



2026 Park & Playground Planning Checklist

1. Define project goals and community needs

Identify your purpose:

- Playground replacement
- Park expansion
- New amenity
- Full site renovation

Identify community needs:

Ages:

Accessibility:

Neighborhood:

Seasonal demand:

Stakeholder & community input:

2. Establish budget

Define a realistic budget:

50% equipment costs
50% freight, site preparation,
installation, & safety surfacing

Funding assistance:

Co-op purchasing agreement:

3. Understand your timeline

Approvals and permits needed:

Current lead times:

Site preparation needed:

4. Site evaluation

Existing conditions assessment:

Utilities:

Drainage:

Accessibility:

Grading:

Landmarks:

5. Design considerations

Amenities checklist:

- Shade
- Seating
- Waste bins
- Surfacing

Other:

5. Design considerations (continued)

Special projects checklist:

- Inclusive play
- National Demonstration Site
- Custom & themed
- Aquatic play
- Fitness equipment
- Custom metalwork
- Gazebos and shelters
- Self-cleaning restrooms

Other:

6. Installation & scheduling

School calendars & events:

Seasonal use considerations:

Community events:

Other:

7. Future planning

Future additions checklist:

- Shade
- Seating and tables
- Waste bins
- Surfacing
- Net climber
- Interactive equipment
- Play tower
- Bike racks
- Archways and signage
- Dog park equipment
- Athletic equipment
- Synthetic turf field
- Splash pad or spray park
- Custom metalwork
- Gazebos and shelters
- Self-cleaning restrooms

Phased planning schedule:



Helpful Resources

GameTime's **Playground Planning 101**

GameTime's **Funding Tool & Playground Funding Guide**

MRC Recreation's **Purchasing Co-Ops**

MRC Recreation's **Ultimate Guide to Inclusive Playgrounds**

MRC & CORE: **Research-Based Play Solutions**