

A man and a young boy are watering plants in a rooftop garden. The boy is holding a green watering can and pouring water onto the plants. The man is standing next to him, looking on. The garden is filled with various plants and flowers. In the background, there are modern buildings and a clear sky.

#UrbanChildhoods

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Image: © John Sturrock

Memory exercise

Think about a place from your childhood which you have fond memories of playing in:

- What age were you?
- Who were you with?
- What type of space was it?

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Cities Alive

Designing for urban childhoods

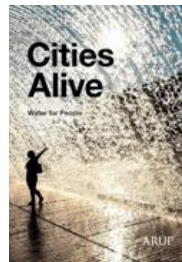
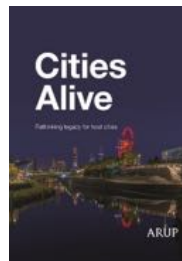
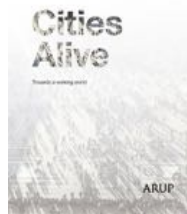
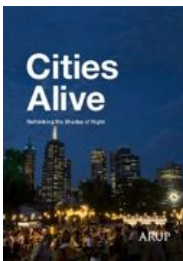
Image: CC Leonardo Veras

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Cities Alive

prelight
**Cities
Alive**
Sustaining green infrastructure

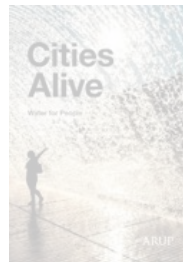
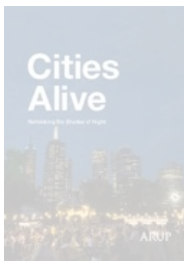
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Cities Alive: Designing for urban childhoods

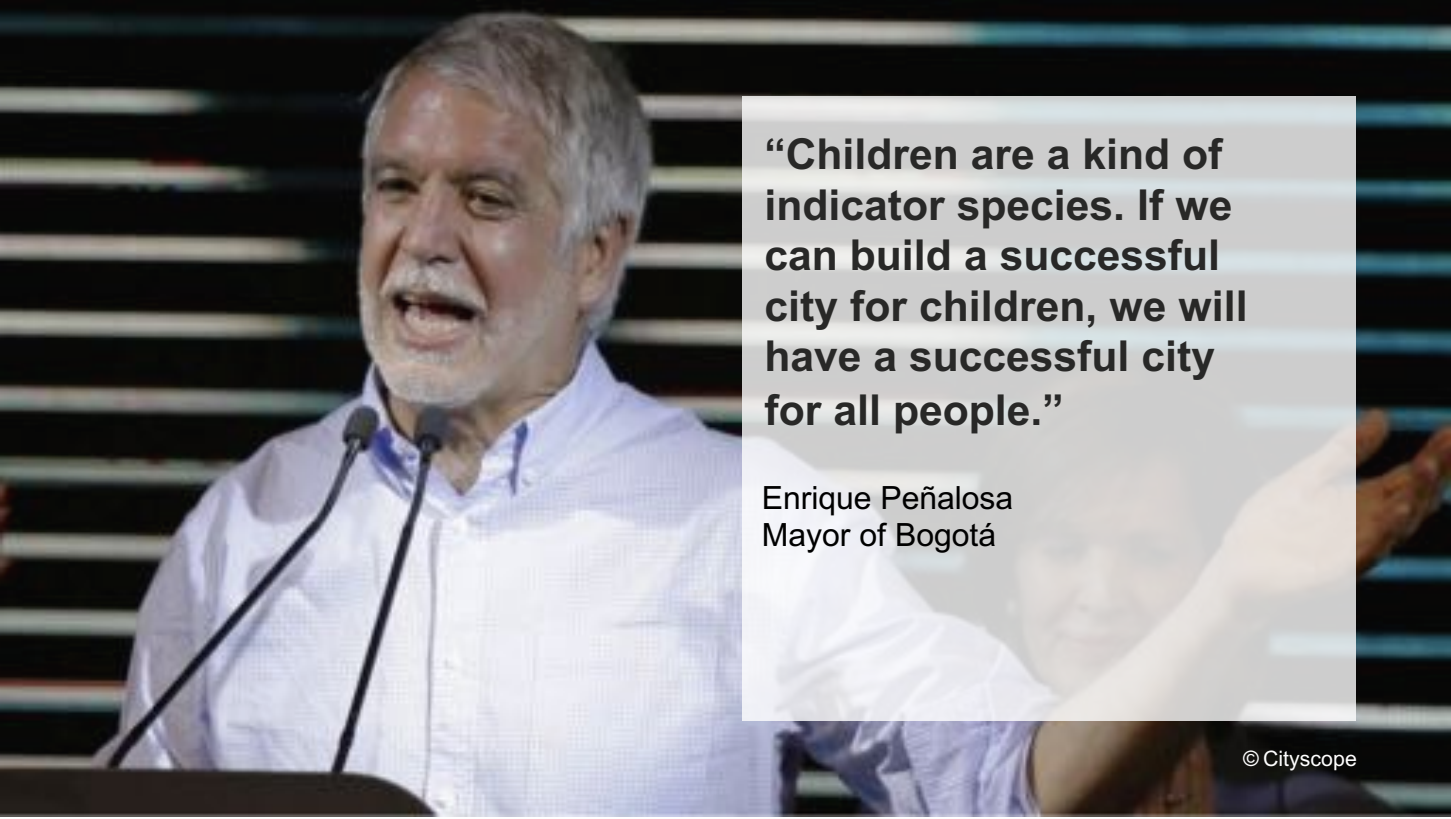
Design
**Cities
Alive**
Setting priorities

