

GUIDE TO **OUTDOOR LEARNING**

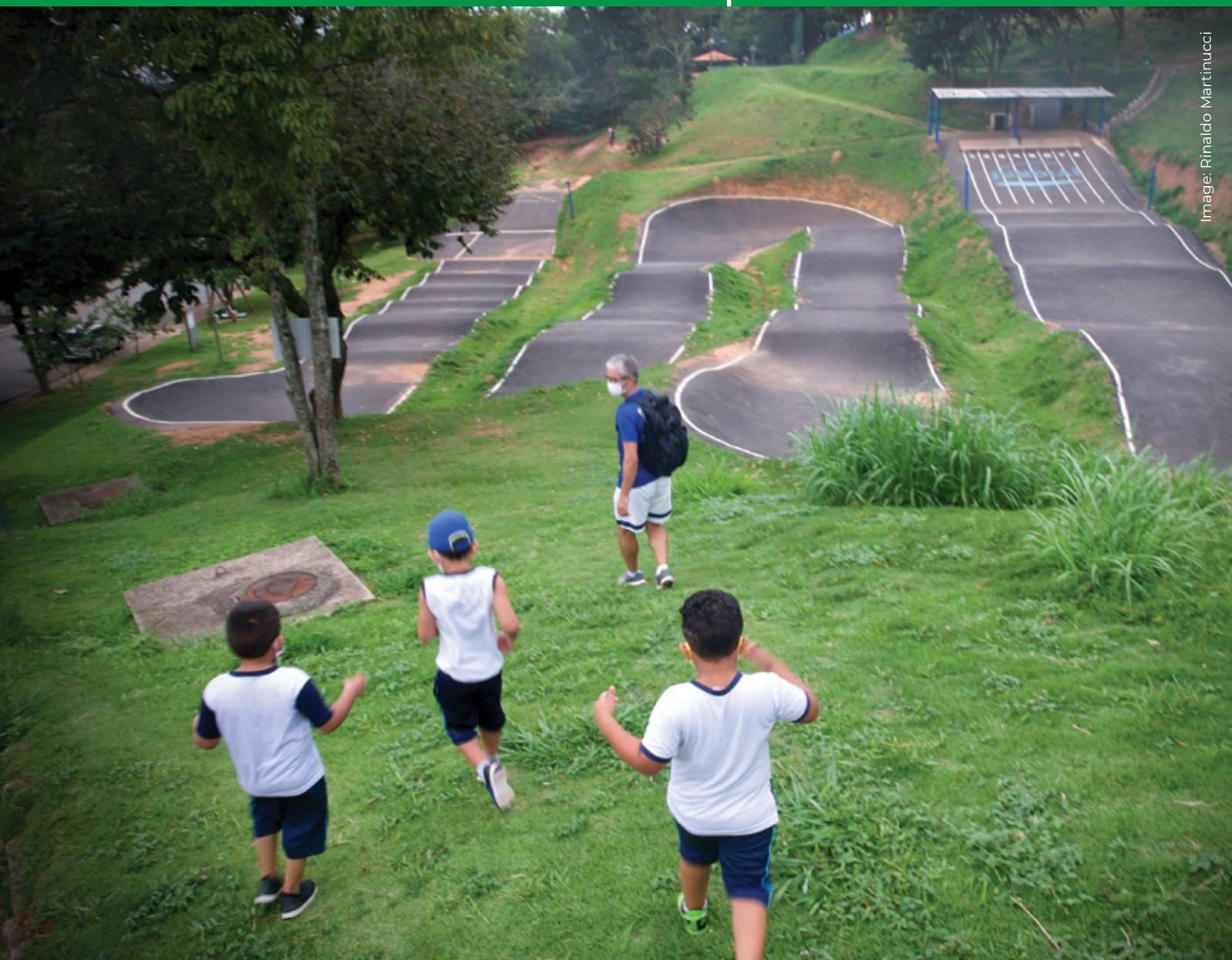


Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

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Thaís Oliveira Chita

Interns

Guilherme França Anastácio

Lucy Matos

Guide to Outdoor Learning in Jundiaí

Coordination

Laís Fleury

Publication Management

Guilherme Anastácio

Paula Mendonça

Copywriting

Guilherme Anastácio

Paula Mendonça

Angela Barbarulo

Thaís Dantas

Graphic Design

Anelise Stumpf

Graphic Design Review

William Nunes

Review and Preparation of Original Drafts

Regina Cury

Credit for improvements

Louise Freire

Guilherme Blauth

Designed by

Instituto Alana

Organized by

Programa Criança e Natureza

PARTNERSHIP

City Government of Jundiaí

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Any suggestions made in this document should be considered as additional activities, in compliance with the official recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO) and any recommendations issued by national health and education agencies.

Foreword



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Children at Escola Ágora, in Cotia, state of São Paulo, returning to in-person learning after flexing of the COVID-19 restrictions

It is our great pleasure to provide this **Guia Guide to Outdoor Learning**, put together by the team at our Children and Nature Program, to support city and state governments in the planned use of outdoor spaces for in-person learning. The initiative began with the educational advisory project developed for the city of Jundiaí, in 2020. The city has made endeavors towards encouraging outdoor learning for children, and this guide reflects the journey taken during the training offered to the city's education team, as well as the case studies performed at three schools part of the city's school network. The purpose of sharing this experience is to inspire and support other city governments and schools interested in using outdoor spaces as a sanitary measure upon return to in-person learning, within the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As schools were closed in 2020 to control the virus spread, we had the chance to monitor the efforts made by the education networks to ensure the right to learning for children and teens: online classes, WhatsApp groups, adjustments to school curricula, active pursuit of families and the tireless work of schools, and educators to respond to the situation, in the short term.

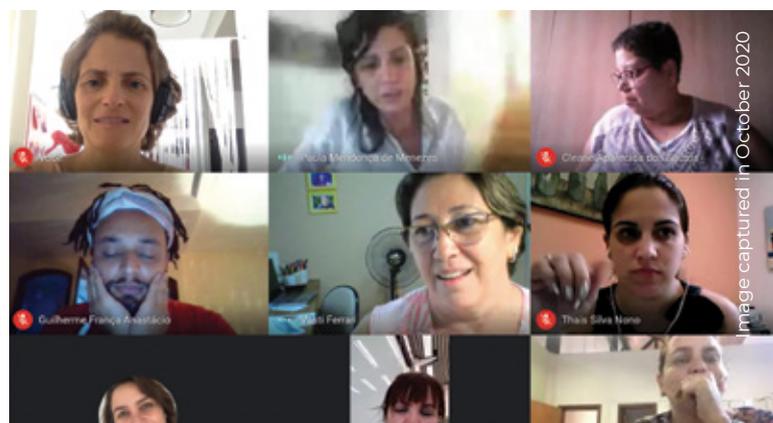
As schools were closed down, students, teachers and families had the chance to realize and value the role of education in children's everyday life. Though activities were implemented to ensure access to knowledge, it became clear that educational quality also comes from the relationships established, from socialization, ties and connections, and from the experience within the school environment. Schools play a key role in establishing such safety



net for children and teens. The challenge ahead is precisely how to plan the return to in-person learning, and to profit from this opportunity to ask ourselves: after all, to what type of school do we want to return?

Based on historical and international references, in August 2020, Children and Nature Program published a [suggestion document](#), with the support of several partners, including the National Association of Municipal Officials (Undime) and the Brazilian Pediatric Society (SBP), in order to include **outdoor learning in the planning protocols to reopen schools and restart in-person classes**. The use of outdoor spaces is a means to decrease the transmission risks of the coronavirus, whilst supporting the wellness and health of both educators and students alike.

Upon request of the Education Management Office of the City of Jundiaí, Instituto Alana's Children and Nature Program organized meetings to reflect on the feasibility of including this perspective in the school-reopening plan. Thanks to joint efforts of the Technical Team for Education and Task Force Children in the Cities, three studies were prepared based on the Pilot Projects of three schools, with different profiles, to meet the following criteria: different alternatives of outdoor spaces within the school building; providing alternatives both for early childhood and elementary



Online meeting of the Jundiaí Education Management Unit and Instituto Alana's Children and Nature Program

school education; proximity to available equipment/infrastructure and neighboring green areas. The purpose of such choice was to prospect experiences that could be scaled out across different scenarios seen in the schools of Jundiaí. This guide covers all three models, in order to support other local governments.

The purpose of this material is to offer an educational pathway to support the work of managers, directors and coordinators in the planned use of outdoor spaces in plans for school reopening, together with the school community. Our idea is to also extend possibilities in terms of educational practices, in connection with nature and with the landscape, to therefore promote healthier childhoods and teen years, as well as friendlier cities for children and the community as a whole.



GUIDELINES, LEGAL GROUNDS AND REFERENCES

Prior to further understanding the concept of the workshops and planning, it is important to understand how this measure is connected, on the one hand, to educational guidelines, and, on the other, to the guarantee of the fundamental rights of children.

When it comes to the guarantee of such rights, it is necessary to bear in mind that a healthy environment is deemed a fundamental right of all human beings. And what exactly is a fundamental right?

Nature as a fundamental right of children and youth

As its very name unveils, fundamental rights and guarantees are the rights and guarantees entitled to all human beings. As such, it is the set of guarantees formal-



One of the rights of children and youth is to be in nature. Children's World Park, in Jundiaí, State of São Paulo

ized in time, inherent to every person. As a result, such guarantees are generally associated to the definition of **human rights**. The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 therefore

reflects the terms set forth in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948**. The Brazilian Constitution includes a list of rights and guarantees deemed fundamental for the Brazilian legal system. Fundamental rights, as such, are the result of a **historical** development.

Several factors have determined such historical development, including world wars, the need to acknowledge the right to life – and not only to human life – and the understanding whereby it is necessary to protect the environment in order to ensure quality of life, both present and future. There are several studies that confirm that a healthy environment, including natural diversity and the protection against any form of pollution, is beneficial for human health. Protecting the environment therefore services the population as a whole. **The intrinsic connection between environment, health and quality of life renders the right to a healthy environment a fundamental right, which, by nature, is inalienable; in other words, it cannot be disregarded.**

Aside from being **inalienable**, such rights are **unwaivable** and **inviolable**. In other words, they may not be sold, exchanged, made available, transferred, or violated, under penalty of punishment by the State. Moreover, such rights are **imprescriptible**: they may be applied and enforced at any time. Likewise, they are **universal**, as they

indistinctively apply to all human beings. Finally, it is worth mentioning such rights are **indivisible**: they are a set of rights whereby any violation of one given right impacts the enjoyment of the other guarantees. **As such, for instance, any violation of the right to a healthy environment adversely affects several other rights.**

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 acknowledges such right, as the right to the environment is a fundamental right, according to its Article 225, whereby *“everyone is entitled to an ecologically balanced environment, which is a common use asset and is essential to a healthy quality of life, and both the Government and the community have the duty to defend and preserve it for present and future generations.”*¹

Everyone’s fundamental right to an ecologically balanced environment acknowledges the close relationship between environmental preservation and the guarantee of survival and of quality of life of children and youth: these groups are not only more vulnerable, in the short term, to the consequences of any lack of environmental

¹ Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil. 1988. Art. 225. <http://www.stf.jus.br/arquivo/cms/legislacaoConstituicao/anexo/CF.pdf>. Online access on February 11, 2021.





