth of public violence has made parents fearful about letting their children out to play on their own. In the majority of families with children, the parents work and are not at home when children return from school. Apprehension about social risks in the outdoor environment has encouraged many parents to enroll their children in afterschool programs, such as music, gymnastics, ecology, cooking, and art. The best programs offer an array of creative, nonformal activities to serve children's varied interests; many programs, however, do not provide this level of quality. For the millions of children whose parents cannot afford afterschool care, watching television has become their primary leisure activity.

Indoor programs have begun to replace outdoor informal play in the leisure time of many middle-class children. Many programs, of course, incorporate physical education (though rarely outdoors). But few programs focus on free play as a main activity, largely because it is hard to "sell," at least in the United States. In other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany, an impressive range of leisure programs are offered by nonprofit organizations, labor unions, and housing associations, often with government partnership. Such programs have existed for at least three decades. In a handful of countries, public policy in the nonformal education sector addressed the need for community-based leisure programs much earlier; in Sweden and Denmark, for example, efforts began in the 1940s with the development of urban playpark and adventure playground programs.

In much of the world, in marginal communities lacking the luxuries of industrial development, children

lead lives deprived of material comfort. However, as long as there is enough to eat, they are constantly on the move in outdoor play. Their level of physical grace and agility are striking to the visitor from the developed world, where children's movement outdoors has fallen below the threshold required for good health—even though geographic movement has increased via cars and school buses.

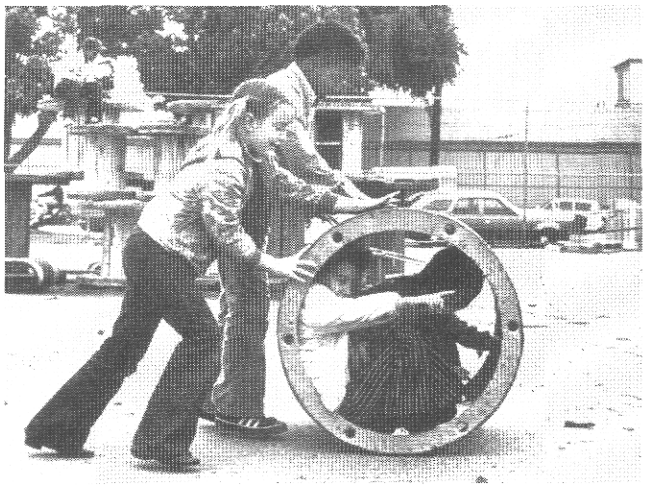
The negative consequences for children's health are dramatic.[2] The projected impact in added health-care costs over the lifetimes of these children is an entirely avoidable burden. Physical education should be part of the answer, but it disappeared long ago from the curriculum in many school districts in the United States—a shocking fact to educators visiting from abroad. The most extreme signal of this trend has been the abandonment of recess in some school districts, which deprive children of their only opportunity to let off steam during the school day.[3]

Washington School definitely still had recess! By the time the Yard was fully developed, it provided such a range of attractive three-dimensional spaces and physical supports for creative body movement that it was impossible for children not to move. This is how an effectively designed movement space should work—not set apart from other settings but designed as a catalyst in the entire environment, irresistibly motivating children to move and exercise their bodies in myriad ways.

BODY LANGUAGE

With each increment of development, an increasing number of children, regardless of ability, would practice moving their bodies through space. With grace and agility, they exercised their muscles, ligaments, and limbs—balancing, chasing, climbing, crawling, dodging, hanging, hopping, jumping, leaping, rocking, rolling, running, sliding, spinning, squirming, swinging, tumbling, twirling, twisting—without a single instruction from a physical education teacher.

This was a far cry from the old schoolyard, where girls hung around admiring the boys' prowess at playing ball or felt excluded because they were not attracted by the crowded play equipment; and where nonathletic



The diversity of challenging environments stimulated a diversity of movement. Especially for children with disabilities, the Yard provided a sense of freedom unavailable in less diverse play spaces.

children were ridiculed and ostracized for not participating in the unchanging routines of ball courts, game lines, and metal bars.

