

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

Gehl

**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.

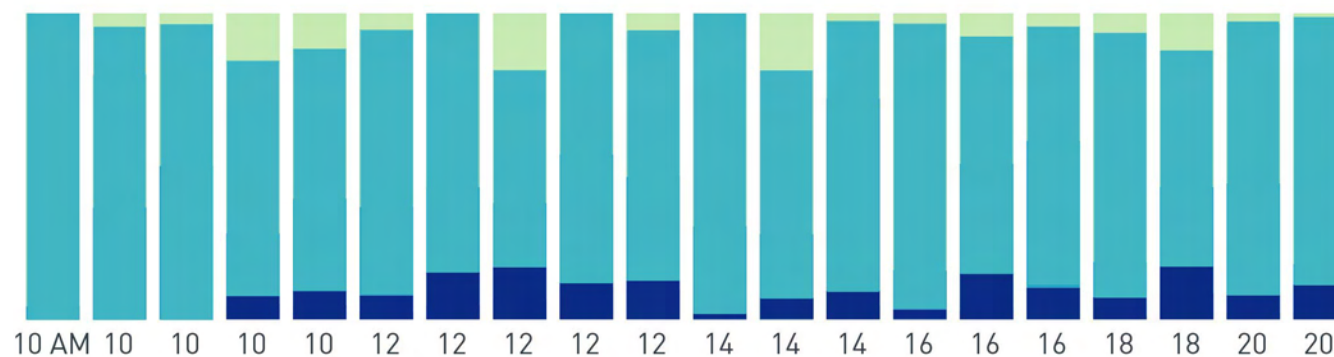
Gehl

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

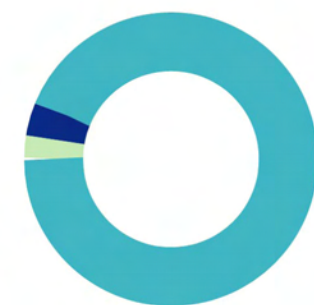
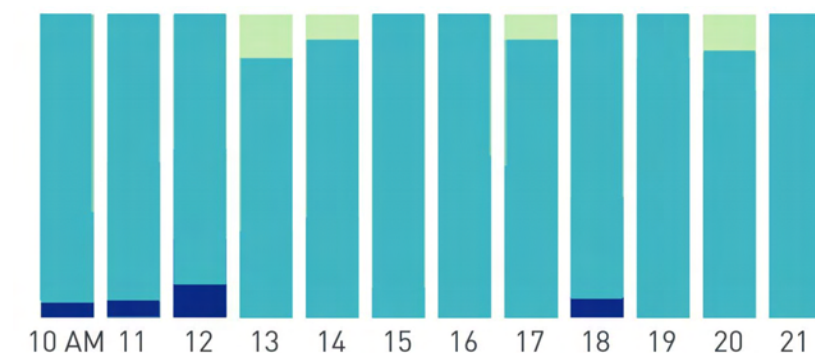
Mall between Larimer and Lawrence Streets



