

Plan for Play in public spaces, 2030 horizon in Barcelona

The importance of a context-specific deployment in the poorer areas of the city.

In collaboration with

institut
infància i
adolescència



- 1- Why a Plan for Play in Public Spaces?**
- 2- Public play spaces from a fresh perspective**
- 3- Core ideas and actions in the Plan for Play**
- 4- A plan for the whole city**
- 5- A look at poorer areas child's indicators**
- 6- The need of context-based actions**
- 7- Public play spaces 2030: what is our vision?**

1. WHY A PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES? 4 REASONS

“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children.” (Nelson Mandela)

4 REASONS



1

Because it is a right

Because children and adolescents have a **RIGHT TO PLAY** and **LEISURE TIME**

A Plan to foster child and adolescent development



LET'S MAKE THE CITY MORE CHILD FRIENDLY



2

Because it has benefits

Because play and physical activity are beneficial for **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Plan to improve the overall health and well-being of all citizens



LET'S MAKE THIS A HEALTHIER CITY



3

Because it enriches community life

Because **COMMUNITY LIFE** is enriched by play, and public space becomes an inclusive place, a place for social gatherings

A Plan to reclaim the streets with more inclusive community life



4

Because of improvements to public space

Because improving play areas is an opportunity to **GREEN, CALM** and **MAKE** public spaces **SAFER**

A Plan to transform everyday urban settings

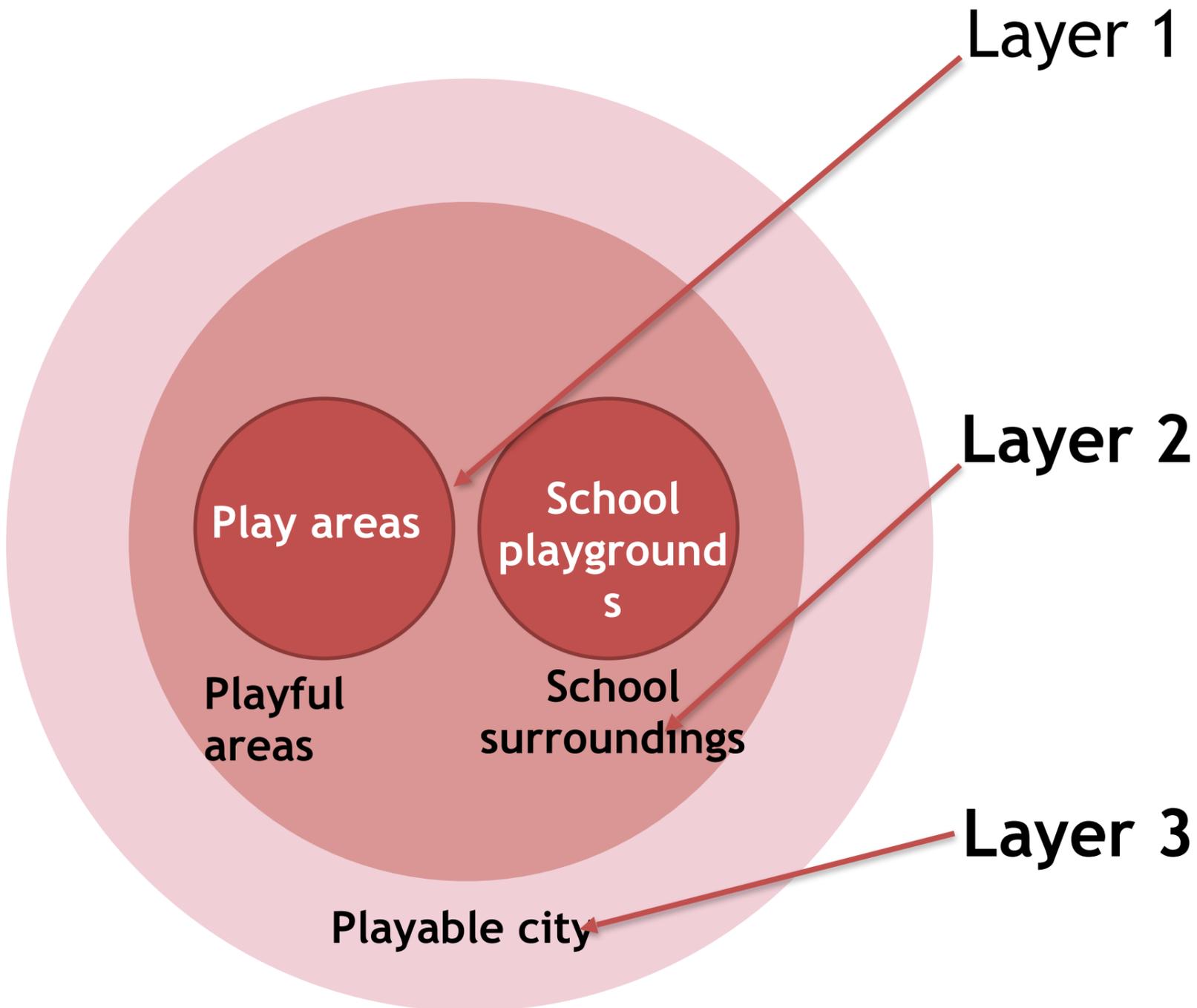


2. PUBLIC PLAY SPACES FROM A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

“We don’t stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing” (George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Prize for Literature)

3 LAYERS FOR A PLAYABLE CITY

The Plan offers a new concept of playful infrastructure and analyses for the first time everything the city offers in terms of play spaces and activity in the open air by going beyond the simple listing of children's playgrounds:



7 CRITERIA FOR A PLAYABLE AND PLAYED-IN CITY

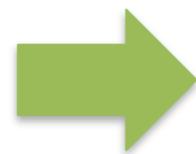
- 1 Multiple proposals for challenging and creative games that aid a child and adolescent's healthy development.
- 2 Diverse, stimulating, versatile, connected and accessible physical space.
- 3 Inclusive playgrounds for people of different ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities.
- 4 Contact with nature, greenery and play with natural elements such as sand and water.
- 5 Shared, intergenerational and collaborative play.
- 6 Place for meeting and community life.
- 7 Playful ecosystems and safe, playable environment.

