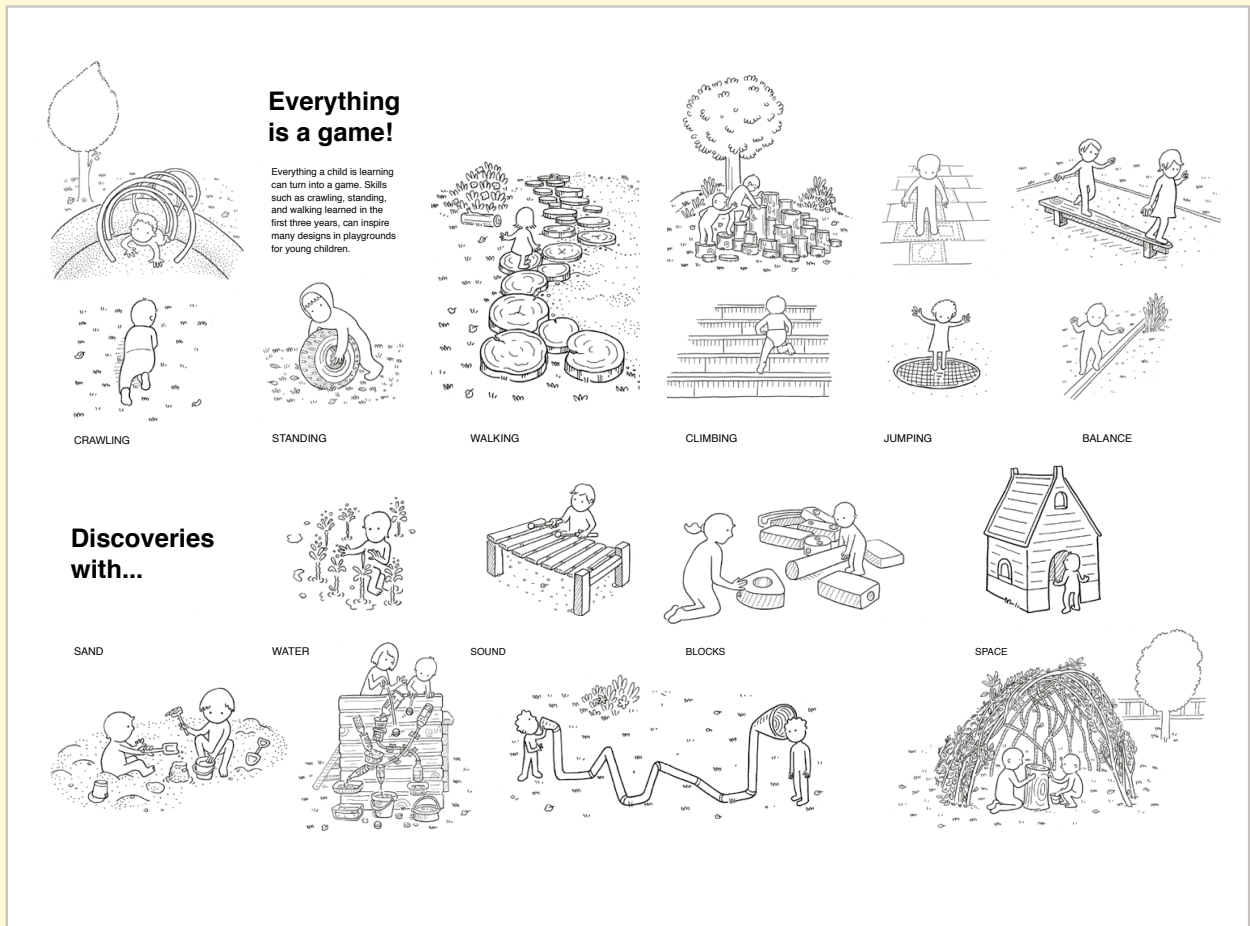# IDEAS BOOK - URBAN PLAY SPACES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

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Play is an important function of public space. However, most often urban play spaces are designed for children or young adults that have already developed their motor skills. In conversation with Bernard van Leer Foundation in Istanbul, Superpool* initiated an 'ideas book' addressing the play needs of younger children and their caregivers. The book is a collection of simple guidelines and design ideas for urban playgrounds.

For designers knowing the 'user group' is an important step in starting any design process. What is fascinating with designing for young children is that their body and skills are constantly changing - arguably no other user group is as ready for new challenges! But the seeming modesty of their challenges, such as learning to stand and keep balance or to take a step, should not cause us to underestimate the potential play value of these new skills. The guide tries to identify these skills and explores play ideas accommodating them.

Alongside the changes in babies' bodies, their games also keep evolving. At first, babies play alone or with the help of their caregivers. As they grow up, they start watching the children around them and playing independently next to them. Later, children start to socialise, they play games together with simple rules and, over

Everything is a game!

Everything a child is learning can turn into a game. Skills such as crawling, standing, and walking learned in the first three years, can inspire many designs in playgrounds for young children.

CRAWLING

STANDING

WALKING

CLIMBING

JUMPING

BALANCE

Discoveries with...

SAND

WATER

SOUND

BLOCKS

SPACE

time, they move to games with more complex, sometimes self-invented, rules based on competition or co-operation.

What is needed then to accommodate younger children and their caregivers in urban play spaces? How can playground design support babies to learn by observation, to challenge their skills, have joyful interactions with their caregivers and even to start early friendships? When searching for answers, instead of giving definitive answers, the ideas book provides principles and suggestions that hopes to inspire a multitude of creative ideas.

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