The Yard celebrated the exuberant fun and excitement of creative movement and expanded beyond the opportunities provided by standard play equipment.

As new elements were added, children invented games with more flexible sets of rules. These games sometimes served as an extension of existing traditions, sometimes reflected the impact of mainstream mass culture of television and film, and sometimes resulted in intriguing, imaginative action games that defied categorization.

Physical diversity stimulated a broader variety of activity. Traditional games that were the base of the children's culture in the Yard became increasingly varied and interwoven with new activities that flourished in response to the expanding choices in the landscape. As the range of physical challenges broadened, more children were able to participate and feel better about themselves regardless of their ability. Movement helped children acquire physical competence and self-confidence through interaction with their surroundings.

"YOU'RE IT!"

Chase games were excellent examples of how the diversified landscape expanded the play repertoire.

"Last one in the dirt area is 'it,'" shouts Rachel. "We play a lot of tag back there because it has lots of things to run around and it's soft when you fall down," she notes, reflecting the children's preference for playing chase games in the Natural Resource Area. The children found the space more interesting and challenging.

"You have to know the bases," Joel explains. "Usually we take time out to decide on them. They could be the logs, parts of the railings, certain rocks, the picnic tables, the bridge, the Gazebo, railroad ties—there's lots of possibilities."

"When we play tag in the meadow, you have to talk to a rock," says Devin. "If you don't, you're out of the game. They're 'talking rocks.' You can say things like, 'How are you doing? Want some tea?'"

"We play 'Marco Polo' around the weeping willow tree," says Harriet. "One person's 'it' and the others have their eyes closed and they say 'Marco' and you have to say 'Polo' so they can hear where you are. The tree [Willow Island] is base, except you have to be careful not to fall in the water."

TRADITIONAL GAMES

Each recess, patches of asphalt rang with the ancient chants and game cries heard around the world.

"Green light!" a girl yells, her back turned towards a line of children a few yards away. The line advances, each player moving as fast as possible while retaining an ability to freeze suddenly.

"Red light!" She whips around, facing the group, and sends anyone who is still moving back to the baseline. She repeats the calls until she is tagged by a player, who then becomes the new "light."

"Simon says" was played on any handy spot of asphalt with much giggling as the children contorted themselves into the most impossible positions. There were also the raucous back-and-forth dashing of "red rover" and the circular "duck, duck, goose" played around the giant compass circle.

Children enjoyed many variations of traditional catching and jump rope games. Chinese jump rope was particularly popular. To play, children tied a large number of rubber bands together to make a string long enough to loop around the legs of two children standing six to eight feet (1.8 to 2.4 m) apart. Three or four then jumped back and forth, inside and outside the loop, as it was slowly raised inch by inch. Players dropped out when they tripped on the "rope." The last player remaining was the winner.

Mostly girls played hopscotch on the three or four hopscotch designs painted along the edges of the asphalt. Sometimes they chalked their own designs. In the old Forum in Rome, there are still hopscotch diagrams scratched in the pavement. The Romans supposedly learned it from the ancient Greeks and then introduced it to the British, who took it to America. Different designs and versions of the game are found in many countries, including Burma, India, Japan, China, Russia, and Scotland.

The children who put the highest premium on running complained that there was not enough room in the Natural Resource Area. The unencumbered expanses of the Main Yard, though, easily allowed them to play tag in groups of six or seven. There were still many places to hide: in the far corners, behind the structures, in the weeds and bushes around the edges. These children enjoyed the spread-out feeling.

"We use the [Big Toy] barrels as base," explains Devin. "You can only stay there for five counts, then you have to get off. Sometimes when the chasers are about to get you . . . when they're about to kill you, you're scared. The fun part is the running. I run like crazy. I just like running. I like the air to get at me and when I don't get tagged I feel proud. I run every day. My dad's a runner. We go up in the park and run first thing in the morning."

"In 'TV tag' you squat down and say the name of a TV show," says one girl, "but you can't say it again in the same game and if you don't say a name, you'll be 'it.' In 'freeze tag' you have to stay still when you're tagged, and you can only get untagged if one of the players touches you. 'Tunnel tag' is where you make your legs like a tunnel and the only way you can get free is if someone goes through them."

