



For immediate release

Local playgrounds unvisited for 1/4 of the time during peak hours reflects the lack of fun and challenge of the facilities

Experts announce observation report on Hong Kong playgrounds and call for “Better Playgrounds”

Videos have been uploaded to: https://www.dropbox.com/sh/8rw4qwliympqy17/AAD_ZedCwZyOLSI4b3iUu9ioa?dl=0

(Hong Kong • 8 September 2015) Summer holidays provide golden opportunities for children to play outdoor. However, from the experimental video recorded by Playright Children’s Play Association (Playright) in 5 different playgrounds in Hong Kong, it is observed that the playgrounds are not visited by any child for one-fourth of the time even during peak hours. This shows that playgrounds in Hong Kong are not exciting and fun enough to attract children, let alone meeting their needs for experience of playing. In order to draw public attention to the design, planning and development of better outdoor play spaces in Hong Kong, and explore the possibilities of improving the existing play spaces, Playright, the Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF HK) and the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architect (HKILA) organize “Better Playgrounds, Better Future” Campaign to share the knowledge with the public about a better playground design, for the better development of children and the society.

Play is children’s fundamental right; playgrounds enable children to achieve all round development.

Play is a fundamental right for every child according to Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The design of playground has been drawing global attention to ensure children with different abilities could equally enjoy their right to play. Ms Jane Lau, Chief Executive, UNICEF HK explained, “UNICEF HK advocates that every child should have at least 1-hour free play time per day as it helps foster children’s all-round development. However, many people don’t recognize the importance of play. There are also not many good play spaces in the city.” Ms Lau added, “In *The State of the World Children 2013* that focuses on the needs of children with disabilities, UNICEF points out a good playground should be able to cater to the needs of all children, including those with different abilities, and even parents or other community members. As an advanced city, Hong Kong has the ability to develop better playgrounds. Through UNICEF Inclusive Play Space Design Ideas Competition, we strive to demonstrate a ‘Better Playground’ design for our next generation which will be debuted at Tuen Mun Park. With better playgrounds, we hope that our children can then reclaim childhood and enjoy an all-round development, and it helps Hong Kong to become a more inclusive society.”

It is not exaggerated to say that play is a fundamental key for children to grow happily and healthily, and that better playgrounds are essential for the development of a better future for society. “Playgrounds provide a relatively safe and controllable environment for children to discover and understand the world. In play, children face various difficulties and challenge, and acquire different life skills. Play is an important part of a child’s social, physical, social, intellectual, creativity and emotional development. It helps to unlock the full potential of children, who will be leaders of the future society,” said Ms Kathy Wong, Executive Director, Playright Children’s Play Association.

Playground facilities unattractive to children

To further understand the usage of playgrounds in Hong Kong, Playright recorded a 600-minute experimental video in 5 different playgrounds in Hong Kong from 4pm to 6pm in four sunny days during the summer holidays. The video shows that the playgrounds are unvisited for one-fourth of the time; and even when there are children, they choose to play with the facilities in their own creative ways (seen every 14 minutes on average) such as climbing up the slide, or play with items other than the facilities (seen every 12 minutes on average) such as scooters and the flowerbed. It is clearer that the playgrounds are not exciting and fun enough to attract children, let alone meeting their needs for experience of playing. Mr Chris Yuen, Playright’s Play Environment Consultant, said, “Playground is not a simple collection of play equipment. Safety is basic to a good playground, but a better playground requires more. It should enable children of different ages and abilities to play freely without any difficulty, and provide them with physical, sensory and social play experience, so that they can accept challenges just right for their ages and interact with each other.”

Playright and UNICEF HK launch “Better Playgrounds, Better Future” Advocacy Campaign to arouse public awareness

UNICEF HK and Playright seek to raise the awareness of the society on the importance of play for children’s development and realize the right to play for every child. Since 2012, UNICEF HK has funded and collaborated with Playright through its Child Rights Advocacy Project to advocate for ‘inclusive play’. We believe if every child, regardless of their abilities, can have access to quality play in suitable environments for better development, we would be able to achieve ‘ZERO Underdevelopment’ someday. This year, Playright and UNICEF HK organize “Better Playgrounds, Better Future” Campaign to explore the possibilities of improving the existing play spaces and address children’s needs to play. A series of activities include video directed by Mr. Adam Wong Sau Ping, Celebrities’ childhood playground experience sharing video, Your “Ideal” playground Facebook campaign and “Better Playgrounds, Better Future” Exhibition.

About Playright

Playright Children's Play Association (Playright), established in Hong Kong in 1987, is a charity which seeks to enrich the life of every child through play. We encourage children to play and seek to raise the awareness of parents and the society as a whole on the importance of play as the fundamental dimension of children's holistic development and the realization of children's right.

Through a fourfold approach -- Advocacy, Resources, Outreach and Environments, we are leading to unlock the full potential of children in Hong Kong and elsewhere in Asia.



About UNICEF

UNICEF promotes the rights and wellbeing of every child, in everything we do. Together with our partners, we work in 190 countries and territories to translate that commitment into practical action, focusing special effort on reaching the most vulnerable and excluded children, to the benefit of all children, everywhere.

UNICEF is at the forefront to achieve ZERO SUFFERING for children worldwide. There has been substantial progress: UNICEF has contributed to saving 18,000 more children's lives than was the case in 1990. But still, 16,000 children die each day from preventable causes, and 5.84 million children are not reaching their fifth birthday every year. Our mission does not stop at "18,000 fewer" deaths per day. We stop at ZERO.

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