

# **Abstract**

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## **Outdoor Playground Landscape Design and Children's Cognitive Development**

Active play is important for the overall development of children and specific types of play have been linked to different aspects of development. In particular, previous research has linked constructive and pretend play to cognitive development. To date, the impact of outdoor playground landscape design on play behavior and children's development has received little attention. Thus, this study investigates the potential impact of the landscape design of playgrounds on the occurrence of constructive and pretend play and on children's cognitive development. The research was carried out in two playgrounds in Cairo, Egypt. The two playgrounds were Selected to be similar in terms of socio-economic context and play equipment but different in terms of landscape design. Structured, person-centered observations of 30 randomly Selected children playing on each of the two playgrounds were conducted to measure differences in the occurrence of constructive and pretend play. With another sample of 14 children from each playground, cognitive development was assessed through a drawing cognitive skills assessment test. Results indicate significant differences in the amount of constructive and pretend play occurring in the two playgrounds. There were also significant differences in the evaluations of cognitive skills between the children of two playgrounds. The results strongly suggest that the appropriate landscape design of playgrounds can help promote the occurrence of constructive and pretend play and, consequently, help promote the cognitive development of children.