

# Concept

Today's children and families often have limited opportunities to connect with the natural environment. Modern family life has changed dramatically in the last two decades. Some children spend more time watching television and playing video games on computers than they do being physically active outside and their health and wellbeing are being negatively affected.

In the past decade, the benefits of connecting to nature have been well documented in numerous research studies and publications\*. Collectively, this body of research shows that children's social, psychological, academic and physical health is positively impacted when they have daily contact with nature.

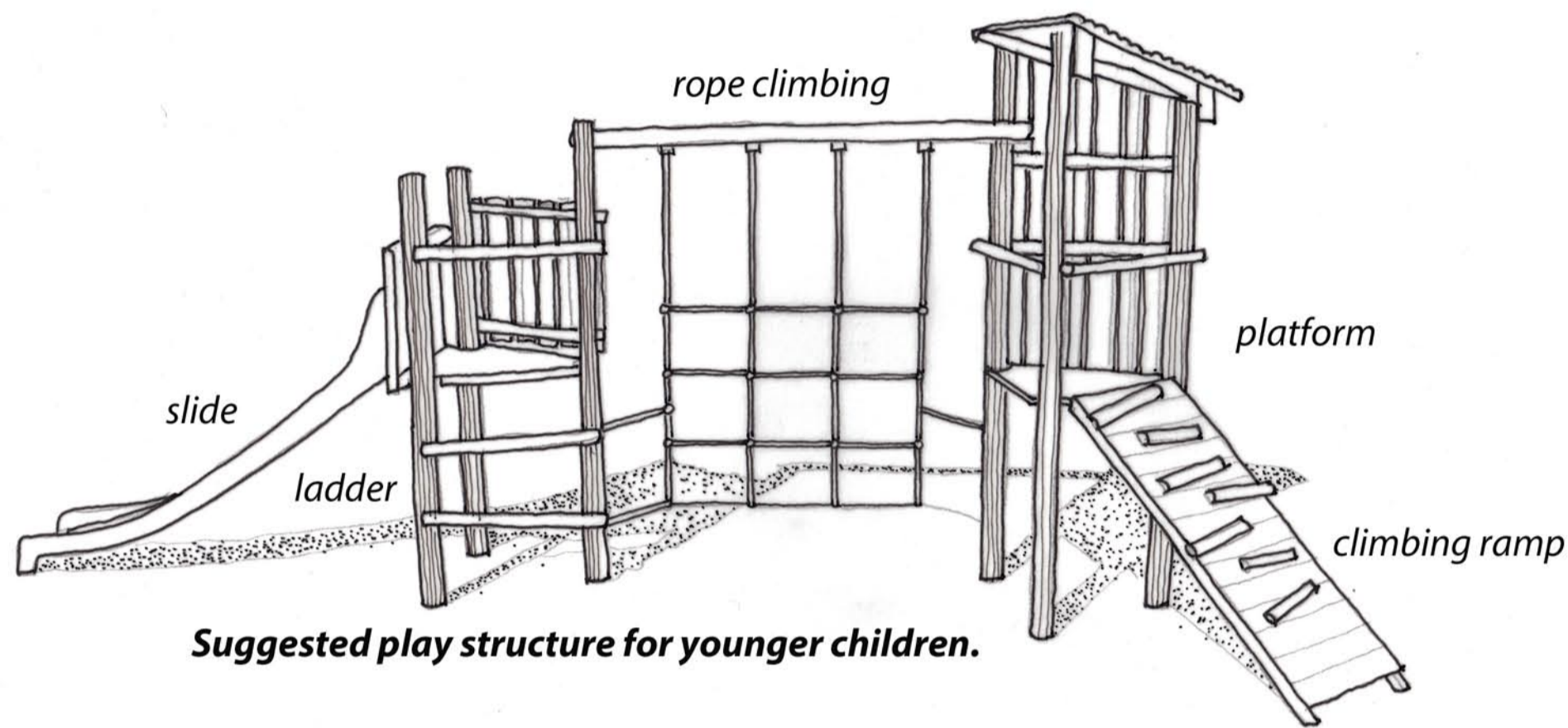
Making a naturalised outdoor multisensory play environment can go some way to encouraging a reconnection with nature, these environments stimulate a diversity of play experiences and contribute to a child's healthy development.

## Community + Place.

Brunswick Park is a local park at the heart of the community. This is an opportunity to develop a multi-sensory play environment that meets the needs of local people. A fun and challenging place for all ages that becomes a great place to meet friends and family. It is important that the new play space becomes part of the life of local people and families and their input into the design and development process will maximise this potential.

