



Playgrounds & Site Amenities

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NOTE: Prices are subject to change without notice. Please request a quotation from your representative for current pricing.

Playground Planning: The Definitive Guide to Planning a Commercial Playground for Your Church, School, Daycare, Neighborhood, or Public Park



Whether it's a church playground, school playground, daycare, or a neighborhood public park, each outdoor playground requires significant planning to maximize your funds. *Playground planning* should recognize that each playground experience is unique to each child, and each commercial playground is unique in its site features, layout, design components, and visual appeal. Also See [14 Layout Considerations for Your Playground](#). The cycle consists of the following:

- 1. [Community Planning](#)- Needs Assessment, Site Plan, Playground Design
- 2. [Budget](#)
- 3. [Funding](#)
- 4. [Installation and Build Day](#)

Community: Playground Planning: [top](#)

Needs Assessment:

Take inventory of the following areas to properly address the needs of the community that will be using the playground. See also:

- Number of children accessing
- Age groups and their distribution: usually split into three categories, 2-5, 2-12, and 5-12 years of age.

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- Special needs-must include accessible route to playground area and equipment must meet ADAAG (accessibility guidelines for public playgrounds). Also See [The Sensory Rich Playground is For Children of All Abilities](#).

Site Plan

Exact dimensions and shape of playground area- Use 8 **Playground Planning** Tips below for reference.

Utilities- water, sewer, drainage, cable, phone, electric, sprinklers, etc.

Other site features- visibility, security, fencing, space, landscaping. Also, [8 Playground Planning Tips](#)

Playground Design

Inventory of existing equipment- will it be a. removed, b. retrofitted (updated to current ASTM F1487 or CPSC Standards for Public Playgrounds-[10 Safety Items to address on playground](#)), c. added to if compliant?

[14 Layout Considerations for Your Playground](#)

[Playground Equipment and Park Equipment Catalogs you Can Download immediately](#)

Playground Equipment Budget:

Considering the costs of funding a playground are similar to any capital project, you'll want to take into account the following items that will affect your budget. KorKat representatives can offer, for free, the following design options as part of your package.

1. After needs assessment, we design a [playground plan](#) that meets your criteria to to be used as your fundraising goal
2. Provide us a fixed budget and we'll design your playground to fit

Budget- How much will this playground cost- Playground

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Planning? [top](#)

The playground itself can be broken down into the following elements for budgeting:

1. Playground Equipment & surfacing
2. Installation
3. Site Preparation

[Critical Article: How to Save Thousands When Building Your Playground](#)

[Critical Article: 7 Zones to Your Playground- Creating Balance In Your Playground Design](#)

1. Playground Equipment- [How to Compare Your Playground Designs and Proposals](#)

- Age-appropriate playstructures or playsystems. Standards are for children ages 2-5, 2-12, and 5-12. Must include signage to indicate age range of design.
- Independent Playground Components- Spring Riders, Spinners/Motion-oriented equipment, Swings, Freestanding Slides/Climbers, Fitness Equipment

| Types | Ages |
|---|-----------|
| Swings | 2-12 |
| Springriders/Rockers | 2-5 |
| Climbing Webs | 5-12, 2-5 |
| Spinners/ Motion-oriented Equipment | 5-12 |
| Active Play | 5-12 |
| Fitness Equipment | 5-12 |
| Trike Tracks and Tot Houses | 2-5 |
| Freestanding Slides | 2-12 |
| Bubble Wall Climber-pic 1, pic 2 | 2-12 |
| Triple Toss, Tetherball, Soccer goals, Basketball Goals | 2-12 |

- Accessible Playground Surfacing: Each public playground requires both an accessible route to the playground area and a certified playground equipment surfacing.

