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# Makefield Women's Association

September 10, 1991

Dear Township Supervisor:

The Makefield Women's Association and other interested members of the Lower Makefield Township community believe the time has come to create a stimulating recreational facility for the younger children of the community which does not exist at this time.

agenda  
10-7

call  
me @

+ tell  
her to  
attend

to  
present

Our goal is to organize a community project to build a playground that the whole community can enjoy which will, in effect give Lower Makefield Township a phenomenal facility completing our park and recreational complex. This facility will be built without taxpayers money and the money will be raised by local businesses and various community organizations.

Several options for building a playground were researched including:

1. Hiring a contractor/architect to construct (not recommended - too expensive/no community involvement)
2. Installing several Big Toys or similar equipment (not recommended - not aesthetically in keeping with site, no community involvement, inadequate guarantees)
3. Robert S. Leathers and Associates - Community built play structure (recommended)

Robert S. Leathers and Associates who have built over 650 playgrounds is recommended. Two other local communities (Chatham and Lawrenceville, N.J.) have built Leathers playground and highly recommend them. We also recommend him because of his national reputation of designing safe structures for childrens play.

At this time we feel the best site for this playground structure to be built is along Edgewood Road between the L.M.T. Community Pool parking lot and the Edgewood Elementary School soccer field.

This is a good site because it is a central location within the township and it would maximize community use.

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# Makefield Women's Association

Below is a sequence of events on how this project will proceed:

1. Approval of site from township
2. A core committee of 12-25 adults is formed to coordinate and oversee the playground project through all its stages.
3. Contact Robert S. Leathers and Associates to schedule a Design Day
4. Start fundraisers
5. Construction of playground  
(takes 5 days to build playground)

The following information is needed from the township:

1. Letter of site approval
2. Topographical survey
3. Photograph of site
4. Site Plan

There is a Robert S. Leathers playground located in Lawrenceville, N.J. This playground was built in 1987 behind Benjamin Franklin Elementary School. Carol Lerner was in charge of this project. You can contact her at 609-883-8878 and she will be glad to answer any of your questions.

In order for this project to get off the ground, the Makefield Women's Association need township permission to proceed. We have several local organizations ready to form core committees to follow the step by step Leathers playground plan.

Attached one will find a playground proposal, information on Robert S. Leathers and Associates and newspaper articles on the Lawrenceville playground.

We would welcome the opportunity to explain and answer any questions regarding this project.

Sincerely,

*Joanna Davidson*  
Joanna Davidson

Member of the  
Makefield Women's Association

Design Day is the official kickoff of the community effort that will result in a quality play area for your community. On Design Day, the layout and detail of your playground begin to take shape as a result of the collaboration between the Architect's representative and your community. Throughout the day, the Designer meets with the children, parents, and school or community officials to gather input for the design of the new play area. A schematic design is completed, and the day's efforts end with the presentation of the design at an evening community meeting.

However, the process does not start on Design Day but several weeks or months earlier. This outline lists the general procedure followed in preparing for and doing a Design Day.

1. **THE COMMITTEE**

In preparation for Design Day, a committee of 12 to 25 adults should be formed. Selection of these people should be made carefully, because the success of the project depends upon them. One person on this committee will serve as the General Coordinator, or two people may work together as co-coordinators. The other committee members will act as coordinators for the following areas (note that many times it is desirable and easier to have two people head an area): donated materials, purchased materials, tools, fundraising, public relations, volunteers, food, childcare, special needs and children's committee. You must have all individual coordinators assigned before you can schedule a Design Day. During the first few weeks following the Design Day, the General, Children's, Public Relations, Donated Materials, and Fundraising Coordinators are most important. It is very important that the committee members represent a diversified cross-section of the community. 50% to 70% of the committee should be parents of 2-13 year-olds. At least two members should be a teacher, principal, or active PTA person in one of the elementary schools. Never should any one segment of the community such as Kiwanis, Rotary or one church group account for more than 30% of the committee. At least 50% of the committee must be female. In forming the committee, the following qualifications should be considered in searching out the heads for different areas:

1.1 **GENERAL COORDINATOR(S)**

The General Coordinator (G.C.) will determine the success of the project more than any other single aspect of the process. The G.C.'s must be willing to make the project a priority, if necessary setting aside other commitments to work on playground organization. In addition, G.C.'s must be able to arrange their daily schedule to allow time for frequent contact with other coordinators. We recommend that the General Coordinators not be a community head such as mayor, district attorney, park and recreation department head or employee, school principal or superintendent. Their positions in the community detract from the grassroots appeal, and the constraints placed on their time by their already busy schedules don't leave the necessary time for the demands of organizing a playground project. One other requirement is that the General Coordinator be a person who can be very tactful with others and who has not already made enemies of local people. This is a big job; frequently two people share the responsibility as co-coordinators. Typically the first task of the General Coordinators(s) is to recruit the other coordinators before Design Day.

1.2 **DONATED MATERIALS**

This person, or preferably two people, should not work in the construction industry. This coordinator must have very flexible daytime (8-5) hours, and will be more successful if he or she is not familiar with construction processes or materials. This person must have the ability to scrounge and be someone who will not take no for an answer.

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## PREPARING FOR AND DOING A DESIGN DAY

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- 1.3 **PURCHASED MATERIALS**  
An individual familiar with buying practices and the network of companies supplying materials is the sort of person who should head this area, i.e. a contractor, builder, hardware store or lumber yard employee.
- 1.4 **CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE**  
Two people who are very good with children should be the heads of this committee. It is helpful if one is a current or ex-teacher in the local school system.
- 1.5 **PUBLIC RELATIONS**  
One person with some experience in some aspect of media should head this. Be sure to arrange media coverage of Design Day--a not-to-be-missed opportunity for newspaper, TV and radio coverage.
- 1.6 **FUNDRAISING**  
One person is needed to coordinate this area with several individual assistants who take charge of particular fundraisers. As many as 4 to 6 individuals should be on this committee before Design Day.
- 1.7 **TOOLS**  
Two people, one of whom has at least working knowledge of tools, should share this responsibility.
- 1.8 **VOLUNTEERS**  
This is a crucial committee; the playground can't be built without volunteers throughout the process. One or two people will coordinate the efforts of many others, particularly during the last stages of the process when it is necessary to personally contact community residents to secure commitments of volunteer workers. Often there will be two coordinators: one to obtain individual commitments and one to contact groups.
- 1.9 **FOOD**  
One person needs to secure and organize the food for feeding the workers on construction weekend. This person need not be a professional in the food preparation industry.
- 1.10 **CHILDCARE**  
Two people are necessary to arrange activities for children and coordinate/supervise childcare during construction weekend.
- 1.11 **SPECIAL NEEDS**  
One person to contact appropriate groups specializing in the needs of handicapped individuals. The Special Needs Coordinator will get input from these groups regarding the amount and type of accessibility desired in the design of the playground. These groups might include: parent organizations, hospital associated clinics, and special education schools. This coordinator would ideally be a parent with a handicapped child, a therapist or a special education teacher.

The Special Needs Coordinator would also gather information on State handicap accessibility requirements and research funding or grants available for playgrounds incorporating handicap access areas. This person should be prepared to discuss these

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## PREPARING FOR AND DOING A DESIGN DAY

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needs and/or requirements on Design Day, and should review the schematic design, as well as the final drawings. This person will be the liaison between the special needs community and the playground core committee. Therefore, they should be present during construction as a resource to the construction consultants in order to ensure that the handicap areas will suit the needs of the handicapped community.

### 2. COMMUNITY OBSTACLES

Prior to scheduling a Design Day with our office, it is wise to anticipate some of the obstacles that may impede or prevent you from doing your project. Building inspectors, school administrators, school board members, city officials, neighboring property owners, and any other concerned citizens should be contacted to ascertain what, if any, opposition to the project there might be, and to find out if there are any application or permit procedures that must be complied with. It's a good idea to deal with these issues from the beginning.

### 3. THE SITE

Before scheduling a Design Day, it is necessary to locate and have approval on a site or potential sites upon which to build your project. A good site is necessary to maximize community use. If the playground is to be used as a city or town park, the site should not be remote. Locate it in a central area or an area that is targeted for development. If possible, incorporate the play structure with other recreational facilities such as ballfields, swimming areas and landscaped picnic areas. The site should be easily seen from adjacent properties and streets in order to discourage vandalism. If there is existing equipment on or in close proximity to the selected site, our office may recommend the removal, relocation or incorporation of the equipment. Additionally, we require photographs of the equipment to be sent to our office prior to Design Day along with the other necessary site information.

If at a school, the site should interface, but not interfere, with adjacent uses, so that both the playground and playing fields can be easily supervised. We strongly discourage dividing the playground equipment, i.e. K through 2 near one side of the school and 3 and up at another location. Playgrounds function best when they provide a continuous integrated play experience for all ages within a single location. The design can be zoned with separate areas for different age groups.

The site should be as flat as possible (maximum allowable slope is 3%) with good drainage. It should be away from vehicular traffic but accessible to parking. If the site is near roads, railways, woods, water or any other area that children could inadvertently run into, we will need to fence the adjacent edge of the playground. We can work around existing trees, and in fact, a few trees on site may provide needed shade.