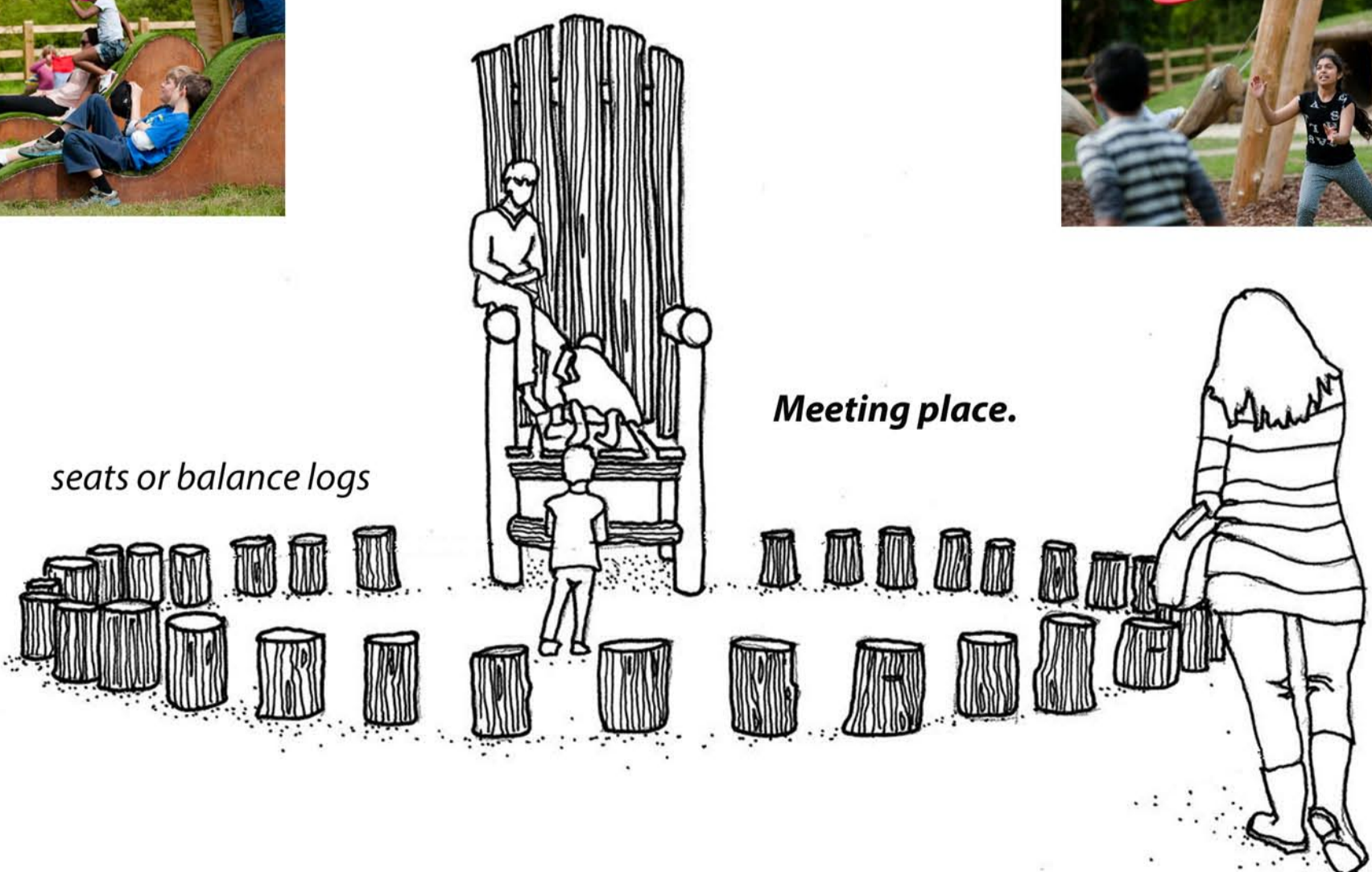
## The existing playground.

The existing playground is old and does not offer an imaginative range of play activities. It is ready for an upgrade. The existing equipment will be removed including the fence and hedge, this will enlarge the playground and allow more space for a better range of activities and the opportunity to create a playful garden feeling to the space. The new space will be zoned for a range of ages but also into places for active and challenging play and other places for more quiet activities and meeting up with friends. A new fence will be installed to maintain the play space as dog free.