"'Freeze tag,' 'mashed potatoes,' and 'bottle of poison' are what we usually play," says George. "Hey Jeffrey, you be 'it'; we're playing poison. Ha, ha, you've got the poison. Do anything you like except with a 'p,' like 'popcorn' or 'potatoes.'"

The bars were the scene of many tag and chasing games.

"For monkey tag," Muffin explains, "we have 'time boxes' [formed by the monkey bars], where the person who's 'it' can't catch you. If a person touches you, you're 'it.' My friend and I trick each other. Every time I go into a box, she goes out; then, when I go out, she goes in."

Jenny and Amy run over from the rings and climb the monkey bars. Larry is there and says, "Let's play 'hot lava.'"

Both girls watch him dangle, threatening to drop. They both dangle and drop.

"Hot lava!" they yell in unison.

Larry moves over to the rings and hangs upside down.

"Mommy, oh Mommy!" he yells. "I just turned into the hot lava monster!"

He tries to catch Jenny. She runs away.

He catches Amy. Jenny tries to save her.

They try not to touch the ground ("hot lava") and get back on the bars. Larry catches Jenny.

"I'm going to take you to my hot lava house," he says.

She runs away and starts chasing him, hits him playfully, scolds him, and tells him to go under the ladder bar. Another boy joins in. The game turns into "boys against girls." The girls grab another boy, get him down on the ground, count to twenty, and dance around yelling.

Settings were designed to stimulate hopping, balancing, running, jumping, and walking. They offered children a variety of ways to experience the Yard environment through movement. A "magic circle" of rocks motivated a special form of tag (top) while the railroad ties encouraged balancing games (bottom).

BALL TAG

"Ball tag," a free-form chasing game with many variations, was played all over the Yard.

Lamonte explains the counting-out routine to avoid being "it." "I'll say, 'Put your foot in the middle.' Then I'll say 'eeny, meeny, miny, mo' or 'eeny, meeny, gitchalini, ba ba lini, and out goes you!' Then we'll start playing, but I won't go on base—I'll say, 'Na, na, na!' And they'll throw the ball at me, but I'll dodge out of the way and it'll hit the guy behind."

He runs across the asphalt, gets hit with the ball, laughs, picks it up, and starts to chase the thrower, who runs behind the spools. Lamonte gets tired, sits on the ball, and bounces up and down. His friend clambers across the spools behind him and gives him a raspberry.

Lamonte leaps into action. Both race off across the asphalt around one of the basketball poles. Lamonte hurls the ball and hits his friend in the back. A boy and girl who had been sitting on the bench join in. The girl grabs the ball. The boys dance around her, smiling and having fun. She throws the ball at one of the boys, who catches it, tucks it under his arm, and pulls out a set of Star Wars cards! They huddle around the boy, admiring the cards and passing them from hand to hand.

Peter explains how they play ball tag on the play structure, making use of the structure's third dimension.

"The guy who's 'it' has the ball down below in the sand," he explains. "The rest of us climb around on the structure and try to keep from being hit. Sometimes we'll jump off into the sand if we think we can dodge the ball."

"He's a girl—you're on our team now."

Jenny teases Larry, calling him a baby. He chases her, teases her; she keeps teasing in return. They all laugh. The recess bell signals the end of their otherwise endless chasing "fugue" that plays its final bars as they continue running around each other on the way back to class.

SPYING, HIDING, SEEKING

"There's a boy we spy on," says Christine, "to see what he's doing, in case he's making up a plan. I spy on him, then he chases me to get all the news he can about the girls."

"I spy all over the place," says Kent. "I just follow people without them knowing. Sometimes I creep up on them, jump out of the bushes, and surprise them. Me and my friends just go in the passageway between the bushes, with all our army stuff, or we make stuff out of what's around—like a stick with a knob for a trigger can be a gun."

"We camouflage ourselves by sticking leaves in our hair when we play 'army,'" says Mark. "We hold branches in our hands and stick leaves in our shoes.

