



Developing a vision

What is it? The purpose of this tool is to outline a vision for **child and family-friendly development**. It aims to ensure that your project considers the needs of young children, their caregivers, pregnant women, and therefore the wider community. It can be used to gather and guide **various stakeholders** towards healthy, protective, stimulating and supportive neighbourhoods.

How to use it? This page lists the **ten principles** of the Proximity of Care Design Guide. You can use them as a **starting point** for building consensus about a **shared set of aspirations** for the development of an area in focus. You can amend these principles, or add new ones.



1 Ensure meaningful engagement and ongoing communication with the community throughout the project

Engage with the community that will benefit from and be impacted by your project, particularly with children, caregivers and pregnant women. Listen closely and explore what has or hasn't worked in the past, and which methods of communication, co-creation and design have been, or could be, most successful. Use a mixture of methods to engage with these different groups within the community, including children under 5 years of age and caregivers, tailored to their characteristics. Children under 5 have different languages and forms of expression to adults, but with the right engagement tools, all can meaningfully contribute to your project.



2 Engage with and collaborate with a wide range of stakeholders

Think broadly about the stakeholders you can engage in your project and consider who can help make it as successful as possible. This could include, for example, relevant technical stakeholders within city authorities or academia, developers, service providers or local business owners. Collaborate across different sectors, age and gender identities. Try to build a sense of ownership and collaboration from the outset to not only help secure the maximum impact for your project, but also open future opportunities to apply child and family-friendly approaches across wider initiatives.



3 Value and localise existing resources, skills and patterns

Approaches that work in one context may not apply to others. Partner with local organisations or community groups with previous experience and knowledge on the community you are seeking to engage and support. Consider local materials and construction techniques, and utilise local expertise. This will boost local economic development and foster a sense of ownership of the project and its results. Be sensitive to local dynamics of power, governance and policy, and work within them to mitigate frictions, build missing links, and ensure inclusion of the whole community.



4 Build health, support, stimulation and protection at different scales

Aim to build health, support, stimulation and protection across both the physical and relational or policy elements of your project context, considering the levels of proximity and interaction at home, neighbourhood and city scales. For example, whilst a project may consider enhancing the protection and stimulation for young children in a specific public square at a neighbourhood scale, consideration could also be made as to how these improvements could feed into wider public design codes impacting the entire city and how the same behaviours could be encouraged in the home.



5 Derive multiple benefits from everyday spaces

Try to identify where interventions or improvements could simultaneously address the needs of multiple community members at once, including different age groups, gender identities, and abilities. Think creatively about and discuss with the community how your project could serve multiple purposes. For example, a creche could become an adult education centre in the evenings; an outdoor play space could host performances or gatherings for adults; or a public transport stop could provide space for small businesses that cater to the needs of caregivers. This approach can sustainably make use of existing resources whilst also creating opportunities for new connections to form between different groups.



6 Embed play and learning into spaces, infrastructure and mobility networks

Play is fundamental to child development and community wellbeing. Create a range of opportunities for children to play beyond playgrounds and schools, by designing for exploratory unstructured play and social interaction, creating informal learning opportunities in the public realm. Playful sites and moments should be treated as connecting points in a network of safe and stimulating spaces to be enjoyed by all, rather than as isolated locations. Making these play opportunities accessible and connected through sustainable and safe walking or cycling routes can reduce time spent in cars or on transit systems. This can create a virtuous circle, boosting the safety and confidence of the community to use shared spaces. You not only provide more stimulation, connection and comfort to children and caregivers, but also boost economic activity and wider community wellbeing.



7 Connect children with nature

Connecting children with nature has the dual benefit of promoting physical and mental health, as well as generating a sense of connection and belonging to nature, which is the foundation of caring about the environment. People are more likely to protect what they value and care about, and to care about something they have positively experienced. Integrate climate considerations, action and resilience into every point across your design process, to ensure nature can become a part of everyday life for children and wider communities within cities.



8 Build positive behaviour change

Consider your project as a series of actions which positively influence behaviours towards child-friendly development outcomes within cities. Identify specific behaviours your project might aim to positively influence to benefit children and caregivers in their home, neighbourhood and the wider city. Keep in mind that prompting and maintaining new positive behaviours often requires a combination of 'hard' and 'soft' interventions to address physical, psychological, and social barriers. One way to do this can be to cultivate a knowledge base amongst community members and stakeholders supportive of the benefits of child and family-friendly principles. This awareness can stimulate collective community action, empower local champions, secure commitments to resources and unblock policy bottlenecks to action.



9 Measure the social, environmental and commercial impact

Be rigorous in your approach to measuring and evaluating the impact of your project to early childhood development, and the wider benefits generated for the community in which you are working. Also, predict, track and report the investment and return in social, environmental and commercial value. Start with a clear process of how this will be measured, reported and shared, and how to learn from it. Consider qualitative and quantitative techniques to get a full picture of the impact and return achieved, and make sure to continue measuring post-implementation to record the different phases of impact. This evidence will be useful to advocate for and convince decision makers and investors of the value in a child-friendly approach.



10 Advocate for child-friendly approaches

Think beyond your specific project to what other similar opportunities it could inspire, like the ripples from a pebble in a pond. Your project can still be successful as a single initiative, but with strategic engagement with a broad range of stakeholders, it could become a launch pad for policy changes at a city level and a wave of future projects. Equip your community and city leaders with the knowledge, language and evidence-base that will enable them to be champions of an approach to design and planning that considers the needs of young children, caregivers and pregnant women.

- Format template
- Group size any
- Time few hours
- Facilitation experience beginner