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| Type: | Cost: (average size 2000 sf) |
|---|------------------------------|
| Poured-in-place Rubber EPDM Surfacing | \$10-14/sf- \$20k-\$28k |
| Bonded Rubber Surfacing | \$7-10/sf- \$14k-\$20k |
| Rubber Nuggets | \$7-11/sf- \$14k-\$22k |
| Rubber Tiles | \$10-12/sf- \$20k-\$24k |
| Synthetic Grass/Artificial Turf | \$8-12/sf-\$16k-\$24k |
| EWF (Engineered Wood Fiber) | \$1.5-3/sf- \$3k-\$6k |

- Site Furnishings- picnic tables, [benches](#), trashcans
- Shade Structures , Commercial Umbrellas and Picnic Pavilions/Gazebos- Freestanding shade [structures](#) and wood or steel picnic areas

2. Playground Installation: Ranging from 25-45% of the equipment price, this is usually the second largest line-item in your budget, assuming the site is ready. **See bottom of page for playground equipment [installation options](#)**

3. Playground Site preparation: The following items can substantially affect the cost of the playground project:

- Grading
- Excavation
- Irrigation
- Underground Utility
- Drainage

Funding your Playground: Playground Planning [top](#)

Budgeting for a playground is usually coming from capital funds which means they are limited, as is the timeframe to meet these goals. Make sure to visit both the [playground fundraising resources page](#) and [playground equipment grant pages](#) for additional funding sources. Consider reaching out to the community for the following items:

- Playground containment borders for the mulch be donated by local companies-See reference for plastic border timbers

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- Ask the mulch be donated if the certified playground surfacing can not be included in the budget
- Consider the [leasing/financing option through KorKat](#), to pay for the project in installments
- Seasonal sales with your vendors- [contact us for current sales](#)
- [Save thousands by installing your playground yourself](#)
- Consider phasing equipment if fundraising goals can be met in a 2-3 year timeframe
- Memorialize donors with customized bricks/fence pickets/site furnishings/signage

Playground Equipment Installation Options: Playground Planning [top](#)

[Back to Playground Installation](#)

[Installing a public playground on your own is a legitimate option](#) and next to sales items and donated resources can provide the largest savings for your budget:

3 options to consider:

1. **KorKat, Inc. installation**- NPSI Certified, Factory-certified installation by KorKat, Inc. to provide a complete installation of all playground equipment and park equipment
2. **Supervised Installation** with a NPSI certified, factory-certified representative of KorKat, Inc. paid for on a per-diem basis.
3. **Community-built, DIY, Self-installation with factory-certified representative**- Includes audit of equipment post-installation

Finally, you'll want to make sure that your hard work pays off well into the future. Two items will need to be addressed:

- [playground equipment maintenance](#)
- [restoring your faded rubber surfacing](#)

Don't forget, if you are in Georgia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Hawaii, Alabama, Tennessee, or Florida and looking for assistance with **playground planning** , we can offer 10 reasons to choose KorKat, Inc. Visit us at www.korkat.com.

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5 Ways to Save Thousands When Buying Your Playground Equipment

Stretching your playground equipment budget:

Buying playground equipment requires a wealth of resources including funds and manpower. With some commitment from your local community, you can save thousands with these tips. Here's how your playground equipment budget will normally be allocated by percentage with a typical turn-key project:



| Description | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|
| Equipment | 60% |
| Installation | 28% |
| Playground Borders | 7% |
| Mulch/In-fill | 10% |
| Taxes/Shipping | 5% |
| Total | 100% |

1. **Playground Grants**- See our playground equipment grants page listed above.
2. **Playground Equipment Sales**- Make sure that you're able to take advantage of any of several substantial sales taking place throughout the year. Discounts range from 20%-30% & may include free items!!
3. **Build it yourself (Community Build)**-The next largest portion of your budget is installation. We can provide the option to supervise your project if you have a committed group of volunteers willing to donate their weekend, tools, & their sweat (only consider for projects >\$14000)
4. **Self-install**- Playland offers detailed instructions intended for the layman with no experience installing playground equipment. Our industry partners choose Playland for their explicit instructions and ease of installation.

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5. **Lease Option-** Installment payment options are available for those with cashflow variances. This is a suitable alternative to **Phased-in projects**.
6. **DIY mulch/in-fill & borders-** We'll let you know how much mulch is necessary to meet today's safety standards so you can shop your local providers. Borders are largely just a containment for your in-fill and there are several options that can be purchased locally including: wood, conduit, rubber, playground timbers.

If you are located in Georgia/Alabama/Tennessee/North Carolina/Florida or Kentucky and would like additional planning for [playground budget](#), please contact us at www.korkat.com

How To Compare Playground Designs

Comparing your playground designs

Be sure your playground incorporates as many play experiences as possible. Remember, it isn't always the number of play events that are on a play structure that make it a good value, but the value of the play itself.



