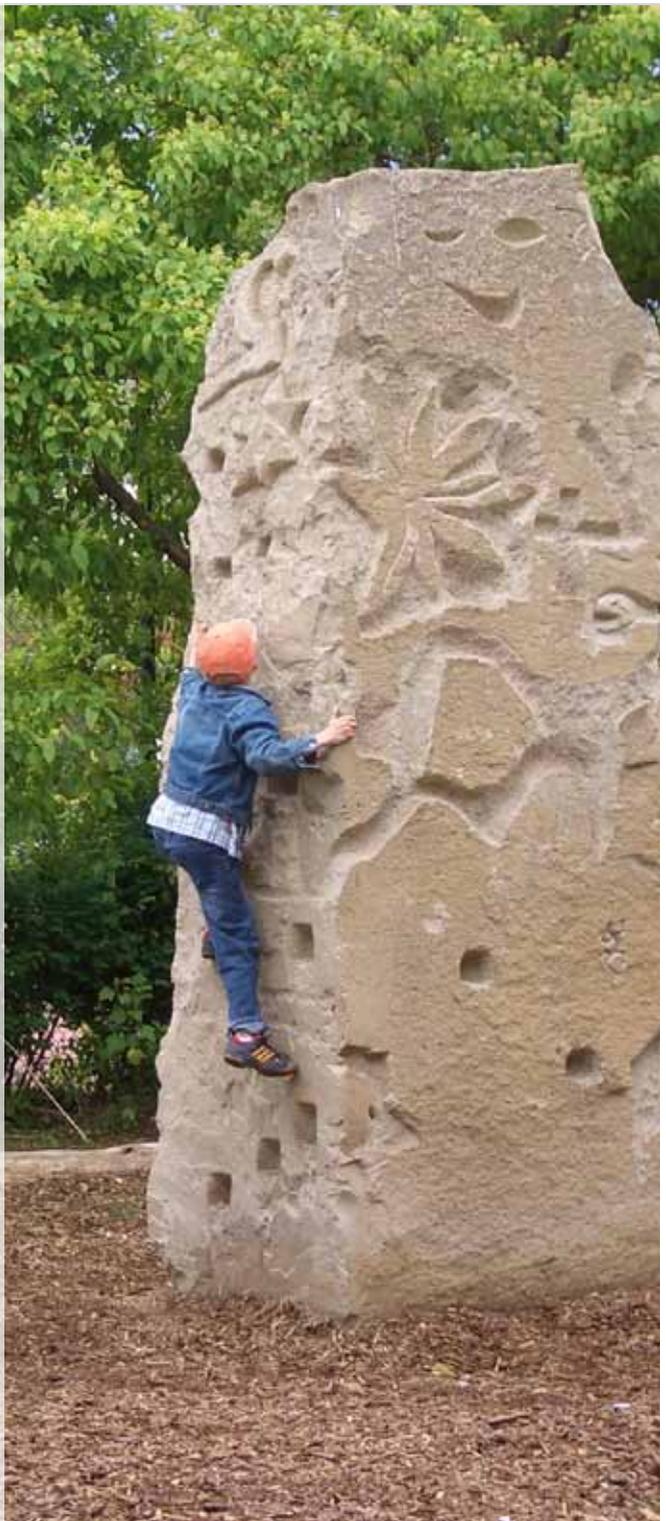


Advisory service for
the ecological,
child-friendly
design of school
yards and
kindergarten





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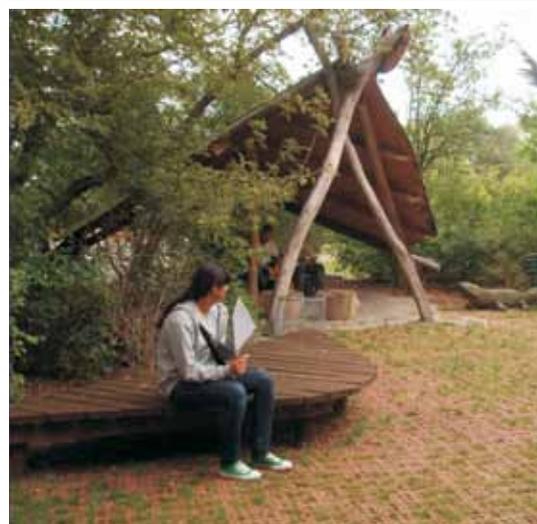
Our Mission

Designing the school grounds and experience!

During the course of their school days, children and youth spend approximately 15,000 hours at school. This is where their future moral values and attitudes toward the environment are shaped. Berlin's schools typically have concrete school yards with inadequate open spaces reminiscent of grey, dreary, claustrophobic courtyards. They are a perfect breeding ground for aggression, ruthlessness, and a throwaway mentality. Nature-related school grounds, on the other hand, exercise a positive influence on the pupils' ecological and social behaviour. Through actively participating in the designing of the green spaces, children develop an emotional connection to nature. The designing of the school yard serves as a model for solving problems through democratic processes. When

pupils feel comfortable in their environment, they naturally develop a desire to maintain and protect their surroundings.

In this way, the nature-based school yard functions as a classroom, field of experience, and kitchen garden (ex. herbs, leaves). It is an essential element in integrated education and an important addition to a green cityscape. "Grün macht Schule" consults on how to make significant changes with even the most modest means. We make recommendations for imaginative, child-friendly school yard and kindergarten designs. We also show what other schools and kindergartens have achieved through great pride, joy and dedication. We encourage everyone involved to get started!