Play equipment cannot be located on a hard surface, therefore, existing asphalt or concrete must be removed prior to Organization Day unless your community chooses to cover the area with rubber safety surfacing material. Even though play equipment cannot be located on asphalt, it is frequently located close to a hard surface play area to provide best results.

The size of the overall area will be determined on Design Day based on the characteristics of the site, the space available, and the number of children expected to use it. The average area used is 10,000 square feet with 4,000 square feet being small and 20,000 square feet large. The proposed area(s) cannot be narrower than fifty (50) feet.

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Before scheduling a Design Day, the office must receive a survey of the site that includes topographical information, photographs of the site(s), a site plan, and a letter from the owner stating it is approved for a playground. This survey should be at a scale of 1/8" = 1'-0". It should show contour lines at one foot intervals and accurately locate north, any trees, retaining walls, underground utilities, overhead electric lines within 50 feet of the playground, roads, asphalt, concrete, drainage ditches, and permanent structures of play equipment that may remain. If your surveyor has AUTOCAD, have them supply you with the survey on a 5 1/4" disk. This will greatly increase the speed and accuracy of our design work. Get this donated. All of this information can help troubleshoot any potential problems that would disqualify the site you've selected before Design Day.

If any site work is required, such as regrading, removing trees and stumps, etc., this must be completed by Organization Day. After Design Day your designer will determine the extent of site work. We may require a survey of the finished work.

Before Design Day, the General Coordinator, principal, director of buildings and grounds, and P.E. teachers should review potential sites for the new play area, keeping in mind the above criteria. For instance, the relationship to existing ball fields, other play areas, slope of land, access from school and any potential conflicts with vehicular traffic should be considered in regard to the proposed play area site. The committee should select their preferred site but be open to change given the Designer's input on Design Day. The owner should be consulted and approval of potential locations and concept obtained. The final site to design the playground from will be selected on the morning of Design Day. Since the decision must be made by 10:00 a.m., any individuals wanting input in that decision should attend the 8:00 a.m. meeting.

#### 4. UTILITIES

Building over underground utilities or under overhead utility lines can be not only difficult but many times impossible. As soon as a likely site is identified, verify what utilities might be there. Many times it is possible to work around one or two utility lines, but it might be impossible to build on a site crisscrossed by many utilities. It is the General Coordinator's responsibility to have all utility companies check all underground and overhead utilities, i.e. gas, electric, telephone, sewers, water lines, septic, sprinklers, drain tile and TV cable.

All services should be clearly marked on the ground with stakes or spray paint prior to Design Day. Depths of underground utilities and allowable clearances necessary under overhead utilities must be ascertained from city or county officials. Do not rely on school or town maintenance records for information. Do not rely on original plans previously sent to us to locate utilities since these plans are not accurate as to exact locations. Have utility companies do actual field measuring and marking on the ground of all utilities. Before the Designer arrives for Design Day, underground utilities must be located by marking on the ground.

#### 5. OTHER SITE CONFLICTS

- 5.1 Be sure the use proposed for the site does not interfere with other adjacent uses (i.e. the site should not be located outside the windows of the school library or close to classrooms).
- 5.2 Check all adjacent buildings for proposed or possible additions and conflicts with same.
- 5.3 Check all zoning or other municipal requirements regarding setbacks, use restrictions, material restrictions, historic and design regulations.

6. **SCHEDULING A DESIGN DAY**

Once your core committee is formed, the site selected, and necessary approvals obtained, you're ready to schedule a Design Day with our office. To do this, send a letter stating that you'd like to schedule a Design Day and giving the following information:

**If the playground is at a school:** number of children in the school and grades.

**If the playground is at a community park or other non-school location:** number of schools to be involved in Design Day; number of children at each school and grades. Do not finalize schedule with the school until you confirm schedule with the Designer.

**For all projects:** background information on the community such as: population; socio-economic level; rural, suburban or urban environment; geographic location; etc. A description of the site: photographs, site plan, survey that includes topographical information, and letter of site approval. If you have a general idea of the schedule you'd like to follow (for example, design in the fall and build the next spring), please inform us of that. (This is tentative, but helps us at least begin scheduling.) Also let us know what you've done to date: is your core committee together? have all approvals been obtained? have you done any fundraising yet? etc.

Upon receipt of this letter, your name is added to our list of projects, and we begin working on scheduling a Design Day.

7. **CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION**

7.1 **CHILDREN'S COMMITTEE**

The children on this committee are selected before Design Day to represent their classrooms (or schools if more than one school is involved). The purpose of this committee is to help ensure that all children are involved throughout the entire process. A total of no less than 25 or more than 75 should be on this committee. If the project is happening at a school, around 25 - 35 children with one or two from each classroom is most desirable. If the project is a central community project with many schools involved, approximately 40 - 75 children are desirable representing as many schools as possible. The process for selecting these children should be as democratic as possible. One method is to ask which children want to be on the committee, then have interested children take permission slips home to parents. From signed permission slips, draw names from a hat.

7.2 **SONGS**

Before Design Day a special playground choral group should be formed (or this may be an existing choral group with this new role). The children in this group write songs about their new playground or make up playground words to sing with a traditional song (i.e. "We've been Working on the Playground" to the tune of "I've been Working on the Railroad," etc.). This song (or songs) is then performed at the evening meeting on Design Day. The children in this group should be different children than those in the Children's Committee. The performance of the song by the children makes for a well attended Design Day.

7.3 **DESIGN IDEAS**

Please do not over-prepare the children. Do not show them pictures or slides of other playgrounds. Instead, prior to Design Day, have them draw pictures or write stories about their ideal playground. On Design Day the Designer will review these to get ideas for the playground.

7.4 **OBJECTIVE**

The children are the secret to this whole process. Involve the children in every and any way that will be a positive experience for them.

8. **PLAYGROUND SURFACING**

Before Design Day the committee should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the four types of playground surfacing. The committee should make a preliminary decision before Design Day as to which one they want to use. After discussion with the Designer from our office at 8:00 a.m. on Design Day, a final decision must be made by 9:00 a.m. Any individuals such as Principals, Superintendents, Buildings and Grounds Directors, Parks and Recreation Directors, General Coordinators or other committee members who want input must be at this meeting.

9. **PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Public Relations is the key to opening many doors for fundraising and donated materials, as well as for creating the visibility necessary to interest and draw more volunteers. The Design Day is an excellent opportunity for TV, radio and newspaper coverage. Have the media come either when the Designer meets with children in the classroom or when the design is being drawn in the cafeteria.

10. **HOSPITALITY**

The Hospitality Coordinator is responsible for providing housing (for one or two nights) and food for the one or two representatives who come from our office for Design Day and Organization Day, as well as transportation to and from the airport if needed. Any costs related to this are in addition to the Design Phase fee, Organization Phase fee and appropriate travel fees. For Design Day and Organization Day, we prefer to stay overnight with a local family wherever possible, even if you are able to get a motel room donated.

11. **DIRECTIONS TO COMMUNITY**

The General Coordinator should make sure that, if we are driving to your area, we have complete driving instructions (a sketch map is useful). We need to receive this no later than two weeks before Design Day.

12. **THE PLAYGROUND PACKETS**

Very detailed information regarding every aspect of the development process is contained in several packets which are sent to the committee upon receipt of a partial travel retainer deposit. Since it is desirable to have the whole committee review this material before Design Day, the sooner the deposit is paid the better. Do not panic when you receive the packets. A lot of information is included, but it all falls into place if taken one step at a time.

13. **DESIGN DAY SCHEDULE**

The following schedules should serve as models. Times are subject to some variation, however. Actual schedule should be worked out with our office prior to Design Day. Note that the designer from our office is limited to a total of one hour and 50 minutes to meet with children in the classrooms (this does not include the time meeting with the Children's Committee).



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## PREPARING FOR AND DOING A DESIGN DAY

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### Public or Private School Schedule

- 7:45 a.m. - Site meeting. Have a building, conference room, and office available  
9:00 a.m. for approximately 15 - 30 minutes of the meeting. Have an owner representative and a maintenance representative present for the site meeting. Also include representatives from any interest groups in the area: persons with disabilities, pre-school, senior citizen groups, teacher interest group, etc.
- 9:00 a.m. - Go to school and get set up for drawing. Designer will need: 2'x5'  
9:15 a.m. foot table (flat), electric pencil sharpener, desk light, extension cord for sharpener and light.
- 9:15 a.m. Begin visiting classrooms. Meet with groups of at least 50 children, up to 100 children. These children should not be just the Children's Committee. Each group should be made up of kids approximately the same age (i.e., all Kindergarten or Kindergarten and 1st grade). Each group will meet in one classroom, gathered on the floor to talk with the Designer. Meet with each group for approximately 13 minutes, allowing 2 minutes to get to the next classroom.
- Two volunteers will be with the Designer during visitation to classrooms. One will take notes and the other will leave after the first five minutes and go to the next classroom on the schedule to make sure all the children are gathered together on the floor waiting for the Designer to arrive.
- 11:00 a.m. - Drawing at table in multi-purpose room, or cafeteria. Two volunteers  
2:00 p.m. will be there to help at all times. During the lunch hour, the children can join the Designer at the drawing table, for approximately 2 minutes, in groups of 12 children at a time. The Designer will give a basic explanation to the first group of children and then the volunteers will explain to each group of children thereafter so the Designer is free to continue drawing. A lunch will be provided for the Designer.
- 2:00 p.m. - Meet with Children's Committee and Chairperson(s). Four adults will  
2:45 p.m. be needed during this time in addition to the Chairperson. There should be 50 - 100 children in the Children's Committee. We will need hundreds of drawings (sketch of playscapes) for mural. All drawings should be done in color and should be colored in (crayons and markers). Make pictures as colorful as possible. Refer to drawings as a "playscape" instead of playground (more imagination will be put into drawings). These drawings will be used to make a large, colorful mural. We will need: 6'x15' foot paper (butcher paper taped together), scissors, crayons, markers, 10 glue sticks.
- 2:45 p.m. Check evening meeting set up. Will need to see and test Kodak carousel projector, large screen, moveable chalkboard, microphone. Must be able to use microphone and projector at the same time.
- 3:00 p.m. - Meet with teachers and committee. (Time of meeting may vary; the most  
3:15 p.m. convenient time after school for teachers should be chosen.) During the first 10 minutes of the meeting, the Designer will review the design with the teachers and committee members.
- 3:15 p.m. - Continue drawing.  
4:00 p.m.