As an example, let's compare Playground A vs. Playground B

Playground A contains a 2 each 3' tall slides; 3s each 3' foot climbers; Arched Bridge; 4 foot slide and 2 activity panels for a total of 9 activities. Playground B has a 72" slide, 7" Arch Climber, 48" Triple Rail Slide, 48" Tree Climber, 42" Sliding Pole, 42" Straight Slide, 90 degree monkey bars, and a motion-oriented Syclone Spinner accessible from the ground. Although B also has 9 activities, it costs \$1000 less, and offers the better value for kids between the ages of 5-12 years of age. Why?

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Children have slides and climbers at three different deck heights on Playground B. It also has motion incorporated; and imaginative play that accompanies the unique play experiences of the arch climbers and Syclone Spinner. Although Playground A has more capacity and room for activities, the lower level climbers and slides don't challenge kids and continue to want to return. Don't forget to reference the Fundraising Resources page on the top right tab, for products and resources to help you with your playground fundraiser. If you are located in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, North Carolina, or Kentucky and would like assistance in designing your playground in addition to stretching your existing [playground budget](#), please contact us at www.korkat.com

| | Playground A | Playground B |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Slides | 2 @ 3'; 1 @ 4' tube' deck heights | 3 total, 72", 48", 42" |
| Climbers | Bedrock, rung ladder, arch | 90 degree, tree climber, arch, sliding pole |
| Panels | Store Front, Driving Panel | Panel Ladder |
| Bridge | Arch Bridge | |
| Notes | 3 slides 48" or lower | Active Series Syclone Spinner |
| Age Group | 5-12 yrs | 5-12 yrs |
| Total Components | 9 | 9 |
| Price | \$13,808 | \$12,776 |

Playground Planning: Include These "7 Zones" To Create a Balanced Playground Environment

Before choosing the actual layout for your playground, it's helpful to have an overall plan or design for the placement of furnishings. You will want to organize the space in a way that will promote physical and social play while minimizing conflicts. The following is called the zoned approach and was outlined in Esbenson in his book "The Early Childhood Playground: An Outdoor Classroom". Similar to the way a classroom is arranged into specific areas or centers, small groupings of functionally separate outdoor play areas called zones can enrich children's interaction with the equipment, nature, adults, and one another. Instead of having one large, central structure that attempts to provide a variety of experiences and activities for children, each zone includes several smaller, related activities and pieces of equipment. This

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allows more active play areas to be separated from areas that involve less noisy creative or manipulative activities and can help minimize the tendency for louder, bigger boys to dominate a play structure.

Esbenson outlines seven distinct zones:

1. Transition zone: The area between your building and the playground or between different play zones. This area allows children time and space to decide where they want to go as they enter the playground. This can include open space, or seating areas. Items to consider: picnic tables and benches, Shade Structures, Picnic Shelters, Bleachers.
2. Manipulative/Creative Zone: Although a place for large-motor activities, fine-motor activities can also be promoted outside. The zone can include a table, ease with paints, or panels with manipulatives.  Items to consider: [Playground Equipment](#), [Fitness Equipment](#), Surfacing Materials
3. Projective/Fantasy Zone: This area is filled with materials to fuel children's imaginations: crates of plastic animals, loose parts, stacks of blocks, and buckets of toy bulldozers. Locate water and sand nearby. Items to consider: [Early Childhood Playground Equipment](#),
4. Focal/Social Zone: Although an action-oriented space, this area fosters a sense of community, a place where children can sit and talk with their peers, share a discovery or simply observe. Picnic tables, benches, shaded area, or large stones. Items to consider: [Playground Equipment](#), Shade Structures, Picnic Shelters, Boulders, Freestanding Climbers
5. Social/dramatic Zone: Dramatic play offers a safe arena to try out new roles. A playhouse with sensory panels, play car, play fort, trike track with stations and signs, can stimulate all kinds of language and social play. Add some props from indoors too, e.g. costumes, etc. Items to consider: [Early Childhood Playground Equipment](#),
6. Physical Zone: This area includes activities that can't be included indoors. Children can develop climbing skills, strengthen their muscles, and improve balance and coordination. The equipment in this zone should allow for many different uses and stimulate the imagination as well as encourage physical activity. Plan open areas, as some of the best physical activity - running, walking, jumping, rolling-requires no equipment. equipment such as a toss-up goal, stenciled areas, and trike tracks are important elements. The equipment must be age-appropriate and scaled to the developmental abilities of the children using it. The structures are so high that children need assistance, or so low that they misbehave and abuse it, accidents both minor and severe are sure to occur. [Playground Equipment](#), [Fitness Equipment](#), Surfacing Materials, Trike Tracks.
7. Natural element zones: Sand, grass, nontoxic plants, flowers, and trees are an important part of children's outdoor exploration, and certainly your entire outdoor space should contain a variety of natural elements. Items to consider: Nontoxic Plants Table.