"We play 'secret agents,'" says Kevin. "I bring badges from the air force and police sets I have at home. I get the chief's badge and then we spy around looking for crooks, around the ponds mostly, 'cause there's no good places to hide out on the Main Yard."

"The pond section is the hardest place to find people," says Edith. "There's a space between two trees where my friends can't find me; or I hide in the bushes in the corner, and when my friend comes up I go to another place. I know all my friends' hiding places and always catch them."

"Where are you?" somebody yells.

"Over here in our hangout," shouts Alice.

Without the complex, interconnected landscape of the Yard, none of this creative peek-a-boo movement and social interaction would have been possible. Time and time again, when asked what they liked about the Yard, the children mentioned "lots of places to hide," "spying on people," and "playing hide-and-go-seek," as well as favorite hiding spots such as "behind the weeping willow," "in the redwoods," "in the bamboo," "under the eucalyptus," "around the ponds" and, most frequently, "in the bushes."

One version of hide-and-go-seek was beautifully adapted to the meadow. All the "hiders" lay in the long grass. The "seeker" stood on one spot trying to identify the children lying around her.

"I feel excited when I'm hiding from other people, because I don't want them to find me," says Anna. "It's scary, like a bank robber's coming to the door."

JUMPING

Jumping was mostly an integral part of chasing, hiding, seeking, and spying activities, except for the occasional child who loved jumping for its own sake.

"I jump from the bridge, the slide, and the fire pole into the sand," says Michael. "I feel excited when I jump. It's kind of scary until you're in the air. It makes me think of astronauts. I want to be an astronaut or a parachutist when I grow up."

A group of boys are jumping over one of the railings by the meadow. They take a running start and monitor each other's performance. They try going over sideways holding on with both hands and return by sliding under, and try various other ways of going over and under. One of them starts leapfrogging over a nearby freestanding post.

Girls played climbing and balancing games on the three layers of railroad ties enclosing the meeting area. On the top layer of ties, they walked around and hopped down into the enclosed space. They held contests, jumping out into the space surrounding the ties, beginning at the lowest level and then going higher and higher, making a mark on the ground for each advance in distance.

Children also saw how far they could travel by taking running leaps off a sheet of plywood supported on one end by a log. The homemade springboard offered a most satisfying jump.

TWIRLING

What ballgames were to boys, the bars—especially the twirling bars—were to girls. Despite the vast array of additional opportunities available in the Yard, the bars remained the girls' haven, a place where they could escape into their own subculture, as in every schoolyard in the land.

"It's our whole life," explain Julie and Jenny. "We play on other things, too, but we like the bars best. We learn all sorts of things." One of them carefully balances the small of her back across the waist-high horizontal bar. She grips it on either side with both elbows and slowly tilts her body backwards until it is almost vertical. Suddenly she drops frontwards, breaking her fall by bending her knees up against her chest just before her feet hit the rubber mat.

"That's a backwards jump," she says. "It's one of the first things you learn."

"There's a frontwards jump too," chimes in her friend. "It's harder than backwards. You have to balance on your stomach and it can really hurt." They both cup one leg over the bar and begin twirling fast. First one way, then the other, with remarkable agility. It is a virtuoso performance.

"It's scary when you first start; your legs have to get used to it," Julie comments. "It feels like you're on a Ferris wheel, spinning through the air. It feels like you're falling, but you're not really."

Clearly, the bars were a great stimulant for kinesthetic and vestibular perception, so important for child development.[4]

"I get excited when I learn new things," says her friend. "I like to get dizzy; it's part of the fun."

She hangs upside down, hair brushing the mat, and watches Jackie and Beth as they each cup a leg over the other bar and rock back and forth.

"You have to do that before you can twirl," comments Alice. "It gets your legs used to it."

"When you can twirl with only one hand, it's called 'one hand,'" says Bosmi, "and when you can do it with no hands, it's called 'criss-cross.' You can put your fingers through your belt loops, or if you have an elastic top, you stick your fingers in there, to keep your hands out of the way. We don't know how to do that yet, but we're going to learn from our cousin."

"Seesaw, seesaw . . . teeter totter, teeter totter . . ." the girls chant. They are now interlaced and balanced on the bar in such a way that they can rock back and forth as one. They call it "seesaw" and mention a version where you can twirl all the way around together—but they can't do it yet.

