

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION SITE NETWORK





ABOUT THE NETWORK



NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION SITE NETWORK

Recognizing Communities for Turning Research Into Practice

High-quality outdoor play and recreation environments are essential to community health and wellness. Research indicates that when stakeholders are engaged in the planning process, evidence-based design best practices are implemented with the built environment, and supplemental programming is offered to further enhance user experiences, then positive outcomes occur.

PlayCore's Center for Outreach, Research, and Education (CORE) leads the National Demonstration Site (NDS) Network as an important effort to raise national awareness, recognize projects of excellence, and help local communities demonstrate the positive impact they are making on Community Vitality. National Demonstration Sites use comprehensive and validated research to provide a unique way to organize and report the indicators of a vital community.

There are five design best practice programs that help communities turn research into practice. Choose to utilize one or a combination of National Demonstration Site designations to thoughtfully advocate for inclusive play, youth physical activity, adult outdoor fitness, nature play, and playful pathways.



OUR UNIQUE APPROACH

Ensure that your community can maximize the value of your investment by implementing scholarly best practice design research to activate play and recreation destinations. With evidence-based best practices to design and implement high-quality play and recreation environments, National Demonstration Sites receive recognition, demonstrate impact through data services and site-specific reports, and are able to share and showcase the impact on community health and wellness.

IMPLEMENT DESIGN BEST PRACTICES



Create high-quality environments.

RECEIVE RECOGNITION



Celebrate your leadership and commitment to play and recreation.

DEMONSTRATE IMPACT



Receive one-of-a-kind data services and site-specific reports that capture the impact and outcomes of your NDS.

SHARE & SHOWCASE



Advocate the positive impact high-quality destinations have on your community health and wellness.



NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION SITE BENEFITS

As part of your commitment to advancing play and recreation, as a National Demonstration Site (NDS), you will receive complimentary benefits, including:



Receive Recognition



Recognition on the **National Demonstration Site Map** (www.playcore.com/NDS/map), an online resource to help others find meaningful play and recreation spaces in their community.

A **Welcome Kit** that includes a National Demonstration Site **project of excellence award** for display and a **Marketing Toolkit** with digital assets to help you promote your site and support data collection.



Demonstrate Impact

A **dedicated portal** provided by the CORE Data Service Lab for your community's site-specific **NDS tools and reports**.



On-site signage with a research QR Code will promote your commitment to best practices and direct visitors to share their experiences and report Community Vitality outcomes.



Share & Showcase



Site-specific Reports provided by CORE Data Service Lab that aggregate local and site-collected data to demonstrate site impact, engagement, and park user sentiments. Each report aligns to the 7 indicators of Community Vitality to provide a holistic view of the health and wellness outcomes your site contributes to the community.

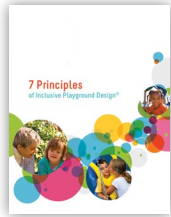


Research & Programming
in partnership with:

 Emma Eccles Jones College of Education & Human Services
Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice
UtahStateUniversity.

INCLUSION

The purpose of PlayCore's comprehensive inclusive play programs and unique design philosophy is to provide high-quality outdoor play experiences for people of all ages and abilities that develop the whole child, address the whole environment, and ultimately, benefit the whole community.



PlayCore is proud of our national partnership with leading experts at the Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice of Utah State University which has led to championing thousands of inclusive play initiatives across the world.

Our evidence-based design and programming best practices innovate outdoor environments where both physical and social inclusion can occur. The **7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design**[®], is a one-of-a-kind resource to help communities move beyond minimum accessibility guidelines to intentionally create destinations that are more usable, by more people, to the greatest extent possible. These principles are the industry's only evidence-based guidelines that are tailored specifically to address childhood experiences in outdoor play environments.

Inclusive play is our passion and purpose. Together we can turn research into practice and advocate for inclusive, intergenerational play destinations across our nation.

