

Plan for Play in public spaces, 2030 horizon

SUMMARY
February 2019



In collaboration with

1. KEY IDEAS OF THE PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES

“Children playing in the street is a good indicator of the quality of community life” (Jan Gehl, urban planner)

10 KEY IDEAS

- 1) In compliance with the announcement made at the presentation of the "Barcelona plays it right" strategy, the city now has its first Plan for Play in Public Spaces. This is an **ambitious, pioneering plan that places outdoor play and physical activity among the policies for making Barcelona a more habitable city and improving the lives of its residents, beginning with children and adolescents.**
- 2) The Plan aims to improve and diversify the opportunities for play and physical activity in public spaces, due to their extensive **benefits for children's development and well-being and for the health, community life, and peaceful coexistence of all citizens.**
- 3) The Plan also seeks to **reclaim the streets as places that invite people to play and come together as important activities in everyday life, to give people of all ages the taste for play,** thus reversing the social problem of a lack of outdoor play and physical activity in a very dense city.
- 4) It is based on three strategic lines of action to ensure we not only keep in mind and **improve the playful infrastructure** in the urban model, but also **encourage outdoor physical and playful activity from the age of 0 to 99, and increase the social importance we give to play.**

10 KEY IDEAS

- 5) It entails a **paradigm shift in the vision of diverse, creative, inclusive and accessible play**, it highlights 10 projects that aim to drive the change and sets 10 measurable targets for achieving a more play-friendly city, where people play more, by 2030.
- 6) It also specifies 63 individual actions which reflect a **comprehensive, cross-cutting vision that combines urban planning initiatives** (ranging from micro-interventions and tactical planning to major urban development projects) **and social actions** (from touring animation activities to new concepts in public services).
- 7) The Plan provides a **new concept of playful infrastructure** to be incorporated into the city model and, **for the first time, analyses** everything the city has to offer for outdoor play and physical activity with a **broad view in three layers**:
 - 1st layer: the ideal places for children to play: play areas and school playgrounds;
 - 2nd layer: green spaces as leisure spaces and school settings;
 - 3rd layer: other urban and natural spaces and pedestrian routes where play occurs fortuitously

10 KEY IDEAS

- 8) The Plan is the result of a **year-long, cross-cutting, participatory process with 24 face-to-face working sessions involving over 400 people**, establishing a time scale, criteria and actions by listening to City Council staff, expert organisations and individuals, both children and adults.
- 9) The plan includes **citizen and social demands**, takes its inspiration from the play plans of other cities such as Dublin and London, and **responds to UN recommendations for advancing the right to play**, a human right specific to children and adolescents.
- 10) It contributes to the SDGs** by making cities safer, more inclusive and more resilient (Nº 11), intervening in public spaces to adapt them to the needs of groups with less presence there. And it **gives shape to various municipal plans** such as those on green infrastructure, the climate, urban planning for everyday life, accessibility and sports facilities, or childhood, youth and ageing.

2. WHY A PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES? 4 REASONS

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children.” (Nelson Mandela)

4 REASONS



1

Because children and adolescents have a **RIGHT TO PLAY** and **LEISURE TIME**

A Plan to foster child and adolescent development



LET'S MAKE THE CITY MORE CHILD FRIENDLY

2

Because play and physical activity are beneficial for **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

A Plan to improve the overall health and well-being of all citizens



LET'S MAKE THIS A HEALTHIER CITY

3

Because **COMMUNITY LIFE** is enriched by play and public space is reclaimed as an inclusive place, a place for social gatherings

A Plan to reclaim the streets with more inclusive community life



LET'S MAKE THE CITY A MORE INCLUSIVE ONE, FULL OF STREET LIFE

4

Because improving play areas is an opportunity to **GREEN, CALM** and **MAKE** public spaces **SAFER**

A Plan to transform everyday urban settings



LET'S MAKE THE CITY MORE SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT

1st reason: children and adolescents have a right to play and leisure time

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child says ...

“Little social recognition, visibility and understanding of the importance of free play and free time in childhood and adolescence”.

“Rest, play and leisure are just as important to a child’s development as nutrition, housing, health and education.”

“When there is investment in leisure, it usually goes to organised activities, but it is just as important to create spaces and times so children can devote themselves to exercising their right to spontaneous play, leisure and creativity.”

At least 4 out of 10 Barcelona residents have a direct interest in the well-being of children and adolescents because they are one (15% of the population are aged 0-17) or because they live with and look after them (23% of the population are adults with minors in their care).

