DESIGN TIPS for Play Yards

To design an outdoor area, choose elements with play value and learning potential. Surround them with hardy, diverse, non-toxic plants that create an intriguing, comfortable place for children and leaders to linger.

A Main Path
A primary path organizes the space. It lets children navigate easily, and adults move quickly if needed. Wide curves offer a wheeled play journey.

B Side Paths
Narrow “shortcuts” and adventure trails with varied surfaces encourage exploring and movement.

C Gathering Places
A variety of spaces for large and small groups provide active and quiet settings for games, storytelling, art, snacks, etc.

D Sand and/or Water Play
These creative and social play settings have endless appeal. For safety, contain sand with rocks, timbers or plants.

E Affordable Additions
Simple ideas can increase an area’s versatility and accommodate the needs of its users.

The diagram shows how elements are arranged in the Toddler Area here. Find more ideas in the photo gallery at right.