Nature is key for the full development of children and youth. Natural Park in Fortaleza, State of Ceará

protection, but are also more likely to have to deal with the long-term consequences thereof². After all, the deprivation of the right to grow in a healthy environment has severe consequences for children and youth, which add up throughout one's life; as several studies confirm, such consequences hinder childhood because of the negative effects on whole health, as is the case, for example, of the increased obesi-

² Terre des Hommes. Protecting Environmental Child Rights. 2013. Available [online] at: http://www.terredeshommes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/tdh_Environmental-Child-Rights_2012-11-final.pdf. Access on August 25, 2020.

ty and overweight seen in one out of three Brazilian children³.

The role played by the government is ever the more important with respect to the intersection between the guarantee of children's rights and environmental quality. There is no quality of life without environmental quality; both matters walk hand-in-hand and this is precisely the reason for which an ecologically balanced environment is a fundamental human right.

But what exactly does this mean, in relation to the care and protection of children and youth?

The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 determines that the **specific development condition of children and youth must be respected**, thereby ensuring their best interests and absolute priority of their fundamental rights. These are the terms of Article 227, which is clear when defining children and youth as subjects of specific rights, also acknowledging the need to make best efforts towards their protection.

³ Data from publication: Obesidade em crianças e adolescentes: uma responsabilidade compartilhada. Available [online] at: https://criancaenatureza.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/obesidade-criancas-adolescentes_.pdf> Access on: January 5, 2020.



The assertiveness of the expression **absolute priority**, set out in the aforementioned Article 227, is unparalleled in the Constitution, whereby the State must absolutely prioritize the guarantee of the rights of all children and youth. This means intersectoral government efforts must be made to ensure the rights, in addition to the shared responsibility between families, the State, and schools in the care and protection of children and youth.

It is precisely for this reason that Law 8,069/1990, the **Brazilian Declaration of Rights of Children and Youth** (also known by its acronym in Portuguese, **ECA**), includes several provisions whose purpose is to ensure the effectiveness of the constitutional rule, so that children and youth effectively **come first within the scope of public policies, budget and services**. It is understood, at the national level, that to the extent in which ECA ensures a set of fundamental rights, such as the right to life, dignity, health, and to food security, the environment must also be pro-



The city of Jundiaí puts the rights of children into practice with deep listening. Meeting of the Children's Committee at the Children's World Park, in Jundiaí, State of São Paulo



The area of the Amadeu Decome square, in São Paulo, State of São Paulo, is used for children to play.

tected. After all, these rights are ultimately tied to and dependent upon an ecologically balanced environment.

More specifically, it is worth mentioning Law 13,257/2016, which sets forth the **Early Childhood Framework, and acknowledges, in Article 5, environmental protection as a priority area for public policies**⁴. In so doing, it emphasizes the key role played by the balanced environment, since the beginning of life. **For this reason, it is necessary to encourage and provide spaces at schools and public areas that allow for well-being, for children to play, be in contact with the environment and exercise their creativity, as also set out in Article 17 of the law.** This should hold true across the entire city, in order to be accessible for every child, and for the right to the environment not to be mistakenly reduced to the condition of privilege.

It is absolutely clear that environmental quality, in a broader perspective, is among

⁴ Article 5. **Priority areas for early childhood public policies** include health, food and nutrition, early education, family and community experiences, social support for the child's family, culture, **as well as leisure and play, space and the environment**, in addition to the protection against any form of violence and consumption pressure, the prevention of accidents, and the implementation of measures to avoid premature expose to market communication."



Image: Joel Reichert

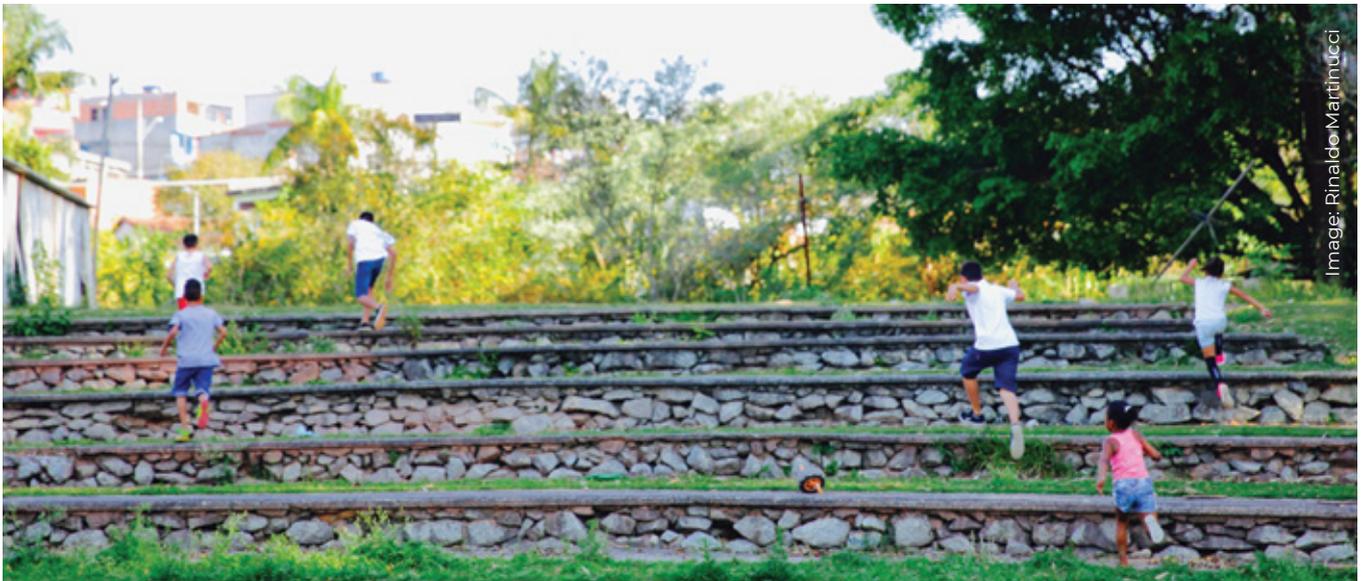
Children of the public school network of the city of Novo Hamburgo, State of Rio Grande do Sul, working on outdoor arts activities using simple material

the leading factors that determine how children will develop in the first years of their lives. The foregoing paragraphs show how the protection and promotion of the rights of children and youth are directly related to ensuring a healthy environment. As such, Articles 225 and 227 of the Brazilian Constitution allows for the understanding that when it comes to “unwalling” the classroom, and the relationship between children and nature, what is truly at play are the fundamental rights of the first phase of human life, which has effects both on the whole development of people, and on the organization of greener and friendlier cities.

Additionally, it is important for municipal school curricula not only to follow the standards of the “Common Core” Curriculum (also known by its acronym in Portuguese, BNCC), but to also be deemed dynamic in nature, in their design, to allow for constant updates based on historical interpretations of reality. It is also key to plan actions that are part of and related to such reality, thereby promoting a relevant learning process. Bringing together the use of outdoor spaces and public equipment and the process of return to in-person learning therefore becomes another aspect of the curriculum, to promote the whole development of children and youth, as well as to ensure greater

safety for students and educators, within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Including outdoor spaces based on the concept of **learning with – and in – nature** promotes the effective practice of **whole education**, covering the development of different human dimensions. It also allows for the formation of **learning landscape** within and outside schools, so that both schools and other public places are organized into a learning ecosystem, comprising one of the pillars of a child-friendly and learning-oriented city.

This means taking another step towards building a **city, which, as it is good for children, will also be good for everyone else.**



Children may use all public areas in a city and neighboring natural environments.
Carapicuíba, State of São Paulo

Using nature to support health and school reopening

Children had already perceived a certain sense of physical and social confinement, even prior to the pandemic and beginning of the quarantine period caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As most Brazilians live in urban areas, children's lifestyle has often been limited to indoor areas. On the one hand, there is a general feeling of decreased safety in public areas and the low number of and difficult access to [green areas in the cities](#) and, on the other hand, the concentration of routine and activities children experience in indoor environments. Plus the increased use of technology, which already translated into a scenario in which children had few opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, substantially reflecting on their whole and health development.

According to [researches and studies](#), the result of preventing children and youth from experiencing outdoors and natural environ-



Outdoor spaces are safer, as they decrease the risk of coronavirus transmission. Ágora School in Cotia, State of São Paulo

ments has effects on their health of development. Sedentary lifestyle, obesity, poor motor skills – lack of balance, agility and physical skills – and even myopia are among the reported issues.

In turn, several studies⁵ performed in recent years show that being in nature during childhood and youth prevents chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, and obesity, among others. It also furthers neuro-psychomotor development (NPMD), and offers mental well-being, balances vitamin D levels and decreases the number of medical office visits.

⁵ Studies and research conducted by Louise Chawla, reported in paper: Benefits of nature contact for children. Journal of Planning Literature. Sage Journals. 20/07/2015. 30(4): p. 433-452. Available [online] at: <<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0885412215595441>> Access on: January 5, 2020.



Contact with nature also helps foster creativity, initiative, self-confidence, choice, and decision-making and problem solving, which in turn contribute to improve psychomotor coordination and the development of multiple languages. Not to mention the benefits associated with social-emotional development, such as empathy, self-care, care for others and for the environment, in addition to the sense of belonging and interdependence.

The Children and Nature Program believes that in order to promote a richer childhood experience, in nature, takes organizing actions together with different community players. Families, education, health and social service agencies, as well as the environment and urban planning, may contribute towards a closer relationship with nature, promoting a healthier development for children in cities.

In other words, even before the pandemic, it was already necessary to take children outside the school environment, to promote the whole health of children and youth. The rise of the COVID-19 pandemic and the



Nature, when tied to the educational-learning process, brings forth several benefits for children and youth health. Ágora School, Cotia, State of São Paulo

resulting social isolation further strengthened the need for children to move their bodies and to enjoy the outdoors. Society, in general, was able to realize the importance of being outdoors. Moreover [medical researches](#) has already proven that outdoor spaces are safer for people to be at this point, as there is lesser risk of transmitting diseases.