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Cities Alive: Diseñando para la infancia urbana



A photograph of Mayor Enrique Peñalosa of Bogotá, Colombia, speaking at a podium. He is a middle-aged man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a light blue button-down shirt. He is gesturing with his right hand while speaking into two microphones. The background is dark with horizontal light streaks.

“Children are a kind of indicator species. If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.”

Enrique Peñalosa
Mayor of Bogotá


Global context

70% of world's children to live in cities by 2050 ¹

80% of the world's adolescent population is insufficiently physically active as a result of urbanisation.²

¹ UNICEF, 2017

² WHO, 2017

An aerial photograph of a densely populated urban area, likely in the UK. The foreground shows rows of terraced houses with red-tiled roofs, interspersed with green spaces and trees. A river or canal winds through the middle ground. In the background, the city extends to the horizon under a clear sky.

Local context

British children are **weaker** than 16 years ago.¹

1/3rd of the most deprived boys in England obese by 2030.²

1. University of Essex, 2018

2: RCPCH, 2018

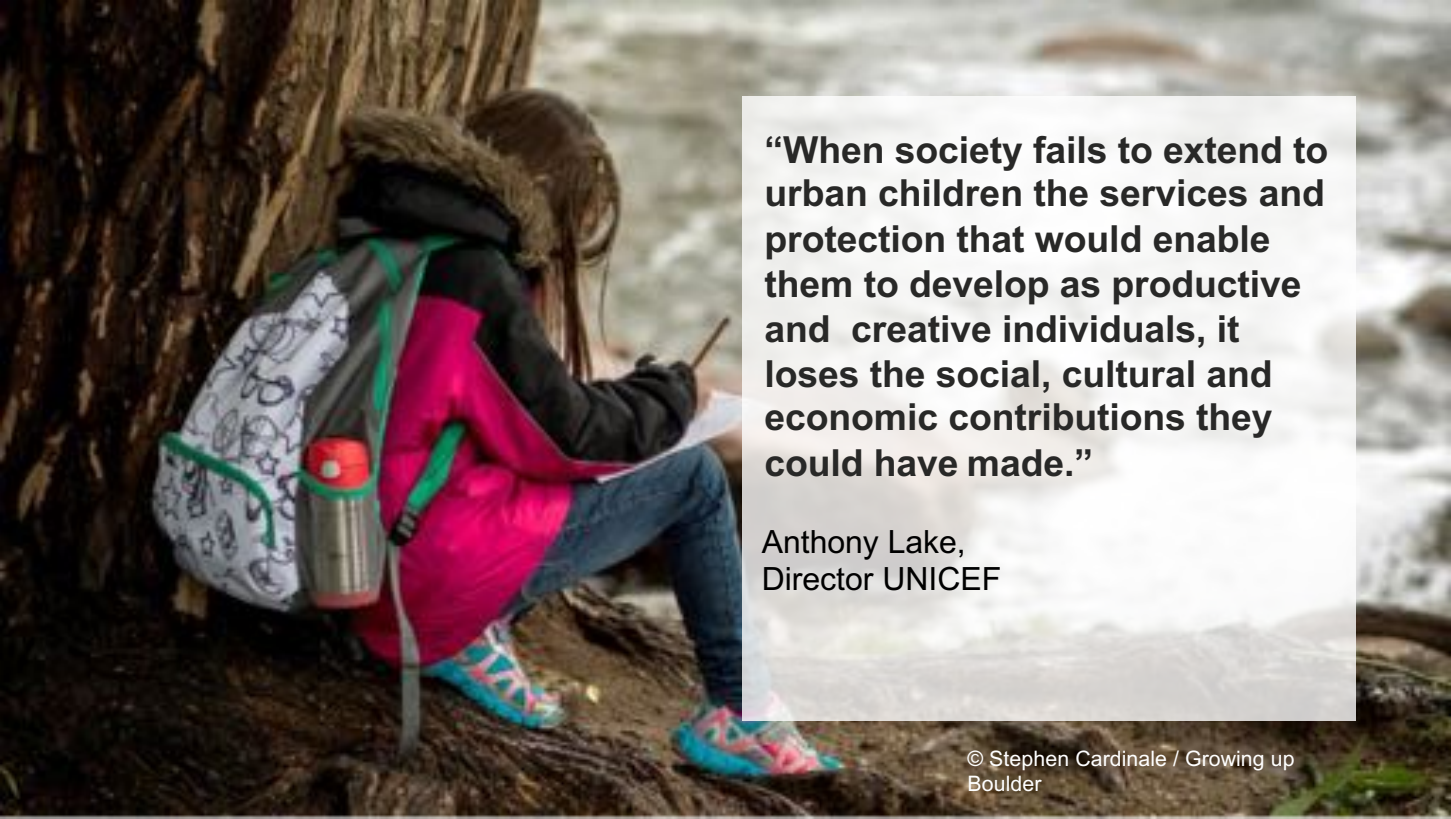
The role of the built environment

Child development:

The early years of a child's life are very important for their health and development.³

