



Investigation of attractiveness of modern megapolis environment for children in Moscow

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- problem statement and purpose
- method
- results and discussion
- conclusions

Child-friendly city –
the goal of joint project
of designers,
psychologists,
teachers,
landscape architects.
Child-friendly city has a
number of places which
inspire free child play and
their own initiatives and
activities.
An outdoor playground
can be such a place.

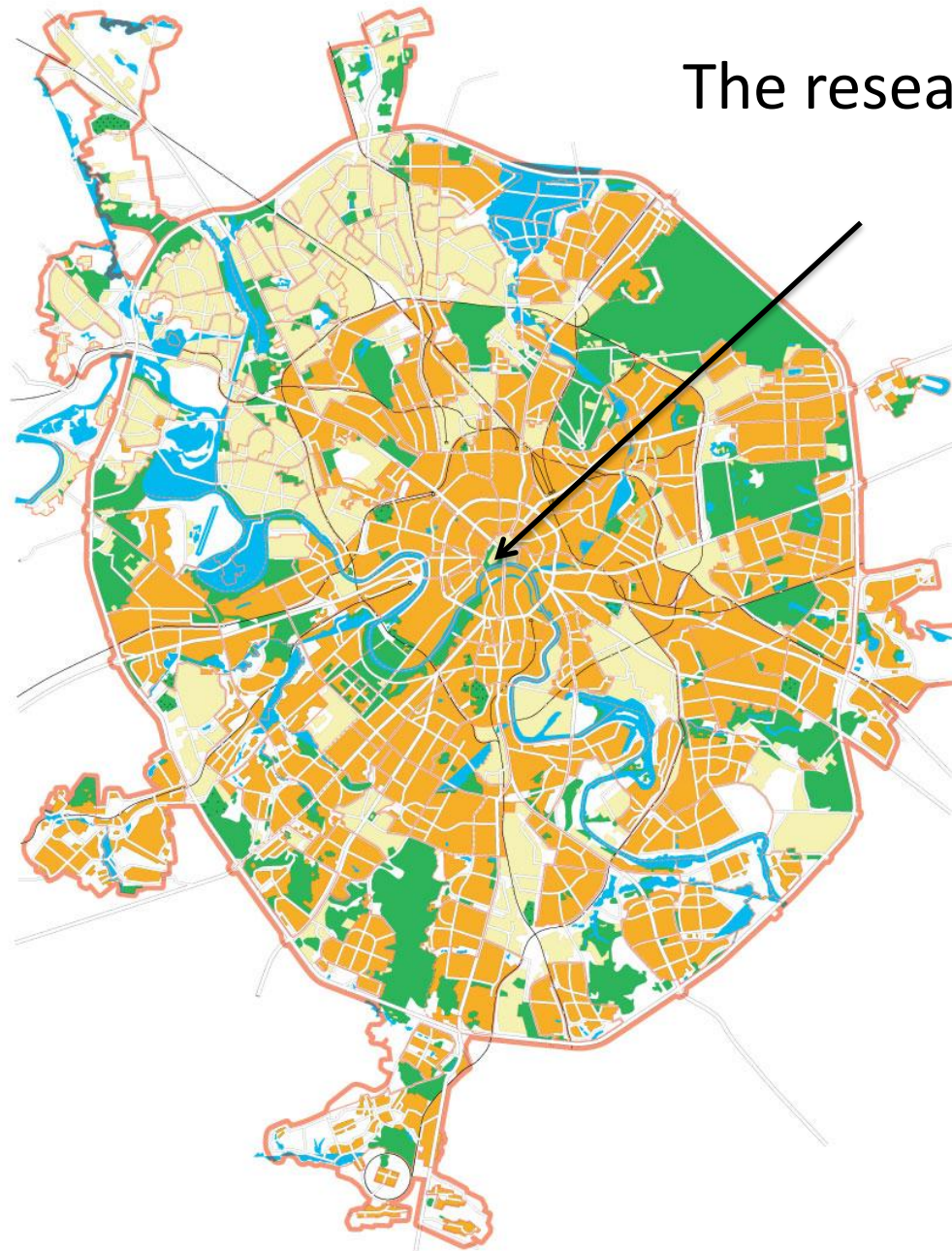


The method of analysis of Children`s Playground Attractiveness (CPA) was developed in 2013 by psychologists of MSUPE Inna Kotliar and Maria Sokolova with the support of company "White City Project"

