Inviting for Play
The Play Everywhere Challenge

Julia D Day
Project Manager, Gehl - NY
@citiesforpeople
@jddnyc

Gehl
Our Focus is Creating Cities for People.
People are the Starting Point in our Work.
We approach our work both as social scientists and designers investigating the inter-connected loop between life...
...and form in cities around the world
Where should play take place in cities?
Kids used to play everywhere in the city.

Few cars on the streets and few formal ‘play’ spaces meant kids could make their own play in public.
Public spaces created opportunities for informal, imaginative, and challenging play!
Today, we see few kids in everyday city spaces. Yet more and more families remain in cities.
Children are under-represented in public. Gehl studies find the rate of children in public is low compared to the rate that live nearby.

**Denver, July Weekend, 2015**
Mall between Larimer and Lawrence Streets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>10 AM</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Children made up less than 10% of visitors
- 84.0% 15-64
- 9.6% 00-14
- 6.4% 65+

**Columbia, SC, November Weekend, 2015**
Main & Lady

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>10 AM</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>16</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>18</th>
<th>19</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Children made up less than 4% of visitors
- 93.7% 15-64
- 6.3% 00-14
- 2.6% 65+
Even in cities with vibrant public life, like New York, children (and seniors) are missing from the public realm, and account for only 10% of pedestrians (though they are a combined 30% of NY’s population).
As uses and activities were separated by design, children were displaced from public.
Monofunctional design, along with more cars, made playing in public ‘riskier’.
And play was further isolated from day-to-day activities, such as working or running errands.
Play areas can also be difficult to get to.

No sidewalks - only accessible by car
And today, invitations to stay inside are stronger than ever! (It’s not just design.)

Childhood obesity has more than doubled in the past 30 years.
“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.”

Enrique Peñalosa
Mayor, Bogota, Colombia
City design can invite kids to play and make them more visible in our cities.
‘Mixed Use’ can mean creating opportunities to play everywhere.

Gehl
When cities put kids first, they can design places that are...

THE PLAY EVERYWHERE PLAYBOOK

Turning spaces into PLAYces

1. wondrous  2. challenging  3. convenient
4. inviting  5. shared  6. unifying

Gehl
And that incorporate play into places where people already are, or have to be (sidewalks)
Incorporate play into places where people already are, or have to be (bus stops)

Bus Stop Boogie
New York
Gigantic Mechanic
Incorporate play into **under-used or inactive city spaces (low-traffic residential streets)**
Incorporate play into **under-used** or inactive city spaces (government centers and city plazas)

**GovPorch**
Charlotte, NC

City of Charlotte, Living Streets Alliance Urban Design
Incorporate play into places where people walk (greenways, sidewalks)

Playful Gardens
Tucson
Living Streets Alliance
People don’t do things because designers tell them to.

People do things when the context makes it easy.
How can play everywhere become the easy choice?

How can play everywhere become...

Gehl