3. CORE IDEAS AND ACTIONS IN THE PLAN FOR PLAY

*“Mr Mayor, we don’t want swings or slides, we want the city”
(An illustrated child by Frato - Francesco Tonucci)*

PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES

3 strategic
lines



- Line 1.** More and better play spaces in the urban environment.
- Line 2.** Stimulating playful and physical activity outdoors.
- Line 3.** A drive to bring about a paradigm shift

63 actions



- 1 Removal of signs saying “Ballgames prohibited”.
- 2 Sundays on the streets: a high street in each district closed to traffic.
- 3 ‘Let’s play in our squares’: playful proposals promoting the habit of meeting in public places.
- 4 Give priority to play in squares and streets on Saturdays for kids and youth clubs.
- 5 Transformation of school playgrounds
- 6 Micro-interventions around schools to turn them into meeting places
- 7 More games with water and sand
- 8 Create new urban sports parks and original play spaces.
- 9 Open cafe-bars in playful areas with toilets and a game-lending service.
- 10 Create more functionally diverse games for kids.

10 lead
projects

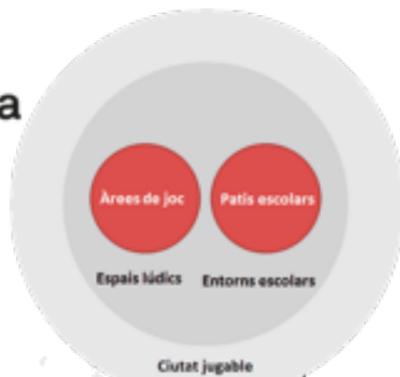


4. A PLAN FOR THE WHOLE CITY

Diagnosis of its playful infrastructure

“Children playing in the street is a good indicator of the quality of community life”

(Jan Gehl, urban planner)

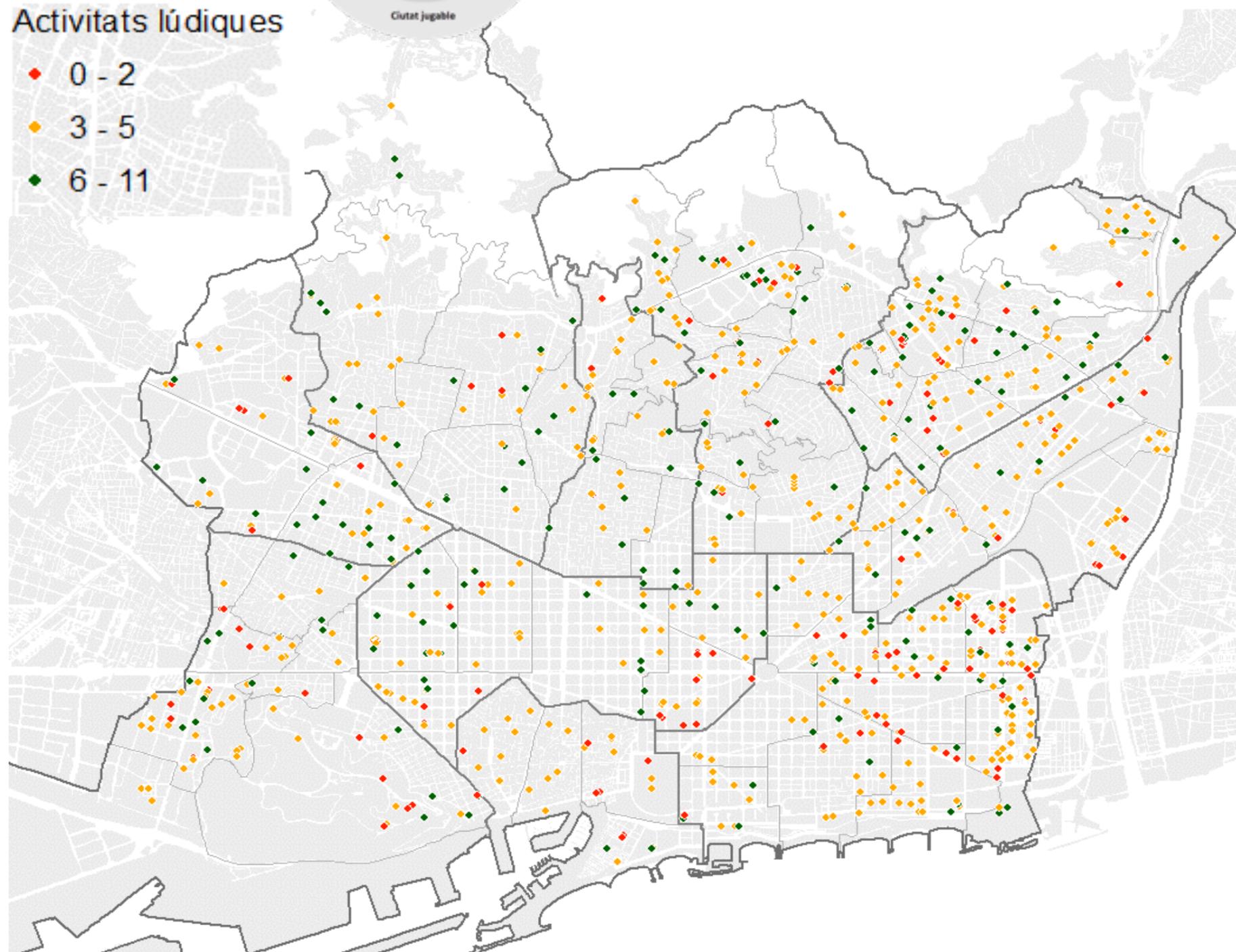


LAYER 1:

