



Let's be Architects

Spatial design activity developed
by CatalyticAction

Let's be architects is an activity that invites children to play the role of architects. Through drawing and/or manipulating 3D models, children explore different configurations of spatial designs, which helps reveal visions and stimulates creativity. Children learn how architects visualise design solutions, discuss the architect's role and become architects by drawing and creating their own intervention based on their needs and aspirations.

Preparation

1. For 2D drawings, prepare and print the supporting drawings and images. The supporting drawings can be a basic plan, an axonometric view or a sketch of the site of intervention produced on an A4 or A3. The images are actual images of the site of intervention which locations are noted on the supporting drawings.
2. For the 3D models, prepare an A3 cardboard to use as a base for the model making, draw a basic plan of the space with key features of the site of intervention if present: trees, water fountain, bridge, etc. Print images of the site of intervention and display them.



Purpose:

To design the spatial intervention.



Duration:

60-90 minutes



Group size:

Ideally up to 15 participants with one facilitator, up to 30 participants with two facilitators.



Suggested Age:

10+

Materials:

This activity can happen using two mediums of expression:



1) Using 2D drawings: Pencils, coloring pencils, crayons, colored stickers, supporting drawings and images, papers.

2) Using 3D models: Pencils, coloring pencils, glue sticks, scissors, cardboard, toothpicks, tape, supporting drawings, recyclables, etc.



Space:

This activity works best in a room with desks or tables for drawing and model-making.

Step by Step:

2D drawings

- Explain to the participants today's exercise and how important it is that they participate in designing the spatial intervention.
- Discuss with the participants briefly the shared vision they had developed collectively and recall the importance of design.
- Distribute the supporting drawings and images of the site of intervention.
- Explain to the participants the supporting drawings and images provided.
- Ask participants 'What do you think is presented in this drawing? 'Who usually draws such drawings? and why?' Introduce the term architect and open up a discussion on the role of an architect. You may ask questions like: What are the steps to build a house?
- Explain what is the zoning of a spatial intervention.
- Conclude the discussion by saying that now, they will be architects designing the spatial intervention, and that they will present their designs at the end of the session.
- Ask the participants to draw on the provided supporting drawings their design; they can also use text and symbols, whatever they are more comfortable with, to express their design.
- Explain to them how to use the coloured stickers to designate the different zones of their design for example: red for play items, green for greenery, blue for sports games, yellow for resting areas.
- Distribute pencils, stickers, and other material to invite participants to begin, by drawing and writing down all the ideas they have.
- Walk around the room and ask questions out of curiosity about their design, individually, such as: why did you put the garden near the bathrooms? or how many swings would you imagine in that spot?
- Once the designs are finalised, the participants present their designs to the group in a panel discussion format where the participants discuss and give feedback to each other on the design.



Note: It is possible to use the two mediums, moving from one to the other, but this requires more time and can happen across multiple sessions.

3D models

- Explain to the participants today's exercise and how important it is that they participate in designing the spatial intervention.
- Discuss with the participants briefly the shared vision they had developed collectively and recall the importance of design.
- Distribute the piece of cardboard on which the participants will build their design models.
- Explain to the participants what the cardboard piece represents while referring to the images of the site of intervention displayed. Introduce the term architect and open up a discussion on the role of an architect. You may ask questions like: what are the steps to build a house?
- Conclude the discussion by saying that now, they will be architects designing the spatial intervention, and that they will present their design models at the end of the session.
- Divide into smaller groups that would work together to build the design model (3 to 4 children per group).
- Invite the participants to pick from the recycled materials available to build their models such as: cardboard, newspaper, matchboxes, etc.
- In groups they start discussing the design of the intervention together.
- They can also use writing and drawing on the cardboard to designate, for example, the entrance or the floor material such as grass, gravel, etc.
- Encourage them to think about themselves using the space they are designing and try to imagine what they see, touch and feel. Once they complete the layout of the 3D model, ask them to color the model they created, they can color the walls, the greenery, etc.
- Walk around the room and ask questions out of curiosity about their work, individually, such as: why did you put the garden near the bathrooms,? or how many swings would you imagine in that spot?
- Once the design models are finalised, the participants present their designs to the group in a panel discussion format where the participants discuss and give feedback to each other on the design.



Tips:

- Optional: You could also teach participants how to create cubes from paper using cut out templates.
- Optional: You could prepare 'small flags sticks' that include drawings of different activities that can happen in the site of intervention. Participants use them to design their intervention. If participants have different activities that are not on the flags, encourage them to draw it on the blank flags.
- Avoid suggesting ideas to participants as they are doing their work. Listen well to what they are saying, what they are doing, and offer guidance by following their train of thinking.
- Some children might feel shy and hesitate to show their work. Gently encourage them to share but do not push too hard. You may ask if they would like you, or a friend to present their work.