

The Bright School Chattanooga, Tenn.

Project Partners

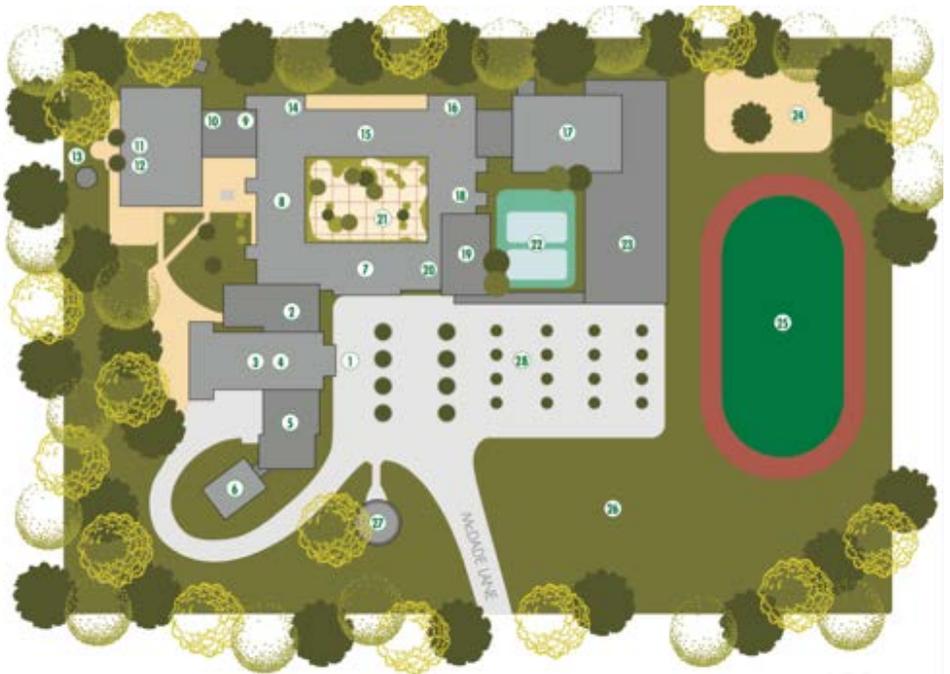
PlayCore
Big Toys
The Bright School

Products

Big Toys wood play structure
Learning garden
Snug Play moveable components

Program Guide

NatureGrounds®, Designing Play
Environments that Integrate
Manufactured Play Equipment
with the Living Landscape™



The Enchanted Forest utilizes natural shade and seasonal learning gardens to immerse children in nature play and education.



The Enchanted Forest Playground is a place of learning, mystery, and discovery for the Bright School's youngest students, where capturing the imagination of young children is at the heart of preschool and kindergarten programs.

Bright School seeks to nurture the whole child, and the playground provides a space to develop the mind, body, and spirit with a central play structure, a "mountain lookout" over the existing stream, and a learning garden.

The garden is a unique space where children grow food to donate to "Katie's Krops", a non-profit that supplies seeds and support to schools to help them grow vegetables to donate to community organizations.

Additionally, beautiful seasonal flowers surround three sides of the play area, where trees and blossoms attract butterflies and birds, providing the children with an opportunity to learn firsthand about native flora and fauna.

Nature-based play opportunities and a program devoted to teaching children where food comes from plus the benefits of sharing it is at the heart of the school's learning program.

Graham Regional Park Haw River, N.C.

Project Partners

PlayCore
GameTime
City of Graham Parks & Recreation

Products

Challenge Course
Timber play structure
Hillside slide
Playworx boulders, logs, nature swing

Program Guide

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The play components are strategically located on either side of the wooded area, and opposite the learning garden, encouraging discovery, active behavior, and engagement with nature.



The city bought the Hawfields area acreage in 2010 through a \$500,000 state Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, contingent upon some development within five years.

The project managers utilized the best-practice research in NatureGrounds to create a wooded area with complementary nature-inspired play components throughout, hillside slides to take advantage of topography, an obstacle course and fitness equipment, a nature garden, and walking/cycling paths through and around the woods.



The space is centrally located between two elementary schools, Alexander Wilson Elementary to the south, and North Graham Elementary to the north, within easy access for field trips. By combining nature and the built environment, children are encouraged to get the highest use and activity level through the variety of options available to encourage play and fitness.

Play equipment is carefully designed to harmonize with and complement the natural environment as well as encourage movement, learning, and periods of moderate to intense activity, as recommended by the Surgeon General.

Green Meadow Elementary School East Greenbush, N.Y.

Project Partners

PlayCore
GameTime
East Greenbush ISD

Products

GameTime play structure
Ultra Site Benches
New and existing natural elements

Program Guide

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The play area utilizes natural shade which creates cozy spaces under its canopy and provides shade to the ramped play area during part of the day.



The playground was implemented in two phases to bring nature into the outdoor play environment by utilizing existing topography and trees.