Two girls challenge each other to a "chicken fight." They hang from the bars, twist their legs together, and try to pull each other down. "Whoever lets go first loses," they explain.

A boy joins in. "I like to see everything upside down," he explains. "You see people walking on the sky and you see people walking sideways—it's fun. It makes you laugh and fall off and hit the mat." The three start counting to see who can stay up the longest.

Alice goes to one of the vertical poles of the high bars, hangs on with one hand, and spins around with her other arm extended.

"I feel dizzy," she shouts. "I feel like someone is pushing me round and round." Now she swings around both poles, alternately, using one hand and then the other in a figure eight.

One of the girls puts her legs through the rings, hangs upside down, confidently flips over, and drops to the ground. "The rings are good," she says, "'cause you can get a good grip. I never have to worry about falling down when I hang upside down . . . I get more blood in my head so I can concentrate on things," she giggles.

SWINGING

"I close my eyes and feel I'm going faster and faster and higher and higher. When I throw my head back it feels like I'm not on anything, I'm falling from the sky and then you swing back and your stomach feels nervous like you're on a roller coaster. It's sort of a neat feeling. It's weird, like you're going to fall but you don't. I can't get that feeling any other way."

The girl's description was a wonderfully articulate reference to kinesthetic perception and the related

PLAYING BALL

Traditional games like kickball remained a favorite pastime for many children and illustrated societal influences and values related to ballplay and sports. Children adapted the games to fit their more immediate need for movement rather than for competition.

Most kick-about games were called "soccer" even though they bore little resemblance to the formal sport. According to the players, an advantage of soccer was that "you can play it anytime you've got a ball."

Kickball was by far the most popular team game in the Yard because it had a simple format, was easy to organize on short notice, and only required modest levels of skill. Because of high demand, two kickball squares were provided: a smaller one next to the McKinley Avenue fence and a larger one in the main ballplaying zone next to the ball wall.

"I love to run the bases . . . I imagine I am running 'round the whole block," a player confides. "I feel like a winner."

Basketball was a different scene, much less formal than kickball because a team was not needed to play. With all ballplay, different boundaries were established daily. For example, the games would sometimes reflect the formal nature of a particular "sport" and, at other times, the children would pursue the simple enjoyment of movement.

"We practice for real games that we play on weekends," a boy comments. "I won a trophy and it's on top of our TV at home." He admits later that he likes the "feeling of getting tackled and then escaping."

vestibular sensation, recorded by the mechanisms of the inner ear as the body moves through space.

The sensation of flying and falling, the feeling of weightlessness, and the imagery of overcoming gravity make swings the most popular item on most playgrounds. In the Yard they provided yet another opportunity for mastering a skill, for acquiring a sense of competence and self-esteem through motor activity.

"It's scary when you're little and you've been swinging on the little swings," says Jeanine. "And all of a sudden you try to swing on the big ones and then you fall, but you say I'm gonna try again 'cause I wanna keep on trying 'til I get it right! Then when you try it again and you can do it, then you feel really good inside."

"Bail-outs" or "parachutes" were the most active challenges presented by the swings. Children pumped themselves as high as they could and launched themselves at the zenith of the forward stroke. The most skillful held contests to see who could bail out the farthest. Some would "bail out backwards," twisting their bodies in midair so they faced downwards and were therefore traveling backwards. Bail-outs were the closest that any child could come to flying.

"We play 'Superman.' We really fly."

Fortunately, by design, the area was large enough to accommodate the sandy landings of these fantasy flights.

Some children went to the swings when they had no one to play with or when they just wanted to be by themselves to enjoy the feeling of freedom and vestibular stimulation.

"It's like flying in a spaceship, without anyone bossing you . . . soaring in the sky, finding where you want to go and landing there. You fly so high the whole world is just a dot in the universe."

SLIDING

Sliding, like swinging, is attractive to children because it also offers vestibular stimulation and interaction with gravity.

Laree and Jason run up the slide, sit at the top, shoving each other while trying to stay in place. Eventually, Laree slides down, stands at the bottom and catches Jason. They both run-climb to the top again.