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- 4:00 p.m. - Committee Meeting, all Chairpersons present.  
6:00 p.m.
- 6:00 p.m. - Dinner  
7:00 p.m.
- 7:00 p.m. - Set up school for evening meeting.  
7:15 p.m.
- 7:30 p.m. - Evening meeting. Introduction and children's songs/skits should be  
8:30 p.m. 5 to 10 minutes maximum. Have all children sing song. Introduce Designer. Designer will take over and take presentation until the meeting ends at 8:30 p.m. Break for refreshments. Refreshments are important in order to keep people long enough to sign up for committees. Have sign-up sheets for each committee on a back table.

**Note:** For the evening meeting, a Kodak carousel slide projector with carousel and a remote control, screen (as large as possible), extension cord, and portable bulletin board or chalk board will be needed. If the community meeting is held in a room seating more than 150 people, a good microphone and amplification system should be provided. The mike must be capable of being removed from the stand and have enough cord to easily reach the slide projector.

- 8:35 p.m. After the general meeting, Designer meets with Children's Committee and their parents.
- 8:45 p.m. Committee meeting. Finalize schematic design, preliminary schedule and fundraising goal. Finalize discussion of committee areas.

Helpful hints to get children and their parents to the evening meeting:

- On Design Day, send children home with reminder of evening meeting. The reminder can be made from 8½" x 11" sheet with 4 playground drawings in each quadrant, include the time and meeting place. These should be made and xeroxed prior to Design Day. Children then color 1 of the 4 and make a necklace or badge to wear home.
- Have everyone on the committee call 5 people, those 5 people then call 5 other people.
- All children should know words to the song, and all should be invited to sing at the evening meeting.

### Community Park/Playground Schedule (more than one school)

If the play area is not to be located at a school site, the previous schedule may change considerably. The site meeting should include the landowner's representatives (usually city planners or parks department personnel), committee people and anyone who desires design input concerning site selection. Meeting with children is typically done at the school or schools nearest to the proposed site. Design Day would then proceed in such a way as to maximize the number of children involved in the design process. If only one school is involved, then the day proceeds as outlined above. If more than one school is involved, then a schedule should be planned so that the designer can travel from school to school, meeting with kids at each school. In this situation where many hundreds of kids may be involved, it is still best to limit the group size of children to 60 - 90.

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## PREPARING FOR AND DOING A DESIGN DAY

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The children should be assembled in a classroom, or other quiet area. Gyms and cafeterias are acoustically very difficult to work in. Sufficient time should be allowed for between school travel. The last school on the schedule would be where the designer sets up to draw, meeting with the children at that school while he or she works on the final drawing. Thus, a day's schedule may look like this (refer to previous schedule for additional details regarding times):

- 8:00 a.m. Designer arrives; site meeting, travel to School 3.
- 9:00 a.m. Set up drawing, layout existing site in cafeteria of School 3 where drawing is going to be done.  
Travel to School 1.
- 9:20 a.m. School 1; 4 meetings with 60 - 90 children each, 15 minutes each (from beginning of 1 group meeting to beginning of next group).  
Five minutes travel to next school.
- 10:20 a.m. School 2; 3 meetings with 60 - 90 children each, 15 minutes each (from beginning of 1 group to beginning of next group).  
Five minutes travel to next school.
- 11:00 a.m. School 3; begin drawing, kids come up in groups of 10 - 15 after they've finished lunch to see the drawing process and give ideas. Three committee people are necessary to help here.  
Lunch is served somewhere in here.
- 2:00 p.m. - Children's Committee meeting. Representatives from each school, perhaps one  
3:00 p.m. or two children per grade per school, will meet with designer. Children's Committee chairperson must attend.  
If the playground site is not located at a school, it may be desirable to hold the Children's Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m. or 8:30 p.m. before or after the evening meeting. If you plan to do this, contact the Architect's representative and review with him/her prior to Design Day.
- 3:15 p.m. Design review and committee meeting.
- 5:30 p.m. Continue drawing.  
Dinner and the evening meeting are as scheduled previously.

**Note:** For the evening meeting, a Kodak carousel slide projector with carousel and remote control, screen (as large as possible), extension cord, and portable bulletin board or chalk board will be needed. If the community meeting is held in a room seating more than 150 people, a good microphone and amplification system should be provided. The mike must be capable of being removed from the stand and have enough cord to easily reach the slide projector.

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## PREPARING FOR AND DOING A DESIGN DAY

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Although more difficult to orchestrate, this can be a very successful approach to Design Day for community parks. Careful scheduling and organization is important. A tentative schedule should be prepared in advance of Design Day and reviewed with our office before a final schedule is prepared. Your project may require substantial alterations to these "typical" schedules. Our intent is to maximize the children's input in the design process within the constraints of a day's time. Plan Design Day with this in mind.

### 14. EVENING MEETING ATTENDANCE

It is important to get as many people as possible to the community evening meeting since this is an excellent opportunity to broaden the support for the project and to address any specific concerns of community members. Special invitations to the parents of the children who are singing and those who are on the Children's Committee, combined with personal phone calls, can insure a successful kickoff for the committee. Do not forget posters, banners, flyers, personal invitations and newspaper articles about the project inviting people to attend the evening meeting. Refreshments should be provided after the evening meeting, and sign up tables with sheets of paper with committee names on them should be adjacent to the food table.

### 15. ARCHITECTURAL FEES

In the interest of being fair and accurate, our office charges by the hour for most services. This hourly rate ranges from \$8 to \$55 depending upon personnel. Sometimes, though, it is difficult to keep track of exact time, and therefore we do have some flat rate charges.

#### 15.1 DESIGN DAY TRAVEL/RETAINER

All "travel" charges are computed as actual travel expenses plus time. We ask for prepayment of a partial travel retainer to secure your commitment for a Design Day. This deposit is non-refundable. The "playground packet" is sent to you upon receipt of payment. The balance of the travel retainer varies depending upon location and will be quoted once the Design Day date has been arranged. This final travel retainer is due prior to Design Day and is also non-refundable.

#### 15.2 DESIGN PHASE FEE

The \$650 fee for the Design Phase covers the costs of a representative from our office doing the Design Day, the drawing of a 1/8" scale schematic plan, preparation of your Potential Donated Materials List, reproductions and postage costs, and organizational time by telephone from payment of the Design Day Travel/Retainer deposit to acceptance of the proposal. The fee is due prior to Design Day and is also non-refundable. If the community cancels the Design Day, regardless of the reason, the fee will not be refunded. If the Design Day is rescheduled, an additional fee will be charged.

#### 15.3 CONSTRUCTION DEPOSIT

Approximately two to four weeks after Design Day our office will request payment of the \$800 non-refundable construction deposit. This deposit will reserve a construction date for your project.

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Associates...Architects PC**

**PREPARING FOR AND DOING A DESIGN DAY**

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**15.4 PROPOSAL**

Upon receipt of the construction deposit, our office sends the committee a proposal which outlines the remainder of the services and fees involved. Your committee will review this proposal and has the option to discuss changes in it or even reject it. If we do not hear from you to the contrary within 2 weeks of your receipt of the proposal, we will assume that it is acceptable to you, and we will proceed with work on your project. Total fees for our services have ranged from \$2,500 to \$19,000 on projects with total budgets of \$10,000 to \$150,000.

**16. OFFICE ORGANIZER**

Prior to Design Day, an individual in our office will be assigned the job of being the Office Organizer for your project. After Design Day, all telephone calls or correspondence should be directed to this person. The Office Organizer will serve as your contact person until and even after construction. If you telephone the office and your Office Organizer is not available, another Organizer will take the call.

## PLAYGROUND PROPOSAL

### Introduction

We are a group of interested members of the Lower Makefield Township community who believe the time has come to create a stimulating recreational facility for the younger children of the community which does not exist at this time.