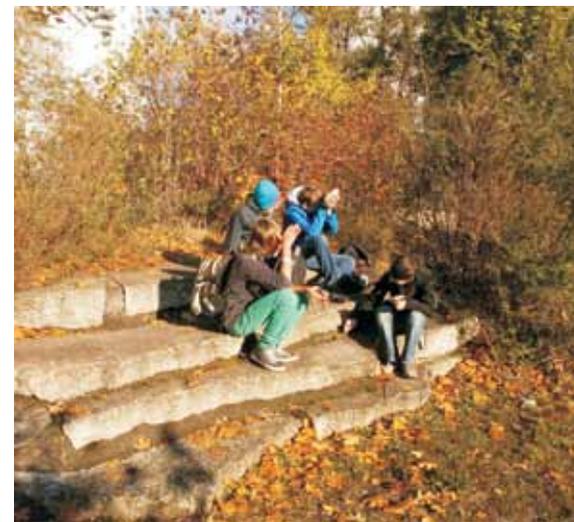


Learning from Others

Excursions to Berlin models

Before making concrete design plans for one's own school or kindergarten, it is important to look around at how others have made their school yards and kindergarten greener, and to learn from their experiences – both positive and negative.

„Grün macht Schule“ offers slide shows, on-site consultations, the organisation of study and project days, as well as further education in „nature-based open space design for children and youth“. „Grün macht Schule“ also supports brainstorming through day hikes, excursions, and study days.



Participation

Designing, planning and building with pupils and children

Today, participatory processes are a statutory part of planning. Their goal is to strengthen democratic processes and increase identification. Planning processes which integrate pupils, teachers, educators, parents and experts at an early phase have proven to be the most beneficial and sustainable over the long run. The joint planning and execution of transformational processes stimulate initiative, make use of available creative potential, strengthen a sense of responsibility, and train democratic action.

This is a great opportunity for pupils to shape their own environment from start to finish. Each can contribute his or her concrete desires, learn to make compromises and work together in order to preserve our natural resources in a sustainable manner.



It's All About Projects

From small to large

School yards and kindergarten offer a wealth of possibilities for projects involving children, youth, teachers, educators, and parents. The size and intensity of the projects depend on the various prerequisites.

„Grün macht Schule“ has initiated and realised some 500 projects at Berlin schools, ranging from re-designing the entire school yard or kindergarten to making minor changes to highlight the quality of the open spaces.



School Gardens

Ecological gardening – healthy food

School gardens are a rarity in today's educational landscape. They are a part of the curriculum in only a few federal states in Germany. Fortunately, the trend toward school gardening is on the rise in Berlin. "Grün macht Schule" is pushing this positive development by operating an annual advanced training course in school gardening for teachers and educators. We are also a member of the jury of the Lenné Academy for Garden Culture and Garden Arts' school garden competition. School gardens not only promote knowledge about plants and nutrition. They also teach young people to take on responsibilities. Here they can enjoy the fruits of their success and gain recognition for their hard work. Communal work in school gardens also helps young people from different countries, cultures and languages grow together.



Ecology, Biodiversity, Experiencing Nature

Ecological constructions create a high degree of (bio-)diversity and promote nature experiences.

School yards and kindergarten should be a place for children and youth to relax and learn.

In watching them relax and play in nature, it becomes clear how important living in tune with nature is to the development of young people, particularly in urban environments. Diverse, nature-related designs promote the education of our children in all areas.*

*See Berlin's educational programme



Art

Wood, stone and metal

Art projects are at the heart of what we do at „Grün macht Schule“. They create atmosphere and identity and make each and every school yard unique. The idea is key. Anyone can be the initiator – art teachers, pupils, parents, or artists. What counts is creativity. Exterior areas offer an infinite number of possibilities: on the facade or in an open space, temporary or for eternity, abstract or concrete, space forming or space filling, two- or three-dimensional, purely aesthetic or also functional.









Swings, Slides and Hanging Upside Down

Combining play equipment and nature-based recreational landscapes

The most popular play equipment are swings, slides, climbing walls, tunnels, seesaws – preferably as single objects in different areas. Play equipment and playing areas should encourage movement and offer enough variety to remain interesting.



Meet, Dawdle, Chill Out, Sprawl

Create diverse hangouts!

Because children and youth spend a lot of time sitting in chairs at school and kindergarten, chairs and benches are not necessarily the best choice for outdoor installations. Children and youth know best how they would like to 'sit' outdoors.

They want to sprawl, chill out and lie around. Student projects created with expert help take exactly these needs into account and forge a feeling of identification.



Greening School Yards

The school yard - a green oasis in the city

Vital, spacious, and green structures in particular have a positive effect on the well-being of humans. Indigenous shrubs are best-suited for greening school yards and kindergarten. Dogwood and willows are hardy and carefree. Ornamental bushes can be added to increase the biodiversity.

Greening means:

- noise-, sight- and emission protection
- climate mitigation
- creation of animal habitats
- dust binding and reduction
- rainwater infiltration
- retreats/space creation
- promoting physical activity
- exploring nature
- urban stepping stone biotopes
- rest and relaxation



Earth, Water, Air and Fire

Experiencing the elements!

What does something feel like? Can you see and hear it? What does it smell and taste like? Is it solid or liquid? A special quality of open spaces is that they convey basic scientific knowledge about the earth, water, air and fire in a playful manner. This is what makes them so popular among children and youth.



Atmosphere and Identification

Viewing school as a designable living space

Children and youth want to be taken seriously, and be included in democratic processes. They want to design, change, and make things happen, and make their environment their own. When given this opportunity, children and youth identify with their school, and make it an electrifying atmosphere and place they call their own.



Imprint

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are available from

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Quality standards for the shaping of open spaces

- in kindergarten
- at all-day elementary schools
- at secondary schools

Requirements for the planning and construction of outdoor installations at schools in Berlin

Senatsverwaltung für Bildung, Jugend und Wissenschaft, Abt. IIB, Bernhard-Weiß-Straße 6, D-10178 Berlin

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