

CREATING A NATURAL PLAYGROUND TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE

Playcosystem is a 10-acre natural play area with 3 zones offering graduated nature immersion experiences. Each zone has distinct ecology and unique play affordances. Researchers documented the design and construction of the space over ~11 months (5 site visits, 3 virtual, guided interviews, document review, and arial photographs).



Total transcribed data:
 -534 min audio/video
 -69,802 words
 -114 pages of text



Analysis:
 -initial, line by line, axial coding, theming
 -secondary analysis

Organic relationships with people: “To the extent possible, everything we do is informed by others.” (i.e., artists, engineers, children, community agencies, UofL School of Public Health...)

Self-reflection to play: “We really want children doing things on their own.” “The rewards are intrinsic.” “Talk to adults about free play and...help the adult remove direct supervision of the child.”

Research/experimentation: “We have lots of different kind of experimental conditions that can be manipulated to do quick or long-term studies.” “Playcosystem is a good ‘laboratory’.”

Accessibility and safety/risk affordance: “Rope...is statistically one of the most dangerous things...we accept that risk.” “We are creating a hiding spot...practice for adults to let their children out of sight.” “We are designing to what’s called Universal Design standards...and will work with wheelchair communities and others.”