This guide offers different perspectives on how nature and outdoor spaces benefit the welcoming back of students and teachers, upon return to school, as well as in the learning of curriculum content.

Welcoming educators and students



Image: Joel Reichert

Children of the public school network of Novo Hamburgo, State of Rio Grande do Sul, at an outdoors class, in partnership with local actors of the learning landscape.

One of the main aspects of planning the return to schools is the need for a **welcoming period, upon arrival**. Studies have confirmed the emotional and psychological impact of confinement and social isolation on children. If effects such as obesity, learning disorders and myopia were already seen in the **restriction on the outdoor circulation to which children used to be exposed**, there are now other mental health effects to be taken into account, in this scenario. Reduced physical activities, increased use of screens, the poor conditions in which basic income, food security and access to drinkable water needs were met, in addition to domestic violence are some of the factors that adversely affect students' whole health.

Experts believe that anxiety and depression are some of the symptoms that are likely to remain, in time, as a result of such toxic stress, according to a [study](#) on the

impacts of social isolation and the effects thereof on mental health and child development. Beatriz Portinari's [paper](#) also includes some of the factors that have been of greater concern for psychiatrists and psychologists: *"mental health issues are related not only to the fear of an invisible virus, but also to social distance. Several preliminary studies have identified the relationship between long quarantine periods and higher psychological anxiety, which may be expressed in the form of nightmares, night terrors, fear when leaving one's home, fear of having parents return to work, irritability, emotional hypersensitivity, apathy, nervousness, difficulty to focus and even a minor delay in the child's cognitive development."* The paper reports on data extracted from studies whereby massive traumas, as is the case in severe natural disasters, may slowly unveil and last for a certain period.



It is necessary to **plan moments to care for the emotional, physical and social issue of those returning to school**. Aside from cognitive losses, the curriculum should be reorganized to include a new educational protect linked to care. Among the general skills to be developed throughout basic education, the **“Common Core” Curriculum (BNCC)** emphasized the essential learning related to care.

SELF-CARE, CARE FOR OTHERS AND FOR THE WORLD

Knowing and appreciating oneself and taking care of one's physical and emotional health, understanding oneself within human diversity, and recognizing one's own emotions and those of others, with self-criticism and the ability to deal with such emotions (BNCC).

Whole learning, as one of the premises of the BNCC, supports the understanding of a teaching and learning process that takes into account all human dimensions and the need to break with educational projects based on fragmented and academic rea-

soning of knowledge, in order to rather be connected to the students' life and reality.

WHOLE LEARNING IN THE BNCC

In so doing, one acknowledges that Basic Education should be aimed at the preparation for and the development of global human development, implying the need to understand the complexity and non-linearity of such development, thereby breaking with reductionist perspectives that either privilege the intellectual (cognitive) dimension, or the affective dimension. Furthermore, it means to take on a plural, singular and whole perspective of the child, teenager, youth, and adult – deemed as subjects of learning – and promote education oriented towards their full support, acknowledgement and development, in their singularities and diversities. In addition, the school, as a place of learning and of inclusive democracy, must be furthered by the coercive practice of non-discrimination, no prejudice and respect for differences and diversities.

It is worth mentioning that it is necessary to seek balance in planning in-person lessons within the scope of activities focused on emotional support, body care and cognitive development. As such, it is important to consider that care and education should walk

hand-in-hand, and understand that health-related measures must be associated to the quality of the educational projects.

Nature, outdoor spaces and the learning landscape, in this scenario, are key partners in school education.



It is necessary to emphasize welcoming the entire school community. Novo Hamburgo, State of Rio Grande do Sul

Outdoor learning



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Adapted classrooms, to welcome children. Ágora School, State of São Paulo

“

And then I started to think about the classroom, both inside and out. It should be interactive; we should always go outside, or go indoors, depending on the activity to be performed, because this is how the world is. There are no doors to or on the world. Children need to understand they are part of a greater community, and that they need to respect this greater community.

”

Terezinha Fogaça, Principal of Ágora School

Outdoor learning is based on two important pillars: learning with nature, in other words, for nature itself to be the subject

or theme to be addressed outdoors, for instance, such as learning about a plant's physiology, photosynthesis and other topics, several of which are part of natural sciences; and the other pillar is learning in nature, in other words, topics and themes of other fields of knowledge may be taught outside the classroom. Nature, or outdoor spaces, in this case, is used as an environment to provide fresh air and well-being to study different contents.

The concept of **Unwalling the Classroom** is based on this idea of learning, as well as on the notion that children learn all the time, everywhere. In this sense, nature not only triggers the relationship of learning **with** and **in** a given environment, but also allows for the understanding that different environments may be part of places for education, such as museums, botanical gardens, etc. However, considering the



pandemic, the idea is to emphasize the **outdoors**.

Outdoor spaces have been used, in the past, to perform school activities during the outbreak of certain diseases. The first experience with [outdoor schools](#) took place in the outskirts of Berlin, in 1904, during the tuberculosis outbreak, as a measure to reduce the risk of transmitting the disease. Such practices were furthered after World War II in certain European countries, such as in England and France. This example [was raised within the context](#) of the current pandemic; after all, much like in the case of tuberculosis transmission, the coronavirus spreads mainly through a person's airways and contact with the eyes and nose. Holding outdoor lessons helped avoiding the concentration of people indoors, in order not to increase transmission.

Certain countries have taken into account the historic reference of outdoor schools for the current return to schools, literally **thinking outside the box**. This is the case of [Scotland](#) and [Denmark](#),



Outdoor school activities in Holland, in 1918



Children learning outdoors during the tuberculosis outbreak, in the early twentieth century

in Europe, which have implemented such measures especially for younger children, considering the **outdoor learning experiences** for preventive purposes, associated to other forms of healthcare measures, such as constant hand washing. Also, it is easier to control social distancing outdoors, developing activities and organizing meals and breaks in small groups.

In turn, a U.S. initiative has raised this discussion in the network led by [Green Schoolyards America](#). Simple measures, such as the use of benches and tables for picnics, benches and stumps made from logs, clipboards and whiteboards, are solutions to allow for outdoor learning. Below are references of outdoor classrooms:



Image: The National Covid-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative

Schoolyard used for teaching, at a U.S. school



Examples and references of temporary outdoor classrooms and materials used



Outdoor classroom at Golestan School, California, USA

Changes made:

- use of canvas as sun shades
- desks placed outside
- social distance
- use of masks



Materials used to adapt outdoor classrooms. California, USA

Changes made:

- use of canvas as sun shades
- straw bales
- social distance
- use of masks
- flip chart used as chalkboard



Image: The National Covid-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative

Temporary classroom at Golestan School, California, USA

Changes made:

- use of canvas as sun shades
- cut-down trees and logs used as stools e mesas
- flip chart used as chalkboard



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Use of natural materials to support learning. Ágora School in Cotia, State of São Paulo

Changes made:

- six-foot-apart seating
- use of natural materials as art and educational tools



Outdoor music class at Ágora School in Cotia, State of São Paulo

Changes made:

- use of a wide, shaded open area, for music class, which requires body and movement



Children at the wall-less classroom, at Ágora School in Cotia, State of São Paulo

Changes made:

- marked out group table to ensure social distance



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Nature used as classroom furniture. Ágora School in Cotia, State of São Paulo

Changes made:

- trees used for shade
- cut-down trees and logs used as stools



Image: The National Covid-19 Outdoor Learning Initiative

Temporary classroom comprised of outdoor group tables



Temporary classroom in Itacaré, State of Bahia



Furniture at a square in Jundiaí, State of São Paulo, which may be used as a temporary classroom

Examples and references of materials and input used

Benches and stools:



Sun shade:



Image: Take it Outside! Outdoor Learning at City Schools, Baltimore City Public Schools, EUA



CHILDREN'S PARKS



Gate of the Children's Parks designed by Mário de Andrade, spaces where children were free to play, sunbathe, play around a the pool, work on art activities, and even just to "hang out"

In addition to international experiences, Brazil also has the reference of Children's Parks designed by Mário de Andrade, when he worked for the City Government of São Paulo (1935-1938). Such parks were part of an outdoor education program, which emphasized free childhood to ensure the whole development of boys and girls. In practice, it became an outdoor education experience that even included health-care services at the parks.



Children had the chance to play and work on art activities outdoors

According to the recommendations made by [Undime](#) and [Consed](#), the decision to return to in-person learning must be planned in the form of partnerships, with intergroup commissions of different agencies, and health and social services.

Inclusion and dialogue with urban planning and environment offices are key to allow for the use of outdoor spaces to welcome children, upon return to school.

ÁGORA SCHOOL: REFERENCE IN THE USE OF OUTDOOR SPACES



Classroom design at Ágora School, in Cotia, State of São Paulo

Even before the pandemic, Ágora School, part of the private school network of Cotia, State of São Paulo, already was an important reference for the use of outdoor spaces. School principal Terezinha Fogaça took part in the training program conducted in Jundiaí, and described the benefits of using her school's outdoor spaces as follows:

“The indoor classroom is a known and given space, where rules are clearly established, and we somehow render pale the contents that are not outside, sunbathing, feeling the wind, close to the natural world. When you’re about to read a story to your students, and you say, ‘let’s go outside, and we’ll find a spot to read a story’, you automat-

ically bring life, movement, and feelings to the students’ experience. You reactivate curiosity, and establish a different type of bond between teachers and students. That alone sparks a shiny little light in the student’s mind. Something in the lines of ‘oh wow, I wonder what’s this story about.’ When you say, ‘now I’m going to read a story’ at the classroom, it seems that the repertoire of stories is more familiar. There are only benefits to working outside. Nature allows for the practice of observation, comparison and classification in a far more lively fashion, which has a lot to do with real and meaningful life.”

CURRICULUM AND EDUCATIONAL SPACE

Barriers are often part of any initial process of working with initiatives focused on unwalling childhood and promoting outdoor learning, some of which are general and others, specific to each educational space. Certain barriers are associated to the availability and quality of the spaces, whilst others have to do with social issues, such as law enforcement and economic inequality. However, **the most significant ones are cultural barriers**, as they relate to how educational practices are generally developed, and how the use of

such spaces is conceived. Making this change requires time and the study of references that help change perspectives on spaces outside the classroom. It is important to mention the concepts of **whole education and learning landscape**. The following text was adapted from publication "Currículo e educação integral na prática: referências para estados e municípios", of the Reference Center for Whole Education, and is aimed at providing elements to support such change.