Children made up less than **10%** of visitors

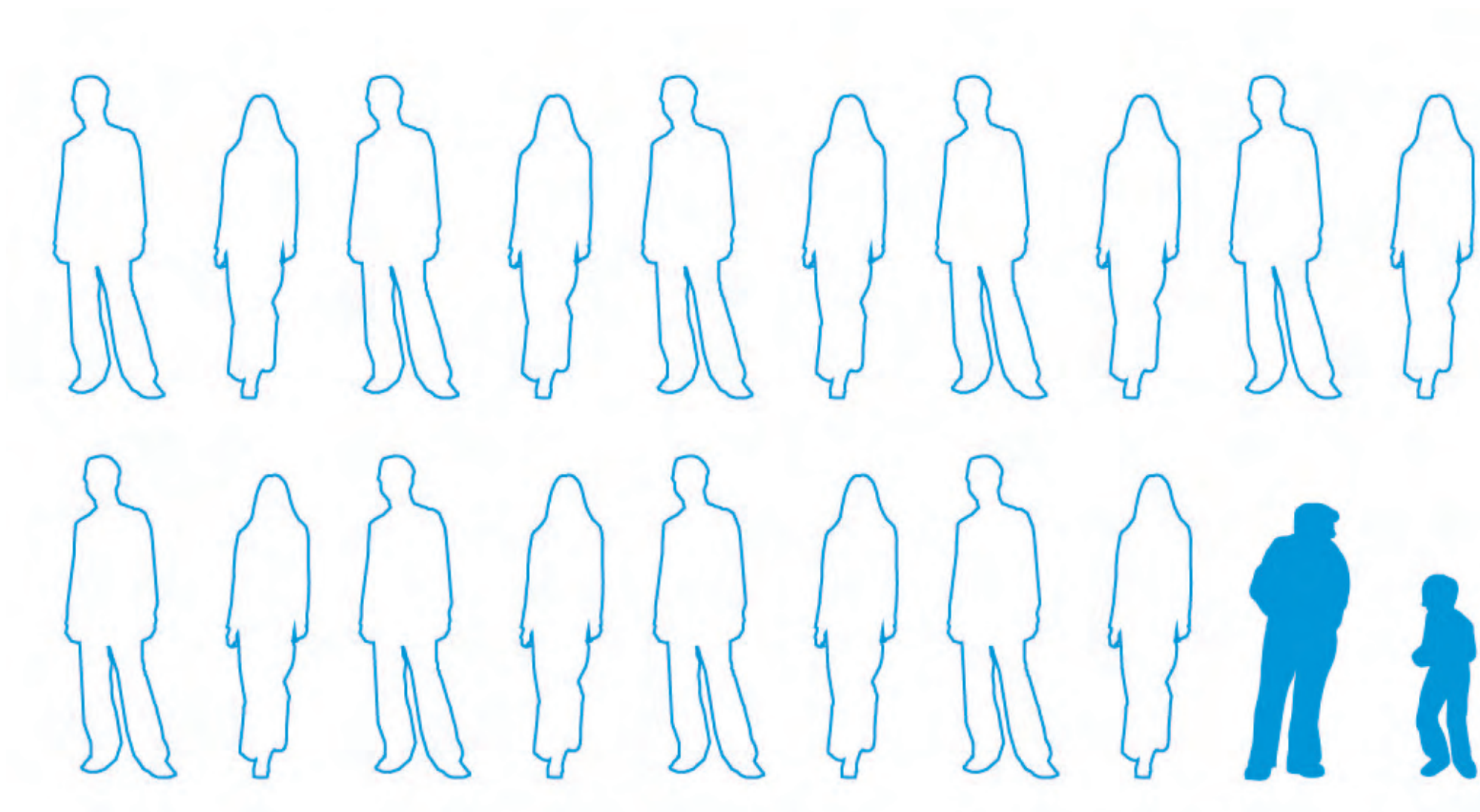
Columbia, SC, November Weekend, 2015

Main & Lady



Children made up less than **4%** of visitors

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).



