

# Five Reasons Why Kids Need Playgrounds

*A Historical View of the  
Playground Movement*



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Children on teeter-totters in NYC 1909. Library of Congress  
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I ran across this article in the Iowa County Democrat Newspaper dated, May 13, 1909. You can think of that period in American history as the beginning of the playground movement. Yet, the rationale and advocacy for a safe place for children to play is relevant even today. In addition to the arguments for playgrounds given today and couple of them may surprise you.

The public playground movement is engaging the attention of thoughtful persons in many parts of the country. It is a movement which concerns the people of all cities and villages, and the health and happiness of children in general. If the youth of today are to grow into upright, vigorous manhood and womanhood, their lives should not be stunted by depriving them of privileges which are rightly theirs.



Children at NYC Central Park 1942 Library of Congress

Dr. Luther Gulick of New York in a recent lecture on the subject of the playground movement gave five reasons why there should be more public playgrounds:

First, because so many accidents to children occur through their playground on the streets.

Second, because playgrounds lessen juvenile crime.

Third, because playgrounds are conducive to the health of children.

Fourth, because boys and girls need to learn to govern themselves and acquire the kind of self-control that comes from discipline on the playground, where the government is largely that of public opinion.

Fifth, we need playgrounds, and we need a knowledge of how to better use our legal holidays, that we may convert the Fourth of July from a day in which children are killed, property is burned, and people are annoyed, into a day on which the whole community co-operates. In a splendid festival that brings together the various elements of the city, provides athletic games and celebrations for children, and inculcates the value of liberty.

The playground movement is certainly a commendable one and should be given attention in Mineral Point. The reasons above stated why the movement should be encouraged are valid reasons. W.H. De Lacy, a judge of the juvenile court of the District of Columbia recently said:

“I regard well equipped and efficiently supervised playgrounds as one of the most effective means of saving city children from violations to which they are peculiarly exposed and predisposed by the pressure and complications of modern urban life.”

One has well said that when a boy goes out on the street and cuts up some deviltry it is not primarily because he is inherently vicious, but because he is inherently energetic- as he ought to be- and the things for us to do that is wholesome.

Although Mineral Point is not a very large city, problems in dealing with boys and girls that confront large cities confront us. Let us give every possible encouragement to efforts to provide parks and playgrounds, where children may meet in the open, enjoy innocent amusements, and be kept away from temptations and allurements which debase and destroy young womanhood and young manhood.

Like Judge De Lacy, I have made the case that idle time on the playground without playground equipment, markings and games in general, leads to problems on the [playground](#).