FORMATION OF THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE

The learning landscape is comprised of learning communities, which, in turn, are made of actors both in and out of the school. The concept of learning community covers the idea of **inter-sectoral dialogue** on a "*specific educational and cultural project to educate oneself, one's children, youth, and adults, thanks to an endogenous,*

cooperative and solidary effort, based on the assessment not only of its needs, but, above all, of its strengths to overcome such needs"⁶. This means *empowering educational actors as training actors, including community practices at school, as well as bringing together curricular knowledge and the spaces within and outside schools.*

⁶ TORRES, R. M. A educação em função do desenvolvimento local e da aprendizagem. In: Muitos lugares para aprender. São Paulo: CENPEC/Fundação Itaú Social/UNICEF, 2003. Quoted in: FARIA, A. B. G. de. em O Pátio escolar como ter[ritó]rio [de passagem] entre a escola e a cidade. In: AZEVEDO, G. A. N.; RHEINGANTZ, P. A.; TÂNGARI, V. R. (Orgs). O lugar do pátio escolar no sistema de áreas livres: uso, forma e apropriação. Rio de Janeiro: FAPERJ, 2011. p. 39.

SABERES DE UM TERRITÓRIO

Ways of knowledge or wisdom are the ways of being and of doing of each learning landscape, and reflect the culture of a place and the context of which the community is part. Such ways of knowledge are socially built and present across all learning landscapes, even if they are not perceived as such. *Local ways of knowledge* lead to acknowledgement: realizing and conceiving practices of daily life, such as habits, values, memories and stories of those dwelling in the learning landscape.

From the perspective of Whole Education, these ways of knowledge operate as input, experiences, and contex-

tualization of the educational process developed by schools and local social organizations, such as museums and libraries, among others. When they receive educational purpose, local ways of knowledge contribute towards the development of meaningful and material learning processes for children and youth. Such experiences, perceptions and “spontaneous” conceptions, in other words, prior practices and ways of knowledge with which they arrive at the school, open up a meaningful context for learning to take place at the school, which allows for such experiences to be broadened, questioned and valued.



The space/environment is an ally in the children's whole development process.
Carapicuíba, State of São Paulo

FRAMEWORK OF THE LEARNING LANDSCAPE

The learning landscape is comprised of actors, spaces, dynamics and ways of knowledge, and becomes educational when its strengths are identified and start being used for educational purposes and to establish ties to the school curriculum.

1

ACTORS

People, groups, or institutions (public or private) that directly or indirectly act at a given place, changing its dynamics, generating demands or making changes.

2

SPACES

Natural environments (such as squares and green areas) institutions (inside and outside buildings), and the places (physical space with its own meaning and identity, which provides purpose and emotional and social value).

3

DYNAMICS

Natural and social processes that take place in the territory: climate events, festivities, rituals, in short, processes that define how the territory is used.

4

WAYS OF KNOWLEDGE/ SYMBOLIC ESTATE

Ways of being and doing of each learning landscape, which reflect the culture of a place and the context in which the community is included. Such ways of knowledge are recognized as part of the curricula, and are as important as scientific knowledge.

PART 2

PLANNING RETURN TO SCHOOL TOGETHER WITH OUTDOOR LEARNING

This part is dedicated to **support plans for school reopening, including outdoor spaces**, whether within or outside schools. It also offers suggestions on the capacity-building process, for school educators and technical teams.

Guidelines and training to create outdoor learning spaces



Children playing, painting, and learning outdoors, with ordinary materials, in Novo Hamburgo, State of Rio Grande do Sul

Image: Joel Reichert

“ *Innovation calls for a new perspective for the same situations. (...) building things together and constant listening are the key to innovation.* ”

Felipe Cunha, Sports Management Division

The purpose of the set of suggestions, below, is to structure, within the scope of each school unit, a plan for the use of outdoor spaces to welcome children and hold classes in the process of school reopening. School boards and management teams may guide such planning process, partner-



ing with and together with the support of the city government. If it makes sense, the plan should be used collectively, by different school units, for the shared use of the spaces available in the learning landscape, outside school buildings. In addition to the school units and the technical management team, such **strategic planning** may (and should) involve several actors of the school community, as well as those who are related to urban infrastructure and city management. The alternatives suggested below should be understood as ideas to guide such plan, but **each school should take into account the specific dynamics that must be respected, and make any necessary adjustments.**



Image: Cristina Maranhão

Members of the Training Course offered by the Children and Nature Program in São Paulo, State of São Paulo

MANAGEMENT OF THE CAPACITY-BUILDING PROCESS

These guidelines are divided into **three phases**, to support the development of the

Training, increasing awareness and broadening the repertoire

Study of spaces, actors and strengths to organize the plan

Ongoing assessment

Each one of these three phases is comprised of **parts** with essential dimensions, which must be taken into account, reflected on, and consolidated in the process of planning for the return to school, using green areas and the outdoors, both within and/or outside the school.

We have organized a **step by step** process to support government agents, school principals, and any other actor responsible for setting up this plan, to be used as reference for such collective building process, but which does not have to be limited to it, and may be further broadened. There should also be room for new suggestions or adjustments, according to the situation of the school in which it will be implemented.

The following chart illustrates the capacity-building process of this plan:

PLANNING PHASES

PHASE 1: Education, awareness and broadening repertoire	Introduction to case studies, experiences and examples of successful global initiatives
	Critical reading of document Planning for School Reopening
PHASE 2: Assessment on spaces, actors and key strengths to work on plans	Assessment on the key strengths of the school, community, and local environment
	Mapping out and assessment of routines and facilities
	Request changes to urban design of the school surroundings
	Adjustment to educational program and curricula
PHASE 3: Ongoing assessment	Ongoing assessment



Objectives:

- Study the theoretical foundations that support strategic planning for the use outdoor areas, upon school reopening
- Look into historical references and examples from other countries
- Build a safe learning environment with and for the community

PART A:**Introduction to case studies, experiences and examples of successful global initiatives**

The COVID-19 pandemic has the same effects on every country in the world. However, the strategies to reduce contamination risks, and especially to plan return to school have been different. As there has been no global standard to fight COVID-19, countries such



Article on reopening of schools outdoors and in contact with nature, in Scotland. The Guardian, 2020



Article on open-air classes in India. BBC, 2020

as China and other Southeast Asian countries have chosen models based on bureaucratic, rational and normative systems, having centralized access control and health protocols.

Considering different perspective, the strategies implemented in countries such as Holland, Scotland and India include outdoor learning and constant contact with nature as an educational method to change the scenario of social isolation reduction of the spread chains.

STEP BY STEP

- a. Meet with the teachers and other members of the school organization.
- b. Share this document. Suggest the possibility to present this material and discuss the theoretical foundations and guidelines for the pre-planning phase, and check whether there are any doubts. It is important to build a safe space for everyone to feel comfortable to ask questions, share uncertainties and other concerns.
- c. Break into groups and perform a quick search on examples of return to school in other countries, in articles, videos, features, etc.
- d. Organize a discussion on the methods used for return to school in other countries, cities, etc., based on the search results.

- e. Discuss the key role nature plays in the wellness of children and youth, and how it can be an ally in return to school. Draft a document on the **benefits and possibilities of use of the outdoors for school reopening, based on the shared ideas.**

REMINDER

There are several materials, tools, news and information on international and national events, all free of charge, available at the website of the Children and Nature Program, organized by categories. Check it out!

<https://criancaenatureza.org.br/volta-as-aulas/>.



TIP

Food for thought and discussion: screen time was already on the rise in past years, and the trend has further increased in the pandemic.

How can this reality be different? Having members of the school team share their personal and childhood stories may be a pathway to increase awareness on the use of the outdoors, on contact with nature, and on having the chance to be free and play out on the streets. These practices are ever the more rare nowadays, which has pushed children and youth to increased and unrestricted screen time.

For further information, watch Instituto Alana's workshop [Childhood in a Digital World](#).



PART B:

Critical reading of document “Planning for School Reopening: Research Takeaways on the Benefits of Nature in School Education”

As part of its initiative to advocate for greener and friendlier cities for all children, the Children and Nature Program published document [“Planning for School Reopening: Research Takeaways on the Benefits of Nature in School Education”](#). The document is supplementary to the official recommendations of the health and education authorities, and **highlights the role played by intersectoral actions in the return to school**, thereby increasing the range of alternatives for the protection of children.

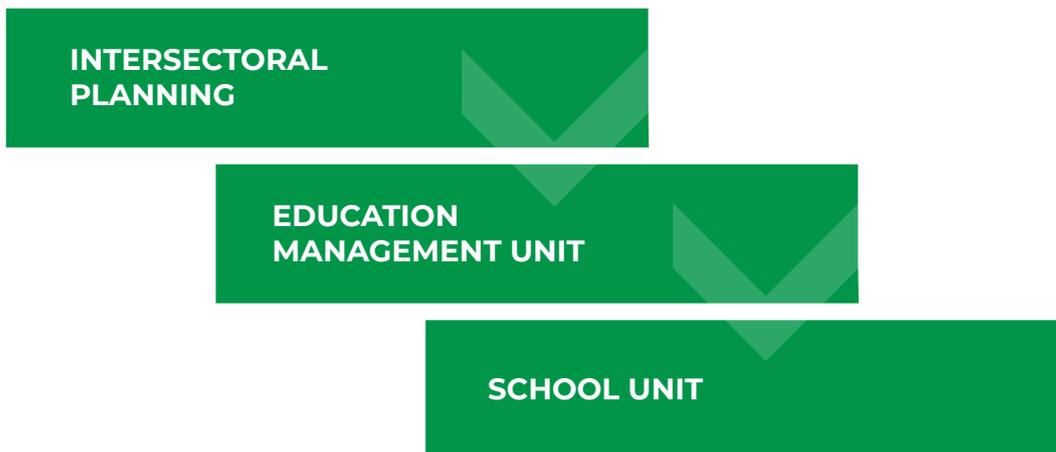
Below are the document’s practical suggestions.

- 1 __ Increase intersectoral collaboration in the planning, implementation and monitoring of return to school
- 2 __ Set up temporary classrooms
- 3 __ Use school yards and outdoor areas
- 4 __ Use simple and individual materials for outdoor teaching and learning
- 5 __ Prioritize the outdoors to welcome and help children settle in
- 6 __ Focus on self regulation and student collaboration
- 7 __ Create efficient channels for communication with families



The document provides further clarification on the foregoing items, available [here](#).