Barcelona is complying with the United Nations obligations and responding to 4 government obligations on the right to play

1. To plan environments, facilities and play and leisure spaces that promote children's well-being:

• **1st PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES**

2. To rely on the participation of children and adolescents in design and planning:

• **CO-CREATION WITH THE SYSTEMIC INCORPORATION OF CHILDREN**

3. To ensure special attention is paid to children living in poverty, with a disability and/or who belong to minorities:

• **ACCESSIBILITY, GENDER, EQUALITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY CRITERIA**

4. To establish monitoring mechanisms in databases, evaluations and research in order to understand the scope, progress and impacts on children:

• **DIAGNOSIS + INDICATORS + ACCOUNTABILITY**

2nd reason: play and physical activity improve mental and physical health

INCREASING OBESITY, SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES AND SCREEN ADDICTION AMONG CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1 out of 4 children never play in a park or the street

(29% of girls and 23% of boys aged 3-14)

17% of adolescent girls and 8% of boys are physically inactive

SEDENTARY ADULT LIFESTYLES

30% of the adult population do no physical activity

(neither outdoors nor in sports facilities, especially people on low incomes, women, over 65s and foreign nationals)

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

(emotional self-regulation, coping skills, resilience and other skills)

1 in 10 adolescents are highly likely to suffer mental health problems

LOSS OF AUTONOMY IN CHILDHOOD

(decision-making, conflict-resolution, risk-management and other skills)

Half of all children are not sufficiently satisfied with their autonomy (at home, at school or outdoors)

3rd reason: community life is enriched by play and public space is reclaimed as an inclusive place, a place for social gatherings

NOT ENOUGH SUITABLE PLACES FOR PLAY AND MEETING UP

Half of all children are not sufficiently satisfied with the places for playing and having fun in their neighbourhood (10-12 year olds)

URBAN PLANNING WITH SCARCELY ANY UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY AND LITTLE GENDER FOCUS

LACK OF FREE TIME WITH TIME OVER-SCHEDULED

4 out of 10 children neither play nor spend much time outdoors (between never and, at most, 1 or 2 days a week, 10-12 year-olds)