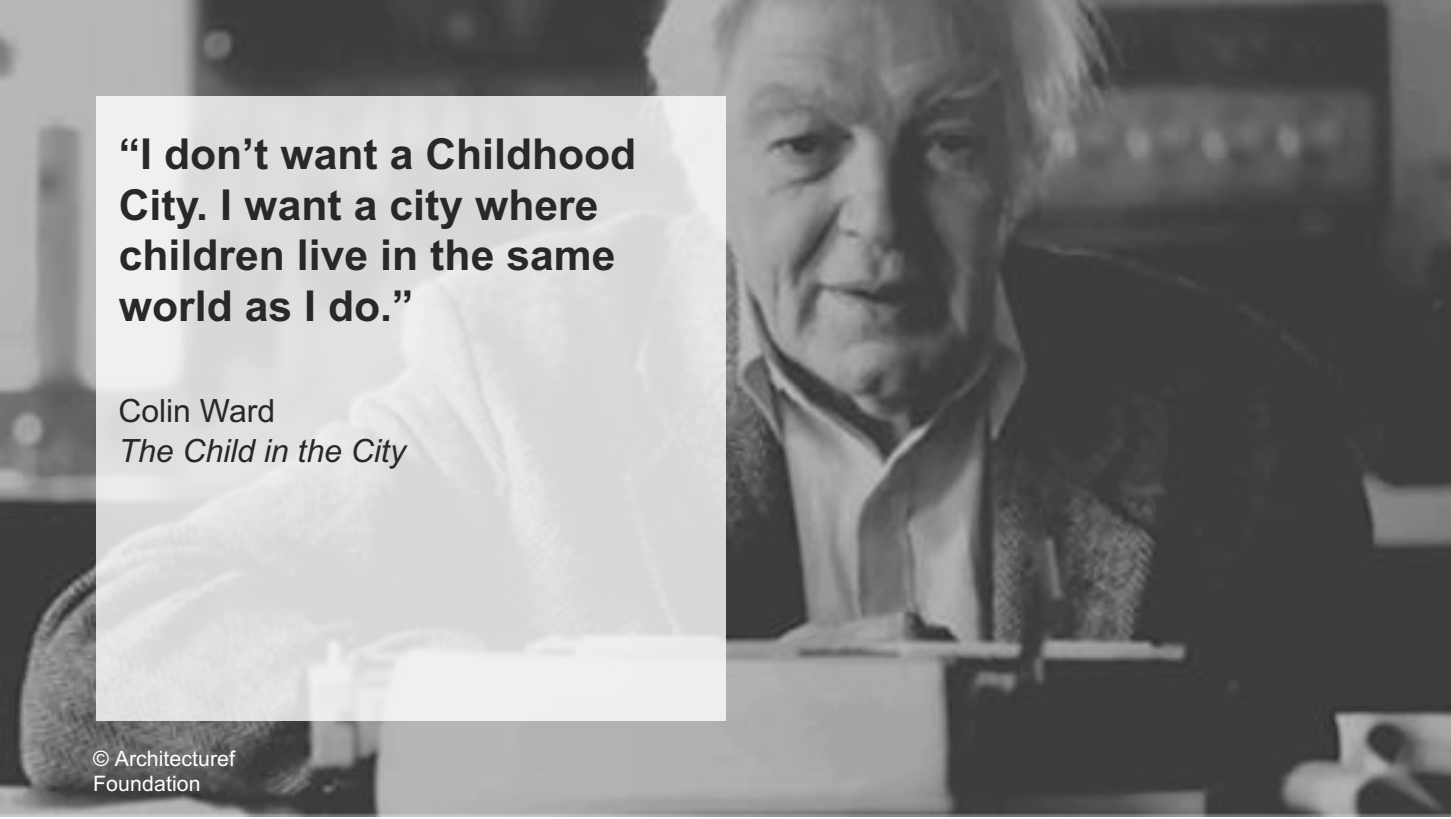
¹ Unicef (2011). *Child development*. Unicef.org



A young girl with long brown hair is sitting on the ground, leaning against the thick, textured trunk of a tree. She is wearing a bright pink jacket over a black long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and colorful sneakers with pink, blue, and green laces. She has a large backpack on her back; the main compartment is white with a pattern of small, dark, abstract shapes, and the straps are green. A red and silver water bottle is visible in a side pocket of the backpack. She is holding a piece of paper and a pencil, appearing to be writing or drawing. The background is a blurred view of a river or stream with white water rapids, suggesting an outdoor, possibly urban or semi-urban, environment.

“When society fails to extend to urban children the services and protection that would enable them to develop as productive and creative individuals, it loses the social, cultural and economic contributions they could have made.”

**Anthony Lake,
Director UNICEF**



“I don’t want a Childhood City. I want a city where children live in the same world as I do.”