The main problem is neither a lack of play areas nor their unequal distribution throughout the city but rather their lack of

Activitats lúdiques

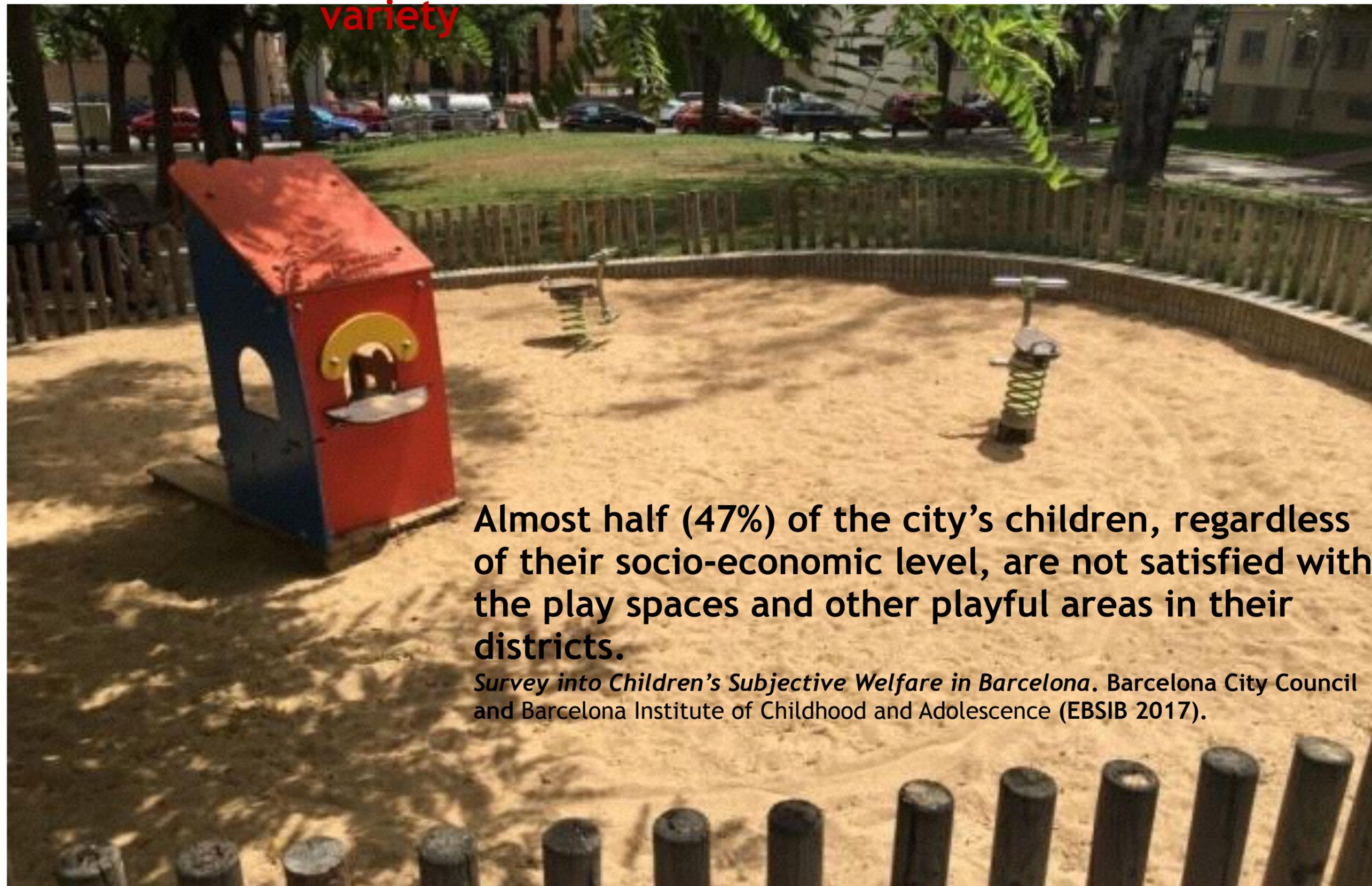
- ◆ 0 - 2
- ◆ 3 - 5
- ◆ 6 - 11



- Only 2 of every 10 play areas offer 6 or more activity options.
- There is no global citywide planning nor standards of minimum quality.
- Play areas are all very similar and standardized, with designs that prioritize safety, maintenance, and adults' peace-of-mind, rather than the interests of the children of different ages and functional capacities that play there.

Map: Distribution of play areas in Barcelona according to the number of activity options they possess (2018)

The current situation - little variety



Almost half (47%) of the city's children, regardless of their socio-economic level, are not satisfied with the play spaces and other playful areas in their districts.

Survey into Children's Subjective Welfare in Barcelona. Barcelona City Council and Barcelona Institute of Childhood and Adolescence (EBSIB 2017).

The current situation - small play



51% of the city's play areas are classified as 'small' as they are less than 150 m² in size.

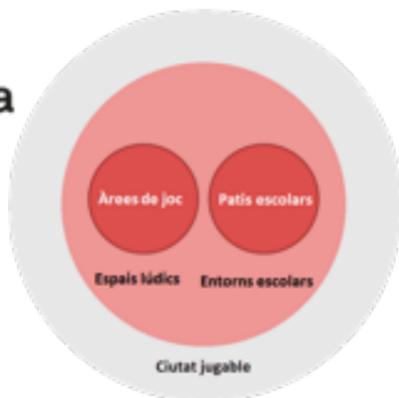
The future situation - a variety of creative, collective and challenging games.