### Goal

To organize a community project to build a playground that the whole community can enjoy which will, in effect give Lower Makefield Township a phenomenal facility completing our park and recreation complex. This project should be completed by September 1992.

Several options for building a playground were researched including:

1. Hiring a contractor/architect to construct (not recommended - too expensive/no community involvement)
2. Installing several Big Toys or similar equipment (not recommended - not aesthetically in keeping with site, no community involvement, inadequate guarantees)
3. Robert Leathers/Community - built play structure (recommended)

Robert Leathers playground structure is recommended/chosen.

### Background

Robert Leathers and Associates has built over 650 custom designed playgrounds in 28 states across the country. These playgrounds are designed to meet the safety standards of all 50 states.

Leathers playgrounds are uniquely designed to suit the particular needs and dreams of the children who will use them. Incorporating ideas contributed by the children, each playground is a multi-leveled wooden structure with interconnecting tunnels, ramps, bridges, ladders and overhead rings, as well as sliding poles, slides, swings, balance beams and more. The structures are designed for continuous active play, to help children develop their upper-body strength, coordination and sense of balance. They are also arranged to stimulate explorative and imaginative play, and at the same time leave quiet corners where some children can just sit and think, dream or read.

The playgrounds are made almost entirely of wood to insure that the finished product is aesthetically pleasing and in keeping with the natural surroundings of the site.

His playgrounds have been featured on the NBC Nightly News, Sesame Street, Mister Rogers and Evening Magazine.

The most important benefit of these playgrounds is that they are a lasting reminder of the total community effort and cooperation.

### Site

A good site is necessary to maximize community involvement.

The location suggested by the Parks and Recreation Board is the property located along Edgewood Road between the L.M.T. Community Pool parking lot and the Edgewood Elementary School soccer field.

This site would be an excellent location as it would maximize community use for the following reasons:

1. Central location within the township
2. Proximity to other park recreation facilities (pool, ballfields, tennis courts and library)
3. Existing parking
4. Existing restroom facilities and drinking fountain
5. Large open area for playground equipment
6. Mature trees which provide shade and picnic areas
7. Potentially\*unobstructed view of site from parking lot and Edgewood Road to insure security of property and discourage vandalism (fencing will be installed around perimeter of entire structure - slightly higher along Edgewood Road)

\*See Site Modification Recommendation

Site Modifications Recommended

1. K-9 Police Dog Housing and Training Facility - remove/relocate all or part of this facility (especially the large area surrounded by high fence and arborvitae) for the following reasons:
  - Children's safety
  - Obstructs view of site thus encouraging vandalism
  - Noise of barking dogs
2. Remove fruit bearing tree which attracts bees
3. Remove sandbox
4. Remove non-functional grill
5. Relocate existing play equipment to Macclessfield Park

Costs

No tax dollars will be used to fund this project. The total cost of the project will depend upon the following:

1. The extent of playground structure to be erected
2. Cost of any site modifications
3. The amount currently set aside by L.M.T. to modify site for improved drainage, etc.
4. Percentage of donated vs. purchased materials
5. Possible eligibility for state/local grants or funding as a result of handicapped accessibility.

We anticipate the enthusiastic support of most area businesses, schools and organized volunteer organizations as well as parents and church groups.



Insurance

Both during and after construction, the liability will be that of Lower Makefield Township.

Maintenance

Once the project is completed, maintenance will be the responsibility of the Township. This structure requires low maintenance. It should be checked periodically for safety reasons and every year the structure should be sealed.

Permits

All permits will be waived or permits will be received in advanced.



# Kids help plan a playground

## Obstacle course' is popular, designer says

By MONITA CASEY  
Staff Writer

**LAWRENCE** — If the children at Ben Franklin School have their way, the aging monkey bars in their playground will be replaced in the spring with a dragon ride, towers and tunnels.

After "Playground Design Day" ended at the school yesterday, architect Ernie Bayles of the Robert Leathers architectural firm had a pile of ideas from the students he worked with during the course of the day and a rough sketch of the playground he will design in the next few months. During their lunchtime, children gathered in groups around Bayles in the school cafeteria as he worked on his drawing and offered suggestions ranging from "make sure you put in tire swings" to "rocket ships would be very good."

"I've heard some great ideas. They'll want a dragon slide where they'll

climb up the back and slide down the tongue. I can do that. At this time of year I always hear about a haunted house. I won't do the 'trap doors with knives below' that one student suggested, but I will do a variation," Bayles said with a laugh.

While he jots down all of the children's ideas—including the roller coaster and hot-air-balloon variety—Bayles said he knows where to draw the line on what is possible. In the past three years, he has designed close to 50 playgrounds.

"THE KIDS get excited about designing their own playground. Mainly, they want to have a continuous flow of activity—down a slide, across a ramp to the swings. The obstacle course is a recurring theme in this part of the country. In Texas, the Alamo is big. Kids are pretty much the same everywhere but you find different ideas surfacing in different areas," he said.

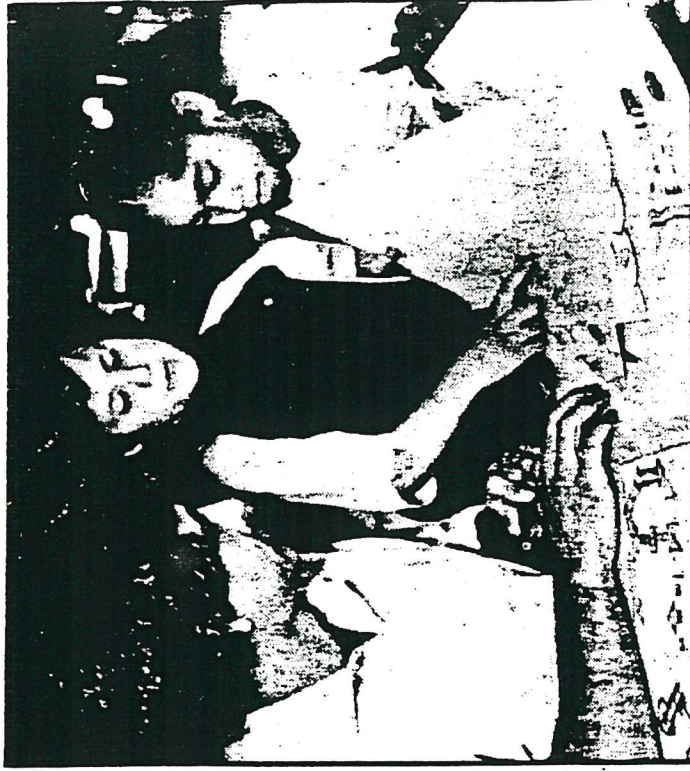
Carol Lerner, who initiated the project after reading a magazine

article about the Ithaca, N.Y., firm's "creative playgrounds," said the playground will be built in the spring by members of the community in the style of an old-fashioned barn-raising. The planning will culminate in a four-day "construction weekend," she said.

After contacting the firm, Lerner said she visited a Leathers playground in Bergen County that strengthened her determination to pursue the project.

"You approach the playground from the bottom of a hill and all you see at first is a castle. It brings to mind a miniature Disneyland. Everything is natural wood that blends in with the landscape. There are twirly slides coming down from a tower and all kinds of active equipment. It's fascinating to watch the kids in action," she said.

The school's Parent-Teacher Organization has been busy coming up with fund-raising ideas and organizing committees to carry out the plan, Lerner said.



Staff photo by John A. Pleiras

Architect Ernie Bayles inspects the playground designs of Anres Mejia, left, and Lahona Burkes, second-graders at Ben Franklin School.

## Inside

■ The Board of Education opposed portions of a plan, now before the Legislature, for state takeover of deficient school boards. See page 2A.

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# The Ledger

## Lawrence

FRIDAY/OCTOBER 10, 1986

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## Police study to get hearings

By Lee Kahn  
Staff Writer

Hoping to gain citizen input on the recently completed study of the township police department, the Economic Development Committee is planning to schedule two public hearings on it at the end of October.

The report, prepared by Carroll Baracker and Terry Eisenberg of Carroll Baracker and Associates of Vienna, Va., was delivered to Township Council in September. The council asked for the study several months ago.

Two or three copies of the report are available at the municipal building and a dozen copies are on file at the Lawrence Library. Six of the 12 copies at the library may be checked out, but the other six must remain at the library.

The report was then turned over to the Economic Development Committee because the group has had some exposure to surveys involving public safety, said Kellogg Birdseye, Economic Development Committee chairman.

A business retention survey sponsored by New Jersey Bell Telephone Co. several years ago triggered some reaction — mostly favorable — toward the township police department, Mr. Birdseye said. He added that the Economic Development Committee had more exposure to police matters than an ad hoc committee might have.

"The public hearing will help us to know what parts of the report the public thinks should be covered. We will make a recommendation to Township Council by the first of December," as to which of the police consultant's suggestions should be adopted, Mr. Birdseye said.