## Meeting places + social space.

- As well as a range of play activities a good playspace needs places to meet with friends.
- It also needs places to enjoy the outdoors throw a ball around or simple sit out and enjoy the fresh air.
- The new playspace will include different types of seats, with backrests and without. Some benches to lie back and enjoy the sun and some picnic table and seats if you want to spend the day in the park.



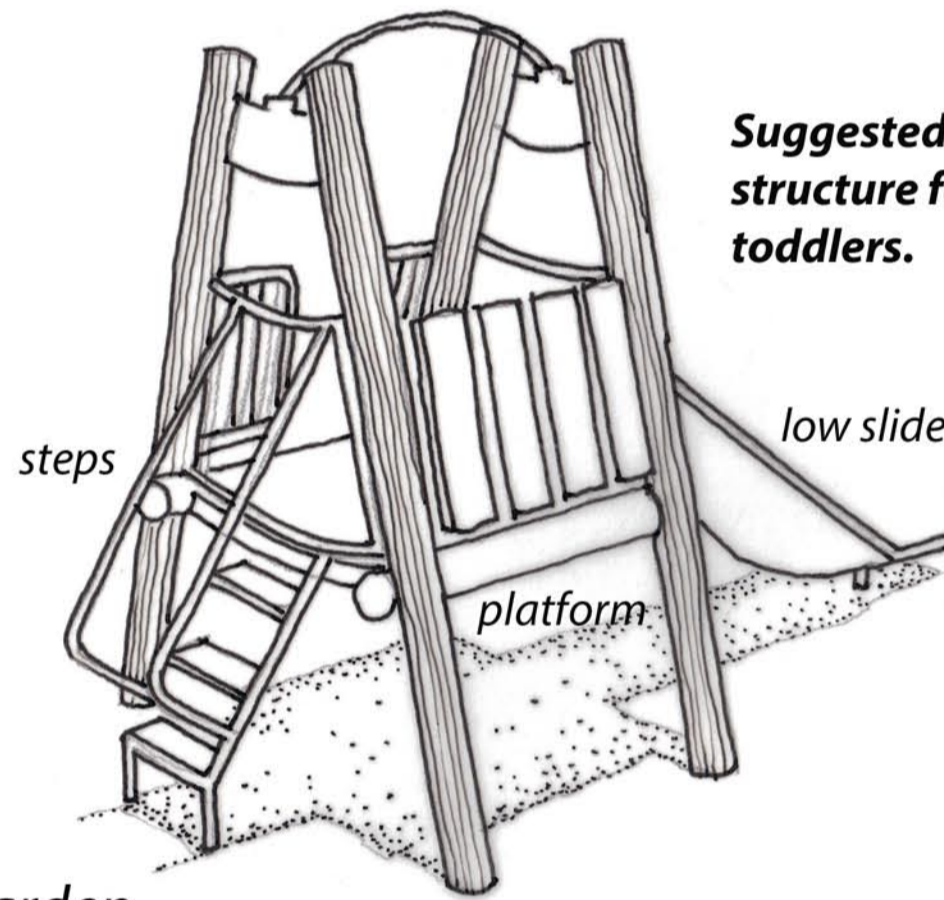
## Play for older children.

- Older children often like to challenge themselves physically.
- Good to have some high structures with several sorts of climbing activities.
- Older children also like to measure their ability with their friends, so it is good to have large structures for groups.
- Basket swings are especially good where lots of children can play together.



