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Abstract

The aim of the present article is to describe how the local environment affects people and how people can have an impact on their local environment. Using the sports movement as an example, the article discusses the importance of getting citizens to participate and to play an active role in decision processes concerning physical planning for the local environment.

How we design our outdoor environments largely determines how our children develop in terms of their motor coordination and self-image, and thereby also their mental status, concentration ability, and academic aptitude as well as our children's resources for engaging in one or several athletic activities that promote life-long amusement, good health and well-being. For young people, the opportunity to spontaneously use their local environment is a basic need, one that has received too little attention in city planning, e.g. fill in projects.

Politicians are sensitive to public expressions of opinion. If it unites its power, the sport clubs and sport federations should be able to ensure high quality play environments for children and spaces for spontaneous sports activities for youth. The new trend towards private-public-partnership means a great deal of negotiations between the developer and the city leadership in which citizens has no access. It takes place behind closed doors and the child perspective is often forgotten. The sport clubs and sport federations have a chance to take the initiative here by formulating goals for children's and young people's motor, social and cognitive development and by pushing its own proposals for developing the local community.

Key words: Balance, decision processes, health, local environment, motor coordination, self-image

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