Children are playful and have their youth because they must play, however their time and space for playing is too often limited by that which is seen to be more important. Playing is central to a good childhood and must be given as much attention as other priorities. Ludicology exists to promote a better understanding of children’s play and the ways in which adults can support it.

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WHAT YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT PLAY

Processes that support rather than constrain play. Paying attention to the playful ways in which children use adult run activities. Children tend to be physically active in their play and often for longer periods of time and in more ways than during adult run activities. Children have a playful disposition, therefore anyone working with children needs to have a good understanding of play and the ways in which they can support it.

VALUE PROPOSITION FOR URBAN DESIGNERS AND PLANNERS

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Shape places for people that are attractive, cost effective and sustainable, where residents or visitors can support their own health and wellbeing.

Create urban designs that work as well for children as they do for adults, ensuring all community stakeholders can actively participate in the public realm.

Maximise the potential of spaces within any development, enabling people’s ease of access to green spaces and spaces to socialise.

Increase the walk-ability and ride-ability of the urban environment, reducing people’s reliance on motor vehicles.

Negotiate adult concerns associated with children’s access to and use of the public realm, minimising the need for constraints to be placed on children.
Children have a playful disposition to the world around them. Access to play and exploration are central criteria for child-friendly environments and essential to children’s health and well-being.

Play matters to children and children’s experiences matter to parents. Allowing children to play out with confidence is key to parental community satisfaction.

The positive effects of playing enhance people’s attachments to the places where they live, increase social interaction and sense of community identity.

Urban designs that appreciate the unique characteristics of play and comprehensively address children’s right to play can reduce the contested nature of space and associated community tensions.

Embedding consideration of play throughout the design process ensures that children’s rights to participation in the public realm are given equitable consideration to those of adults.
Advice for organisations seeking to embed consideration of children and their play within design processes.

Play based training and continuous professional development for those whose work impacts directly or indirectly on children’s play.

Facilitate children’s active participation in the design and development of urban design projects.

Pre-development research exploring children’s play preferences and existing use of space to inform evidence based design recommendations.

Act as a critical friend during the design process ensuring designs are considered through the prism of play.

Post-development research to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of project developments on children’s opportunities for play.

Development of play and risk management policies and procedures and associated guidance for staff.