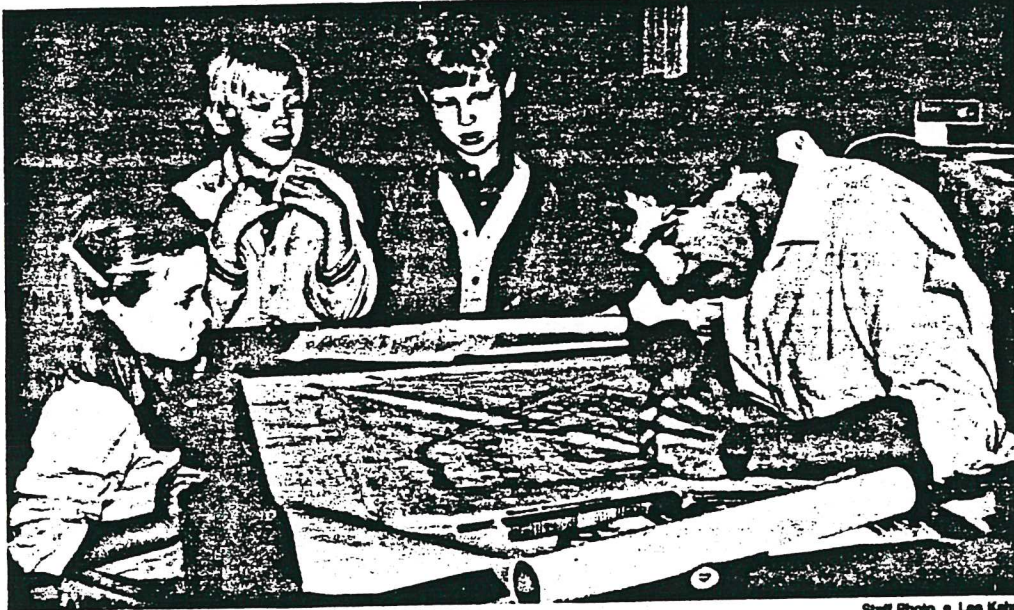
The police consultant made several recommendations in his report. It was recommended that a "booking station" should be established at the Quaker Bridge Mall, since more than a quarter of all serious crime in the township can be traced to the mall. Police do not regularly patrol the mall, which is a "serious shortcoming," the report noted.

Police Chief William Seabridge, who attended the Economic Development Committee's Tuesday night meeting, told committee members that the township police do patrol the mall, but not on a regular basis.

Chief Seabridge also told the committee that the Quaker Bridge Mall has had its own security force since the mall opened in 1976. The security officers make the majority of the shoplifting arrests, he said.

"In 1980, my concept was to have a place at the mall," Chief Seabridge said. "The sergeant could go to the mall, rather than send two policemen to the mall to get the accused and bring him back to the police department. The [municipal] manager and I went to the mall, but he left and the idea died. It's probably moot, now."

Chief Seabridge noted that a police department in southern New Jersey had



Staff Photo • Lee Kahn

Under the watchful eyes of Ben Franklin School students Kathy Scott, Brian Klockner and Timmy Morgan, playground architect Emie Bayles plots out the new playground at the Ben Franklin School.

## Kids plan their playground

### Architect adppts suggestions of Ben Franklin students

By Cheryl Miller  
Staff Writer

Playing around is serious business for these kids.

And although many adults might shrug them off as childish fantasies, Eric Bayles takes the dreams of more than 300 elementary schoolchildren and makes them reality.

"Pretend you're in an airplane and looking down at your school," Mr. Bayles, a professional architect representing the Robert Leathers Architectural Firm in Ithaca, N.Y., tells the group of children huddled around him. "This is where the castle will be, then the twirly slide..."

"What's this?" asks one child, pointing to a series of curly lines.

"That's the tire city...and this is the wriggly bridge, and here are the swings."

For the next two hours, handful after handful of critical observers lean over the table where the architect sits, and pay close attention to the maze of lines that will become their playground in the spring, and that they, in part, designed.

Part of the Leathers Architectural Firm's success has been to seek the help of the children and community that will be using the playground, says Joan Citadino, public relations spokesperson for the Creative Playground Committee of Ben Franklin Elementary

School. For the last week, the elementary school children have been drawing pictures of what their ideal playground should look like. What emerged were a super duper dragon slide, a hot air balloon, a dungeon with monsters, a spooky house with trap doors, a cave house with witch dolls and Tarzan swings.

On Tuesday, the architects met with the children to discuss their ideas and expectations, and prior to this, they met with the various parents contributing to the project.

"It was the PTO's gift to the school on its 25th anniversary," says Karen Thompson, another parent.

And it will be the first such playground in the township, because it will be open to the public after school hours, Mrs. Citadino says.

Outside the Ben Franklin school sits several pieces of equipment that have been there "since the earth began," says Susan Closson, a physical education teacher. A few outdated jungle gyms, whose bars are too high for most of the students, and a see-saw squat on the grass behind the school.

"Five years ago we tried this, but it never got off the ground," she continues. "Because of lack of funds, time and help, it was dropped."

But this time around, they'll have plenty of time, help and funds.

Come the spring, all plans and preparations

will culminate in a four-day construction weekend, when money, volunteers, labor, food, child care and tools will be recruited.

Everyone, from Girl Scouts to nursing home residents, will be asked to give whatever help they can to the finished product, says Carol Lerner, a parent and member of the Creative Playground Committee. She estimated that they'd need about 300 people to help construct the project this spring, plus \$20,000 for the entire project, which parents hope to obtain through various fund raisers.

People will get the chance to "be involved in something from start to finish," she says. Participants will do whatever they can, whether it be "washing some tires, or sanding some wood," Mrs. Lerner continues.

But what Brian and his twin brother Timmy Klockner, both seven years old, are most excited about is that their request for a tree house will be honored.

A tree house "with a rope that you climb up and a pole that you slide down," explains Brian.

Tommy Morgan, also seven, is excited that his request for a castle is also on the master plan. Plus, other popular requests, like jungle gyms and scary mazes.

Only one student is less excited than the others.

"Where will we play for the four days it's being built?" asks Michael Schoen, nine years old.

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Writer

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confirm the reported \$4.3 million Mr. Leslie said the highway con-

The Red Roof Inn charges \$36.95 hotel in the works on Route 1 in West  
for a two-bed room, while Franklin Windsor, is less than a mile from the  
Inns of East Brunswick charges Clarksville Motel. A Marriott Hotel

## Chain to close on Clarksville property

# School's playground committee kicks off fundraising campaign

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By **MONITA CASEY**  
Staff Writer

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**LAWRENCE** — The Ben Franklin Community Playground Committee is gearing up for a "Buy-a-Board" fundraising campaign to raise \$35,000 for a new playground at the Ben Franklin Elementary School.

Joan Cittadino, a spokeswoman for the Parent-Teacher Organization committee, said the campaign will begin tomorrow afternoon at the school when Superintendent of Schools Barry Gleim "buys the first board" for the playground. The campaign coordinator will accept Gleim's donation and the fundraiser will begin, she said.

"All children at the school will be given 10 boards, symbolized by popsicle sticks, to sell to friends, neighbors and relatives. Parents will also be selling boards throughout the township," Sara Gluckman, campaign coordinator, said of the fundraiser.

The playground is being designed by the Robert Leathers firm of Ithaca,

N.Y. The firm incorporates ideas from students, parents and teachers in designing the playground and the finished product is typically a multi-level wooden structure with tunnels, ramps, slides and mazes.

Over a weekend in the spring adults and children will be putting the playground together with materials bought through donations.

Cittadino said the president of Prince Manufacturing in Lawrenceville has agreed to kick off the corporate fund drive tomorrow with a check for \$1,000. Lawrence businesses and corporations will be receiving letters from the committee requesting similar financial support, she said.

"We would like to see the leading corporations in town fund particular parts of the playground," Frank Haggerty, corporate fundraising coordinator, said. "For example, a corporation could donate \$4,800 to pay for a castle crawling maze with tunnels, ladders and platforms or \$3,800 for an outdoor classroom."

# Drive starts to build new playground

By Cheryl Miller  
Staff Writer

The Ben Franklin PTO Community Playground Committee kicked off its campaign to raise \$35,000 to build a playground at the Ben Franklin Elementary School yesterday.

The president of Prince Manufacturing, Inc., in Lawrence, Jack Sullivan, began the corporate campaign by awarding a check for \$1,000 to Carol Lerner, a parent co-ordinator of the playground committee.

Barry Gleim, superintendent of schools for Lawrence Township, was also on hand to kick off the the committee's Buy-A-Board campaign. He purchased the first board from Sara Gluckman, coordinator of the campaign.

Each board is \$3, and is pasted on a schematic design of the playground, on display at the school, with the donor's name on it.