As part of the design process, site planners used a Global Positioning System (GPS) to map the existing natural assets to conserve them. GameTime then planned the playground around these natural site features to enhance the aesthetic quality and to increase socio-dramatic play opportunities for students. Implementation included a committee to help plan, design, execute, maintain, and help fund the project.



The playground includes a landscaped berm to lift the accessible route to the play structure, social seating areas are designed to offer color, texture, and smell for a rich multi-sensory experience, and are designed to promote outdoor education and curriculum programming.

This joint use, universally designed playground serves a nearby school for children with disabilities.

New and existing plantings serve as nature spots for teachers and students to explore. Benches serve as learning and observation areas.

Santa Ana Play Trail Santa Ana Calif.

Project Partners

PlayCore
GameTime
City of Santa Ana

Products

Bee, Ant & Nature play pocket
Educational signage and activity guides
Nature themed poured rubber surfacing

Program Guide

Pathways for Play®, Infusing Play into
Pathway Networks™



The play pockets are positioned along an active walking/biking path with bollards to serve as a visual cue dividing the play area from the path.



The Santa Ana Play Trail is part of the Santa Ana River Trail that stretches from Huntington Beach to Anaheim. Two miles of the trail, near Anaheim, are dedicated play pockets for children to learn more about animals and their habitats, while encouraging active travel between and within the pockets.

Each pocket of play, is dedicated to a creature found in nature - butterflies, bees, and ants. Each also features interpretive signage to educate the visitors on the creature, its role in nature, and its habitat, while also providing fun activities for all ages.



Visiting classrooms also have the opportunity to download activity guides and continue the learning back at school. Created by leading experts in environmental programming from The Acorn Group, the activities found within the booklets can be used as supplemental activities prior to, during, or after the Play Trail experience. They are full of rich information and ideas to inspire children to learn about the wonders of nature, while developing a strong sense of environmental stewardship.

Each play pocket features themed equipment, nature plantings, and educational signage to teach children valuable lessons about our precious natural resources.

Signal Centers Chattanooga, Tenn.

Project Partners

PlayCore
Big Toys
Signal Centers teachers and students

Products

Play & Park Structures equipment
and Vine Arch
Big Toys planter
Learning garden

Program Guide

NatureGrounds®, Designing Play Environments
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with the Living Landscape™



The Signal Centers Friends Playground includes a mix of nature and the built environment to encourage overall use.



Signal Centers is a nonprofit agency which serves children of all abilities. Their vision was for a nature-based, inclusive play environment that factored in challenging topography, and the therapeutic services that their center offers for people ranging from 6 weeks to adulthood. Extremely important to all stakeholders was the incorporation of a learning garden and play equipment that promote awareness of weather, nature, and learning.

Not only is Signal Centers a universally accessible playground, but it is also certified as a NatureGrounds National Demonstration Site due to its integration of manufactured play equipment and the living landscape.

“Children who have a rich play environment are able to develop in a number of different ways, ways that strengthen the mind, body and soul,” said Donna McConnico, executive director of the agency. Funding for the project came from four local foundations as well as money raised by Friends of Special Children and by the Signal Centers. Existing trees were preserved, and an additional 15 trees and 1,500 new plants were added to the landscape.

Children of all abilities and ages are encouraged to interact with the natural elements, including weather stations, vine tunnels, planting pockets, and seasonal floral plantings.



Springfield Greene Play Trail Springfield, Mo.

Project Partners

PlayCore
 GameTime
 Springfield Greene Park Board
 Springfield Greene School District

Products

Butterfly, Mushroom, Pond, Tree, and Leaves
 Play Trails equipment and educational signs
 Educational activity booklets
 Butterfly Garden

Program Guide

Pathways for Play®, Infusing Play into
 Pathway Networks™



A variety of play pockets along the sinuous path provide opportunities for children and families to play, learn, and interact with nature.



When the Springfield Greene Park Board wanted to connect meaningful destinations in a family-friendly way, a playful path was an obvious solution. Three sites were considered for their proximity to schools and meaningful destinations. The first phase of the resulting PlayTrail provides a fun, educational route that is near three elementary schools and provides additional learning opportunities for children, classes, and families visiting the Springfield Arboretum and Butterfly Garden.

Students using the pathway have access to five playful pockets, each with a particular nature theme, where they can learn important nature lessons like the metamorphosis of butterflies, the ecosystem of a pond, the contribution that trees make to our lives and the environment, all while enjoying playful fun. Additional learning opportunities are explored in the classroom through free downloadable guidebooks that continue the educational opportunities found on the trail. The master plan recommends the addition of more playful stops to extend learning opportunities and connections to neighborhoods.

The playful pockets, including a butterfly sculpture near the butterfly gardens, teach a variety of important lessons about nature, and lead to the playground, where imaginative, nature-focused play continues among children.