Glòries Park

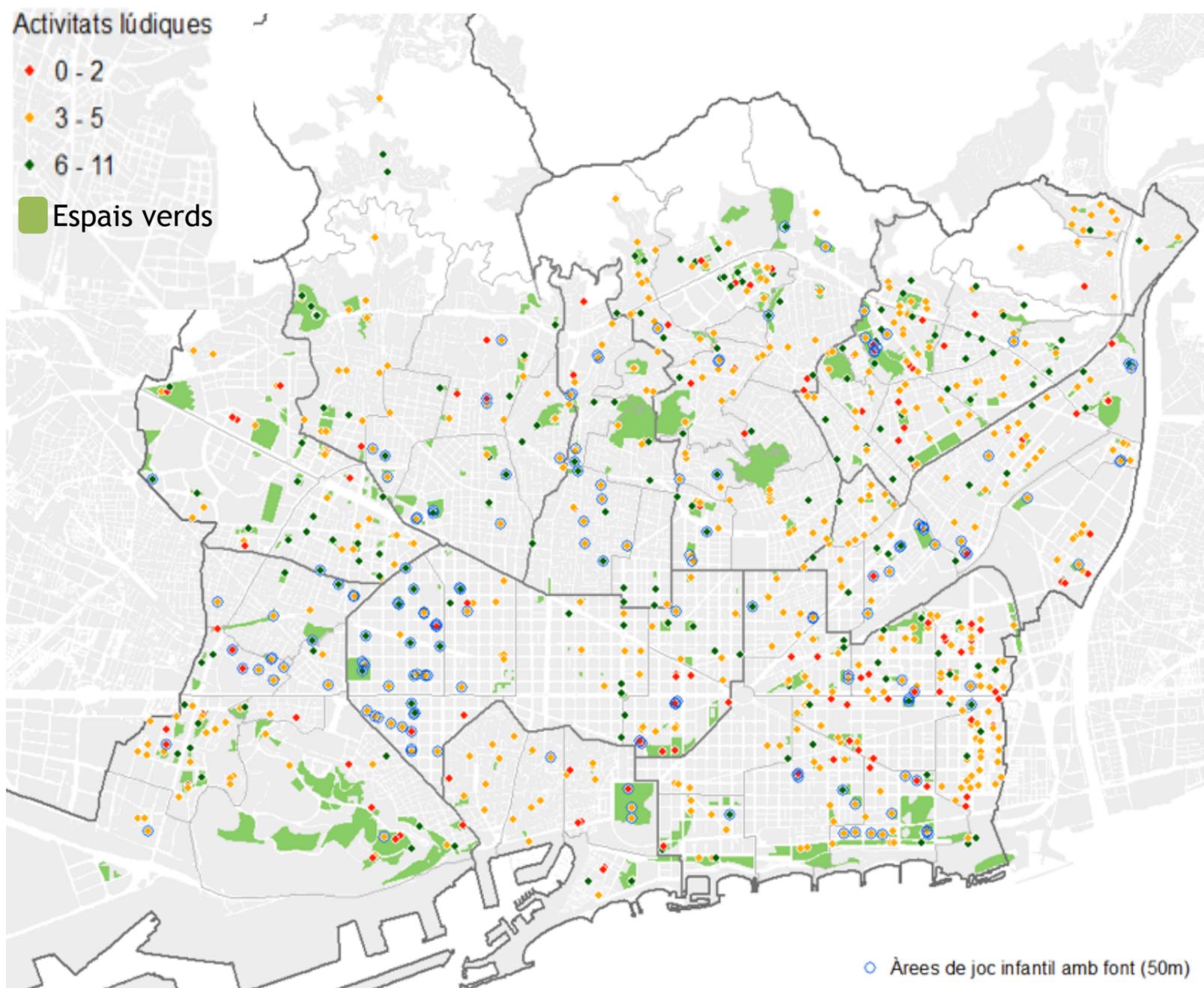
The future situation - natural play areas that are better integrated into public spaces



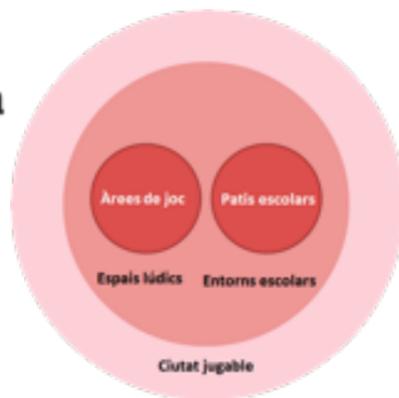


Layer 2:

The potential of green areas to act as playful spaces for all and motors of community life is not taken advantage of.



- The city's green spaces bring children closer to nature (this is especially important for children living in built-up areas).
- The vegetation in green spaces is not designed for children to interact with it.
- Only 18% of play areas have drinking water nearby.
- Only 9% of green spaces have picnic tables.



Layer 3

In the city there are spaces that should form part of its playful infrastructure and be regarded as 'playable areas' for all.



Skateparks



School surroundings



Urban sports facilities



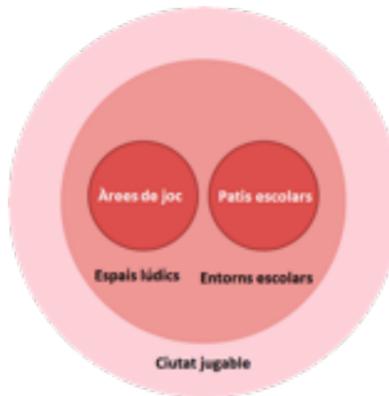
Pedestrian precincts



Free-access sports facilities



Traffic-calmed areas



The Plan for Play in Public Spaces targets the whole city because the main deficits in its playful infrastructures are common to all districts.