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The following was adapted from Tracy Theemes' "Let's Go Outside! Designing the Early Childhood Playground"

Don't forget to reference the Fundraising Resources page on the top right tab, for products and resources to help you with your playground fundraiser. If you are located in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, North Carolina and would like assistance in [planning and designing an early childhood playground](#), please contact us at www.korkat.com

14 Layout Solutions for your Playground Design



1. Organize zones to facilitate play and minimize conflicts, e.g. locate quiet play areas away from active spaces

2. Provide areas that encourage group interaction as well as places from solitary and partner play
3. Avoid putting high-activity zones close to transitional zones
4. Locate compatible play zones close together, e.g. creative play and social play can be placed adjacent
5. Design all play zones for child-initiated activity
6. Locate play areas for toddler and areas involving quiet, creative activities near the entry to building
7. Use low, natural partitions and different surfacing materials to define zones, i.e. EWF hardwood fibers around swings, and pour-in-place rubber surfacing around the playsystem

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8. Use space wisely, leaving some areas open. Cluttered playground detracts from children's explorations and cause injuries
9. Plan zones to take advantage of any prominent or unusual elements, e.g. physical area around a sloped designed for running
10. Be sure that equipment landscaping do not interfere with visual supervision. Adults must have a clear line-of-sight
11. Retain as many existing trees, shrubs, and other landscaping as possible.
12. Locate equipment away from dumpsters, heavy traffic and loud noises. Plant trees or build fences and visual barriers to block nuisances.
13. Make sure site is accessible for maintenance and emergency equipment
14. Use your imagination. Paint stones, create a mural, make hand prints in cement. Cue children through the color, shape and type of materials that this is their place to play.

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If you're looking for a fundraising partner or program, don't forget to review the [Fundraising Resources pages on the top right tab](#). If you are located in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, or North Carolina and would like assistance with designing your playground, please contact us at www.korkat.com

Playground Maintenance: 10 Things you Better Not Overlook

Playground Safety: 10 Maintenance Check Points on your Playground

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1. Make sure surfaces around playground equipment have at least 9" of loose-fill rubber, 9" of certified EWF (Engineered Wood Fiber), 12" of un-tested wood mulch; or include mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials.
2. Check that protective surfacing extends at least 6 feet in all directions from play equipment. For swings, be sure surfacing extends; in back and front; twice the height of the suspending bar.
3. Make sure play structures more than 30 inches high are spaced at least 9 feet apart.
4. Check for dangerous hardware, like open "S" hooks or protruding bolt ends. These can catch on clothing such as hoodies, or loose clothes.
5. Make sure spaces that could trap children, such as openings in guardrails or between ladder rungs, measure less than 3.5 inches or more than 9 inches.
6. Check for sharp points or edges in equipment.
7. Look out for tripping hazards, like exposed concrete footings, tree stumps, and rocks.
8. Make sure elevated surfaces, like platforms and ramps, have guardrails to prevent falls and the climbers have no more than a 15" space to access/exit.
9. Check playgrounds regularly to see that equipment and surfacing are in good condition
10. Carefully supervise children on playgrounds to make sure they're safe.

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Above all, make sure your equipment is age-appropriate in design. Kids will challenge and regulate themselves during free play, and you'll find that your "safe" low level platforms and climbers are being used inappropriately by older kids that aren't being stimulated.

Don't forget to reference the Fundraising Resources page on the top right tab, for products and resource to help you with your playground fundraiser. If you are [planning a public playground project in Georgia](#), Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Kentucky, or North Carolina and would like design advice, please contact us.

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