It is also worth mentioning that there are several **layers of planning**, and this guide is focused on the school community that will welcome back students, in the current scenario. It is necessary to bear in mind that good planning does not imply the education sector only, but rather requires **intersectoral efforts. This means understanding the environment, urban and city planning, traffic and transportation, as well as social and health services.** Infrastructure-oriented, macro planning is required. As for the schools, each principal needs to understand their reality, and adapt and organize planning according to the specific context.



The principles included in the document emphasize that outdoor learning, in contact with **nature, is a safe alternative in the pandemic.** Any planning for school reopening should take into account that the teaching and learning process should be **WITH** and **IN** nature.

PASSO A PASSO

- a. First, send document “[Planning for School Reopening: Research Takeaways on the Benefits of Nature in School Education](#)” to all school teachers and other members of the school community.
- b. Meet with the teachers and other members of the school organization. Make sure everyone has already read the document.
- c. Organize the key takeaways, thoughts and new suggestions made, in order to establish connections between the items suggested in the document and the school’s specificity and reality.
- d. Ask guidance questions, such as:
 - How will the planning take place? Who should be involved in the planning process?
 - What are the difficulties to be addressed when taking children outside?
 - How is it possible to adapt the curriculum and educational contents for classes to be held at the new environments?
 - What are the key strengths the school has to offer, to set up such activities?
 - Who are the actors the school could bring in to make this happen?

REMINDER

The idea here is to brainstorm ideas and suggestions after reading this document, searching for successful examples and reading the document “[Planning for School Reopening: Research Takeaways on the Benefits of Nature in School Education](#)”.

Everyone’s opinions, concerns, and uncertainties should be respected. School managers and principals should see these occasions as an opportunity to share and discuss ideas, and, above all, to welcome and support people in the process of dealing with all sorts of expectations.



- e. Define a **schedule** for meetings to organize the plan and other necessary tools (for example, attendance lists, minutes of the meetings, organization cards, etc.).

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The critical reading of this document is intended to make sure everyone is on the same page, when it comes to understanding that offering outdoor experiences for children and youth is effectively guaranteeing the fundamental rights set out in the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, as explained in the first part of this guide. **Nature promotes health, and we have to understand nature as an innovative technology, which, together with the teaching and learning process, may bring several benefits not only for the students, but also for educators and school teams.**

Moreover, the purpose of this first phase is to align and mobilize the school community on this matter, to ensure planning is a collective initiative. Brace yourselves: everything will be hands on, from now on!



Participants of one of the Course for Facilitators, organized by the Children and Nature Program in São Paulo, State of São Paulo

EDUCATION FOR EVERYONE

The commitment to the right to education, with respect to access, learning, and school permanence depends on an inclusive educational project. Inclusive education means the education in which each student's singularities are affirmed and valued. Additionally, focus should be on school culture, including curriculum, facilities and spaces, time, materials and resources, and interactions, in order to eliminate any obstacles that may prevent access to, participation of, and learning of students with disabilities, global developmental disorders (GDDs), and high-ability/gifted students. According to the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which has the status of a constitutional amendment in Brazil, disabilities are understood as long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, and not as a deficit, invalidity or disease. The disorder occurs in the interaction between people with disabilities and the obstacles faced, in terms of attitudes and the environment.

In this perspective, managing classrooms and tools, such as planning, allows for opportunities to be made available for students to benefit from the educational propositions. This means planning that makes room for materials, environments, activities and services designed, to the greatest extent possible, to cater to human diversity as a whole, without requiring any adaptation or specific project. Such understanding does not exclude the specific support for people with disabilities, when necessary. Encourage teachers to explore the multiple languages, resources, and assistive technologies to work on planning, taking into account what students already know and do, and what kind of support should be provided. It is worth mentioning that the collaboration of the people part of the Specialized Educational Services and of the families of students with disabilities is key in the pursuit of solutions to ensure their full school inclusion. Making sure this listening and debate actually happens can further improve any school planning.

Objectives:

- To provide new learning conditions upon return to school, prioritizing children's health and wellness
- To map out green and outdoor areas, within and outside schools, which may be a healthy alternative place for students to be
- To acknowledge the educational potential of the facilities, and to include the natural environment in the learning process
- To make adjustments to school routines, set up strategies to organize and schedule the use of the spaces within and outside schools, as a hybrid teaching strategy



Several spaces have educational potential. Multipurpose court in Carapicuíba, State of São Paulo

PART A:

Assessment on the key strengths of the school, community, and local environment



Children playing with a birdie, in contact with nature, in Carapicuíba, State of São Paulo

“

It's not just about moving the classroom elsewhere, it's about taking children from closed spaces to open spaces, with a different scenario. It's about a great opportunity to change this scenario as part of the learning processing, using the educational power of the natural environment and all the elements it has to offer as tools for the children's development.

”

Sylvia Angelini, Architect and Urban Planner - Urban Planning and Environment of Jundiaí



Mapping out the existing strengths and potential of the natural environment takes far more than the mere superficial visualization of such spaces. This perspective must always be based on rendering nature and outdoor areas allies in the process of returning to schools. And how can we set our minds to do so?

First of all, it requires understanding that this process should offer new learning conditions upon return to schools, prioritizing the children's life, health, and emotional, physical, and cognitive wellness. Next, it is necessary to map out the green and outdoor areas both within and outside school, which should be regarded as an alternative for the students' healthy permanence. Finally, it takes acknowledging the educational potential of the physical spaces, thereby including elements of the natural environment in the learning process.

Hence, looking at the school itself, and at its surrounding areas, at the natural environment, should also include questions such as: what could be different? What activities could be organized in this area? **It is a call to action, creativity, and adaptability. Ready?**

MAPPING OUT POTENTIAL SPACES:

- I. Map out green and outdoor areas within schools
- II. Map out outdoor public areas close to the schools
- III. Define the conditions for the use of such spaces, from a multidisciplinary approach

ABOUT GREEN AND OUTDOOR AREAS WITHIN SCHOOLS

Explore the schools itself, and find places such as gardens, vegetable gardens, playgrounds, and in-door and outdoor courts, in short, look for places where children can have the chance to be outside, and set up temporary classrooms within the school itself.



BEYOND SCHOOL WALLS

Available spaces that may be adapted, rebuilt and/or renovated in neighboring areas, in order to increase the different uses thereof, by the students, as temporary classrooms or for field studies. Prioritize places with a lot of shadow or close to sources of water, to allow for everyone to wash their hands.

SECRET SPOTS

In addition to easy-to-be-spotted public green areas, there are those that are yet to be found. Ex-amples of such secret spots include green areas within places such as churches, leisure clubs, etc. It is necessary to map out these areas and establish partnerships between the school and such or-ganizations, so that the children may use their green areas.



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Outdoor activities organized by the Sports and Education Management Units

STEP BY STEP

- a. Meet with the school team in order to map out the areas where the improvements will take place, both at and outside the school.
- b. As a group, map out the green and outdoor areas at the school, which may be used as “temporary classrooms”.
 - Mapping out these areas depends, to a certain extent, on the creative thinking skills of those imagining how the areas could be used. Be bold. There is potential even in small gardens or sidewalk gardens.
 - Rely on the school team’s experience to map out these places. Children oftentimes already occupy the school’s green areas, and all it takes is revitalization and minor adjustments to make the classrooms happen.
 - If the school team understands there are no green and outdoor areas that may be used to set up “temporary classrooms”, or even if it is interested in having the school reach out beyond its walls, move on to the next step, on how to map out neighboring green and outdoor areas.
- c. As a group, map out the public green areas close to the school, that may be used as “temporary classrooms” upon return to school.



TIP

At this point, it is key for you to have the materials to design the use of such spaces: cardboard paper, city maps, satellite images, and craft paper for the drawings and plans.



- Use this opportunity to map out both known green areas and secret spots. If possible, bring in the local actors to establish strategic partnerships for the improvement.
- c. Decide, as a group, which areas will be chosen to set up the temporary classrooms. Bear in mind that you have to define short, medium and long-term actions, depending on the required improvement.
- d. Questions that help plan and map out the areas: what areas can be used? Where they located? Does it require engaging with other local actors? Does it require any adjustments? How do you get there? Are streets safe? Which management units could improve the spaces and the streets, in order to get there?

REMINDER

Be bold, creative and suggest new ideas in relation to the public green areas. Ever thought about how any abandoned, weed-infested vacant lot, which has become a place for people to inadequately dispose of trash, near the school, could be renovated and turned into a temporary classroom? How fixing that particular area could not only benefit the learning process, but the life of the school community as a whole?



Storytelling activity organized at Children's World, in Jundiaí, thanks to the efforts of the Education and Culture Management Units



TIPS

- Write down all the group's ideas and decisions on the flip-chart and maps.
- Organize the information and present it to the community, families and students.
- If possible, hold such activities at outdoor areas or temporary classrooms, so that educators may enjoy this experience, which may also help trigger new ideas to be used.
- Planning meetings should always take place according to the safety protocols.



Image: Cristina Maranhão

Participants of one of the Course for Facilitators, organized by the Children and Nature Program in São Paulo, State of São Paulo



PART B:

Mapping out and assessment of routines and facilities

At this point, planning requires mapping out the school's routine and facilities. This is a key step, which should involve collective efforts.



Spaced out desks to accommodate new requirements at Ágora School, in Cotia, State of São Paulo

This phase requires further understanding the school routine:

- Where is the school gate located?
- How many classes/grades are there?
- How many students per class/grade?
- How many students do the school facilities accommodate?
- What are the school hours?
- What is the students' age range?
- Where will meals take place?
- At what time do students and the school team arrive and leave the school?
- List the available green and outdoor areas

This survey is key for everyone involved to be on the same page.

Once this assessment is made, the next step is to focus on the action plan. What could be different? What changes to the school surroundings could the school team itself make, to welcome back children and youth? This implies having a critical and creative perspective on the school routine, to look for feasible changes that also respect the health-care protocols and guidelines, as recommended by the government health and education agencies.

Questions to be included in the assessment:

- Is the school an early education school? Elementary school? Middle school? High school? Adult learning center?
- How many students are enrolled at the school?
- How many students are there, per class/grade?
- Do classes take place in the morning, afternoon, full-time, or at night?

- How many people are part of the school team? What are their working hours?

Based on the assessment, it is possible to suggest a new routine for the school:

- Will the team be divided according to scheduled times and duties?
- Will there be other shifts or schedules to work around students' needs? And how about the families?
- How many students will be allowed, per temporary classroom?
- Will there be any hybrid learning activities?
- What spaces could have their general/usual functions changed?

