

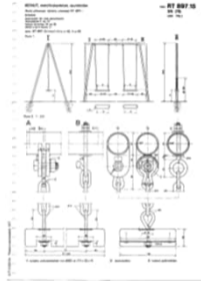


Sörnänen, 1950, Eino Heino, Helsinki City museum

Towards Standardized Childhood

The development of Built Playgrounds in Helsinki,
Finland 1940-1990

Veera Mäki, Aalto University



Simo Rista, 1970, Helsinki City museum



Images: Liisankatu 7, 1970 & Prinsessantie, Eeva Rista Helsinki City Museum

Urbanization from children's perspective

Conceptualized, planned and lived urban childhood in the 1940s-1980s

Independent mobility

"the freedom of children to travel around in their neighborhood or city without adult supervision" (Hillman, 1990)

Play

Range of activities done for recreational pleasure and enjoyment.





A home or a Barrack for our Children? pamphlet (1946) By director of the Finnish Population and Family Welfare Federation (Väestöliitto)



Children and youth magazine (1947). Publisher: Central Union For Child Welfare



What a child needs in housing? (1977). Publisher: Mannerheim League for Child Welfare



Housing policy magazine (1953). Publisher: The Finnish Population and Family Welfare Federation

**PROBLEMS
SOLUTIONS
IDEAL STATE OF
MATTER**



Sömäinen 1950, Eino Heino, Helsinki City museum

**MOBILITY
PLAY
URBAN
ENVIRONMENT**

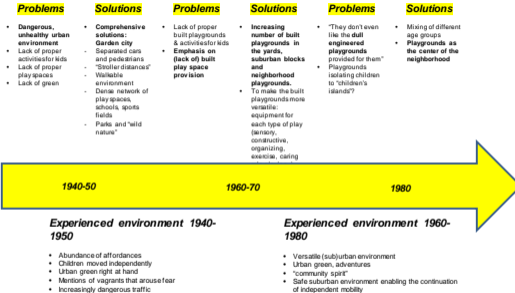




Sörnäinen 1950, Eino Heikonen, Helsinki City museum

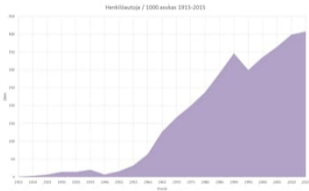
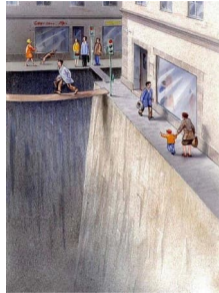


Helsinki, 1956, Finnish Heritage Agency





Kruununhaka, Eeva Rista, 1970s Helsinki City museum; Carl Jlg, Swedish Road Administration

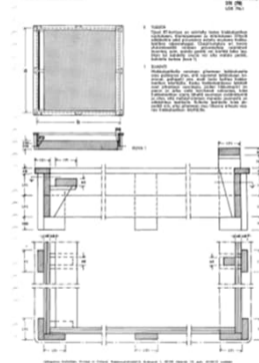
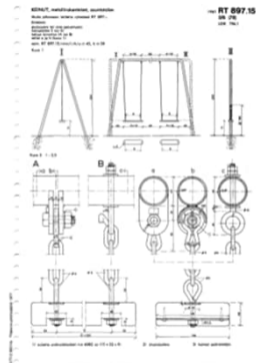


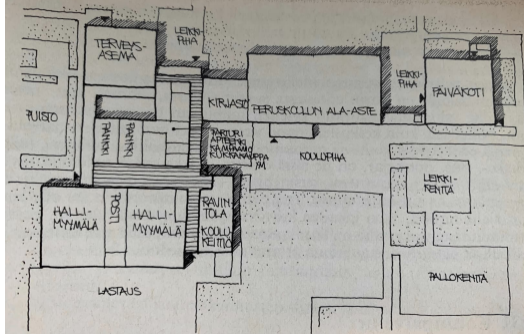


Standardization

Large scale: Defining the principles of (children's) living environments & recommendations

