

Outdoor workshop promotes kids creativity ^[1]

Play workshop in Peachland Oct. 28 offers children unstructured setting to play, learn and create

Author:

Source: BC Local News

Format: Article

Publication Date: 14 Oct 2017

AVAILABILITY

Read online ^[2]

EXCERPTS

The second of two free outdoor play workshops will be held Saturday, Oct. 28 in Peachland, offering children and their families the chance to express their creativity and engage their sense of wonder.

Children will have the opportunity to discover and explore playing with loose parts – a trending concept in the world of unstructured outdoor play. Families are invited to join in the fun at the Peachland Heritage Park and Pavilion on Beach Avenue.

And the unique play experiences aren't just an incentive for families to spend a fun morning at the park – feedback from participants will inform a research project guiding the creation of a new play space unlike any other in the region.

"Research tells us that when children visit traditional play spaces, they spend about six minutes on the play equipment," says Dr. Beverlie Dietze, Director of Learning and Applied Research at Okanagan College. "They spend more time playing with the gravel and the items that are underneath the play apparatus.

"With a natural play space, children will spend as much time as you allow them. There are options for them to pick up rocks and look at the bugs underneath. They can challenge themselves to balance on a tree stump or walk the length of a log. The play opportunities are absolutely open and expansive. When you add in man-made materials that we call loose-parts then all of those pieces require the child to do something, to actively engage in the play."

Those types of play opportunities are precisely the kind Dietze hopes to gain feedback on through the workshops as part of a \$91,000 research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and neighbourhood developer New Monaco. The goal is to support New Monaco in creating unique naturalized play spaces that fit children's zest for curiosity, learning, and development. Using a research tool developed by Dietze, data on how children use the loose parts in their outdoor play will be compiled and relayed to the developer and landscape architects at Outland Design Landscape Architecture. The architects and Dietze hope to bring an entirely new kind of play space to the Okanagan.

A potential spot for the unique park has been identified within the New Monaco master planned community currently being developed in Peachland.

"Our vision for the community is to be the healthiest place to live in Canada," explains Mark Holland, Partner, New Monaco. "We're very excited to be actively involved in this applied research project with the ultimate goal of understanding how we can create a new type of play space that is innovative, supports healthy lifestyles for children and their families, and goes beyond what people expect to find in a traditional playground.

"New Monaco is committed to working with Peachland to attract more families to this great community and make it the best place to grow up in the Okanagan."

But before it can ever be built, Dietze's findings will first need to be translated into a design that can be brought to life in the New Monaco neighborhood. Enter Fiona Barton, Principal of Outland Design.

"Our company is focused on re-thinking the way in which play spaces are designed and support optimal child development. It's hard to imagine how the next generation will become stewards of the natural landscape if they haven't actually spent time in it," says Barton, who worked with Dietze in 2016 to train her staff in the principles of early learning and outdoor play spaces.

"We look forward to embracing the challenge of applying natural outdoor play principles from the research work and incorporating those into a municipally managed, public park system that is beneficial to families in the Okanagan."

Dietze hopes the project will serve as a model for public parks and play spaces in other areas.

"It would be wonderful to see what we learn with this project in the Okanagan inspire and help others create innovative play spaces across the country and around the world."

Joining Dietze and Barton at the workshops will be a team of early childhood education students and educators to support children in playing with loose parts. The outdoor play opportunities are free but families are encouraged to register in advance by emailing outdoorplay@okanagan.bc.ca [3].

-reprinted from BC Local News

Related link:

Region: British Columbia [4]

Tags: outdoor [5]

curricula and pedagogy [6]

study [7]

physical environment [8]

child care [9]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/10/outdoor-workshop-promotes-kids-creativity>
Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/child-care-news/17/10/outdoor-workshop-promotes-kids-creativity> [2]

<https://www.bcclocalnews.com/news/outdoor-workshop-promotes-kids-creativity/> [3] <mailto:outdoorplay@okanagan.bc.ca> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7860> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/outdoor> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/curricula-and-pedagogy> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/8957> [8]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/physical-environment> [9] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/child-care>