

# The New York Times

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## Op-Chart

DAVID ROCKWELL

# Unpacking Imagination

In an age of childhood obesity and children tethered to electronic consoles, playgrounds have rarely been more important. In an age of constrained government budgets, playgrounds have rarely been a harder sell. Fortunately, the cost of play doesn't have to be prohibitive. In creating the Imagination Playground in Lower Manhattan — a playground with lots of loose parts for children to create their own play spaces — we realized that many of the elements with the greatest value to children were inexpensive and portable. Although traditional play-

grounds can easily cost in the millions to build, boxed imagination playgrounds can be put together for under \$10,000. (Land costs not included!) The design below is one that my architecture firm has done in collaboration with the New York City Parks Department and KaBoom, a nonprofit organization. But it needn't be the only one out there. There are a lot of ways to build a playground — and a lot of communities in need of one. Let a thousand portable playgrounds bloom.

— DAVID ROCKWELL, president of the Rockwell Group

### PLAYGROUND IN A BOX

FRONT ELEVATION      SIDE ELEVATION

OPENING DIAGRAM

### SCHEDULE OF LOOSE PARTS

- 8 PRIMARY BLOCKS
- 4 LONG BLOCKS
- 5 LITTLE CHEESES
- 2 PLUS GEARS
- 8 PLUGS
- 2 CHUTES
- 4 STRAIGHT CHANNELS
- 5 SMALL PLUGS
- 10 BLOCKS W/ HOLE
- 10 SQUARE BLOCKS
- 2 CLOVER GEARS
- 4 SQUEAKY HINGES
- 5 NICKELS
- 2 ARCH CHUTES
- 4 BENT CHANNELS
- WATER
- WONKY CART
- SAND

### DISTRIBUTION & LOCATIONS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS      NURSERY SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY CENTERS      FAMILY DAY CARE

CHURCHES      PARKS

HOSPITALS      HEAD START

HOUSING      MILITARY BASES

Y.M.C.A./Y.W.C.A.s      FEMA/POST-EMERGENCY

NEW PLAYGROUNDS      EXISTING PLAYGROUNDS

### ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

### FOUND PARTS (ADD YOUR OWN)

- CARDBOARD TUBES
- PVC PIPES & ELBOWS

### SPECIFICATIONS

WEIGHT: 825 lbs

LOAD-BEARING CAPACITY: 1000 lbs

MINIMUM AREA EA. BOX: 10' X 10'

MINIMUM PLAY AREA: 225 sq ft

MATERIALS/BOX:  
POWDER-COATED STEEL FRAME AND HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE PANELS

MATERIALS/BLOCKS:  
BIODEGRADABLE CROSS-LINKED POLYETHYLENE FOAM

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BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW PLAYGROUND

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