SOCIAL ISOLATION AND INDIVIDUALISATION FROM CHILHOOD TO OLD AGE

4th reason: play for greening, calming and making the urban environment safer

SCARCITY OF URBAN GREEN SPACE

6.6 m² of green space per inhabitant

LACK OF CONTACT WITH NATURE AND POSSIBILITIES FOR PLAY WITH NATURAL ELEMENTS

half of play areas are not in green spaces

AIR POLLUTION MAKES HEALTH WORSE

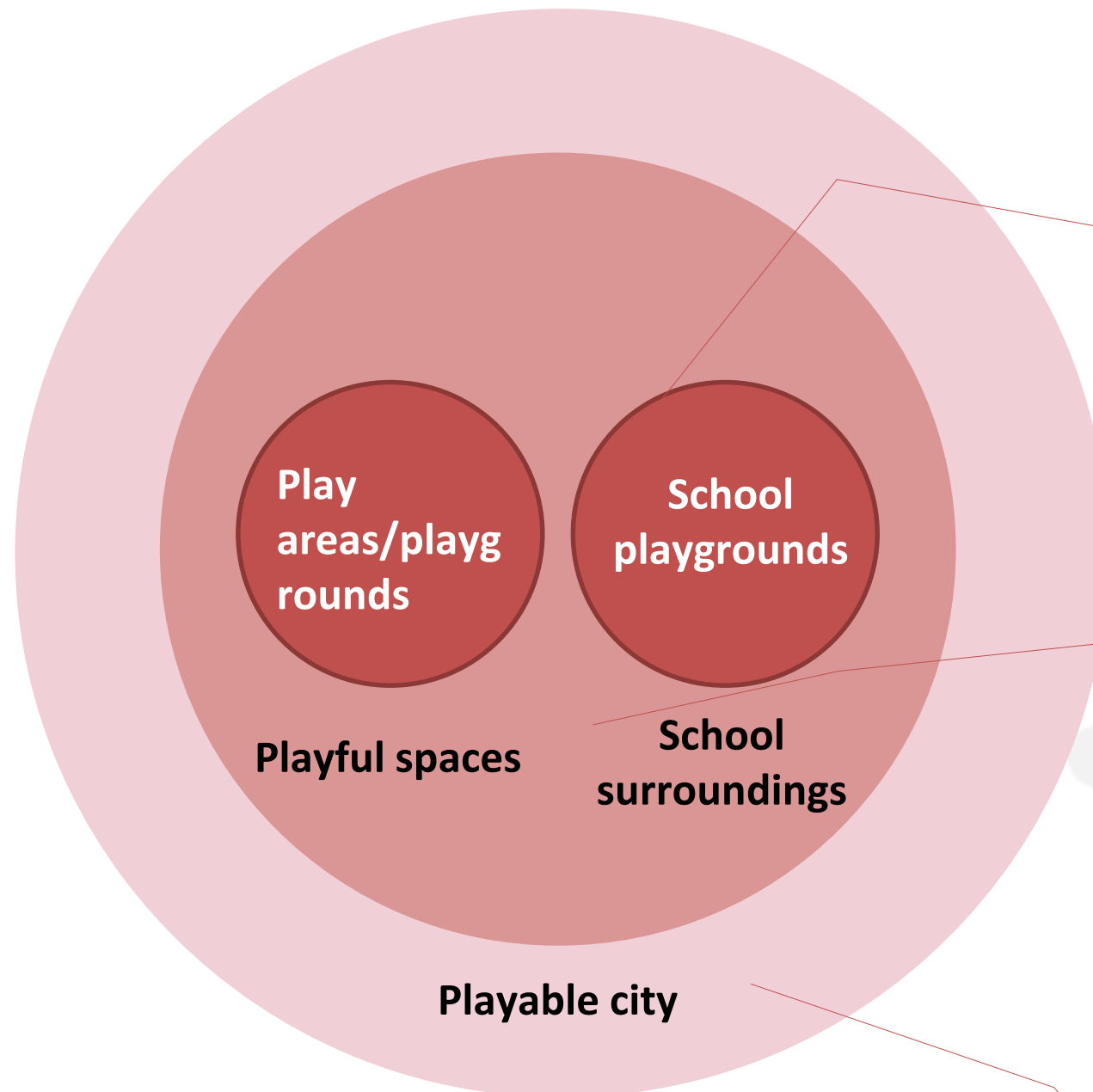
(especially among children and older people)

ACCESS TO PLAY AREAS NOT SAFE ENOUGH BECAUSE OF TRAFFIC AND THE ROAD ACCIDENT RATE

3. 3 LAYERS AND 7 CRITERIA FOR A PLAYABLE AND PLAYED IN CITY

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing” (George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Prize for Literature)

3 LAYERS FOR A PLAYABLE CITY



1st layer:

Play areas/playgrounds Enclosed, sign-posted and certified places designated exclusively for play with expressly designed and certified playful equipment.

School playgrounds: Outdoor spaces at nursery, infant, primary and secondary schools where children play in school time and at midday, and which can open up to the neighbourhood at other times.

2nd layer:

Playful spaces: Parks, squares, gardens and residential block interiors that offer possibilities for play alongside other uses and may or may not include a play area.

School surroundings Urban spaces around schools and at nursery, infant, primary and secondary school entrances with traffic-calmed access and possibilities for an area to relax and play in.

3rd layer:

Other urban and natural spaces and pedestrian routes in the city where it is possible to play or do physical activity more or less fortuitously:

- Permanently or temporarily pedestrianised streets
- Traffic-calmed streets
- Wide pavements
- Play-friendly urban furniture (benches, shelters, etc.)
- Skate parks
- Open sports courts
- Sports equipment (basketball baskets, table-tennis tables, petanque courts, etc.)
- Beaches
- Woodland parks
- River beds

7 CRITERIA FOR A PLAYABLE AND PLAYED-IN CITY

1

Lots of ideas for creative games or with challenges for the healthy development of children and adolescents

2

Diverse, stimulating, versatile, connected and accessible physical space.

3

Inclusive playgrounds for people with different ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities.

4

Contact with nature, greenery and play with natural elements such as sand and water.

5

Shared, intergenerational and collaborative play.

6

Place for meeting and community life.

7

Playful ecosystems and safe, playable environment.

4. HORIZON 2030. IN 6 VISIONS AND 10 TARGETS

“Play is the highest form of research” (Albert Einstein)

Horizon 2030: a play-friendly Barcelona in 6 visions

1. A city where children enjoy their **right to play and leisure time** and everyone rediscovers the joy of playing in public spaces.
2. A city that promotes **health, all-round development** and well-being through outdoor play and physical activity.
3. A city that offers and **integrates more and better opportunities for play.**



Mas Ravellat gardens (Horta-Guinardó)

Horizon 2030: a play-friendly Barcelona in 6 visions

4. A city with **greened, safe and traffic-calmed settings** that allow people to play on the streets.

5. A city that **stimulates inclusive play** taking into account the diversity of ages, genders, backgrounds and functional abilities.