Small scale: Technical standardization of built play spaces and play equipment



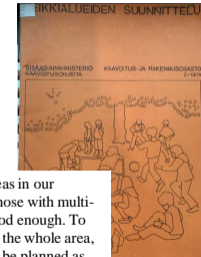
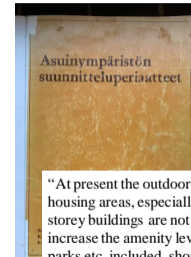
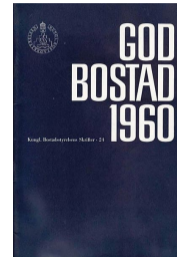


Principles of planning the living environment, 1973

(Ministry of the Interior, Division for Planning and Building)

National built playground standards for the size, amount, equipment and proximity to dwellings

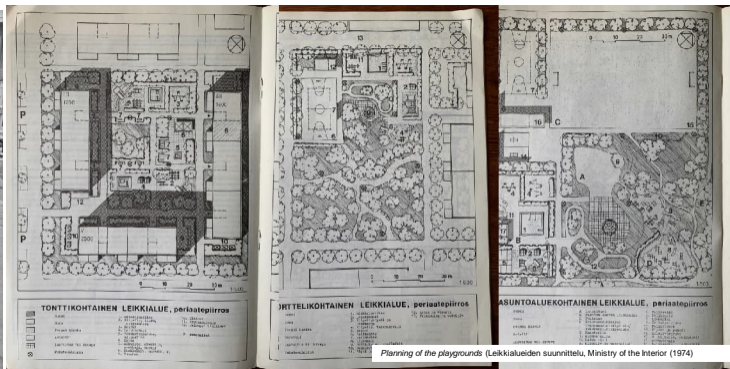
Three types of play spaces: *yards*, *suburban blocks* and *neighborhood playgrounds*.



“At present the outdoor areas in our housing areas, especially those with multi-storey buildings are not good enough. To increase the amenity level, the whole area, parks etc. included, should be planned as one unit all the same time”



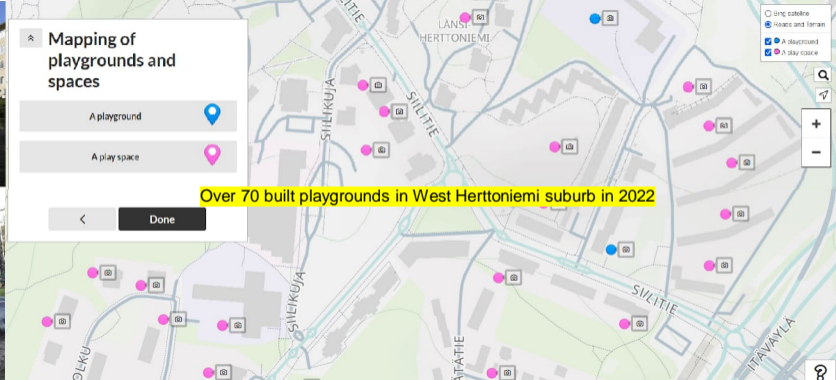
Pasila, 1978, Ahola Harri, Helsinki City Museum



Planning of the playgrounds (Leikkialueiden suunnittelu, Ministry of the Interior (1974))



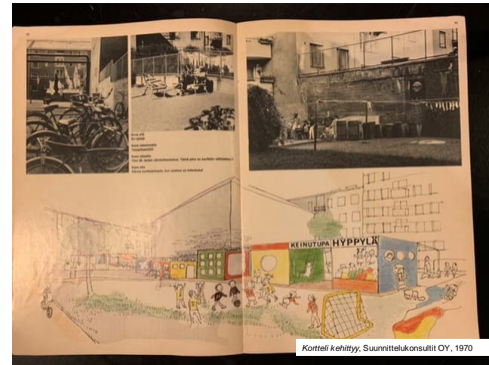
Playground in Kivenlahti, 1975-80 Espoo City Museum, Asuntosäätiö



