



A New Playground for

What is your favorite memory of playing on the playground looking out on Dunning Lake? Was it as a child when your family was at the beach? Was it bringing your children for play dates with friends they still are close with today? Was it bringing your grandchildren and seeing them play and laugh the way their parents did when you brought them as kids?

The playground has been a focal point of the beach for over thirty years. When it made its debut in 1986, it was considered an advanced playground with unique features and play options that could not be found at any other playground in the region. There are surely some who will remember Winding Trails first full time Camp Director and now Executive Director Scott Brown using tools given to him as a wedding present to help build the playground with the help and support of volunteers. As we continue to make progress on our 10-Year Dunning Lake Master Plan, we will focus on the playground and plans to replace it with a new playground that will again provide unique features and play options that won't be found in any other playground in the area. But we need your help.

The original playground cost about \$30,000 and proved to be a great investment. The budget for its replacement is in the \$300,000 range. We know, that is a lot of money. To achieve this goal, we depend on the generosity of members to support and make possible the new playground. This year we will have a separate appeal in support of the new playground that will go out in early summer and hope you will consider making a donation. We will also host some fundraising events that will provide opportunities for us to have a good time while supporting this great cause. In the coming months, we will be communicating more about our playground plans and how you can help!

Playground design, function and quality have come a long way in the last 30 years. Staff, Board Members, and focus groups have been engaged in assessing options and value to be sure we are well positioned to get the same benefit for this playground that we did with the current one. Along the way there have been countless examples reinforcing the importance and value playgrounds provide. Child psychologists



and researchers have linked physical, social, and emotional skills to playgrounds and free-unstructured play. Here a few of those key findings.

a New Generation



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Optimal health demands physical activity on a daily basis, and modern playgrounds make it easier than ever for kids to just move, run, climb, jump, and more.
- Playgrounds provide a place for "full body" workouts that include exercises to strengthen the arms, legs, torso, shoulders, and so on. The cardiovascular system, circulatory system, and neurological system of the child are nurtured, too.
- Climbing equipment stimulates cognitive skills like memory, problem solving, and visualization. It puts to use the perceptual motor skills and increases fitness ability. It enhances body and spatial awareness and develops most of the motor skills.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Playground advocates note that social interaction benefits society because they are locations where kids of any race, age, and economic status can socialize and play.
- Playgrounds provide an opportunity for children to practice their social skills, to come up with solutions to problems, and to learn self-control in working out their conflicts.
- Conflict resolution is a common skill learned on a playground in early childhood. So, too, are resiliency and self-advocacy... "all of which can help children learn how to develop healthy relationships and to become leaders." (Magher, 2014)

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Just as everyday life brings up lots of emotions for adults, playing does the same for kids, particularly in a playground where they are exposed to other children and to lots of physical challenges.
- Diplomacy is something that almost any child can learn when negotiating the terms of play with a single or group of peers on a playground.
- The word "play" does not mean simply running around. It is an activity that demands the "acquisition of a complex set of skills... making agreements with others as equals, stepping into an imagined structure, and accepting that structure even when things don't go your way." These are key life skills. (Bornstein, 2011)
- Kids absorb knowledge through risk taking, exploring, and the consequences of their choices. Playgrounds provide a nearly fail-proof location for this important part of development.

These are all things we know but serve as a good reminder of how important playgrounds and unstructured play is to our children. We are finalizing the design as this goes to print. Keep an eye out for communications regarding solicitations and fund-raising opportunities to assist in this noble cause. We will provide more information at a temporary kiosk by the existing playground this summer. With your support, Winding Trails hopes to have a new playground installed for summer 2022. Please consider lending a hand. Even Albert Einstein acknowledged that, "Play is the highest form of research!"

Source: <https://www.aaastateofplay.com>