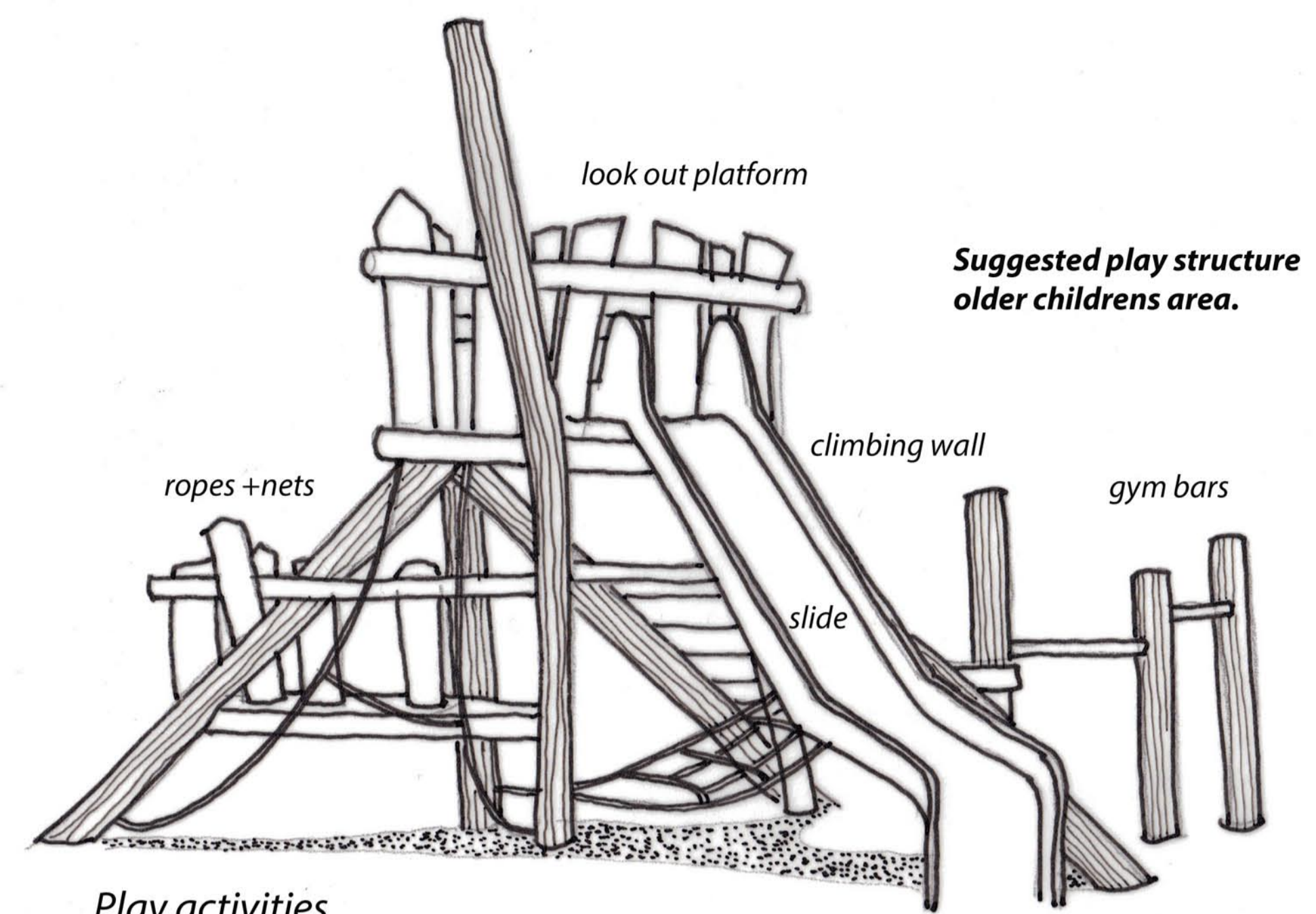
## Play for toddlers and younger children.

- Younger children and toddlers also like to test their ability and challenge themselves physically.
- They can be equally happy with very small scale objects that are interesting because they have a distinctive texture or make an interesting sound.
- Younger children also need their own space where they do not get overwhelmed by the more active play usually associated with older children.



## Woodland play garden.

- A space for quieter activities and in hot weather will be a cool and shady space for sitting and resting.
- Small play activities will be included for example balance logs, sound tubes, and space to picnic.
- The area will be grassed with some low level planting.
- The focus here will be on colour texture and sound, along with a variety of plant colours, scents and textures.



## Play activities.

- The best play space are welcoming to everyone whatever their ability or age.
- A range of physical activities are included as well as other restful and relaxing spaces.
- Swinging and sliding are always favourite activities, along with climbing, balancing, rocking, bouncing and gliding.
- Places to get up high or down low and underneath all add to the range of playful activities, and make the play space a multisensory environment.



## Materials.

- A range of materials will be used in the playspace with some timber play structures as well as some metal.
- Surfaces will include natural grass, plus impact absorbing play surfaces like rubber and artificial grass as well as some stone and rock.
- Colours will be kept natural looking with wood, stone and plants, this helps to create an atmosphere of calm.



## Nature + Wildlife.

- New trees and planting will bring another dimension to the space with textural variety scent and seasonal change.
- This will encourage wildlife, with nectar rich plants for insects and ground cover planting to attract birds.
- In places new grass areas can be left to grow long or mown into paths or a maze pattern.
- Seasonal variety means that on each visit the playspace has something new to see and it helps to create a welcoming place where everyone will want to spend time and enjoy the outdoors.