"I like the slide," says Jason, "because I'm sort of scared to go down the fire pole. We pretend we're being chased and have to

go down the slide real fast. It's really fun, especially now I can run right up to the top. Not everyone can do that."

Laree runs up the slide and shows off by sliding down while standing. He then grabs Jason's feet and pulls him down to the bottom.

"Some people slide down head first," says Jason. "Some people go rolling down, some people go down regular. Some people hit their heads on the slide; sometimes it hurts, sometimes they just laugh."

Kim comes by, starts to run up, hesitates, and tries to crawl up. She eventually uses the ladder and slides down hand in hand with Laree. A circular flow of movement is apparent: down the slide, up the ladder, then down again. Seven or eight children go down at once, and pile up on top of one another at the bottom, laughing.

Two boys start playing with their Stretch Monsters on the slide, propping them up along the edge, sitting them on the top, letting them slide down, catching them at the bottom. They pick up handfuls of sand, throw it at the slide, and watch it trickle down.

"Help! Help! An avalanche!" one of them shouts, as they hold their toys in the stream of sand, let them go, and watch them tumble to the ground and become buried in the pretend snow.

BALANCING

Balancing activity was much more common in the Yard than jumping. While jumping was done in the thrill of the moment, balancing was a more social activity, demanding more skill (again involving the vestibular sense), stimulating more drama, and conserving the potential energy of an elevated position.

"Hot lava!" screams Laree, a participant in the most popular balancing game. "The sand is hot lava," he explains. "You can travel all around the structure and if you touch the ground you're the new hot lava monster. Other children call it 'sand monster' or 'quicksand.'"

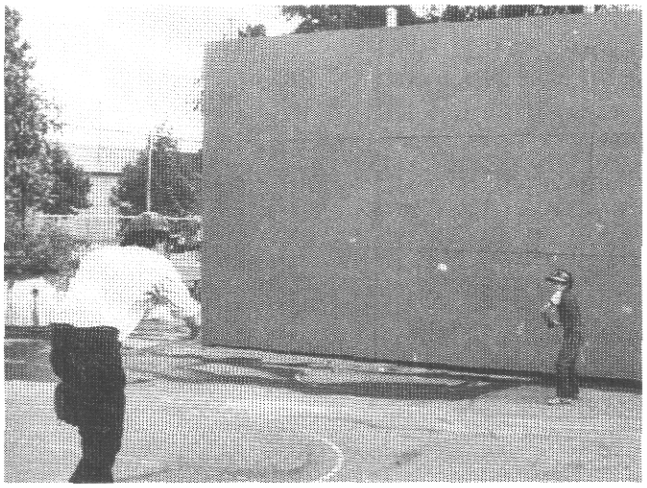
"We try to get on the tips of the rocks in the stream," says Joel, "without falling in the water. You have to be careful because you don't know if they're slippery. We get our feet a bit wet but our teacher doesn't really mind 'cause we dry off real fast."

"I like to run across the stepping stones in the corner," says Sabine. "You're on the rocks and there's water all around you. It's like you're on an island."

"Oo, oo, oo." A line of children straddle the concrete-block edging of the Orchard Wayside, pretending they are on a train trip.

Children use the Natural Resource Area railings to walk along, trying to keep their balance. They "fight" on them to see who can stay on the longest.

A girl and boy play follow-the-leader, trying to keep their balance by grabbing on to the branches of trees next to the railing. They stop at one of the weeping willows, swing on the branches, and demonstrate different tricks. A teacher remarks that tightrope