WORK

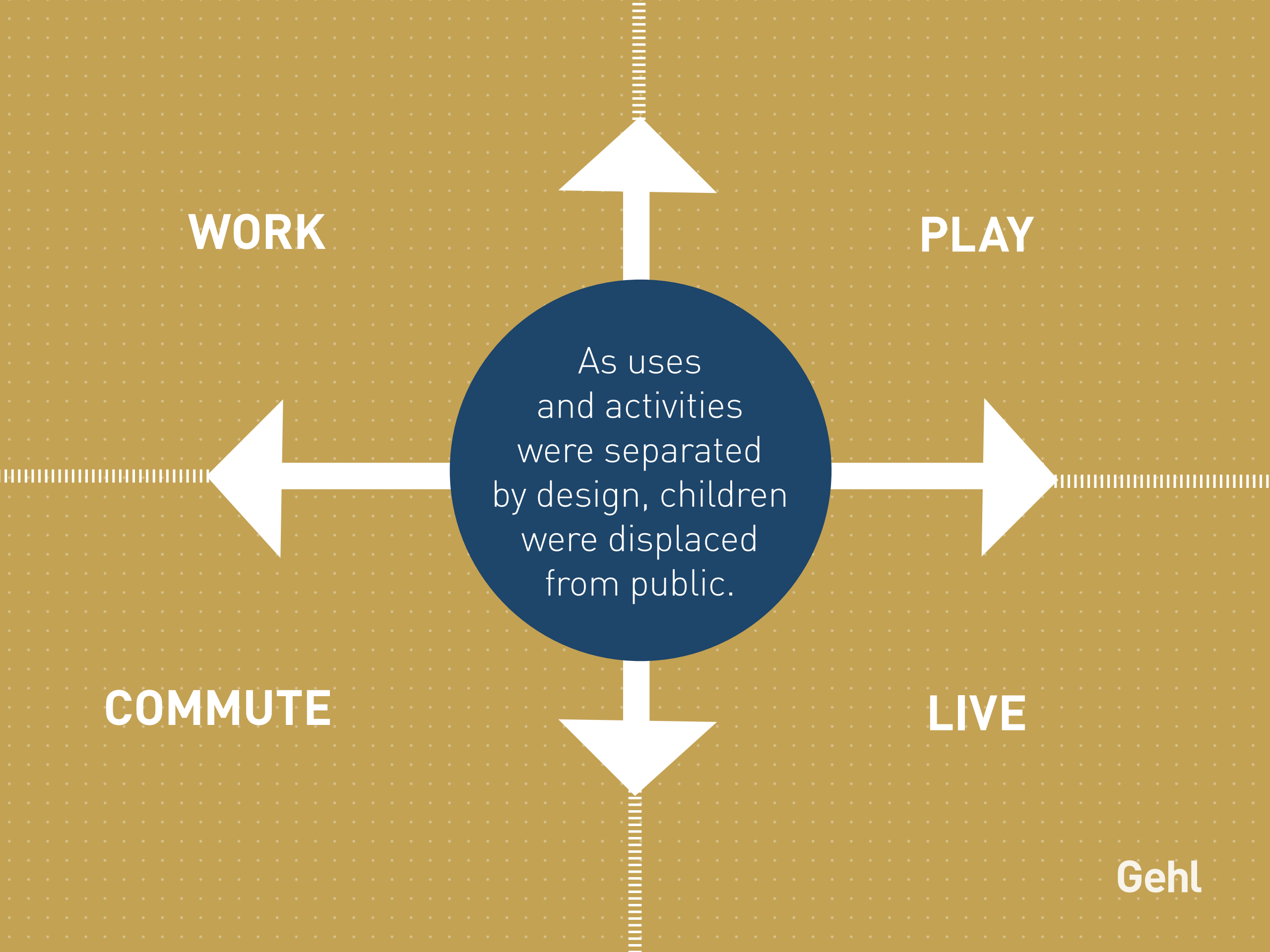
PLAY

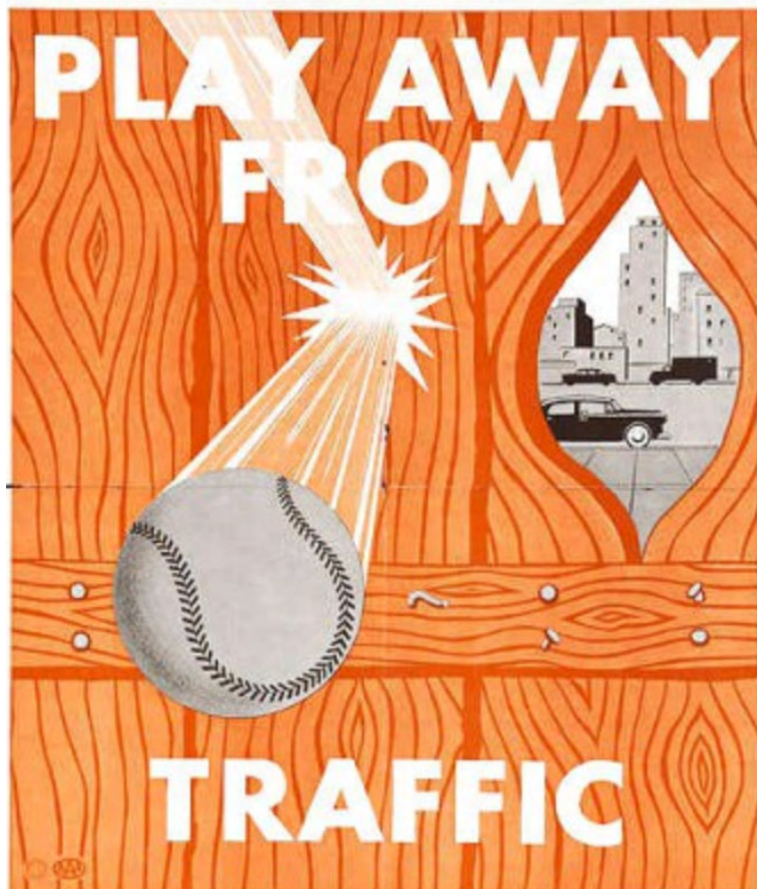
As uses
and activities
were separated
by design, children
were displaced
from public.

COMMUTE

LIVE

Gehl





Monofunctional design, along with more cars, made playing in public 'riskier'.

Gehl



And play was further isolated from day-to-day activities, such as working or running errands.


Gehl



**No sidewalks -
only accessible
by car**

Play areas can also be difficult to get to.

Gehl

A photograph of a young boy with light brown hair, wearing a red t-shirt and dark blue pants, sitting on a grey couch. He is holding a large glass bowl of cereal and eating. To his left is a large, dark CRT television. On the couch next to the TV are several bags of snacks and a bowl of popcorn. A remote control lies on the couch in front of him. An orange circular graphic is overlaid on the image, containing text about childhood obesity.