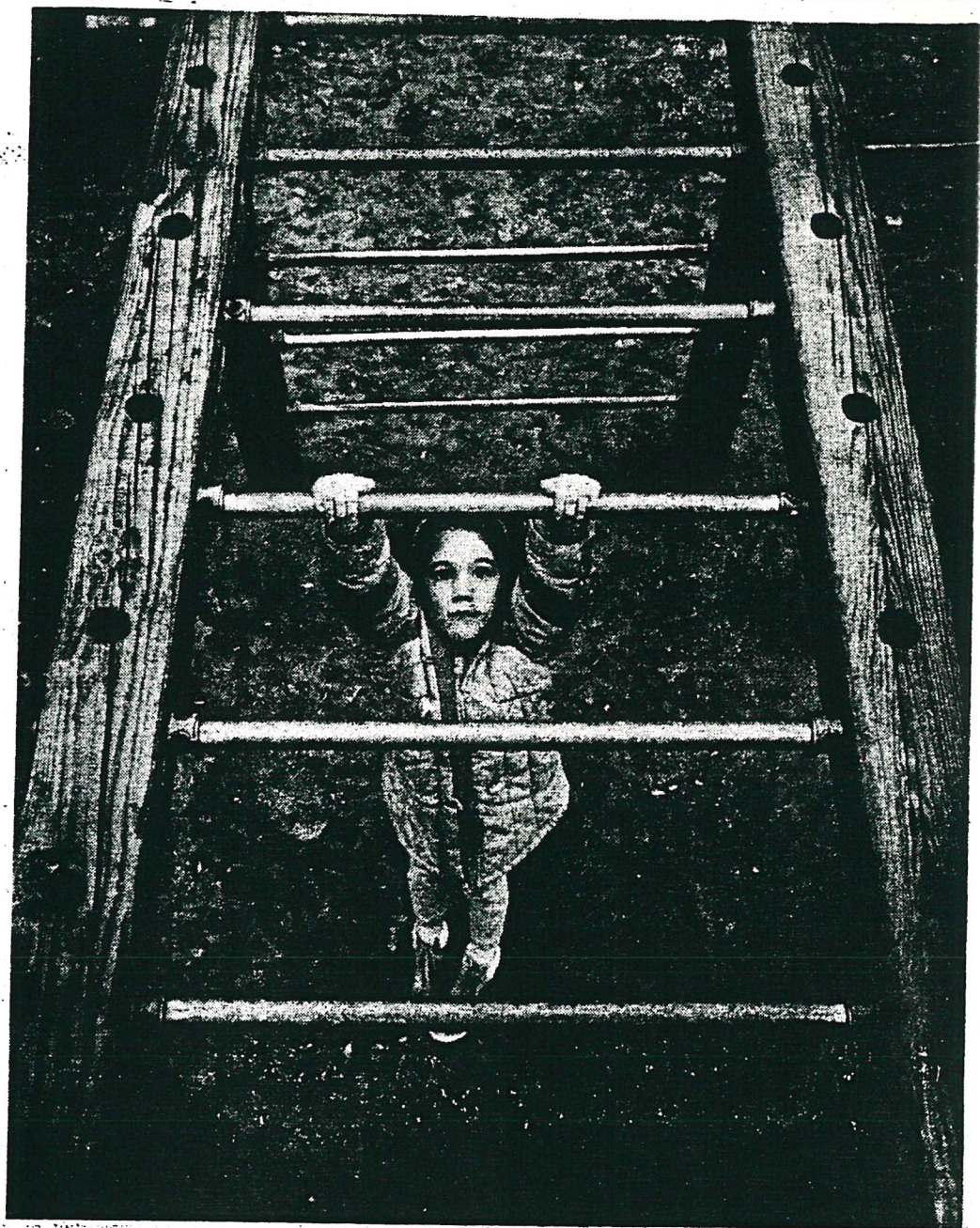
"I'm very pleased with the effort of parents to organize this act which will benefit all the children of our school," Dr. Gleim said. "I will look forward to the day when this playground will become a reality."

The playground, which children at the Ben Franklin Elementary School helped to design, will be a multi-level wooden structure with tunnels, ramps, bridges, slides, mazes and castles. It will replace the original playground, which is unsafe and inadequate, and about 25 years old, committee members said. It will be open to the entire community after school, on weekends and during the summer.

On Oct. 7, Ernie Bayles, an architect with the Ithaca-based Robert Leathers architectural firm, listened to more than 300 elementary children's suggestions for the playground. The project is expected to culminate in a four-day construction weekend in the spring, when money, volunteers, labor, food, child care and tools will be recruited.

But committee members need to raise money for the project, and the Buy-a-Board and corporate campaigns are two of the many fund-raising projects that committee has begun. The committee expects to raise between \$10,000 and \$15,000 from the Lawrence business community, corporate fund-raising coordinator Frank Haggerty said.

"We would like to see the leading corporations in town fund particular parts of the playground. A corporation could donate, for example, \$4,800 to pay for the materials in a castle crawling maze complete with tunnels,



Staff photo • Paul Savage

Tracy Doremus, a first-grader at Ben Franklin Elementary School, tries out the old playground equipment at the school. A drive has begun to raise \$35,000 for a new playground that will be build over a four-day period by community volunteers.

ladders and platforms, or \$3,800 for an outdoor classroom," Mr. Haggerty said. If the committee can raise an additional \$5,400, they will include, in the final project, a wheelchair access area including ramps and exercise equipment.

Other play area equipment for which committee members need funding include a suspension bridge, a double slide, picnic tables, a tunnel slide, a circular slide and a hot air balloon.

Mrs. Gluckman said that she hopes to raise at least \$5,000 by selling boards, which will

be symbolized by popsicle sticks, to community residents. Other fund-raising ideas that committee members are embarking on include holding an auction in late February or March.

The playground design and construction is being supervised by the Leathers firm, who have supervised over 400 similarly, community-built playgrounds throughout the country in the past 15 years. What the firm does is to incorporate the ideas of parents, teachers, residents and especially children into the design.

# Class area will be part of school's playground

By MONITA CASEY  
Staff Writer

LAWRENCE — Holding to the idea that children should have a certain amount of wind in their hair and sun in their faces when they are learning about science and nature, the Ben Franklin Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization has included outdoor classrooms in its design for a new playground.

Architect Ernie Bayles of the Robert S. Leathers and Associates firm, of Ithaca, N.Y., has worked a stage-like area with benches into one area and a cluster of round picnic tables into another area of his design for what the PTO Playground Committee has dubbed the "Ben Franklin Community Play Area," said Joan Cittadino, a committee member.

At the committee's request, both areas will accommodate a full class, she said.

School children, parents and teachers told the architect what they want

included in the playground design during "Design Day" held Oct. 7 at the school.

Bayles' site plan of the playground includes a dinosaur slide, a castle maze, bouncing toys, a tire tunnel and a tire city, a suspension bridge and a rubber bridge.

Cittadino said most of the play equipment will be connected to allow children to move from one activity to the next. A child will be able to choose between several different levels of challenge when going from one piece of equipment to another, she said.

For safety, areas such as the castle maze and tree fort, which will be raised high off the ground, will have enclosed sides, and the playground will have wheelchair access, she said.

During the next few weeks, the committee will be making plans for "Playground-Raising Weekend" scheduled April 30 through May 3. Residents will be asked to volunteer their time and build the playground under the supervision of the architect during that weekend, Cittadino said.

# \$11,000 for Ben Franklin playground

The fundraising campaign for the Ben Franklin Community Playground has gotten off with over \$11,000 raised toward its \$35,000 goal. The community playground will be built by volunteers during the weekend of April 30 - May 3.

The parents and children of the Ben Franklin School have raised most of this \$11,000 through the Buy-a-Board Campaign (selling symbolic boards for \$3 each) which raised over \$4,000; through collecting Acme frequent Buyers Coupons which raised \$3,500 for the circular slide; and through the Holiday Gift Fair which raised \$600.

The Playground Committee also raised over \$3,000 in its business/corporate campaign which is just getting off the ground. Following is a partial listing of donations made by individuals and businesses:

**Silver Award: \$50 and under:** Mr. Joseph Arnone; Beneficial; Robert Buda Associates; Franklin Corner

Grocery; Franklin Corner Tavern; Jiffy Lube; Bruce Lwstbader, D.M.D.; Fredenc J. Malles, M.D.; Peyton Associates, Pennington; Barry Rabinowitz, D.D.S.; David Sobor, D.D.S.; Al Susman Realty, Inc.; Weisdel Realtor, Lawrenceville.

**Gold Award: \$51 - \$249:** American Biltrate, Inc.; Amtico Flooring Division; Applied Color Systems; Carteret Savings Bank, Morristown; FMC Chemical Research and Development Center; Hair Saloon, Inc.; Parklane Furniture; Princeton Motorsport, Inc.; Mercedes-Benz Dealer; Lewis J. Russo, Jr., D.D.S. and Kevin P. Coyle, D.M.D.; Jeffrey I. Schard, M.D.; Lawrence OB-GYN Associates.

**Platinum Award: \$250 - \$499:** Bruce Small, D.M.D.

**Diamond Award: \$500 and up:** Ed Cahill Chevrolet; Prince Manufacturing Company.

**Materials Donations:** Larry Plummer, sign maker made eight-foot slide thermometer lawn slide; Princeton University Press printed 5,000 brochures. In addition, the Lawrence Road Florist donated a \$25 gift certificate and Acme Markets gave two turkeys as raffle prizes for the Holiday Gift Fair.

**Fundraising chairperson, Sam Gluckman,** announced that donors \$1,000 or more will have their names engraved on a permanent plaque. Donors of \$3,000 or more will have a separate plaque dedicated and attached to a major piece of playground equipment.

