This is our children’s research report about our ideas, dreams and designs for a child friendly play space at the Rouse Hill Town Centre. This project is part of the global UNICEF Child Friendly Cities and Communities Initiative that encourages the community to support the rights of children to be included in decisions being made about their quality of life.
Child Friendly Play Space…
35% of children reported that a climbing structure was their favourite play element image because it would be exciting and fun.

“I like lots of ropes to climb, I like ropes”
Matthew, male, age 5

“This is my favourite because it’s big. You can climb on it. You can climb to the top and get a nice view and you can slide down. I feel really happy playing here”. Kavvya, female, age 9

I CLIMB, SLIDE AND GO FAST

Julia, female, age 8
So children can play and have fun together and make friends.

Big, big, big playground

Brendan & Zane, aged 6

“I like the climbing wall because it’s tall and very scary and you are not allowed any gear – have to be tough.” Ethan, male, age 6

“It’s really fun and fast.” Angelina, female, age 8
I ENCOUNTER NATURE

It’s a nice climbing tree, I am here with my dog. I like climbing the tree. It’s fun and I can go really high up.”

Hope, female, age 6

39% of children surveyed would like to have natural play elements such as sand water and plants included in the redesign of the Food Terrace Play Space. Natural play elements were also drawn often in children’s drawings of their dream play space.
“This is me in my neighborhood. Climbing stuff, playing where there is nice grass, a purple horse, my sister, a toy. I like to play in nature, animals to play with and the sun”. Caitlyn, female, age 6

“I like the grass. I went up real close. It’s really good to run on. When the kids fall over it’s not very hard”

Casey, female, age 6
I FEEL GOOD AND SAFE

“This is good for children of all ages and it’s fun to climb.”

Tudhjot, male, age 9
“Hard surface, it’s not a good play space.” Mary, female, age 9

“When you fall down you can hurt yourself. You need to put something around.” Roland, male, age 7

Being safe and getting injured while playing in play spaces was raised often by children when they were talking about the photos they had taken of good and not-so-good play spaces. Being a little scared can also be what makes it good. 25% of surveyed children said that they were very concerned about getting injured and of strangers while playing in the Rouse Hill Town Centre play spaces.
78% of children reported that they would like to improve the Food Terrace Play Space at the Rouse Hill Town Centre with more play activities available and 56% said they would like this to include different play equipment.

“There are lots of secret spaces, underneath there is a door and a gate to a hiding place” Lara, female, age 6

Hope, female, age 6
“I like how it is like a big ship and it has really good climbing things
and things to balance on and climb. Things to climb and things to
balance. Tunnels to climb through.” Hope, female, age 6

Kyle, male, age 9
“I liked this photograph of a play space the most. I like the slippery dip. I like the place for sitting in it. You can slide with your brother, mother, sister or mum.” Madison, female, age 5

“This is a photograph I took at the local park. I like it because little kids can go on it; also adults. You can race and climb. In the middle are the triangles. I sit in them.”

Harry, male, age 9
Half of children surveyed said they would like their parent or carer to be able to see them at all times when playing in the Food Terrace Play Space. 45% of children also said that they would like the Play Space to be visible from inside the Food Terrace. Also important was children’s desire to have opportunities for group activities with 39% saying that they would like to have more play activities with other children.

“Kids can play in it. We can play with mums and dads.” Jessica, female, age 5
“My favourite image was the picture with the dinosaur eggs. I like the footprints, the slide and boulders. I drew this as my dream play space”

Mikaela, female, age 5
“My favourite image was the street sand pit. I like this because you can make stuff. You can bring your own play stuff. My drawing of a dream play space has steps to get up from the sand pit” Jessica, female, age 5

“You can play any sorts of games, we can go on the swings, it’s a good place to pretend. We play in teams and pretend there is a fire, we pack our bags and camp inside the cubby house. Signs are good. We block the windows when we don’t want to stop playing” Rocco, male, age 6,

Malleable play options were highlighted by children as a desirable improvement to the Food Terrace Play Space with 28% of children surveyed saying they would like loose materials so they can create their own play.
115 children participated in the research. The following organisations are where we are from: Milestones Early Childhood Centre; Playdays Early Childhood Centre; Kellyville Ridge Public School - Grade 1S and Grade 3/4KD. We also had 46 children from the community who filled out an online survey.

Some of the activities we participated in included drawing our neighbourhood and our dream play space, talking about photographs of different play spaces from all around the world and picking out our favourites. Some of us took disposable cameras home for the weekend and took photographs of play spaces we liked and some we didn’t like too much. We talked together and shared our drawings and photographs and some of us also made short videos explaining to the play designer what we thought was important for a play space.

Our research recommendations will be used by the designer to design and build a new play space at the Rouse Hill Town Centre. We all live close to the centre so we look forward to having a fabulous new child friendly play space.

We would like to thank the researchers both children and adults and the early childhood and primary school staff for letting the project go ahead in their busy learning spaces.
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