Modelling of method 01-03.2013

Data collection 08-10.2013

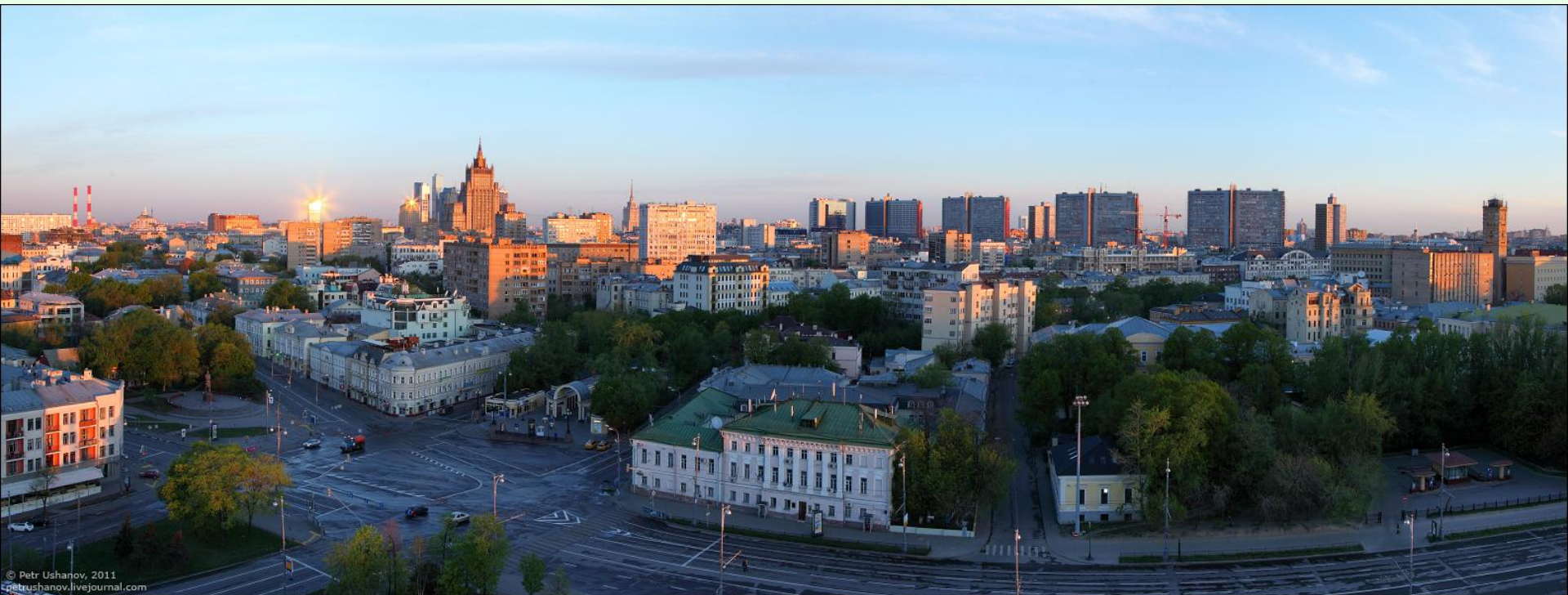
This is the first focused empirical research of childrens' playgrounds in Russia