## Acme coupons sought for Ben Franklin playground

The Ben Franklin Community Playground Committee has collected enough Acme Market Frequent Buyers stamps to obtain a \$3500 circular slide for its playground to be built by volunteers on April 30 - May 3. Parents and children at the Ben Franklin School collected over 6,795 filled checks.

Frequent Buyers coordinator for the Playground Committee, Meg Lloyd received notification from Acme that its Frequent Buyer program will come to an end on Feb. 14. However, Acme

will redeem any filled coupons at a rate of 50 cents. Mrs. Lloyd urges residents to drop off coupons in the box at Acme or mail to Ben Franklin Community Playground, Ben Franklin Elementary School, 2939 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648. Coupons must be received by Feb. 20 in order to comply with Acme's deadline.

"These stamps will become worthless in February," Mrs. Lloyd stated. "I urge everyone to unload any stamps they have away stamps and help the playground meet its fundraising goal."





Photo • Kathie Chaikin

## We're on the way

The thermometer in front of Ben Franklin Elementary School is beginning to register some warmth as the fund drive for the new playground reaches \$15,000. Looking on is the Thompson family: Dayna (left), Leigh, Karen and John.

February 10, 1987

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### **Volunteer to help playground project**

To the editor:

The residents and businesses of Lawrence Township have a unique opportunity to become involved in a project they can be proud of now and in the future: next April 30 to May 3 hundreds of volunteers — young and old — will build a community playground at the Ben Franklin Elementary School.

The project is special in a number of ways: The playground was designed with the input of the children at Ben Franklin under the expert guidance of the Ithaca-based Robert S. Leathers Architectural Firm. We have designed the playground with the broader community's needs in mind with equipment that spans a wide age and skill level as well as with benches for sitting, picnic tables for family outings, and an area for the physically handicapped. Finally, the project is relying on volunteers from start to finish — from the raising of funds, gathering of tools and materials and recruitment of labor for construction, food duties and childcare.

So far, we have raised over \$10,000 for a project that will cost us about \$35,000 and will have a commercial worth of about \$120,000. The parents and children have raised the bulk of this by selling \$3 symbolic boards in their Buy-A-Board campaign, by collecting Acme Frequent Buyers' checks for a \$3,500 circular slide,

and by holding special fundraisers.

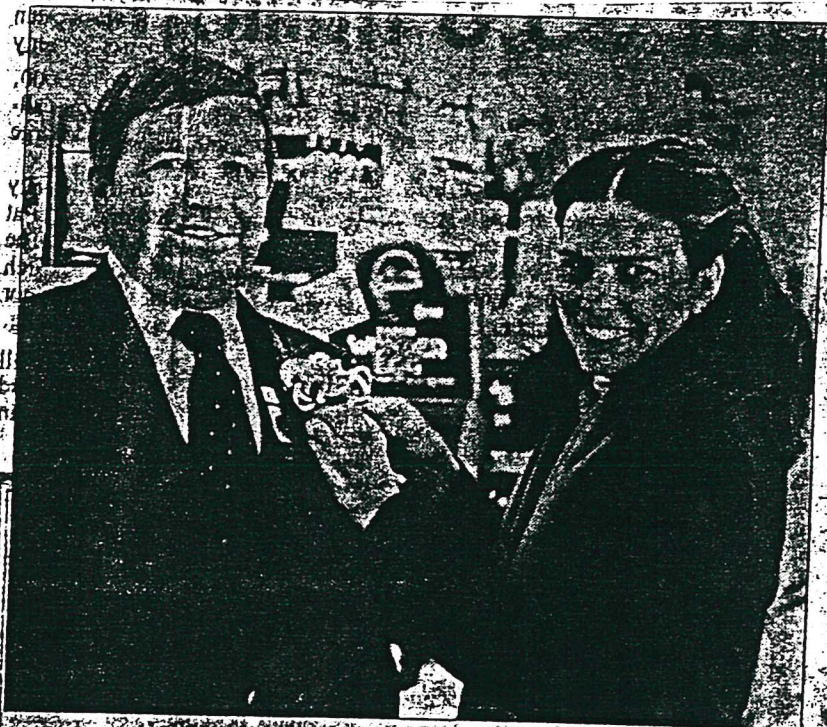
During the month of January and early February, practically every business and corporation in Lawrence received or will receive a packet of material explaining our project and requesting a donation, either in cash or materials. We have raised over \$3,000 from the business community already in a campaign that is just beginning to get off the ground but we need to raise at least \$7,000 more in small and medium-sized donations and at least an equal amount in large donations. Donors \$1,000 and more will have their names engraved on a permanent plaque and donors \$3,000 and over will also have a separate plaque dedicated to a major piece of equipment.

In addition, retail stores are being contacted for donations of merchandise or services that will be auctioned off at a March 21 Family Auction and Flea Market. Finally, we are asking all food-related businesses to donate food to feed volunteers during Construction Weekend.

Our theme for Construction Weekend is "We're Building A Dream." In the style of an old-fashioned barn raising, we are asking everyone to pitch in. Please help the children of Ben Franklin and all the children of Lawrence Township realize their dream for a quality, creative and fun-filled playground. Support our fundraising campaign and volunteer your time for a shift on Construction Weekend. It will be a lot of fun and very rewarding.

Please contact Carol Lerner, playground coordinator at 883-8878 or Russell Stanley, principal, at 883-0300, for further information.

Carol Lerner, Coordinator  
Ben Franklin PTO  
Community Playground Committee



Meg Lloyd, chairperson of the Acme Frequent Buyer Check Campaign, pins a token of thanks on manager Charles Litz after completion of the fundraising effort.

## Acme buyer stamps yield \$8,386 for Ben Franklin

Meg Lloyd, chairperson of the Acme Frequent Buyer Check Campaign for the Ben Franklin Community Playground Committee, thanked all members of the community who gave their Acme Frequent Buyer Checks to the playground. The Playground Committee, she said, is also very grateful to Acme Markets for their Group Fundraising Program through the collection of the Frequent Buyer Checks.

The initial goal for the \$3,500 circular slide was quickly met through the community's generosity. Acme paid 50 cents for each filled Buyer Check thereafter and an additional \$4,886 was raised for a total of \$8,386.

Playground-Raising Weekend will be Thursday through Sunday, April 30-May 3. Skilled and unskilled workers are needed to make this dream playground a reality. Call Ben Franklin



# The Ben Franklin Community Playground

## The school's coordinating committee presents the project to readers

### The mobilization is on

From April 30 through May 3 a community playground will be built in barn-raising style by about 800 volunteers at the Benjamin Franklin Elementary School.

The playground, which would cost in excess of \$150,000 if commercially built, will be an important recreational facility for the entire area.

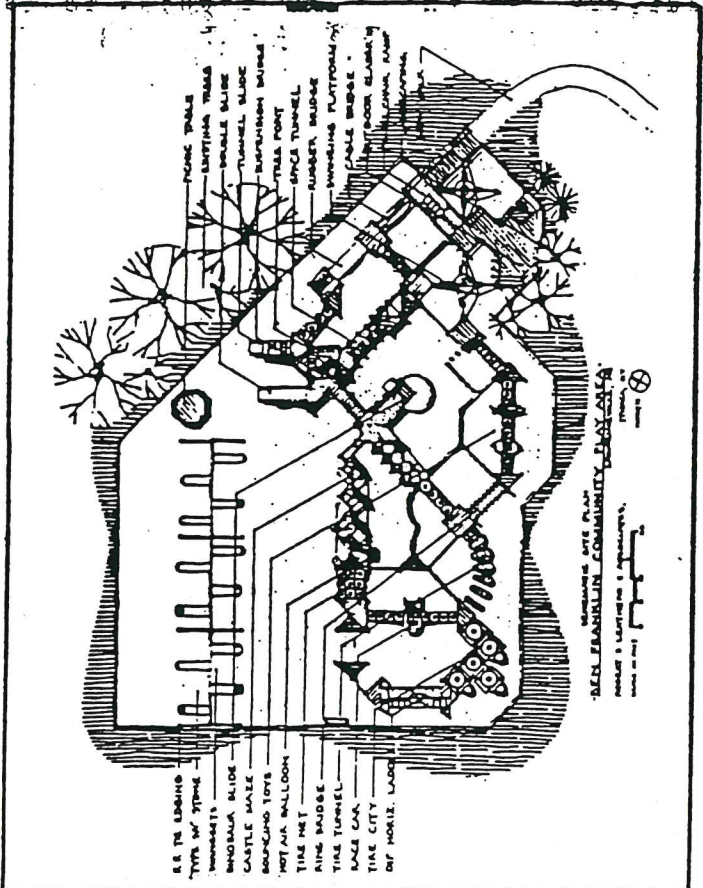
The playground was designed by the Itasca-based Robert S. Leathers architectural firm which specializes in community-built playgrounds. Last October, an architect from the firm spent the entire day at the school meeting with each class and incorporating many of the children's ideas into the schematic plan. Parents, teachers and community residents were also key participants in the planning.

For the past six months, nearly one hundred parents, teachers and community residents have worked thousands of hours fundraising, procuring material, recruiting volunteers and planning logistics. Now the time has almost come to build.