• Inner-city courtyards



Eeva Rista, 1970s, Helsinki City Museum



Kortteli kehitty, Suunnittelukonsultit OY, 1970



Liisankatu 11, 1970s and 2022, Eeva Rista, Helsinki City Museum



Playground Linja in Kallio,
1972, Teuvo Kanerva,
Helsinki City Museum

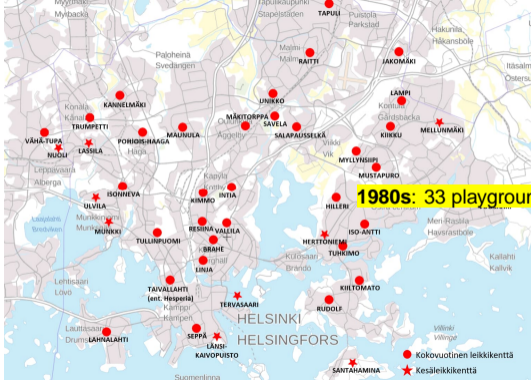
Supervised playgrounds since 1914



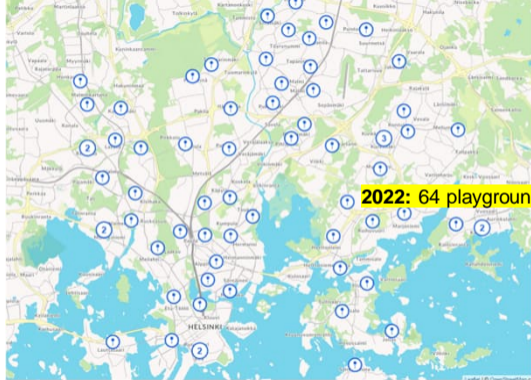
Soup lunch in playground,
1980s, private collection



1920s: 9 playgrounds



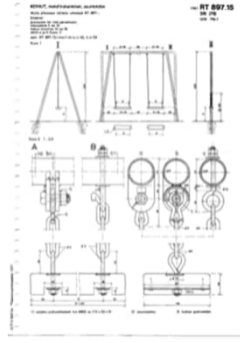
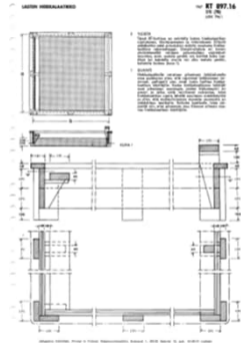
1980s: 33 playgrounds



2022: 64 playgrounds



**Changing built playgrounds:
increasing amount of equipment
& standardization**



Brahe playground 1940s, Aarne Retinen, National Heritage Agency & Puotinharju playground 1983, Kari Hakli, Helsingin kaupungin museo



Image 1: Playground Taivassalo 1957; Image 2: Lappset Group catalogue 2022



Lisankatu 7, 1973, Simo Rista; Helsinki City Museum; Lappset catalogue www.archiexpo.com/prod/lappset/product-66398-2004252.html



Image 1 Heinola 1957, Eero Sauri, Finnish Heritage Agency; Lappset Group catalogue 2022





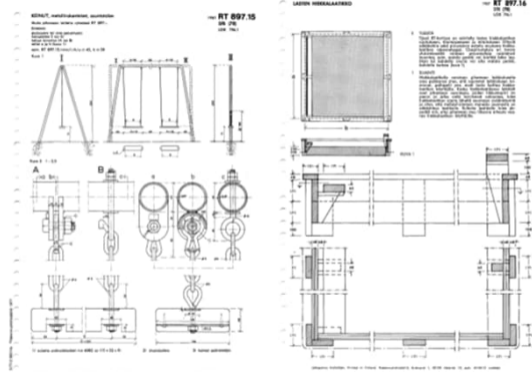
Myllypuro/Puotinihaja, 1970s, Simo Rista Helsinki City museum

Standardization + & - ?

Standardization

Large scale: Defining the principles of (children's) living environments & recommendations

Small scale: Technical standardization of built play spaces and play equipment



Places for children vs. 'children's spaces' (Rasmunssen, 2005)



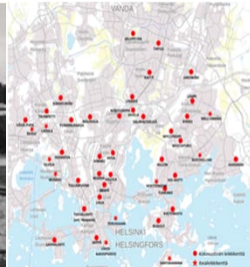
Kallio, 1970s; Simo Rista, Helsinki City museum

Children's Islands? (Zeiber, 2001)



Topellus park, ca. 1969, Simo Rista, Helsingin kaupunginmuseo

Or flexible spaces? (Moll & Jouhki, 2021; Strandell 2012)



Playground in Jakomäki, Stefan Bremer, HKM, 1976; Playground network of Helsinki in the 1981

Standards are to be found everywhere.