6. A city that **enriches community life and the mix of people** and uses around play.



Plaça del Sol (Gràcia)

10 Key milestones of the 2030 Plan

1

DOUBLE the number of diverse and creative play areas: those that offer at least 6 of the main playful activities.

2018

23% of play areas offer a range of playful activities.

2030

50% of play areas offer a range of playful activities.



Pl. Josep Maria Folch i Torres.

2

Ensure some minimum size and playability standards in play areas, **REDUCING** the number of spaces under 50 m² and **RENOVATING** those with insufficient playful options.

2018

- 4% of play areas are less than 50 m².
- 16% of play areas offer insufficient playful activities.

2030

- 0% of play areas are less than 50 m².
- 0% of play areas offer insufficient playful activities.



Font de la Mulassa play area

3

INCREASE the number of splash and cool play spaces in playful areas and the possibilities for playing with sand in play areas.

2018

- 2 spaces for splashing about and cooling down
- 70% of play areas offer possibilities for playing with sand.

2030

- 10 spaces for splashing about and cooling down (in the districts furthest from the beaches).
- 80% of play areas offer possibilities for playing with sand.



Example beach – Torre de les aigües

4

DOUBLE the possibilities of play with challenges and risk management specially designed for adolescents and young people, with urban sports parks and play equipment with a height challenge.

2018

4 urban sports parks, 9 ziplines, 8 giant slides, 10 pieces of play equipment with a height challenge.

2030

10 urban sports parks, 20 ziplines, 15 giant slides, 20 pieces of play equipment with a height challenge.



La Mar Bella Urban Sports Park (Sant Martí)

5

Promote shared and collaborative play and physical activity outdoors, so HALF of all play equipment is certified as being suitable for groups and different ages and by INCREASING the sports equipment.

2018

11% of play equipment encourages shared play,
191 table-tennis tables
and 84 basketball baskets.

2030

50% of play equipment encourages
shared play, 250 table-tennis tables
and 150 basketball baskets.



6

Increase the play opportunities for people with functional diversity, **ENSURING** new and renovated play areas are accessible and encourage inclusive play

2018

25% of play areas are accessible and have equipment certified as inclusive.



2030

100% of new and renovated play areas are accessible and have equipment certified as inclusive.



Inclusive play area Barcelona Zoo

7

Improve the habitability of green spaces as social meeting and playful spaces

2018

- 18% of play areas have nearby drinking water fountains.
- 78% of green spaces have a drinking water fountain.
- 8.5% of green spaces have toilets.
- 9% of parks and gardens have picnic tables.

2030

- 40% of play areas have nearby drinking water fountains.
- 90% of green spaces have a drinking water fountain.
- 20% of green spaces have public toilets.
- 75% of parks and gardens have picnic or similar tables.



Font del Roure

8

Improve school playgrounds for more play options and co-education in greener, more sustainable settings, **DOUBLING** the number of state primary and secondary schools with suitable playgrounds and community uses.

2018

30% of state schools are estimated to have suitable playgrounds or are in the process of being renovated and have community uses.



2030

60% of state schools have suitable playgrounds with community uses (a minimum of 120 playgrounds).



Congrés Indians school playground

9

Improve school settings that are inadequate environmentally and which are unsuitable for socialising, gradually **INCREASING** the micro-interventions at school entrances to turn them into places to spend time in

2018

4 school settings improved



2030

100 school settings improved



Area around Institut Viladomat secondary school (Eixample)

10

Reverse the sedentary lifestyle trend and lack of active outdoor play in the city during childhood and adolescence, significantly **REDUCING** the physical inactivity rates

2018

- 29% of girls never play in the park or street.
- 23% of boys never play in the park or street.
- 17% of girls and young women are physically inactive.
- 8% of boys and young men are physically inactive.

2030

- 18% of girls never play in the park or street.
- 15% of boys never play in the park or street.
- 10% of girls and young women are physically inactive.
- 5% of boys and young men are physically inactive.