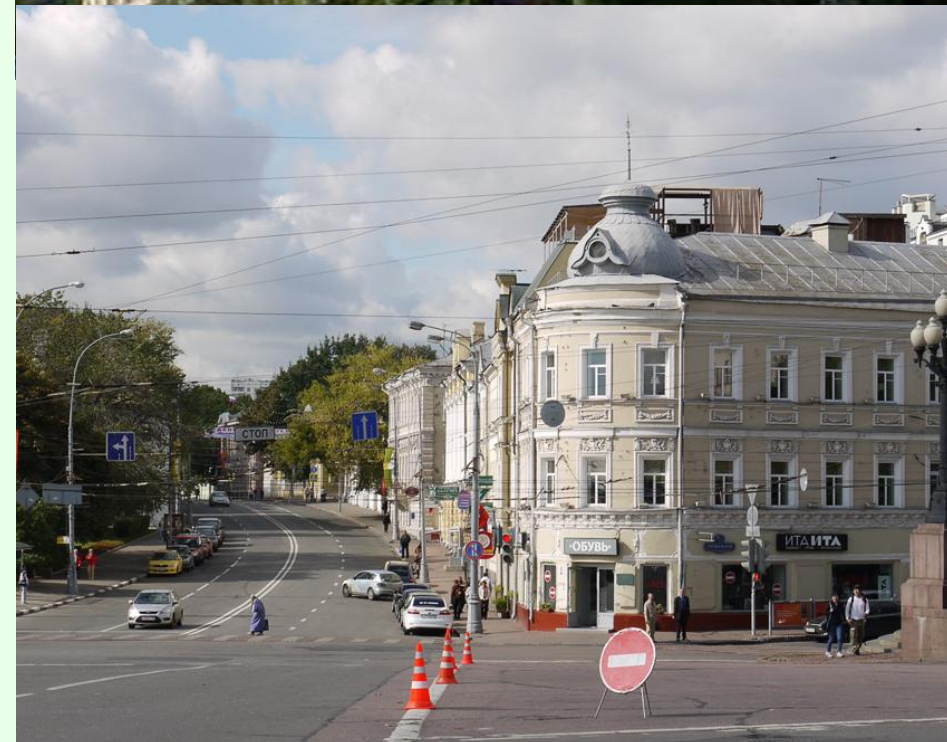


The research area

The description of the research site

- Central district of Moscow (Volkhonka)
- The square 307,7 ha, 3500 residents
- 9 schools, 5 kindergartens, a lot of museums, embassies, publishing houses, offices





Observation

Non-participant observation of playground and its visitors:

every 15 min\per hour

from 10.00 am to 22.00 pm at each playground (12 times a day)

during one workday and one day off

Every playground was observed 24 times

The structure of the method

The method consists of:

- Description of the set of equipment at the playground
- Instruction for the monitoring and observation
- Lists of observations:
 - time
 - weather conditions
 - illumination
 - visitors age and gender
 - type of activity

Example of observation list

Время наблюдения		Площадка №	
Б. Афанасьевский пер., Ptit Cref 2			
Адрес площадки			
Действие	1–5 минут	5–10 минут	10–15 минут
Ребенок	Копает, строит, лепит		
	Играет		
	Общается		
	Конфликт		
	Опасная ситуация		
	Использует иначе (как?)		
	Контролирует		
	Помогает		
	Участвует		
Взрослый	Выключен		

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Адрес площадки			
Действие	1–5 минут	5–10 минут	10–15 минут
Ребенок	Качается		
	Играет		
	Общается		
	Конфликт		
	Опасная ситуация		
	Использует иначе (как?)		
	Контролирует		
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Взрослый	Выключен		

Types of childrens activities - 2

Child can perform several types of activities at the playground equipment:

- Observation
- Experimentation with objects
- Play - act «as if»
- Communication
- Conflict situation
- Risk
- Relaxation

Types of childrens activities - 1

1. Actions that are "prescribed" by the logic of the equipment.

Swing on the swing, slide down the slide.

2. Actions, "overcoming" the logic of the equipment. Experimenting with the object or playing with it.

Put the stone on a swing and launching it, use the swing as a rocket or submarine.