Best Practice Implementation:

- Address local priorities, create awareness, and enlist community partners that share your mission and goals.
- Provide a developmentally robust and balanced assortment of playground activities that meet the diverse physical, social-emotional, sensory, cognitive, and communicative needs of all children, including those with disabilities.
- Apply the 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design[®] to the overall environmental design.
- Offer programming, activities, special events, and/or other initiatives to further create awareness and foster friendships.



Providing intergenerational, inclusive play ensures that all people experience the satisfaction of contributing to meaningful play and reap the lifelong developmental, physical, and social benefits of inclusion."

- Keith Christensen, PhD, Institute for Disability Research, Policy & Practice of Utah State University



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YOUTH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The purpose of **Play On!** is to promote physical activity and fun by designing outdoor environments for active play and implementing playground learning activities. The Play On! program provides educators and recreation professionals with evidence-based design best practices to promote fitness and health — maximizing the value and potential of school and community playgrounds.



PlayCore is proud to partner with physical activity experts, SHAPE America, to provide a valid solution for intentionally increasing physical activity on playgrounds through six key elements of play to promote fitness. Play On! can be used to enhance recess, physical education, before/after school programs, special events, camps, and other programming efforts to combat sedentary lifestyles and childhood obesity.

The Play On! Program contains 125 activities for grades PreK-5 that align with national physical education standards. The program includes assessment tools, equipment lists, playground funding opportunities, send-home family resources, and design best practices.

Play On! can become a vital component to strengthen, educate, and build healthier, happier communities through active play.

Best Practice Implementation:

- Incorporate six key elements of play that promote physical activity — balancing, brachiating, climbing, spinning, sliding, and swinging.
- Provide a developmentally appropriate progression of skill opportunities through beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of challenge.
- Design the layout of the space to encourage movement through running, chasing, and exploring.
- Program the environment utilizing Play On! learning activities and additional loose parts to encourage active play and social interaction.



It is critical to advocate for play initiatives, effectively communicate the developmental benefits of playgrounds, and demonstrate how investing in play can result in healthy outcomes."

- Russ Carson, PhD, Co-author of Play On!



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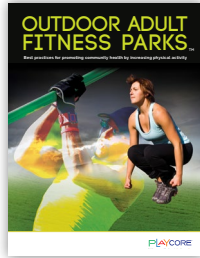
 THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
CHATTANOOGA

OUTDOOR ADULT FITNESS

Research demonstrates that **Outdoor Adult Fitness Parks** provide a variety of healthy outcomes to communities by offering new ways to make physical activity more available, accessible, affordable, and enjoyable.

PlayCore partnered with Dr. Gary Liguori, past Department Head Health and Human for Performance University of Tennessee at Chattanooga; Dr. Michael Suk, Chairman of Orthopaedic Surgery at Geisinger Health System; and Dr. Thom McKenzie, Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University to develop evidence-based design best practices for community outdoor adult fitness destinations.

This designation recognizes communities that advocate for and utilize Outdoor Adult Fitness Parks as a critical solution for improving health and overall wellness. National Demonstration Sites align to health benefits and total body fitness by offering visitors of all levels a well-rounded workout. Together, these elements can help people adhere to routines that develop overall health and wellness, and engage participants in substantially more moderate to vigorous physical activity.



Best Practice Implementation:

- Identify user groups, location/context, site-specific amenities, and programming opportunities.
- Select a design typology that meets the space requirements, usage goals, and site-specific needs.
- Offer a variety of aerobic, muscle/strength, core, balance, and flexibility equipment to provide a well-rounded fitness routine.
- Adhere to safety and industry standards in regards to surfacing, accessibility, signage, and equipment configuration.



As our country continues to struggle with obesity and chronic disease, outdoor adult fitness parks are a sustainable option with measurable impact across the broad spectrum of adult health and wellness."

- Gary Liguori, PhD, University of West Florida



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NATURE PLAY

The purpose of **NatureGrounds** is to create a dramatic shift in the standard playground development process by deliberately designing nature back into the everyday spaces of childhood, not only to benefit children's play, but also to engage communities in working together to deliver high-quality play experiences across generations. Research has proven that designing play environments that integrate the living landscape with manufactured equipment results in increased play value, higher levels of physical activity, social interaction, and improved environmental sustainability.