5. 3 STRATEGIC LINES, 14 OBJECTIVES, 63 ACTIONS AND 10 LEAD PROJECTS

“Mr Mayor, we don’t want swings or slides, we want the city” (An illustrated child by Frato - Francesco Tonucci)

Plan for play in public spaces



3 strategic lines



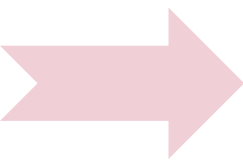
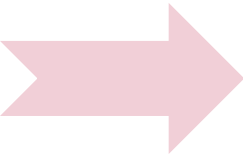
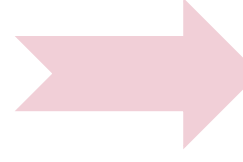
14 objectives



63 actions



10 lead projects

- 
- Line 1.** More and better play spaces in the urban environment: playful *infrastructure in a playable city*
- 
- Line 2.** Stimulating playful and physical activity outdoors: playful *uses in a city of play*
- 
- Line 3.** Promote a paradigm shift: *play gains ground in the city*

14 objectives

Line 1. More and better play spaces in the urban environment:

Objective 1:

- Design quality play areas, as well as play-friendly playful spaces and urban furniture that offer opportunities for diverse, safe, stimulating and inclusive play, taking into account adolescence, diverse backgrounds, universal accessibility and a gender perspective.

Objective 2:

- Improve opportunities for play and socialisation in and out of school, turning school entrances into squares and school playgrounds into a community resource.

Objective 3:

- Plan and create more playful infrastructure based on proximity, density and equality criteria in playful ecosystems that make the most of each neighbourhood's potential and characteristics while seeking to maintain a territorial balance in the city.

Objective 4:

- Increase the opportunities and space available for playing on the streets, encouraging casual and spontaneous play around the city in safer settings.

Objective 5:

- Create relaxing outdoor environments that encourage social contact and community life around play by incorporating the various everyday needs of children, young people and the grown-ups who look after them into urban design.

Line 2. Stimulating playful and physical activity outdoors

Objective 6:

- Encourage children and adolescents to come out and play in the streets, squares and parks with as much autonomy as possible.

Objective 7:

- Promote intergenerational play and the habit of playing and doing physical activity outdoors among all ages, especially in green spaces.

Objective 8:

- Facilitate social-entity or citizen initiatives linked to playful and physical activity that stimulate diverse and positive uses of public spaces.

Objective 9:

- Enable playful spaces and school settings to become meeting points and places for community life with various uses in addition to play.

Line 3. Promote a paradigm shift:

Objective 10:

- Raise awareness and knowledge of the social importance of play and its individual and collective benefits for everyone.

Objective 11:

- Increase the time that children and adolescents have for free play as part of a social reorganisation of the ways people use their leisure time, achieve a work-life balance and the democratisation of care tasks.

Objective 12:

- Promote citizen co-design and co-responsibility, above all children and adolescents, to take their needs into account and increase the sense of belonging and an attitude of care for the urban environment.

Objective 13:

- Generate knowledge and evaluate the opportunities and playful uses of public space in order to understand them, progress made, steps backward and impacts on the general public, especially on children and adolescents, as well as on the quality of community life and the urban environment.

Objective 14:

- Boost municipal services and resources for adequately implementing and coordinating the Play Plan and executing it as a city policy.

10 lead projects of the Plan for play in public spaces

Lead projects 1

Remove 'no ball games' signs



Lead projects 2

Sundays on the street: close one main street to traffic in each district



Via Laietana Day without Cars (Ciutat Vella)

Lead projects 3

Let's play in the squares: playful suggestions to encourage people to get together



We play Pl/ del Sol, Districte de Gràcia

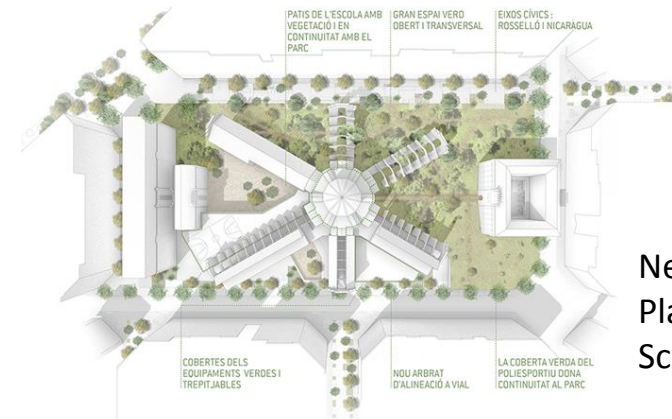
Lead projects 4

Prioritise play in squares and streets on Saturdays for Scouts' clubs and educational playful centres



Lead projects 5

Transform school playgrounds



New Space with
Playground School and
School (Eixample)