They are all about power (in addition to being about technical, economic, political, social, and other concerns)

Increasing standardization from 1960s led to increasing amount of built playgrounds.
Better accessibility for more people?

An imperative?



Decreasing amount of self-made playgrounds? Dull “engineered” playgrounds?

Model environments for model families?

Play equipment for average bodies?

Standardization benefited the (play equipment) market but at what cost?

New objects of play provision: safety and free trade?



Places of play

Collection of written memories concerning playgrounds from 1 September 2021 to 31 January 2022

What kinds of playground-related memories do you have? Did you spend time in playgrounds as a child, or do you visit them now as an adult with your own children? Have you worked as a playground attendant, playleader, or professional playground designer? We would like to receive stories from past and present playground users, parents, playground employees and playground environment planners. Tell us your story!

This writing collection is arranged in celebration of the upcoming 100th anniversary of organised playground activities in Finland. We aim to illustrate the history and present state of playgrounds and their significance to children and adults.

The following questions might help in the writing process:

As a child in a playground

- What were your favourite playgrounds like? Where were they? What did you do and how did you play there? What kinds of equipment were there? What was forbidden, what was allowed?
- At what age did you visit playgrounds? Who was with you? How did you go there?

- Describe your sensory memories from the playgrounds. How did it look, feel, smell and sound?
- Tell us about the adults present in the playground and organised playground activities.

As an adult in a playground

- How significant a role have playgrounds had in your family's life?
- How often have you been visiting playgrounds? What is a good playground like? How could they be improved?
- What do playgrounds have to offer for an adult?

Working in a playground

- Tell us about your playground work. What is the everyday work in a playground like? Tell us about the children in playgrounds. Which values have guided your work? What is the role of parents like?
- Tell us about your work as a designer of environments for children. Which regulations have guided your work? Have you been able to use your creativity? What is a good playground environment like?
- What is the future of playgrounds?

Please tell us the town and the decade to which you refer in your story. You can also send us photos and drawings.

The collection is organised by the Finnish Literature Society (SKS) in cooperation with postdoctoral researcher Essi Jouhki (University of Jyväskylä) and doctoral researcher Veera Moll (Aalto University). The collected memories will be archived in the SKS archive and the Finnish Social Science Data Archive. The results of the collection will be published in spring 2022. Those who send their stories will participate in a draw of book prizes.

Answering instructions

Please write in your own language and style. The length of the texts is not restricted.

Write your name or pen-name, contact details and date and place of birth in your answer. We also accept photographs, recordings, graphic memoirs and interviews. Please send material only if you have the right and/or permission to send such material. Include your consent for archiving the material in the SKS archive and for its use in accordance with the rules of the archive. In addition, please include your consent for disclosing the material to the Finnish Social Science Data Archive so that it can process and use the material for research, teaching and studying purposes.

Please read the guidelines governing the collection of material for the SKS archive at www.felix.fi/arkisto_24_arkistointi.

Please submit your text by 31 January 2022

via the online form at

www.felix.fi/en/places-of-play

- via mail to the following address: The Finnish Literature Society, c/o SKS, PO Box 239, FI-00027 Helsinki, Finland. Please mark the envelope with "Places of play".



Further information:
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Essi Jouhki, essi.jouhki@jyu.fi / Veera Moll, veera.moll@aalto.fi

"As a child, I never wanted to leave our yard. There was everything one could want: rocks, trees, bushes, crouches, sandboxes, swings, playhouses, slides and "the greens". The greens were climbing frame (...) Yes, I noticed that our house was not necessarily the most beautiful possible, and building a nine-story house on a hill was not necessarily the best solution for the landscape, but the views for us were stunning - -"

An author who grew up in the Soukka suburb in Espoo in the 1970s, image: Soukka, Espoo city museum