Activitats lúdiques

• 0 - 2

• 3 - 5

• 6 - 11

Menys densitat

Més densitat

IRFD 2017

Molt baixa

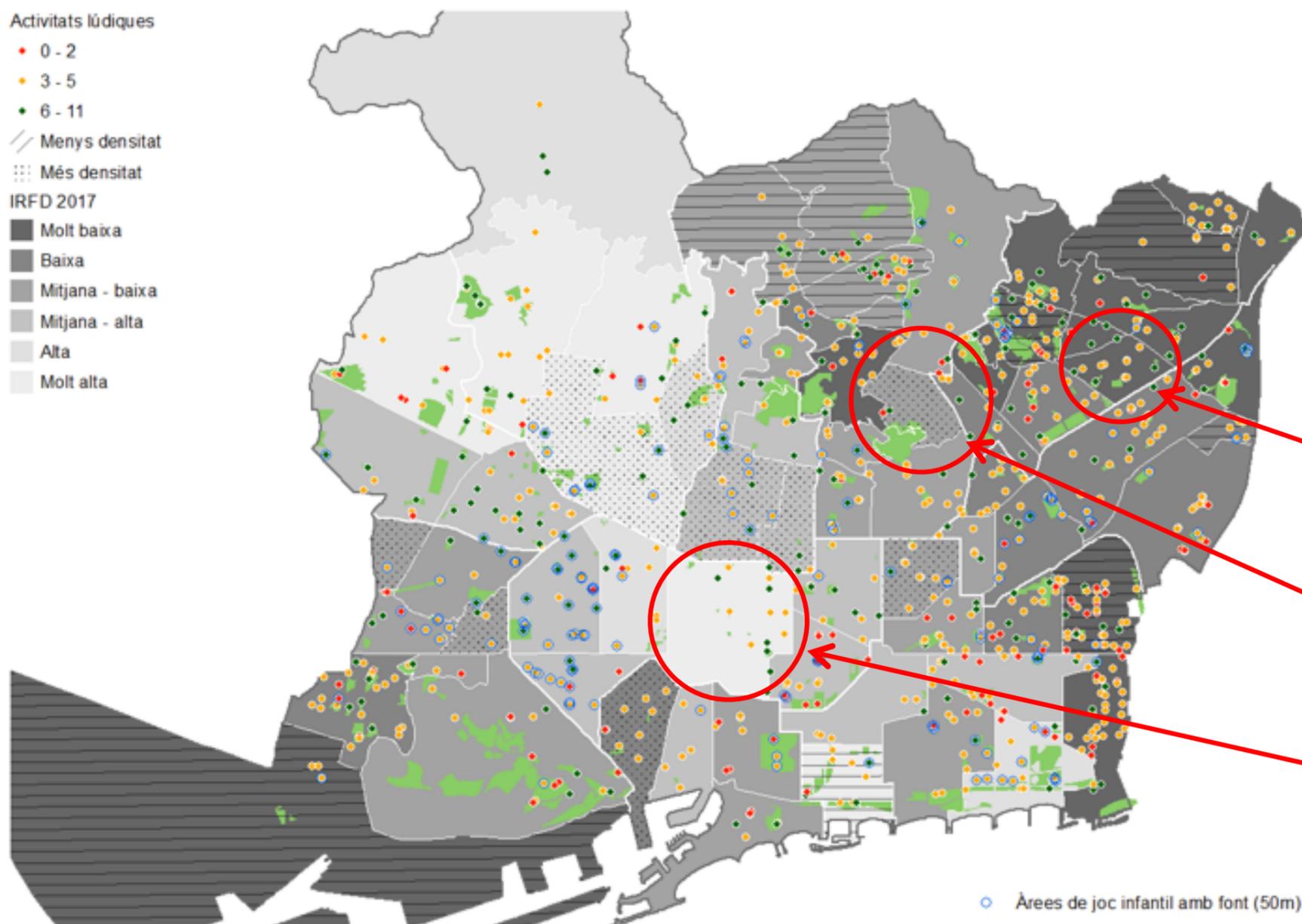
Baixa

Mitjana - baixa

Mitjana - alta

Alta

Molt alta



➤ The deficit in play areas that possess a variety of play options, the lack of green spaces and playful infrastructure designed to foster community life, and the high density of resident children is common to all of the city's districts, poor and rich alike.

Prosperitat: Low income; poorly diverse play areas: lack of green areas and drinking water.

Font d'en Fargas: Middle income; large number of children but few play areas and with little variety; lack of green areas and no drinking water.

Dreta de l'Eixample: High income; low-quality play areas, lack of green areas and drinking water.

Map: Distribution of play areas according to the number playful activities and green areas, as well as drinking water, near the play area, highlighting the 10 city districts with the least and most number of children/m² of play areas, and different income levels (2018).

5. A LOOK AT POORER AREAS CHILD'S INDICATORS

In Barcelona there are serious inequalities between children: 3 key figures:

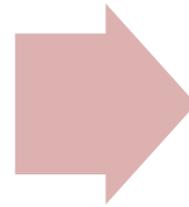
29.5% of the city's children live in a situation of moderate poverty; 8.5% live in severe poverty.

In 2 of the city's districts, 4 of every 10 children are unable to go on holiday "at least once a year" (i.e. they rarely leave the city).

62% of children and teenagers live in districts with low family incomes (low-incomes are associated with other specific needs).

in less well-off districts spend more time playing in the street but are less satisfied with the way they use their time (less educational time, more boredom and less quality family time)

More time playing the street.
But they only play in their local areas and rarely visit the rest of the city. (IIAB 2019)



Imbalance between free play and organized accompanied play. They enjoy fewer after-school activities (educational leisure time). (IIAB 2019 i EBSIB 2017)



(Low income + foreign origin) They are less satisfied with the use of their free time and do not have as much fun at home. (Source: EBSIB 2017)



They are more bored than other kids. (Source: EBSIB 2017)

Source: Ethnographic study. playful and inter-personal dynamics in poorer districts of the City of Barcelona. IIAB 2019

Source: Survey into Children's Subjective Welfare in Barcelona. Barcelona City Council and Barcelona Institute of Childhood and Adolescence (EBSIB 2017).

