

Design Your Dream Playground

Children let their imaginations run wild as they create a diorama of their dream playground!

Age Appropriateness:

5-8, 9-12, 13 & up

Key Topics:

Importance of play

Communication

Skills:

Art

Writing

Critical Thinking

Materials:

Shoeboxes (one per child), paper, glue, scissors, variety of art supplies (buttons, pipe cleaners, glitter, beads, etc.)

Action Time:

1 hour

OBJECTIVES

- To gather ideas and inspiration from children to create a playground design!
- To use argumentative narratives as a way of expressing ideas and opinions



Discussion

Take some time to discuss your playground project with the children. Talk about what groups of people will be working together to make your project possible and the importance of giving back to the community around you. Then, discuss why kids love to play and what they like to do when they play.

Action

- Ask the children to close their eyes and imagine their dream playground. If you have already selected a vendor for equipment, consider allowing 2-3 minutes for the children to browse the possibilities! Colors, size, natural elements (such as trees and flowers) and equipment are all very important parts of the design. Don't forget to let the children know that their ideas will be used to create the final design for the playground!
- Tell the children to open their eyes and begin a quick sketch of what they've imagined. Give the children some time to sketch out ideas on a scrap piece of paper.
- Each child should receive a shoebox. An adult should help them cut the top and one long side off of the box. Allow 45 minutes for the children to bring their ideas to life! Use the art supplies to create a diorama of the design that each child would like to see in his/her brand new playground!

Reflection

Ask each child to write a 1-2 paragraph argument for why his/her playground should become the final design. Remember some key points of writing argumentative narratives: write in "I" or "me" statements and use opening and closing sentences to make your argument clear. Discover similarities and differences in the designs by sharing essays with the group.