Lead projects 6

Micro-interventions in school settings to turn them into meeting points



School surroundings
Auró School
(Eixample)

Lead projects 7

More water and sand games



Lead projects 8

Co-create new urban sports parks and unique playful spaces



Skate Parc Baró de Viver (Sant Andreu)

Lead projects 9

Open café-bars in playful spaces with toilets and the loan of games



Bar- In Garden
Rambla de Sants

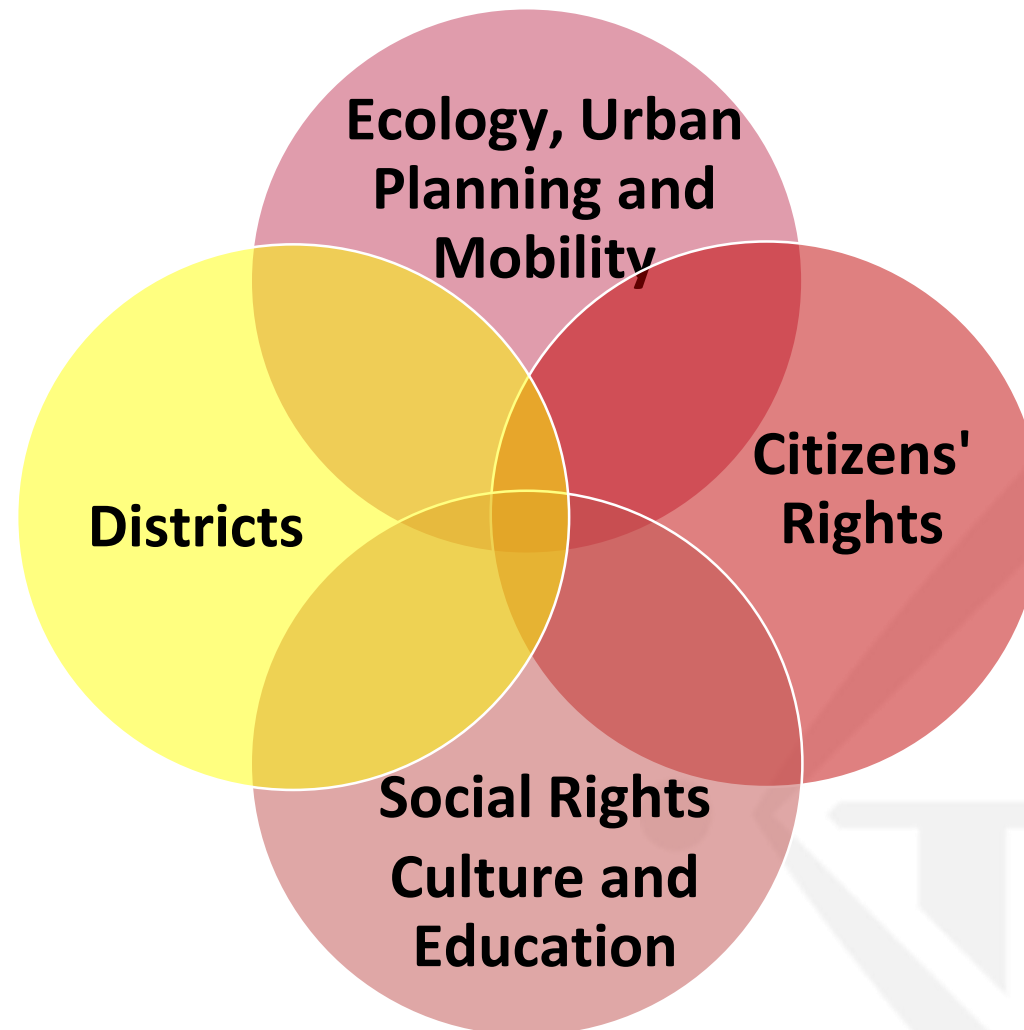
Lead projects 10

Support play for children with functional diversity

6. AGENTS

“One of the functions of play spaces is not to play but to be a meeting point and a starting point for other activities and types of play, because in general their uses are too limited. Children play other games most of the time they are outside” (Jan Gehl, urbanist)

Municipal agents involved in the process and its implementation



[Urban Model + Municipal Institute of Parks and Gardens \(IMPJ\)](#)

[Barcelona Institute for Children and Adolescents \(IIAB\)](#)

[Municipal Institute for Persons with Disabilities \(IMPD\)](#)

[Municipal Institute of Education \(IMEB\)](#)

**Full text of the Plan for play in public spaces,
2030 horizon via [this link](#).**