**Childhood
obesity**
has more than
doubled in the
past 30 years.

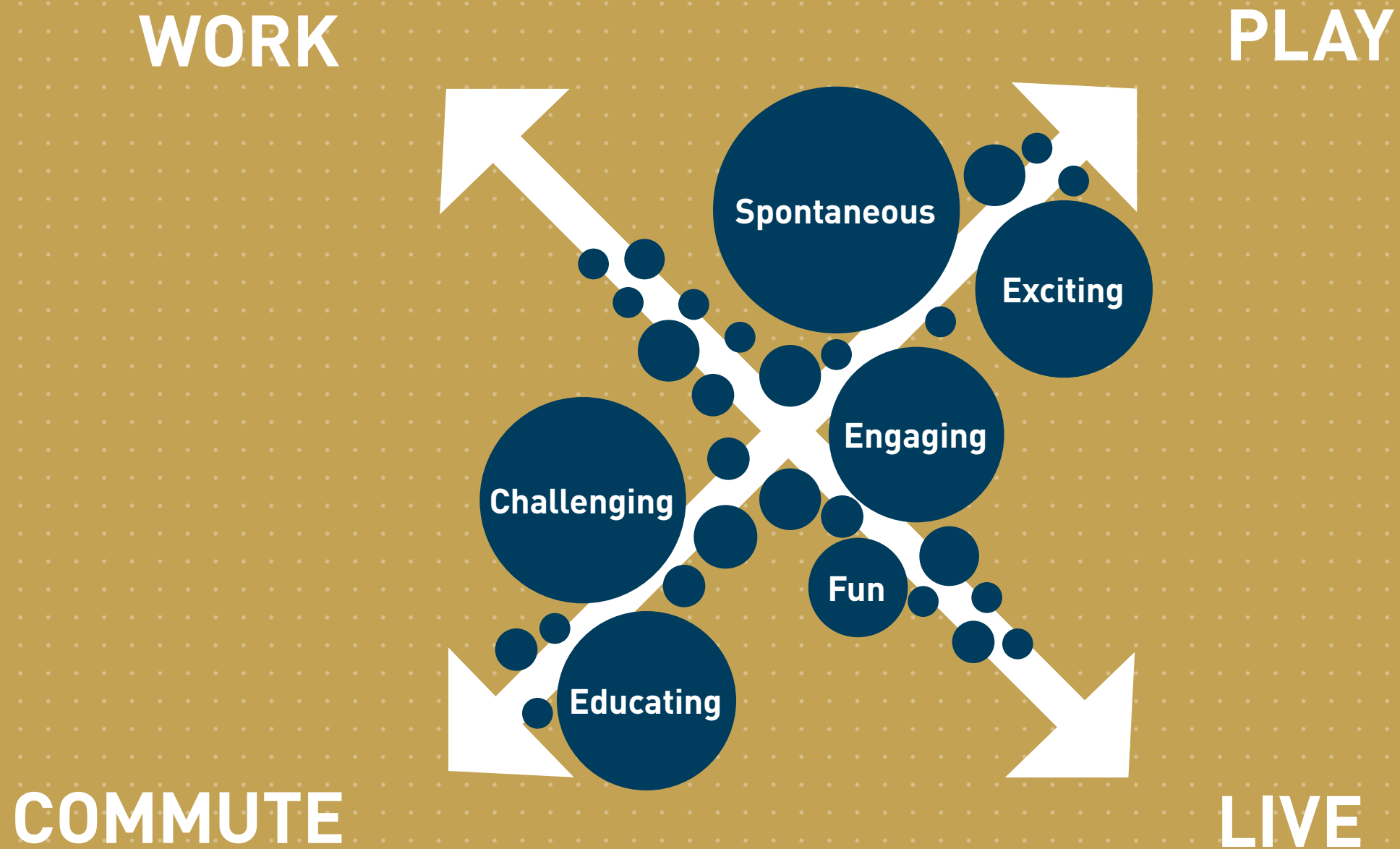
And today, invitations to stay inside are stronger than ever! (It's not just design.)

Gehl

“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)**

**The
Play Parklet**
Philadelphia

Roofmeadow, Studio
Ludo, University
City District



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)**



iPlay MIAMI
Streets
Miami

City of Miami

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)**



Before



After

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.**





Convenient

Inviting

Wondrous

Shared

Challenging

Unifying

How can play
everywhere be
the easy choice?

How can play everywhere become...

Gehl