16 urban playgrounds

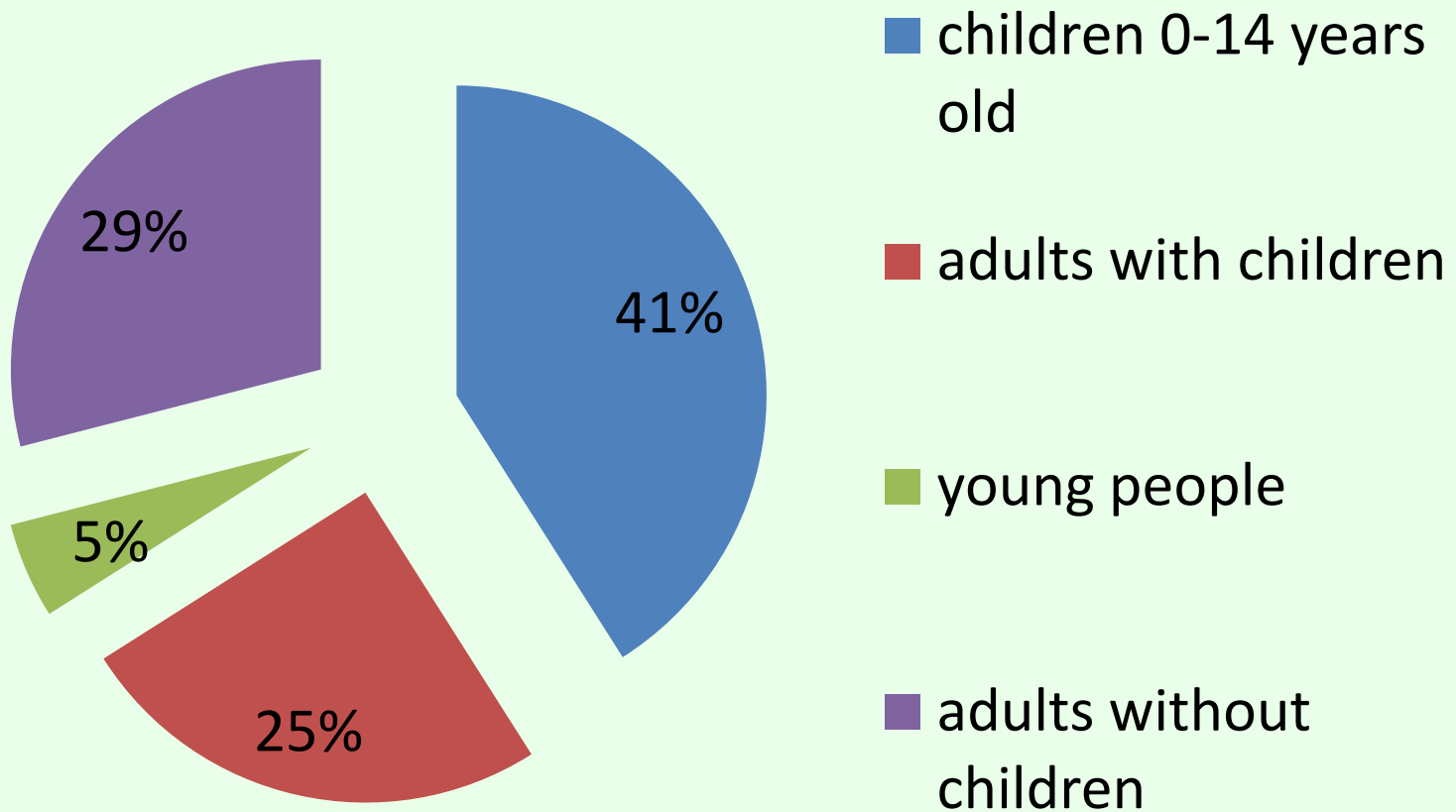


Criteria of evaluation of children playground attractiveness

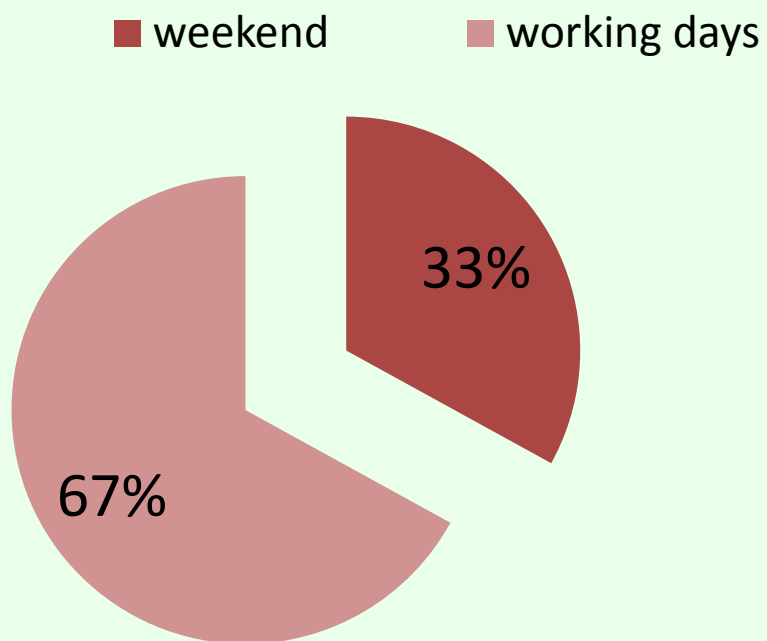
- Number of people who visit the playground and character of interaction with the apperators in it
- Variety and preferences of children actions and activities prompted by playground