Children in poorer districts are less healthy and there are serious gender-based differences (differences between children are much less marked)

Awareness of their state of health as either 'reasonable' or 'poor', above all in girls

- 14% of girls in low-income districts, almost double the figure for girls in high-income districts (8%).
- Boys have a more positive health-awareness: only 6% feel their health is only 'reasonable' or 'poor' (irrespective of the district they live in).

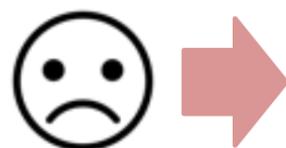
Physical inactivity, most noticeable in adolescent girls

- 18% of girls from low-income families and 15% girls from high-income families are physically inactive.
- The situation is less serious amongst boys: 9% in low-income families and 7% in high-income families are physically inactive.

More time spent watching TV and more sedentary lifestyles

- 12% of adolescent boys and girls in low-income districts watch TV for 2 or more hours in their free time on school days.
- In high-income districts, the corresponding figure is only 5%.
- 10-12-year-old children in low-income districts who are deprived of certain material possessions spend more time watching TV. (EBSIB 2017)

3) Children in the poorest districts have worse socialization and community-life indicators



They are less

Security of play areas

Their freedom and autonomy

Friends and schoolmates

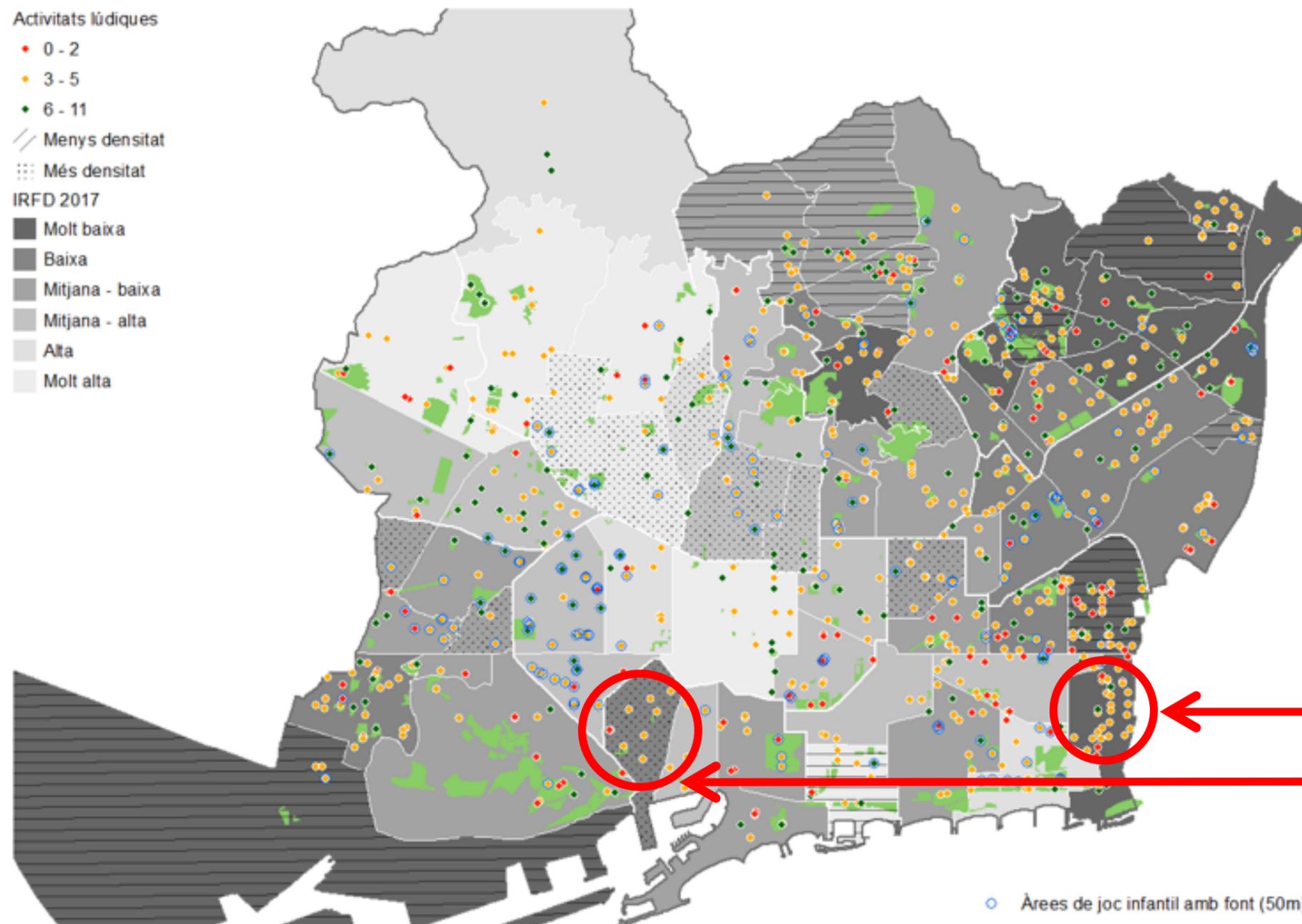


Poorer perception ...

Of the friendliness of adults in their districts

of the support they receive from the adults in their districts when they

How should we identify priority districts when planning what actions are to be taken? Analysing the three 'playability' layers + income inequalities + health indicators + daily life in the district



Districts focused on: Raval and Besòs Maresme

Map: Distribution of play areas according to the number playful activities and green areas, as well as drinking water, near the play area, highlighting the 10 city districts with the least and most number of children/m² of play areas, and different income levels (2018).

6. THE NEED OF CONTEXT-BASED ACTIONS

OBSERVATION OF THE PLAYFUL AND INTER-PERSONAL DYNAMICS IN TWO POOR

Similar social
context

Poverty, unemployment,
difficulties in finding
housing, insecurity in public
areas,
fewer educational
opportunities (children do
fewer after-school
activities)

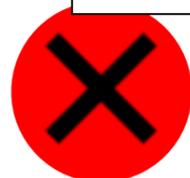
Similar physical
conditions of play
areas

Space available for play,
diversity of options for
games in the studied
play areas

The dynamics in the
games and inter-
personal
relationships are
different.