Colin Ward
The Child in the City

The core challenges for urban childhoods



Traffic and
pollution



Crime, social fears
and risk aversion




Isolation and
intolerance



High-rise living
and urban
sprawl



Inadequate and
unequal access to
the city



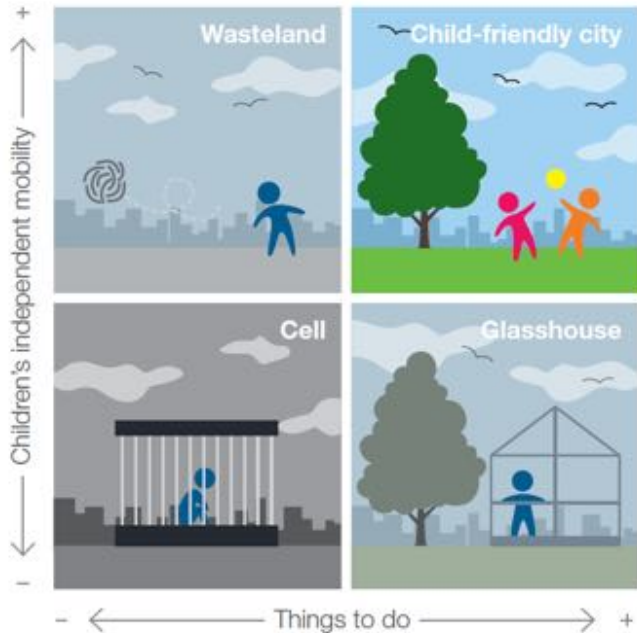
Everyday freedoms

Playful behaviours and freedom to explore should be **part of everyday life**, throughout the city.

Children's infrastructure

The **network of spaces, streets, nature and interventions** which make up the key features of a child-friendly city.





Places to go, things to do


Child-friendliness as a relationship between **the availability of things to do** in an environment and the **levels of freedom or independent mobility** a child has to explore and enjoy them.

Illustration © Arup, based on the work of Marketta Kytä

Opportunity areas

- Streets and spaces near peoples homes
- Intergenerational, multifunctional spaces
- Influencing everyday journeys
- Interventions at the neighbourhood scale
- Reducing car dominance
- Connected green infrastructure networks



A photograph of two children running through a park. The child in the foreground is wearing a dark blue t-shirt and light-colored pants, running away from the camera. The child in the background is wearing a light grey long-sleeved shirt and light-colored pants, running towards the camera. They are running on a paved path. Large trees with yellowing leaves are in the background, and a modern building with large windows is visible on the right side. A semi-transparent white box with text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

A catalyst for improving cities

Focusing on the needs of children has the potential to act as a **unifying theme to navigate complex challenges** and **gain support for progressive ideas.**











The benefits of child-friendly cities



Health and wellbeing



Safety



Local economy



Stronger communities



Nature and sustainability



Resilience



A catalyst for improving cities

Global case studies





A river brought back to life

A heavily polluted 13km stretch of river was transformed into a **resilient and ecologically rich landscape** for the community. Connecting schools with residential areas, the corridor is now a popular gathering place for children.



Recommended interventions



Multifunctional green infrastructure



Sense of ownership



Playful encounters



Cultural and heritage spaces



Wild spaces



Construction sites



Multi-use community spaces



Intergenerational spaces



Traffic measures



Pedestrian priority



Community gardens



Neighbourhood mapping



Play streets



Playable spaces

Recommended actions



**City leaders and
policy makers**



**Developers and
investors**



**Built environment
professionals**

1 NO
POVERTY



2 NO
HUNGER



3 GOOD
HEALTH



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



7 RENEWABLE
ENERGY



8 GOOD JOBS AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INNOVATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE BELOW
WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND



16 PEACE AND
JUSTICE



17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Access for all to adequate, **safe and affordable housing and basic services** and upgrade slums

Access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable **transport systems for all**, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport

Inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for **participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning** and management in all countries

Protect and safeguard the world's **cultural and natural heritage**

Universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, **in particular for women and children**

A low-angle shot of a child swinging on a swing set. The child is in mid-air, wearing a yellow shirt and shorts. The swing chains are dark. In the background, a multi-story apartment building is visible under a clear blue sky. The overall image has a warm, golden-hour glow.

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