In other towns where similar playgrounds have been built, volunteers have commented that the project is much more than simply building a playground. It becomes an effort in strengthening a community. "There's never been anything quite like it to our community together the way this project did," commented a volunteer from a similar playground built earlier in Great Falls, Va.

This special section will present the full scope of the project and provide information. We hope many readers will join us to help build the playground.

*These articles were researched and written by Ben Franklin Community Playground Committee members: Carol Lerner, Eric Lerner and Joan Cittadino.*



An early version of the schematic plan of the playground shows the variety and extent of the project.

### Construction Weekend — April 30-May 3 — how it will work

For four virtually non-stop days from April 30 through May 3, about 800 volunteers will pitch in with hammers and shirt sleeves rolled up to build a very special playground.



Construction weekend will be a barn raising in the truest sense of the word. Saws and electric drills. We will find

mothers wielding electric saws; fathers placing pilings into holes; youngsters washing tires and grandfathers doing sophisticated carpentry or passing out tools.

"It's easier to put a playground together in four days than to spread it out over months," says architect Robert Leathers. "Once the adrenaline is flowing and the energy of the community is targeted, it swings everyone into a flurry of accomplishments."

Over the four days accomplishments will include hammering over 650 pounds of nails into enough lumber to frame two houses. Mountains of food will be prepared or donated and consumed.

By Friday, all platforms will be completed, as will all carpentry prefabrication and all wood sanding. The cubes, tire nets and ladders will be assembled.

On Saturday, all bridges, beams and tires will be in place. Handrails will be completed and railroad ties installed. Children in child care will continue helping out with sanding and other safe activities.

cut a straight line with a hand held circular saw. Youngsters 10-13 can work on the main site if accompanied by a parent but cannot use power tools; youths 14-17 can work on a crew without a parent but cannot use power tools. Anyone 18 or older is treated as an adult.

Builders will be assembled into a three-person crew consisting of one skilled and two unskilled workers. The crews will be supervised by volunteer foremen, the architect and the construction supervisor. Skilled carpenters will do the more intricate prefabrication work on highly specialized machinery on loan.

The work shifts will run from 7:30-

10 will take place in the school and care for infants and toddlers under three will be available in private homes. A full schedule of activities — crafts, story telling, horticulture, drama, movies, etc. — is being planned. Children five and over will be periodically taken to the special children's site to help with safe construction-related activities like sanding.

"I love to see a whole family — a grandparent, a parent and a child — out there working," says Mr. Leathers. "They've never had a chance to build something together like this."

Above all building a playground is fun and a very special type of camaraderie develops amongst partici-



A Leathers' playground in Mount Kisco, N.Y., during a Construction Weekend last October. A similar effort will begin here on April 30.

# The playground — what it will look like

enough so that the children imaginatively transform one thing into another. For example, a castle can be turned into a space-ship or an ocean liner at sea; the tree house can also be a fort or the bottom portion of an Indian tepee or African jungle hut. There is an outdoor classroom large enough to accommodate an entire class for nature study or — by using the small stage — for dramatic performances or puppet shows. Three round tables and benches grouped together will double as both picnic tables for family outings or work benches for art and science projects. Throughout the playground there are many nooks and crannies for quiet play where a child can sit and think, dream or read.

The playground has also been designed with the broader community's interests in mind. There will be benches scattered throughout the park-like setting of the playground area. The outdoor classroom will be a popular area for parents and grandparents to relax in the sun with a good book or newspaper while their young users safely play. Seniors might enjoy the checkerboards painted on the picnic table for a leisurely game of checkers or chess.

The playground will also have wheelchair access to the outdoor classroom and to some specially designed exercise equipment which will include bars, rings and a sand table.

## Tool loans urgently needed

The Playground Committee needs loans of tools for construction work.

All tools are guaranteed to be returned in as good or better condition. A complete list of tools can be obtained by calling Tool Coordinator Paula Kockner at 896-0450 or Eric Lerner at 883-8878. A partial list of particularly needed tools follows: Chain saws, 18

# Why a playground — the importance of play for children

is a community playground important enough to mobilize the whole town to build it? Why should we be putting our energy into this project rather than another more academically oriented one?

The main reason is that play is crucially important to children. A community playground is the best way to give the children of Lawrence expanded opportunities for the physical, social and imaginative play they need to develop their minds and bodies.

Play is the essential work of childhood," as Dr. Matthew Hlar, a child therapist in Princeton puts it. "It's how they get their bearings in the world, work out their feelings and develop their emotions." For young children especially, play is the way they learn about themselves and about how to relate to others. It's also the way they

exercise their imagination. Without a well-developed imagination — the ability to think up new things that haven't existed before — the learning received in school can't be put to creative use. It becomes just an assortment of skills and facts.

It's harder for today's children to find opportunities and time for social play than it was for their parents a generation ago. Twenty-five or thirty years ago, a group of children might be quite content to turn a porch stoop into a space-ship or a small woodlot into a mysterious castle. But today, just getting a group of playmates together isn't so easy. There are fewer children per family and, as suburbs have expanded outwards, fewer families live on the block. The children that do live close often aren't around. As psychologist Bruno Bettelheim writes, "The days of

most middleclass children are filled with scheduled activities... music and dance lessons, organized sports — which leave them hardly any time simply to be themselves."

Sharpened concerns about children's safety means that parents are more reluctant to leave children to unsupervised play. The net result is that play is usually "by appointment" — involving a child over to your house, often a frustrating effort on days when nobody's home. And finally there's TV, a much more potent lure away from imaginative play than in the old days of black-and-white.

Today's children need a center for playing that's exciting and safe enough to bring them together for unstructured enjoyment. That's the role of a creative community playground. "An imaginatively constructed playground

will be attractive to the children, so they will use it," points out Dr. Mark LeVita, pediatrician with the Pediatric Group, Princeton, and president of the Medical Staff at Princeton Medical Center. "Traditional playground equipment just doesn't hold their interest."

This is certainly the case today at Ben Franklin.

"During recess the children just run around," comments Mrs. Sandra O'Neill, a first grade teacher, "they rarely play with the existing equipment." But the fanciful castles and mazes of the community playground will be the magnet that pulls children off the living-room couch and out playing with each other.

"A creative playground gives a child a background to learn to interact with each other," says Dr. LeVita. "One

child, for example, may be riding in the hot air balloon and another will ask him if he can buy a ticket, or join him in an adventure to Oz." Since the design of a Leathers' playground is inherently safe for even very young children, the need for parental supervision is relaxed. At other such playgrounds the outer benches after school or on weekends are often filled with grown-ups placidly reading their papers or taking in the sun.

While the children are having fun, and developing their imaginations and sense of themselves and others, they'll also be getting stronger. Despite the popularity of physical fitness among adults, a survey performed by fitness expert Dr. Kenneth Cooper showed that in every age group from kindergarten to 12th grade, American kids are significantly fatter and less fit

lunch from 12 - 12:30 and dinner from 5 - 5:30. Snacks will be available all day. Meals will be prepared at the school or brought in from area food merchants or community residents and served family style. Meal time is an important part of the work day and can turn lots of hard work into a festive occasion.

A full child care program will be available for all children ten years and under. The child care for children 3 to

final hours of building comes to an end with a certain sadness fills the construction site.

"After all the anticipation, those four days slipped too quickly into memory," commented a Glen Cove, New York playground leader. "Long before the last ten-penny nail was hammered home, the air was filled with a new crop of 'why don't we's,'" he said. Anything to keep the magic spirit going.

## Volunteers needed!

We need to know now if we can count on you and which shifts you can work. We must fill quotas for each shift and we also need to know who is coming for the purposes of planning food and child care. Remember, we need to fill 1,500 time slots, so please sign up for as many shifts as you can. But if you can't work a full shift, even an hour or two will be useful.

Please take a moment right now to fill out the sign-up form below and mail it to the Ben Franklin Playground Committee, Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, 2939 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648. You can also phone in which shifts you plan to work by calling any of the following numbers: 883-1239 or 883-5367.

**SIGN UP FORM**  
Check the shifts you can work and indicate job category on the line next to the time shift using the following code: B = Build; CC = Child Care; F = Food Services

Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
April 30	May 1	May 2	May 3
7:15-noon	7:15-noon	7:15-noon	7:15-noon
12:30-5	12:30-5	12:30-5	12:30-5
5:30-8:30	5:30-8:30	5:30-8:30	5:30-8:30
Name: _____			
Address: _____			
Phone: _____			
Day: _____ Evening: _____			
Do you need child care? Yes ___ No ___ Ages: _____			
Return to: Ben Franklin Community Playground Committee, Benjamin Franklin Elementary School, 2939 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, N.J. 08648. Call 883-5367 or 883-1239 with any questions.			

today than their older brothers and sisters were in 1975. "Children need to work on building upper body strength," notes Mrs. Susan Clowson, physical education teacher at Ben Franklin. "The playground will encourage this in many ways — climbing up and over, swinging from back crawling under things I think it will be wonderful." From the playground, Lawrence's children will get the idea that vigorous physical activity not only can be fun, but makes them feel better too — a valuable lesson for keeping fit later on.

In an era where child psychologists worry about overemphases on academic effort, on "hot-housed children," the playground will be a way to right the balance and to reassure our children that we know childhood is a time for play.