Besòs Maresme



- Individual and more conflictive games
- Gender-segrated play
- Perception of insecurity
- Spatial and temporal separation in play
- Different children playing every day
- Mistrust of adults present in play areas
- Perception by local people of play areas as unsafe and uncared for
- Presence of adults who only watch



Raval

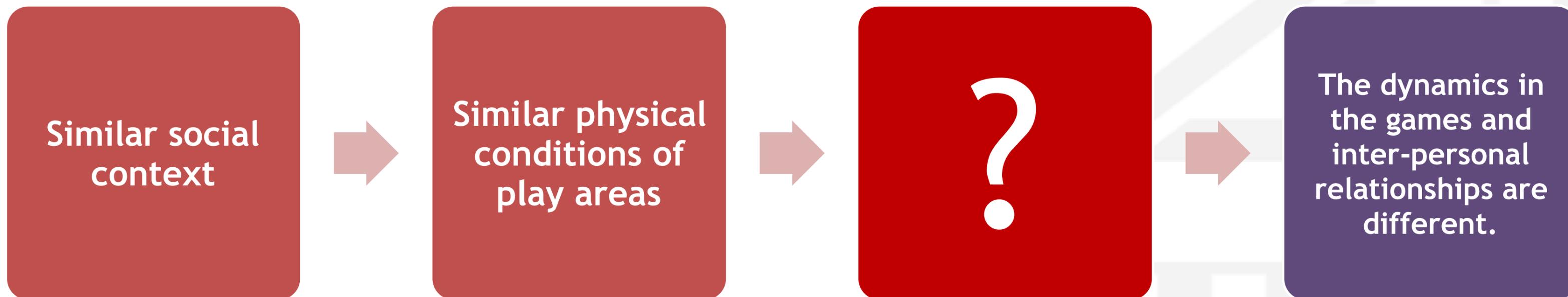


- Collective, more cooperative play
- Intercultural and intergenerational play
- Perception that play spaces are safe
- Co-existence in the play area
- Same playmates every day
- Adults look out for all children in the play area
- Perception of play areas as safe and well looked after
- Play areas also act as places for adults to socialize

- More socialization, communication capacity, empathy and respect
- The ability to reach agreements and find collective solutions
- Learn from older people, a motivation to accept challenges and put motor skills to the test

All this contributes to the overall development of children and

What is the origin of these differences?





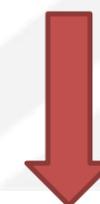
Factors that explain the differences:

- Greater presence and participation by local council-backed social entities.
- More ongoing projects designed to stimulate socio-communitary interaction.
- Participatory processes to design play areas.
- More regular use of play areas by families, schools, etc.

**Community dynamics stimulate positive play,
and positive play favours more community life**

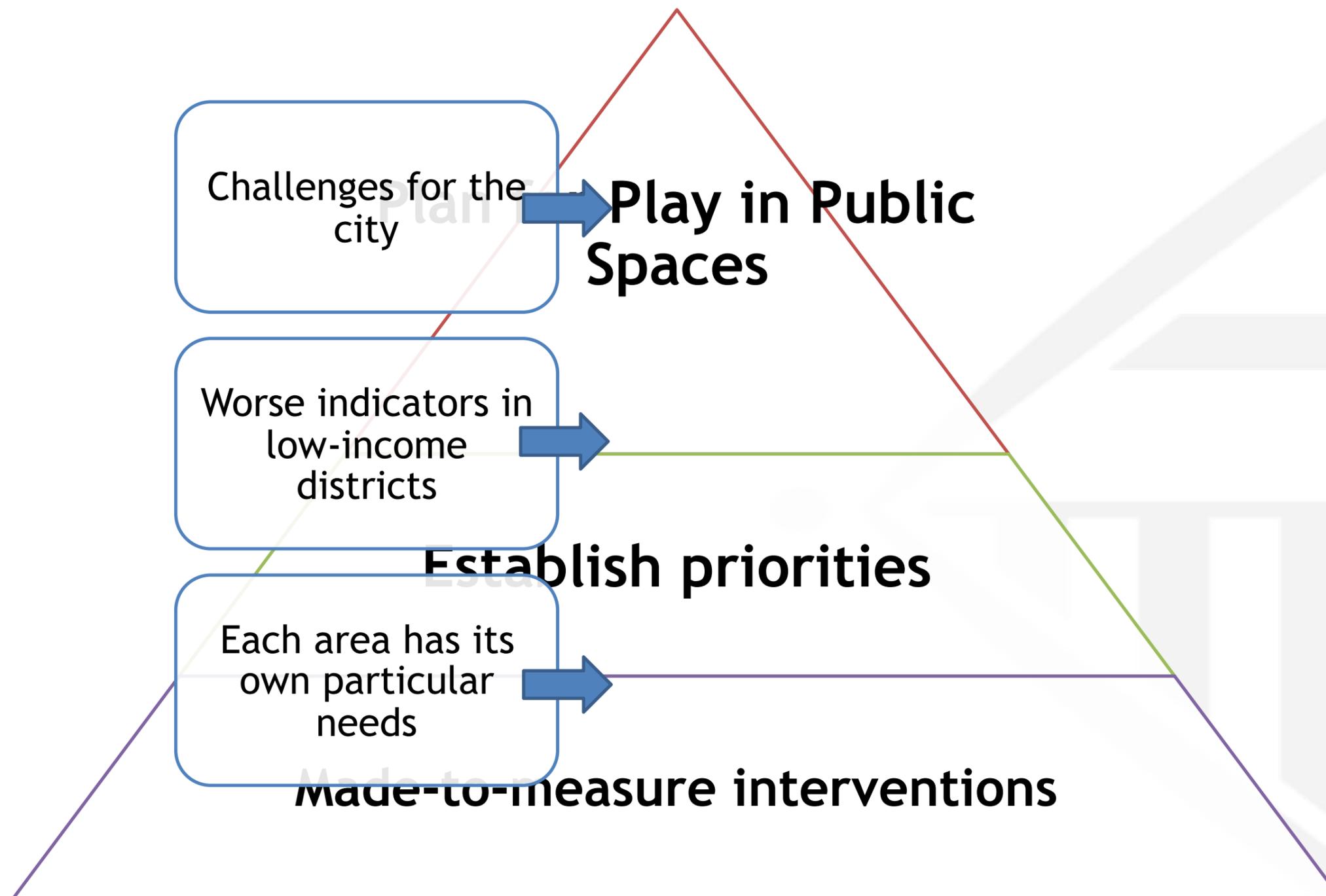
To offer more and better play possibilities it is not enough simply to build more play areas. We also need to act at a social level by identifying accurately the realities and needs of each area.