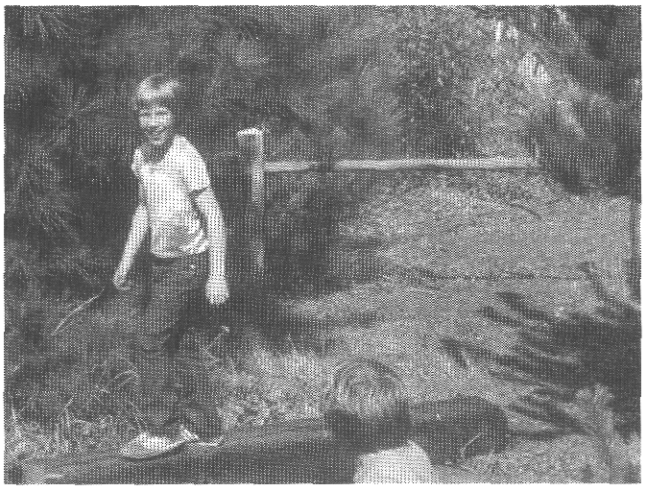


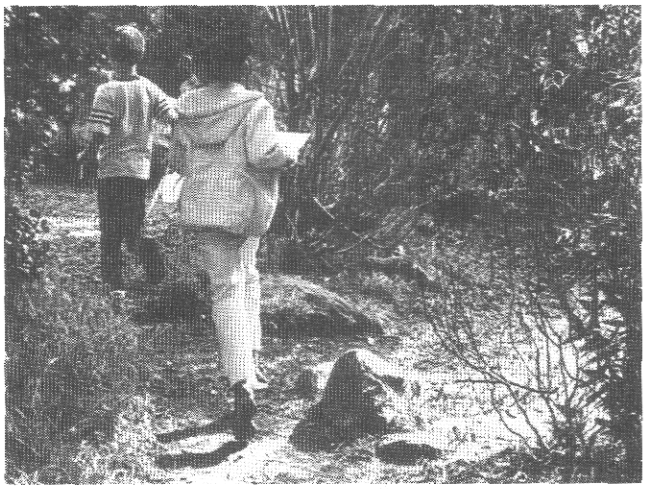
WEEKEND PLAY

On weekends, the Yard was used for family activity. The top photo shows siblings playing in the community area. A father and son use the "ball wall" (bottom), a twelve-foot-high (3.7 m), twenty-four-foot-wide (7.3 m) structure located south of the larger kickball square.

Batterball, strike-out, work-up, kick-back, and dodgeball were all played against the wall.

The children reported that it was easy to play dodgeball against the wall because no one had to chase after the ball—after each throw, the ball came bouncing back. Another version of dodgeball was played around the giant compass.





After school, the Yard was a place to have fun. Children practiced balancing skills (top) and roamed through the landscape (bottom).

walkers usually have a balancing pole. A moment later the pair returns with a long tree stake from the potting shed. They turn the game into a performance, with the boy acting as the impresario. They both proudly show how they can walk the full length of the railing without falling.

The most agile children could navigate the Yard entirely above ground—along the MLK Way planting strip, from the school building to the garden compound. They supported themselves on the post and rail fence and the edges of the sewer pipes. If necessary, they clung to the chainlink fence or even climbed the Monterey pines, swinging between them and the acacia trees.

Amy says she goes "tightrope walking" on the fence "all over the land." Phoebe performs cartwheels on the grass, calling herself a "cartwheelist." Jenny joins the two girls. They get on the railing and start walking along it, hanging on to each other and the pine branches above.

The tightrope tricks are repeated on the railing. Jenny tells Amy, "Look how I practiced today, Mommy."

ROAMING

Not all movement in the Yard was so active.

Alice and her friend go to the eucalyptus tree in the northwest corner of the Yard. They bounce on the lowest branch, picking and smelling leaves. They walk to the chaparral and sit on the fence, and after talking for a while, slowly climb over it. They walk to the top of the hill and down the other side to the beach, where they jump the creek.

One child runs away, followed by the other, back to the chaparral. One picks a flower and says, "Ow, that's my tooth!" She puts her hands to her mouth and pretends to have a toothache. They sit on the log by the wooden bridge and talk with their arms around each other's shoulders. One points to a flower and says, "An ant just crawled out . . . it's an ant house!"

They talk about how they wish there were a big island in the middle of the pond. They return to the eucalyptus and look at a set of cards for a few moments. They then walk to the pine trees, return, and sit on the eucalyptus branch once more. They stand up and try to clear the ground of leaves with their feet. Finally, they climb through the fence into one of the corrals, pick plants, and shred the leaves as they walk through the meadow, past the Gazebo to the corral in the far corner.

