

Beyond playgrounds: Building climate resilient, child- and family-centered cities ^[1]

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Excerpt

Editor’s note: This piece is an edited version of Ankita Chachra’s opening keynote address at Start With Children, The Bratislava Summit on May 22, 2024. The summit brought together leaders from many disciplines to explore ways to transform cities for future generations.

Child-Centered Cities are Climate-Adaptive Cities

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Working on initiatives like Designing Streets for Kids and Urban95 shaped my understanding of the early years and the importance of designing cities that support children and keep them safe. But experiencing the city as a parent in the early days of my son’s life—well, that was a whole different thing. How we appreciate small things like shade and cover to feed a baby or recognize multiple failures in city systems inevitably shifts when we become parents.

Today, when I think about cities that prioritize children and families—cities that allow families to flourish and make raising healthy and resilient children easier—I think about the changing climate. As climate change intensifies, it becomes harder for families and communities to provide the nurturing environments and experiences that help children become healthy and resilient adults. When we design public spaces, we must include social policies to ensure that parents and children are cared for and help build their capacity to live in the era of climate change. Here at Capita, I’m working to shape such cities.

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