

Development of Featured Elementary School Playgrounds to Create a Happy Paradise for Children

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



The K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, has subsidized many elementary schools to build playgrounds with diverse features since 2019. With the collective efforts of schools, the featured playgrounds have been completed and opened for use, including the Fu-Sing Elementary School in Zhonghe District, New Taipei City, the Tainan Municipal Madou District Peiwun Elementary School, the Xiliao Elementary School in the Daliao District, Kaohsiung City, the Shangren Elementary School in the Qidu District, Keelung City, the Chaoxing Elementary School in the Shetou District, Changhua County, and the Nanxin Elementary School in Taibao City, Chiayi County. The processes of playing with different facilities in the playground are expected to unleash students' potential for development.

For example, the Tainan Municipal Madou District Peiwun Elementary School's playground has appropriately incorporated the historical tradition of the local salted vegetables culture in

Madou, with the images of the salted vegetables barrel as the theme of the playground. With slides, swings, sand pits, and natural material pavement, a playground with local traditional characteristics while in compliance with the Safety Management Regulations on Children's Playground Facilities has been created.

The Pingtung County Linluo Elementary School has named its playground "Qilin Playground". It has installed five game facilities with local features and cultural meanings, including "Dawushan Slides", which are slides with slopes, climbing ropes, climbing boards, and stairs based on the idea of the big mountain chain Dawushan in Pingtung County. Climbing to the top of the slides in different ways is as if climbing the Dawushan in various methods. "Dahuofang Tree House" becomes an outdoor classroom for children. There are even "Microphones" for students to whisper to each other. As "huofang" is an architectural structure, in which Hakka people with blood and clan relationships live together, it enables teachers and students to feel as family members. In addition, there are hanging bars under a tree, a balance beam, and a seesaw in the playground.

The playground of Shangren Elementary School in the Qidu District, Keelung City, features a three-story wooden house as a climbing system with different height levels, which helps to train children's cardiorespiratory endurance, palm grasping, and dynamic balance skills. The upper and lower three-dimensional spaces allow children to make eye contact and motivate children of different abilities to participate actively and interact with each other in games, thereby facilitating inclusion. The playground is also named "Sweet Gum Paradise" based on the sweet gum in the schoolyard. The overall design of the playground facilities is for students in all grades and in special education, with an emphasis on an inclusive playground environment.

Both teachers and students at the Xiliao Elementary School in the Daliao District, Kaohsiung City, jointly designed a featured playground. In the playground, "small hills" are combined with climbing nets and slides to strengthen the muscle development of children's upper and lower limbs; the basket swings are safer than traditional ones; the sand pits are designed for small

children and elementary school students; the double seesaws allow more students to play at the same time.

According to the K-12 Education Administration, teachers, students, parents, and architects jointly participated in the planning and design, incorporated local cultural as well as existing natural and landscape, thereby constructing playgrounds with diverse characteristics while in line with school students' development needs. It will continue to build on relevant experiences and existing models to develop more school playgrounds with their own characteristics.