There is no strict guideline to be followed, during this phase. Each school has its own environment and specific needs. As such, the more diverse and the greater the number of people involved in this process, the greater the number of alternatives that will be available.

STEP BY STEP

- a. Meet with the school team in order to review the school's operational routine.
- b. Perform an assessment survey on how the school's "regular" routine used to be, before the COVID-19 pandemic. What were each person's roles and duties, and how was each space used? Make sure to include the data on the number of students, students per class/grade, etc.
- c. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic and the proposal of returning to school using nature, green areas and the outdoors, present the **suggested adjustments to the school routine**. For example,



decrease the number of students per class, organize the necessary schedule, make sure students use all areas equally, both in and outside the school, and establish guidelines for hybrid learning, considering both online and in-person activities.

- d. List the necessary educational and cleaning materials required (such as hand sanitizer and extra masks).
- e. List the personal material each student must bring (caps, sunscreen, face towel, water bottle, snack, etc.).
- f. Estimate the number of adults per student that will be necessary to supervise the field trips and define clear procedures for any such outings, or for classes outside the school environment.
- g. Create a document containing all the key takeaways, and report on how the situation was before, and how it should be considering the new routine, also defining which human resources and adjustments will be necessary for the changes to be made.



TIPS

- Tables, charts and drawings may be used as visual aids, to facilitate planning.
- Bear in mind that bringing in parents who are available to supervise activities outside the school can also strengthen the family-school partnership.



PART C:

Requesting changes to urban design in the school surroundings

At this point, our suggested exercise is to think about the community your school is part of, understand the local environment as having educational strength and potential, and consider the dynamics of the city.

What could be different with respect to the urban planning in the school surroundings, for children and youth, together with the school team, to have safer and effective access to green and outdoor areas?

The intersectoral approach is nothing other than the integration of actions and efforts made by different sectors in order to allow for a given project or improvement. In order to do so, it is necessary for all government agents, authorities and officials involved to be ready for such improvement. As informed in document [“Elements to Support the Establishment of Protocols to Return to School, from the Perspective of the Municipal Education Networks”](#), prepared by the Association of Municipal Directors and Managers (UNDIME), it is necessary for there to be intersectoral commissions at all government levels, in addition to municipal school commissions and within the scope of the school community as well. Document [“Planning for School Reopening”](#), drafted by the Children and Nature Program, also shares this understanding, and further broadens the notion of intersectoral actions to include the offices for architecture, urban planning and the environment, as well as the offices for culture, sports and leisure, as fundamental and key actors for return to school to ensure, protect and render effective the fundamental rights of children and youth, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Building a natural playground in the City of Fortaleza, State of Ceará

It is important to look at the local environment during this planning phase, to reflect on the issues that go beyond the scope of the offices of education and health. Which agency is responsible for traffic control? Which management unit is responsible for the conservation and renovation of degraded green areas? Which management unit is responsible for social services and the health and well-ness of children and families?

NOTE

The city of Jundiaí has set up a permanent task force, Children in the City, which brings in representatives from all management sectors and levels. Childhood-related public policies are discussed by the intersectoral group, in order to ensure collaboration and the common understanding of the different agencies, which helps to avoid any overlapping actions and also optimizes budget. Organizing intersectoral groups to reflect on childhood within the urban context is also one of the guidelines of the Early Childhood Framework, for the implementation of the Municipal and State Plans for Early Childhood. The fact that Jundiaí has already organized this group since 2018 was very helpful for outdoor areas to be used upon return to school. We strongly recommend other cities to follow the guidelines set out in the Framework, as well as the UNDIME guidelines, mentioned above.

“The public places that are closest to the schools are sidewalks and the streets themselves. We can look at the sidewalks and streets as an opportunity to bring people closer to nature. (...) [In a project organized] together with the Children in the City task force, we actually started designing bigger zebra crossings. Such process was implemented using vases, paintings on the grounds, by planting trees on the street, and it actually turned into a mini-square, right in front of the school. It is therefore necessary to take into account the streets and sidewalks themselves, as a possibility of looking into other potential improvements, to welcome student back to school”.

Felipe Cunha
Sports Management Division

PSTEP BY STEP

- a. Meet with the school team in order to plan dynamics and activities beyond the school walls.
- b. Organize the suggestions for improvements in urban design in the school surroundings.
- c. Send the proposed changes to the municipal commissions responsible for COVID-19 management.



Outdoor activities organized by the Sports and Education Management Units, in Junidiaí

PART D:

Educational and curricular adjustment



I believe this type of planning is truly paradigm-shifting. (...) As for teachers, classes have traditionally been taught within the classroom environment, using desks and boards, so this change in paradigm actually has to do with their own personal journeys, too.



Cleane Santos, Supervisor of the Education Management Unit of Jundiaí

One of the key phases of the plan refers to the educational and curricular adjustments to be made, so as to ensure that outdoor learning covers all existing aspects of the conception of whole education. This planning phase also calls for the detailed assessment of the relationship with nature included in the BNCC, and the possibilities of further development them using the hybrid teaching approach. There are several skills and fields of interaction in the curricula, which are directly tied to nature.

Observation, contemplation and the direct study of nature are one of the pillars of the entire learning cycle in basic education. Moreover, as mentioned, the outdoors can also be an environment to study different fields of knowledge, and this change of scene may be beneficial for several contents taught.

For this reason, it is necessary to understand that this process of taking children outside brings, in itself, the need to shift paradigms inherent in our behavior, especially with respect to the understanding that the act of teaching-learning should take place within the classroom only, using a board and a desk.



It takes being creative at this point, for the learning activities to be effective, and also to understand that **nature is not a source of dispersion, but rather of benefits for the child, as a whole.**



Education is guidance. We should use art and good examples as sources of inspiration, and we should be bold. There's a lot of room to be bold, to use natural elements to work on collages, on geometry, and even in math, for counting and so on. I am sure that if you choose this pathway, if you surprise your students, if you invite your students to leave the classroom and look outside, you will have several good surprises ahead of you.



Terezinha Fogaça, Principal of the Ágora

Adjusting the school curriculum requires creativity: how will you look at the educational proposal and find the several possibilities of teaching the same content, amidst a green, lively, and outdoor scenario?

STEP BY STEP

- a. Meet with the teachers in order to think possible adjustments to be made to the school curricula.
- b. Suggest unwalling children and youth, using news features, visual aids and other support material.



- c. Ask each teacher to list at least three possibilities of educational content that may be taught outside. And three contents they consider impossible to each outside the classroom.
- d. Organize all the suggestions and opinions and reflect, as a group, on each issue raised, in order to find key strengths and new perspectives.
- e. Based on such exchanges, ask the educators to organize lesson plans with at least 3 outdoor activities, in contact with nature.
- f. Use all contributions to draft a general document to guide educators and families.



Image: Joel Reichert

Students welcomed at one of the municipal schools of Novo Hamburgo, State of Rio Grande do Sul

REMINDER

There are specific guidelines that must be complied with and implemented for each phase of basic education. Hence, in early childhood, the work of integrating the development of learning objectives and fields of interaction to the outdoor areas and nature, will require different efforts with respect to elementary school education, which is divided into fields of knowledge.

REMINDER

Such dynamic sharing is, above all, a moment of welcome. It is an opportunity to think collectively. Make sure everyone's opinion is respected and that every teacher has the opportunity to speak, and accept any uncertainties and concerns that may arise. The keywords here are being bold and creative, for nature and outdoor areas to become allies in the process of returning to school.



ONGOING ASSESSMENT AND MONITORING OF THE ACTIVITIES

The assessment process is key within the scope of public policies, and its use has become increasingly necessary. Turning such often-peculiar tools into allies, in the teaching system, may bring material contributions to establish and ensure the continuity of such improvements. During planning, the managers and principals of the schools responsible for the school teams should create means to allow for data collection, which can then be duly assessed. Such instruments include reports to be prepared at a certain frequency, attendance control spreadsheets, organization of issues faced, key learnings and takeaways, identification of issues with the families, and deep listening to and substantial understanding of children, etc.

When **nature and the outdoors are turned into allies in the process of the safe return to school**, there are certain paths that may be taken to set up the data collection process, also taking the role of intersectoral actions, in this regard.



Tapes used to mark spaces at Agora School in Cotia, state of São Paulo, according to social distancing protocols

- **Carefully track and account for the confirmed and suspected COVID-19 cases.**

It is key to set up mechanisms to allow for the identification of confirmed and suspected cases, including by measuring temperature from time to time, and by establishing communication channels with the families, so that the cases of direct or indirect contact are informed to the school community as fast as possible. Collecting such data is key to establish alternatives and change actions, with respect to the plan.

Such data tracking and collection is efficiently performed by the healthcare authorities, responsible for counting the city population. Collecting this type of data may support our objective, as the evidence can be used to show the effects and impacts on the health of children learning in nature.

- **Follow up the benefits and difficulties part of the outdoor learning process.**

As mentioned above, taking kids “outside” breaks the paradigm vis-à-vis the teaching-learning process. Measuring such learning is a challenge for which there is no “easy recipe” to be followed – the school staff has to work on this skill. Recording and monitoring the understanding of different contents, identifying which issues each student face, on a multidimensional approach, and the issues faced by the class/grade, can support each teacher’s decision-making process with respect to the content to be taught.

LEMBREM-SE

If any students or family members are contaminated, or face any contamination risks, measures should be taken and restrictions should be established based on the safety guidelines and protocols determined by the local authorities.

Such process can be measured by drafting qualitative reports, from time to time, both by each teacher and in groups, meetings and discussions. Quantitative reports can also be used, in order to look at attendance, participation in classes, grades and content learned, even if such method does not represent all issues addressed.

It is worth mentioning that assessing the problems is key to support the decision-making process, but it is also necessary to identify and organize the benefits stemming from outdoor learning, for children and youth.



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Children digging, which triggers a new feeling in relation to the natural world, at Ágora School, in Co-tia, State of São Paulo

- **Collect data on children's perspectives**

Children and youth have a lot to share with us. As such, we must put deep listening into practice, to actually listen to them. We can do so by using forms or quick interviews, to be recorded and assessed, in the future, and taken into account in the decision-making process. There are several possibilities in terms of using playful methods that explore different languages and are able to bring out such information. Use the deep listening potential to engage with the children, and include, as material information, any such information obtained to design any projects and improvements.