"Roaming around" was Alice's phrase for this relaxed strolling through the landscape, which she said was like "being in your own place." Other children called it "walking around and talking," "looking at things," and "noticing things that are different." As children wandered, the surroundings stimulated their imaginations.

Alice quietly looked around as she roamed, concentrating, intermittently saying something under her breath in a private dialogue with her environment.

One girl carries a bouquet of grasses. She and her friend go around the corral, behind the pussy willows and silver birches, picking plants along the way. They walk past the railroad ties through the pine trees and down to the beach, constantly adding to the bouquet. She says they are going to give it to their teacher. They continue to add more grasses and flowers, retracing their steps up and around the railroad ties and returning to the big rock. They lean on the rock as they arrange the bouquet. The bell rings; the children return to class, quintessential best friends quietly sharing their world.

"HORSES"

Between second and third grade, some girls became very interested in horses. We are unaware of a psychological explanation for this, but it was certainly true for a group of Washington students whose lives for a while centered around horse toys, books, and games.

"I'm Little Black," explains Laree, "and Lela is Brownie. Christine is the rider. We play everywhere. We put ropes around ourselves and Christine holds on to them and goes, 'Yah! Yah! Yah!' She says, 'Full speed.' I feel tired, but we have to do it. Horses are slaves. When we get tired, we rest in the bamboo by the pond—it's our stable."

"It's kinda like a house except you have horses in there. Christine is the owner. She takes care of us by putting horseshoes on and feeding us. We crumple up dry redwood leaves and pretend they're oats. She gives us lots of exercise by leading us around; then she rides us into the city across the asphalt and we go 'round looking for people we know."

"When I play horse I feel really big," says Lela. "I feel free like a wild Appaloosa. I always have to be the boy, ugh! Sometimes I get to be a girl. We have fights with a stallion against a mare, or a mare against a mare, or a stallion against a stallion. We act like we're tearing things up, but not really. When we put jump ropes around our bellies and pretend to ride each other, it's really weird. Your tummy doesn't feel too good afterwards."

Like all play activity, horses was not universally popular.

"I like to play horses sometimes," Sabine confesses, "but I'm not usually in the mood for running around and going 'neigh.'"

THE PEDAGOGY OF MOVEMENT

Movement invites social interaction and fosters exploration, mutual understanding, and compassion among children. Elements can be designed to support the pleasure of bodily movement through space, offering variations in heat, light, sound, color, texture, smell, and temporal pattern.

Swing ropes can be long, suspended far above the ground, giving a long, incredible "whoosh"—moving through a big space with each swing. They can also be short, affording a fast-moving, back-and-forth, round-and-round ride, always connecting the rider to gravity.

Slides can be high, low, fast, slow, narrow, wide, bumpy, smooth, straight, or curvy. Children can slide on, over, under, through, between, beside, above, alongside, and around. These are basic concepts describing the child's relationship to physical space. Each can be practiced, discussed, written about, compared, evaluated, and explored. Why do your pants get warm when you slide? What is "friction"? What is "energy"? How many calories is your slide worth?

As children climb, swing, jump, slide, run, move up and down, around and around, and to and fro, teachers can extend the learning process. What are "muscles"? How do they work? What muscles do you use for what? Do all creatures have muscles? Do plants have muscles? How about fish? Why is it important to exercise our muscles? Why do they hurt when we exercise hard? What is good health? Can you balance on that plank? What does "balance" mean? How do you spell it? What other things around you are "in" or "out" of balance?

Movement can prompt questions of perception of time and space—fast and slow, near and far! How far do you live from school? How long does it take you to get there? Who prefers to walk, to ride, why? Do you know how far some birds can fly? How fast some animals can run? What is the slowest animal you've ever seen? What's the farthest you've ever been? Rhythm is the beat of life: the heaving ocean, 24 hours to a day, 60 seconds to a minute, 3.7 people to a family, 6 beats to a bar, 2,000 cars per hour, 22 inches of rain a year, the Earth orbiting the sun each year. The possibilities are endless.

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In recent years, the private sector has responded to the movement deprivation of urban children and