

## Concept for Play Area for UUFCO

Our new home's play area will be designed to inspire creativity and imagination, encourage discovery and exploration, and foster interaction and cooperation. Created from natural materials, it will be located on the south side of our building, in a protected sun pocket, visible from classrooms and the building's main entry and gathering terraces. It will be universally accessible with a path leading from the entry plaza and religious education classrooms to a safe fenced area with another gate leading to a future nature trail. Play elements will be selected and designed so that children of all ages and abilities can enjoy them. Benches will provide places for adults and encourage intergenerational relationships.

The play area's features will invite children to have fun in the natural world. When our new home opens we hope to have, at the very least:

- a simple log and tire swing set
- a spiral made of log rounds that acts as seating or islands to hop across, and as a gathering/teaching area, or it could also be a simple labyrinth of stones
- boulders, logs, and sticks, sourced directly from the site, for climbing, balancing, and building
- a central area of larger boulders and logs, surrounded by sand for digging and engineered wood chips for safety
- a fort created by willow branches to provide children with a place for imaginative play
- a child size picnic table for projects and snacks



Potential elements we envision for the future:

- a pollinator/habitat garden set among the existing trees next to the church patio
- a dry creek bed extending to a functional bioswale with a small tunnel or bridge over it to encourage hide and seek games
- garden boxes or cold frames for edible plants
- additional play and learning opportunities to be developed as we see how the area functions and what most engages our children

Most of the area will be planted with native plants that are resilient and drought resistant. Native trees and shrubs will be placed along or near the fence to help integrate the fence and play area into the natural habitat.



Although we will use as many materials as possible from the surrounding land, we will have costs for fencing, grading, ground coverings, landscaping, play components, and design. We intend to use volunteer labor as much as possible. A task force of parents and teachers are working with our landscape designer to plan the area. Next summer, RE teachers intend to take our children to different play areas and playscapes around town to observe what most attracts and engages them.

Because our play area will be visible to all who approach the main entrance of UUFCCO's New Home, we believe it will be very welcoming to families with children and encourage them to return regularly for services and religious education programming.

*The concept drawing included in this packet is preliminary and subject to change, as our vision develops with assistance from the children. As of this date, we have a rough estimate of \$22,000 for the project. We expect to provide a more refined budget as soon as possible.*

With gratitude for images and inspiration from:  
"world's children: The Playscape Chronicles of Frode Svane,"  
<http://www.letthechildrenplay.net> "Labyrinths in Children's Playscapes,"  
Green Garden Blog: Cow Hollow School Natural Playscape, San Francisco,  
as well as *Natural Playscapes* by Rusty Keele,  
and Andria Truax from WinterCreek Restoration.