These are only a few of the examples of data collection, which, once analyzed, become key indicators not only for school management purposes, but for the entire education system. We are aware that managing school environments covers several complexities, specificities and inequalities, which are related to the journey of the school community as a whole. Managers should duly map out such difficulties, using scientific evidence



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Children playing outdoors, in contact with nature, at Ágora School, in Cotia, State of São Paulo



PILOT PROJECTS AND REFERENCES TO CREATE AND USE OUTDOOR SPACES

This part focuses on certain pilot projects developed based on the training offered to the Jundiaí team. Three schools were chosen in different situations, to be used as case studies both for indoor and outdoor improvements, in and outside classrooms.

IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS were prepared based on the workshops, meetings and discussions, according to the same planning script presented above.

1° PHASE

EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND BROADENING REPERTOIRE

- **Part A:** introduction to case studies, experiences and examples of successful global initiatives
- **Part B:** critical reading of document “Planning for School Re-opening: Research Take-aways on the Benefits of Nature in School Education”



- **Part A:** assessment on the key strengths of the school, community, and local environment
- **Part B:** mapping out and assessment of routines and facilities
- **Part C:** requesting changes to urban design in the school surroundings
- **Part D:** pedagogical and curricular adaptation

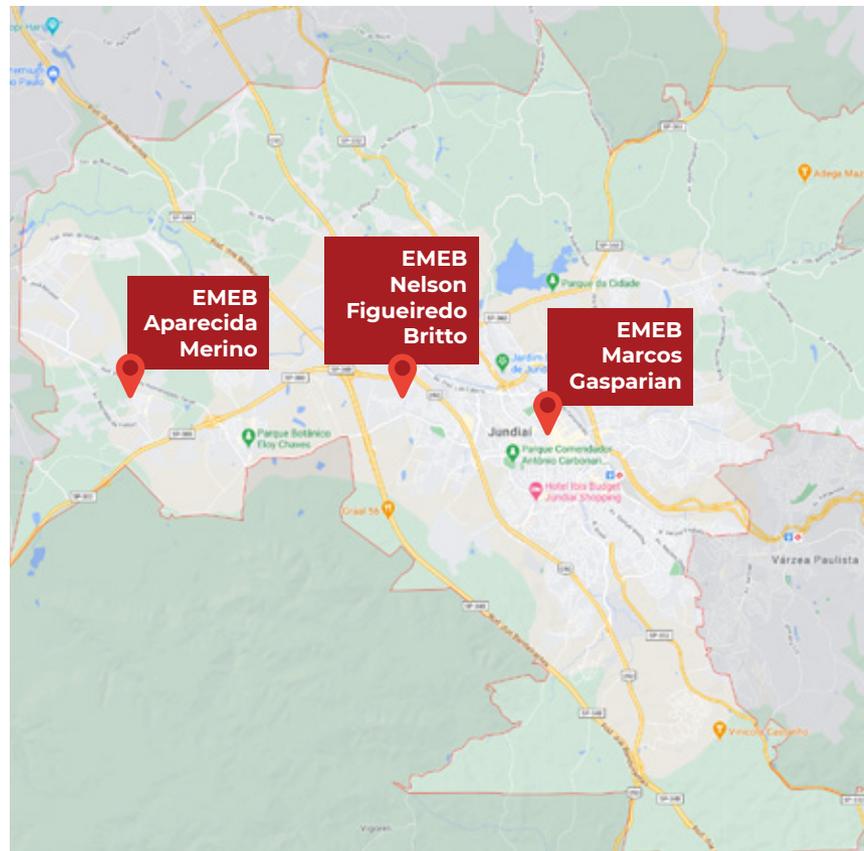
Pilot Projects

The Education Management Unit chose each one of the schools together with Jundiaí's Children in the City Task Force, considering issues such as:

- size and number of green areas at the school
- whether the school is located in areas deemed central areas, or farther away/peripheral areas
- whether there are early childhood and/or elementary school students

Schools chosen:

- EMEB Aparecida Merino
- EMEB Marcos Gasparian
- EMEB Nelson Figueiredo Britto



Geographic location of the three assessed schools.
Image: Google Maps. Image captured in January 2021

The purpose of this exercise was to create inspiring examples for principals and educational planners to work on their own plans, covering the specificities and needs of each and every school community.

As such, these Pilot Projects are not understood as a recipe to be followed by each school. Even if there are details that may certainly be replicated in the examples below, the idea is to further expand repertoire, to render easier the planning exercise.

Case study 1: EMEB Aparecida Merino Elias



Yard and multipurpose court at EMEB Aparecida Merino Elias in Jundiaí, State of São Paulo

ASSESSMENT

Basic Education Municipal School (EMEB) Aparecida Merino Elias is located in the district of Medeiros and has both early childhood and elementary school students. As the school has a lot of green areas – including vegetable gardens, woodland, and two courts – the team considered it would be best to make improvements at the school itself.

SCHOOL DATA AND PROFILE

- Total number of students enrolled: 640
- Morning, afternoon and full-day
- Age group serviced:
 - 4 and 5-year-olds (G4 and G5) – 9 classes of about 25 students each
 - 6 to 10-year-olds (1st to 5th grade) – 17 classes of about 30 students each
 - Two full-day classes – 30 students each



SITE



Geographic location of the school



Mapping out of neighboring public green areas

MAPPING OUT POTENTIAL SPACES

1. Study of outdoor spaces at the school



Woodland

Image: Carla Bolognizi





Image: Carla Bologhezi

Covered and open-air courts

Tent located at the front part of the school



Image: Carla Bologhezi

Community garden



Image: Carla Bologhezi



IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- use of existing facilities
- tables for flexible use: for snacks and activities
- create an environment for group activities to be developed, using group tables
- social distance and use of masks

After



Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- use of areas where there is shadow
- logs used as benches and stools
- bamboo pyramid
- log climbing
- picnic towels used for children to sit on
- materials such as flip charts and clipboards

After



Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- use of sunny area
- bamboo and canvas structure, for shade
- use of tables
- logs used as benches and stools
- board and clipboard



Case study 2: EMEB Marcos Gasparian



The school and a nearby square

ASSESSMENT

Basic Education Municipal School (EMEB) Marcos Gasparian is located downtown, and its school community is highly engaged. They often organize several activities outside the school, and even count on the support of the municipal police. The assessment revealed that both indoor areas at the school and the square located 50 meters away from the school could be used as temporary classrooms, thereby increasing the ability to welcome back students, and to ensure everyone's health, safety and wellness.

SCHOOL DATA AND PROFILE

- Total number of students enrolled: 392
- Morning and afternoon
- Age group serviced:
6 to 10-year-olds (1st to 5th grade)
222 students in the morning and
170 students in the afternoon

SITE



Geographic location of the school



Mapping out of neighboring public green areas

PING OUT POTENTIAL SPACES

There are certain outdoor areas at the school that may be used, and it is also possible to include potential uses for the square near the school.

1. Study of outdoor spaces at the school



Gate and front view of the school



Schoolyard



Court



Shadow provided by the mango tree found at the yard



2. Study of outdoor spaces outside the school

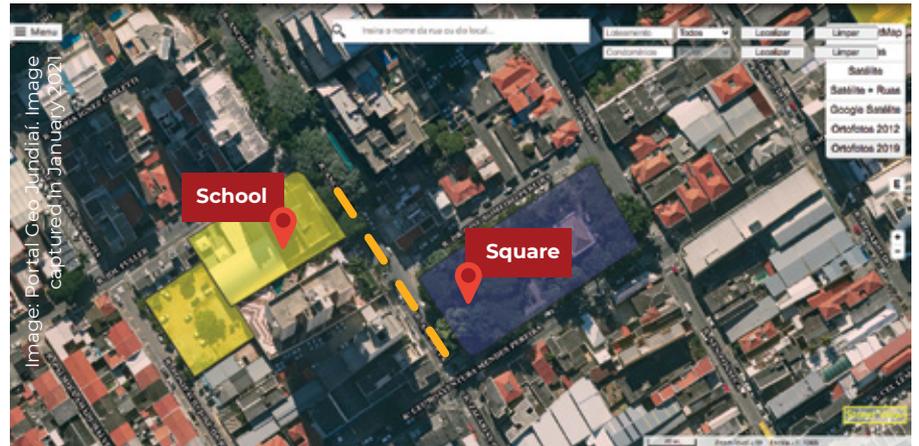


Image: Portal Geo Jundiaí. Image captured in January 2021

Mapping out of neighboring public green areas



Image: Portal Geo Jundiaí. Image captured in January 2021

View of the route from the school to the nearest square



Square on the school's street, to be used as a temporary classroom



Image: Carla Bolognezi



Image: Carla Bolognezi



IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

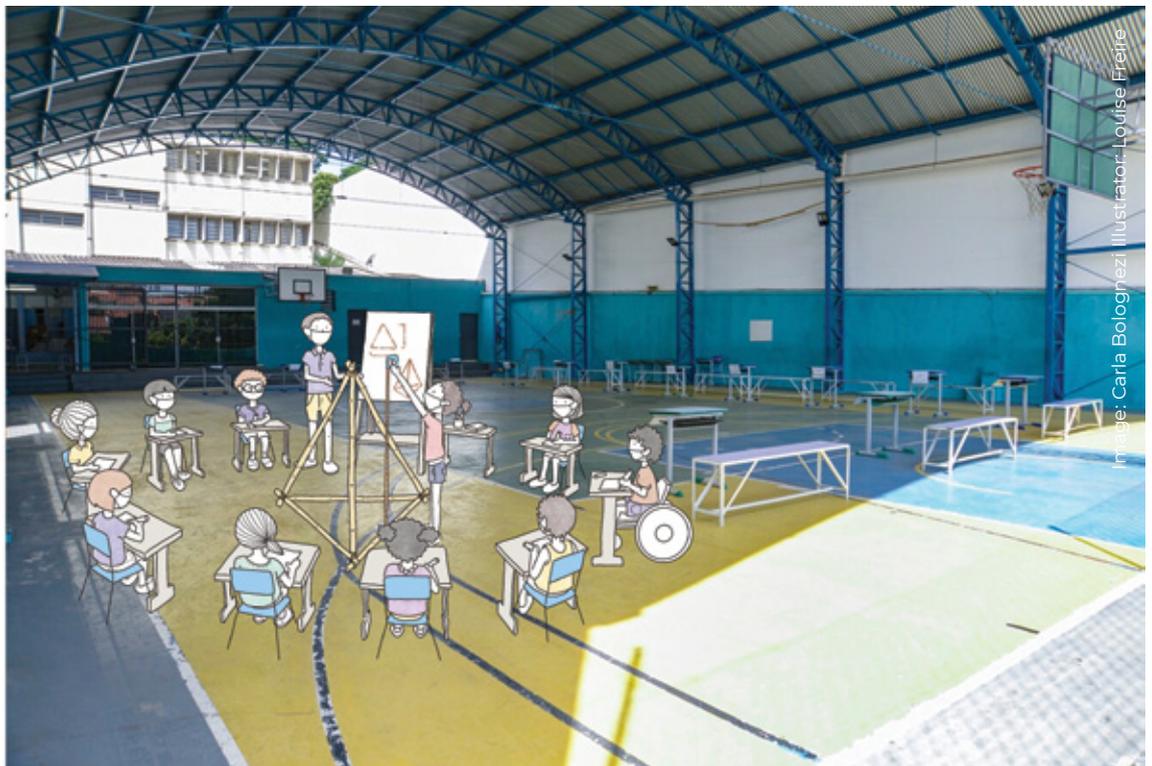
Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- use of school desks (1.5m apart from each other)
- flip chart
- bamboo used to study geometry

