

# The Architect's Playspace

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## Modern swingsets -the Pros and Cons

**Pros:** The folks that design swing sets sure know what kids like to do. Run, spin, slide, hide and climb. Swing sets encourage kids to be active so they get lots of exercise and keep their bodies healthy. They also encourage kids to play together and socialize with each other.



**Cons:** Swingsets are usually made of plastic, wood and steel. Plastic takes thousands of years to break down and winds up polluting our oceans. Sea animals can mistake plastic for food and eat it. This makes them very sick and can even kill them. Wood requires cutting down trees which can contribute to global warming. Metal manufacturing requires use of lots of toxic chemicals. Imagine every family having their own swingset; that's a lot of material for just a few children. Plus, these type of swingsets don't look particularly natural in the yard. Swingsets are also designed for a specific functions and can limit kids' imaginations. A swing, a slide, a ladder and a rock wall are all designed for one activity (although most kids come up with creative ways to get around that).

## Nature as a Playspace

Nature has been the playground for young animals and humans since the beginning of life on earth. Play is something all young animals do to practice the skills they will need as adults; things like pretend games (creative thinking), coming up with unique ways to navigate obstacles (problem solving), exercising (healthy bodies), honing balance and coordination (Gross motor skills), and learning to get along with other kids (socialization). Whether you live in a desert with sand, rocks and boulders or you play in a city park with trees, grass and flowers, playing in nature comes without preset rules. Kids can be more creative and design their own fun. It's amazing what kids can do when they are allowed the freedom to imagine!



Add some recycled materials and the options are endless!

