

Elementary schools' playgrounds are renovated to jointly create a secret base for children

(Courtesy of Yang, Yu-Leng at the Division of Junior High and Elementary Education)



To provide students with a better and safer playground, the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, has invested a total of NT\$2.1 billion since 2020 to assist local governments in replacing, installing, and improving children's playground facilities in elementary schools, all of which are expected to be completed by the end of August 2022, benefiting as many as 1,814 schools. As such, students can play in a safe and interesting space.

Haipu Elementary School in Changhua County is a case in point. It originally had two sets of old, rusty, and severely damaged climbing frames in the school, resulting in safety concerns. Through a subsidy program, the old playground equipment and floor mats were removed, and new combination play units that look like a fiddler crab were installed, making the playground not only safe but eye-catching. In addition, the two new hexagonal three-dimensional combination play units can be used as a shelter for children to hide, with a climbing net connecting both sides, to enable kids to slide, climb, and crawl, thereby facilitating their physical development.

Sanxing Elementary School in Chiayi County originally did not have a children's playground in the schoolyard. With the support of a subsidy, colorful paintings and a green turf were subtly embedded in the schoolyard, and the space was named Sanxing's Dream Garden for Children, an anti-disaster slide and rock-climbing site; meanwhile, a terrazzo slide and a painted rock-climbing area were set up in alignment with the slope that separates the playground and the school buildings. The classic slide and modern rock-climbing site are combined to demonstrate a multi-generational playground image, while the design of a low-slope, slow-speed, and wide slide with multiple chutes, allowing both adults and children to play together and create a highlight in the schoolyard.

Huanan Elementary School in Yunlin County originally had plastic play equipment installed on the trapezoidal gentle slope with two kinds of pavements, as such it fails to meet the playground regulations. Through the subsidy program, the playground has been expanded and also designed in a way to conform to the surface irregularity, thereby strengthening children's jump thinking. Meanwhile, a wilderness area equipped with climbing boards and climbing frames has been set up for a wilderness course, allowing children to touch trees and get close to the natural environment, which helps to enhance independence ability, confidence, and learning efficiency.

The K-12 Education Administration stated that the school playground is very critical to children's growth as it not only provides a space for them to play but functions as a crucial site to strengthen their physical fitness, ability to explore, and teamwork. The Ministry of Education will continue to work with local governments to accelerate the improvement the playgrounds, allowing school children to learn and grow in a better and safer playground, to ensure their both physical and psychological health.