After



Before



Image: Carla Bolognizi

Description of the suggested improvements:

- use of school desks (1.5m apart from each other)
- board
- climbing wall
- flower bed

After



Image: Carla Bolognizi | Illustration: Louise Frelie



Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- logs used as stools and benches
- flip chart used as chalkboard
- clipboard
- physical barrier to protect the children (from the street)
- speed reduction sign (30 km) on road and on poles, indicating school crossing

After



Case study 3: EMEB Nelson Álvaro Figueiredo Britto



Front and entrance of the EMEB Prof. Nelson Álvaro Ferreira Britto

ASSESSMENT

Basic Education Municipal School (EMEB) Professor Nelson Álvaro Figueiredo Britto is located in the district of Jardim Guanabara. Despite its limited space, the school community is very engaged, which makes it easier to mobilize people to make the improvements. Two improvements were determined for this specific school, to be planned during different time periods, resulting from the mobilization and investments needs required:

- short term: indoor open area
- mid term: green area

SCHOOL DATA AND PROFILE

- Total number of students enrolled: 104
- Age group serviced:
 - 4 and 5-year-olds (G4 and G5)
 - Morning: Group 4 - 24 students and Group 5 - 28 students / Total 52 students
 - Afternoon: Group 4 - 24 students and Group 5 - 28 students / Total 52 students

SITE



Mapping out of neighboring public green areas

MAPPING OUT POTENTIAL SPACES

1. Study outdoor areas at the school



Front Gate of EMEB Nelson
Álvaro Figueiredo Britto



Outdoor playground



Cafeteria



Outdoor corridor





Playground



Outdoor area
at the school



IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- wooden boxes used as stools and benches, as part of the temporary classrooms
- small flower beds/gardens
- walls used for written or art interventions

After



Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- make sure there are plants in the vases or flower beds, for shadow or as gardens
- walls painted with drawings of the children
- climbing wall
- sand box
- logs and cut-down trees used as benches and stools, to be used in temporary classrooms

After



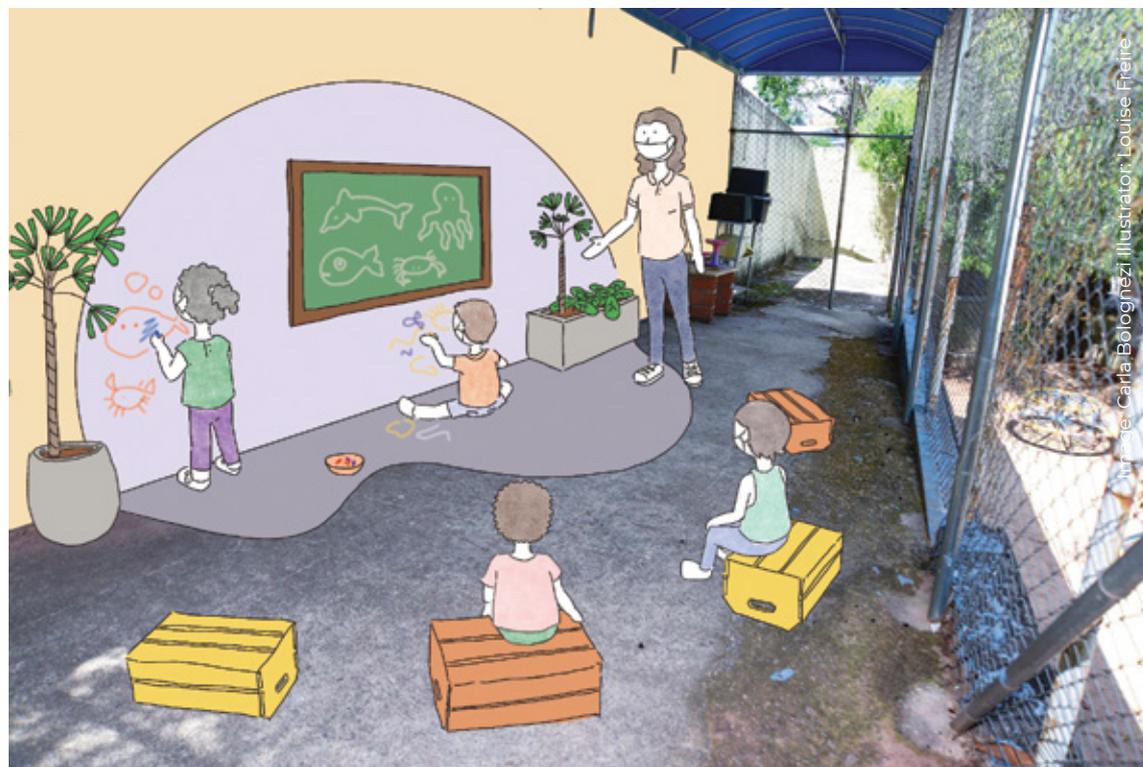
Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- make sure there are plants in the vases
- walls used for written or art interventions
- wall used as a board
- boxes used as benches and stools for the students
- plastic tables removed

After



MAPPING OUT POTENTIAL SPACES

1. Study of outdoor spaces outside the school

View of the route from the school to the nearest green area



Assessment of the streets to get there:

There are issues in the route the children must take in order to get to the closest green area, such as:

- sidewalk is too narrow, uneven, and there is no accessibility
- visual pollution, dirty walls
- no shadow or trees on the route
- no elements such as trash cans, benches, flower beds

- no playful elements and drawings on the ground, to make the route more attractive

View of the route from the school to the nearest green area



IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- playful elements on the sidewalks and pathway to the school, including road markings to play games
- benches along the way, for rest
- trees planted to ensure there is shadow on the way

After



- graffiti or painting on the walls, at the children's height
- speed reduction sign (30 km) on road and on poles, indicating school crossing
- road markings and posts installed by the sidewalk, as warnings for drivers

Before



Description of the suggested improvements:

- space conceived based on the principles of a natural park
- trees planted on the sidewalk, for shade
- benches made from logs
- hedges used to limit spaces and for safety

After



- yellow road surface marking to increase attention
- bamboo pergola for shade, and to shelter the children
- flower beds and sand boxes for children to play in
- speed reduction sign (30 km) on poles, indicating school crossing

HAVE YOU COVERED EVERYTHING?

Use this checklist to see if there are any key elements missing

MAPPING OUT THE ROUTINE AND POTENTIAL SPACES:

- ❑ What outdoor and green areas are available at the schools? Near the schools?
- ❑ Are there any public facilities (courts, museums, etc.)?
- ❑ How many students are there?
- ❑ How many groups will be allowed to use the space? How many students per group?
- ❑ Will there be scheduled/specific times? How about hybrid learning methods?
- ❑ Which materials will be helpful for outdoor learning (clipboards, flip charts, etc.)?
- ❑ Will there be any teacher training? How will it work?



Image: Rinaldo Martinucci

Student at a wall-less classroom at Ágora School, in Cotia, state of São Paulo, cleaning their desk

ADAPTING THE SPACE AND PLANNING THE IMPROVEMENTS

(good places: access to areas with shade and shelter, water and close to a bathroom)

- How will you prepare the public spaces and equipment to welcome the children?
- Which public equipment is available for use? How will this use take place?
- Where can we set up temporary classrooms?
- Will we have access to logs and cut-down trees to build the temporary classrooms?
What else is necessary to adapt the space?

TAKING CHILDREN OUTDOORS

- Which teams and equipment will be involved to take students from school to the temporary classroom?
- Will families or volunteers be involved?
- What are the necessary health practices and care?
- How will children be taken to these spaces?
- How will food be organized?
- How is it possible to ensure safety in the process?

INDIVIDUAL HEALTHCARE AND COMMUNICATING WITH FAMILIES

- How can families help?
Which health practices should be followed?
 - Water
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Mask
 - Individual water bottle
 - Individual towel



Films and videos

O começo da vida 2: lá fora (The beginning of life 2: outside) - feature film

<<https://ocomecodavida2.com.br/>>

Institutional video: Children and Nature program, Instituto Alana

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GeRQKzMmC-M&feature=emb_title&ab_channel=Alana>

Quando o risco vale a pena (When it is worth the risk)

<<https://criancaenatureza.org.br/acervo/quando-o-risco-vale-pena/>>

Verdejando o aprender (Towards greener learning)

<<https://criancaenatureza.org.br/acervo/verdejan-do-o-aprender/>>

A natureza como espaço de acolhimento (Nature as a welcoming space)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVdt7U_Vlso&feature=youtu.be>

Encontro de aprendizes na grande aventura de viver (Meeting of apprentices in the great adventure of being)

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YZF7CaVYEM&feature=youtu.be>>

Desemparedar as crianças na escola (Unwalling children in school)

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CB1qg-43k05A&feature=youtu.be>>

Grandtully Primary School

<<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1GnF6sWgrYs-a6R-UeTx7bZGdz-5lWuDi5/view?usp=sharing>>

Publications and websites

Desemparedamento da infância a escola como lugar de encontro com a natureza (Unwalling children and school as a meeting point with nature)

<https://criancaenatureza.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Desemparedamento_infancia.pdf>

Planejando a reabertura das escolas: a contribuição das pesquisas sobre os benefícios da natureza na educação escolar (Planning for school reopening: research contributions on the benefits of nature in school education)

<<https://criancaenatureza.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Planejando-a-reabertura-das-escolas.pdf>>

O papel da natureza no planejamento da reabertura das escolas (Nature's role in planning for school reopening)

<<https://criancaenatureza.org.br/volta-as-aulas/>>

Guia para pequenos criadores de TiNis (TiNis guide for little creatives)

<<http://www.tinis.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/GuiaCOLORIDO.pdf>>

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Realização



Uma iniciativa



Parceria