Context-based interventions are required



BESÒS-MARESME	RAVAL
A) FIRST CHALLENGE: improve interaction between peers through play.	A) FIRST CHALLENGE: Improve access to play areas that favour cognitive learning through play. Children in El Raval do less well at school and participate less in after-school activities.
B) DRIVING FORCE: Let's play in the square!	B) DRIVING FORCE: Let's play in the square!
C) ACTIVITIES: playful programs designed to promote joint play, popular street games, team games, games with monitors in public spaces linked to schools and other educational centres.	C) ACTIVITIES: promotion of table games that stimulate the acquisition of linguistic, mathematical and social skills.

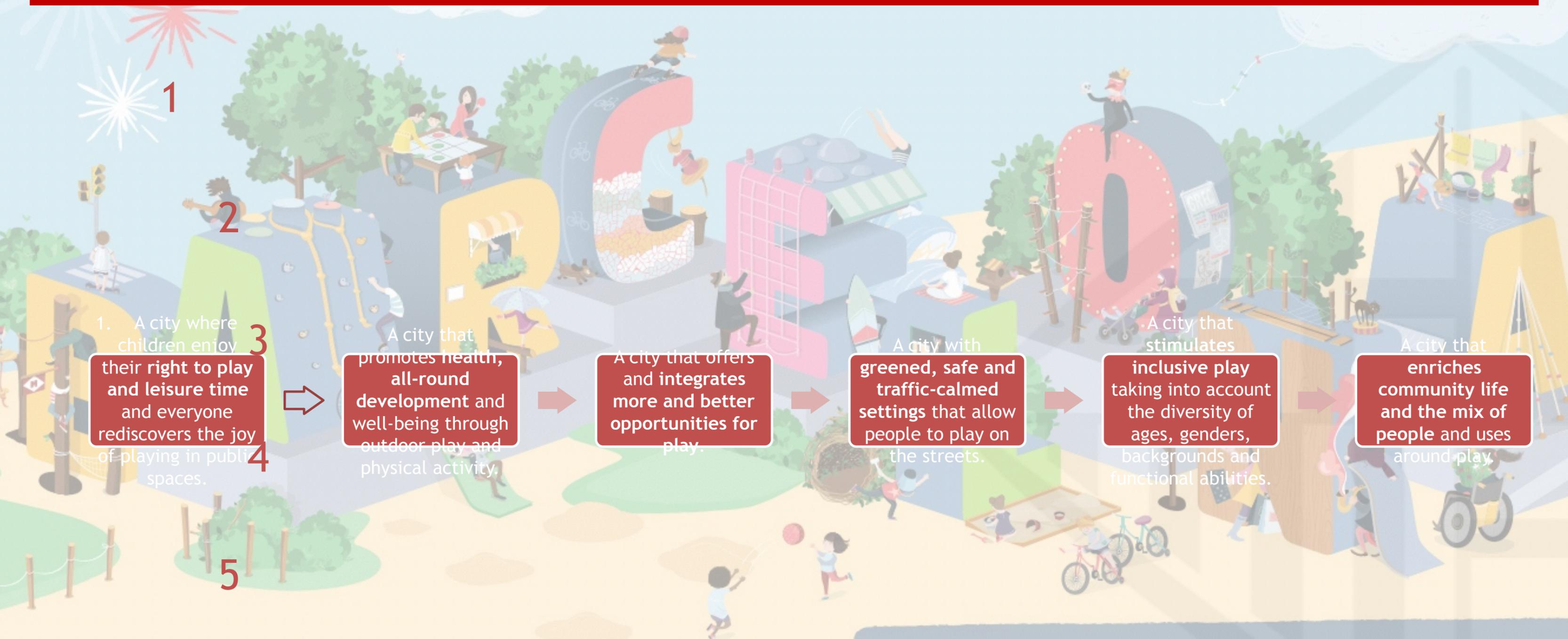
To conclude ...



7. PUBLIC PLAY SPACES 2030: WHAT IS OUR VISION?

“Play is the highest form of research” (Albert Einstein)

HORIZON 2030: A PLAY-FRIENDLY BARCELONA IN 6 VISIONS



1. A city where children enjoy their right to play and leisure time and everyone rediscovers the joy of playing in public spaces.

A city that promotes health, all-round development and well-being through outdoor play and physical activity.

A city that offers and integrates more and better opportunities for play.

A city with greened, safe and traffic-calmed settings that allow people to play on the streets.

A city that stimulates inclusive play taking into account the diversity of ages, genders, backgrounds and functional abilities.

A city that enriches community life and the mix of people and uses around play.

Pla del joc a l'espai públic

Many thanks 🥰



Pla del joc a l'espai públic

For more information

- [Full document *Plan for Play in Public Spaces* \(City Council website\)](#)
- [Summary of Plan](#) (Institute's website)
- [Article. *A playable city and a city people play in: a diagnosis of play opportunities in public spaces in Barcelona*](#) (Institute's website)

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