

We all have a role to play — what's yours?

Depending on where you sit in the life cycle of play space or skatepark development, there are a range of lessons learned from this study that can inform your approach.



Let's ...
Build the Case

You're a champion of skateparks or play spaces and need to get a diverse range of stakeholders on board to support your vision. What role will you play?



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You might relate to someone like Pete Scheira (left) and Chase Burbank (right). Pete is a passionate skateshop owner and skating instructor in Jamestown, NY, and Chase is a (then) 11-year-old skater – both helped get the City and the skating community behind the future JTNY Power House Skatepark.



Build the Case

Talking points to communicate the varied benefits of unstructured play

Sandi Brundage, project lead for Highland Avenue Park Playground, rallied the community around a new playground that serves as an everyday gathering space for Native American and non-native community members and a point of pride for indigenous families. →



Underscore free play's role in fostering health and social outcomes for kids (and adults!)

Investing in play spaces and skateparks means investing in well-being, physical activity, and social connection.

- ★ Over 70% of kids observed in Built to Play spaces were being active, and 25% of caregivers surveyed report their kids engage in more self-directed play since the site opened.

Communicate the necessity for physical infrastructure that enables unstructured play.

There is a need for more public spaces that allow kids to play freely, especially in underserved communities.

- ★ 63% of parents surveyed who live in rural areas indicated their child would likely play at home or a friend's home if the Built to Play play space or skatepark did not exist.

Highlight play spaces' and skateparks' community development impacts.

Play spaces can have spillover effects – such as bringing foot traffic to local businesses, to building a sense of neighborhood pride.

- ★ Nearly half of Built to Play project leads report that the project has increased foot traffic in the surrounding area.
- ★ 70% of adult survey respondents reported that the play space makes them feel proud to live in their neighborhood.

Embrace the potential of play to steer area and city planning.

Play can become a pillar of public space planning and wider community health efforts, due to its impacts on health and social connection.

- ★ In Rochester, the Play Walk and Roc City Skatepark came to life as the city was revitalizing its downtown. In part thanks to the Play Walk – a project led by an organization that advocates for play as a health priority – play is now embedded in the city's latest Comprehensive Plan.

Celebrate the consensus-building power of play projects.

Play spaces are a source of common ground and an effective platform to build buy-in for a wider public space agenda.

- ★ Over 80% of survey respondents indicated they would support more public funding for play spaces.
- ★ 58% of survey respondents believe perceptions of skating improved after the construction of their new skatepark.