PlayCore has partnered with the Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, NC State University, to help professional and community champions bring "nature to people" in an effort to reconnect children to nature to support healthy human development. NatureGrounds play and learning environments positively impact play value, child development, health and wellness, and environmental sustainability.

Naturalized playgrounds have become sought out destinations that provide visual interest, shade, and comfort resulting in sustained repeat visits, a relaxed and playful social atmosphere, and growth of community social capital. These well-designed playgrounds offer rich outdoor education and programming opportunities for both schools and parks.

Best Practice Implementation:

- Locate playground in relation to existing site features and surroundings such as mature trees and topography.
- Design entrances, pathways, and boundaries to enhance naturalization and connectivity.
- Integrate planting pockets (trees, shrubs, grasses) into the play environment as part of the play experience.
- Select child-friendly plants to provide additional play value using the Plant Database at playcore.com/plants to offer variety, seasonal change, wildlife enhancement, and/or play props.



A generation ago playing outdoors in nature was usually taken for granted, but times have changed. Now, nature must be deliberately designed back into children's lives."

- Robin Moore, DiplArch, MCP, Hon. ASLA



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PLAYFUL PATHWAYS

The purpose of **Pathways for Play** is to intentionally integrate play — critical for children’s health — into walkable, bikeable, shared use community pathway networks.

Research shows that playful pathways attract children and families and can dramatically increase frequency and duration of use.



PlayCore has partnered with the Natural Learning Initiative, College of Design, NC State University, to help professionals and community champions create opportunities to “bring people to nature” by creating playful routes for families to explore, discover, learn, and be physically active together surrounded by nature. Pathways for Play National Demonstration Sites infuse play into trails, greenways, and shared parks to motivate children, families, and youth organizations to get outdoors and engage in healthy, stimulating activity in nature.

Best Practice Implementation:

- Assess form, location, access, usability, safety, and regulations when evaluating an existing or planned pathway.
- Connect pathways to meaningful destinations in locations where children live to support their independent mobility.
- Promote environmental literacy and learning by integrating play pockets along the path. Play pockets include themes for learning, educational signage, and playful activities that enhance the overall play value.
- Integrate at least three play pockets at appropriate distances apart to encourage movement and discovery.



It is clear that there is no other choice but to discover new ways to deliver high-quality outdoor environments for children compelling enough to motivate them to acquire healthy, fearless, outdoors-in-nature, active lifestyle habits.”

- Robin Moore, DiplArch, MCP, Hon. ASLA



JOIN THE NETWORK

Data collected across the National Demonstration Site Network demonstrate that evidence-based design positively impacts visitors and promote healthy communities. Through our research, we have learned that National Demonstration Sites:

ENCOURAGE REPEAT VISITATIONS

97% of site visitors say they will return again in the near future.

DEMONSTRATE HEALTH & WELLNESS

99% of site visitors were active.

PROMOTE RECOMMENDED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

96% of site visitors are active at the site for 30 minutes or longer.

CLAIM VISITOR SATISFACTION

98% of site visitors are satisfied with their visit.

Visit playcore.com/nds to learn more.

Turn Research Into Practice & Become a National Demonstration Site

1

Design

Work with a local, National Demonstration Site trained representative to design your site to implement evidence-based design best practices. Choose one, or a combination of designations, to address the goals and priorities of your community.

2

Collaborate

Identify a Key Informant that will serve as the primary contact and champion to utilize the Marketing Toolkit and NDS resources to help create awareness, promote the site, and encourage community members to share their experience using onsite data collection methods.

3

Share & Showcase

Create positive attention through collaborative marketing and/or programming, and use your destination to demonstrate impact to your stakeholders.



Building communities through play & recreation™

**Join us in our mission to build healthy
communities through play and recreation
and turn research into practice.**

playcore.com/nds | (877) 762-7563