- Age and gender feachers of every object and playground in general
- Risk and dangerouse places of playground

367 observations and 1328 episodes of visitor`s interactions with equipment were produced in the playground

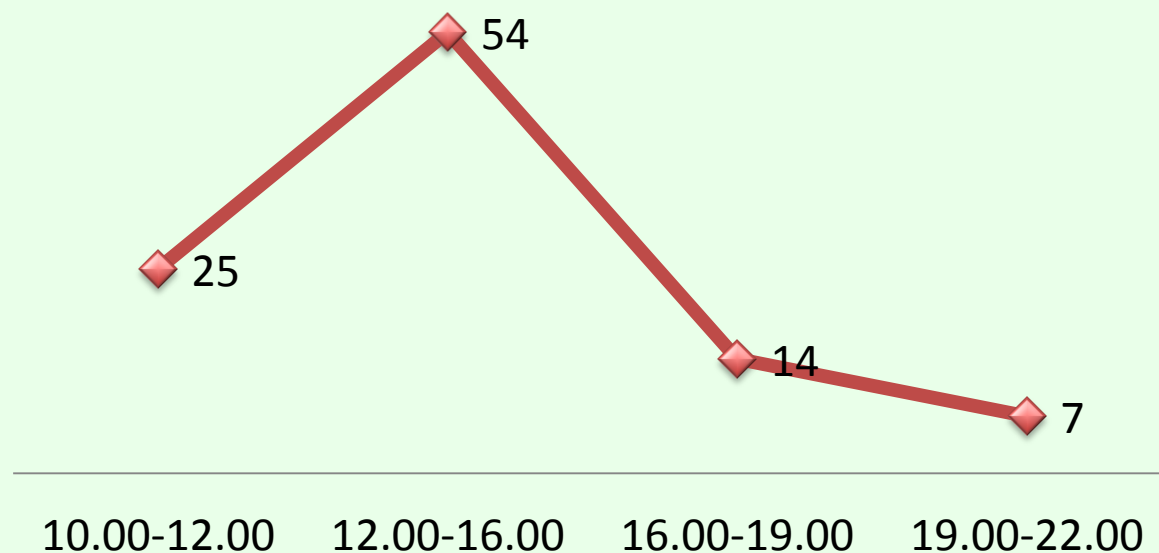
Age of visitors



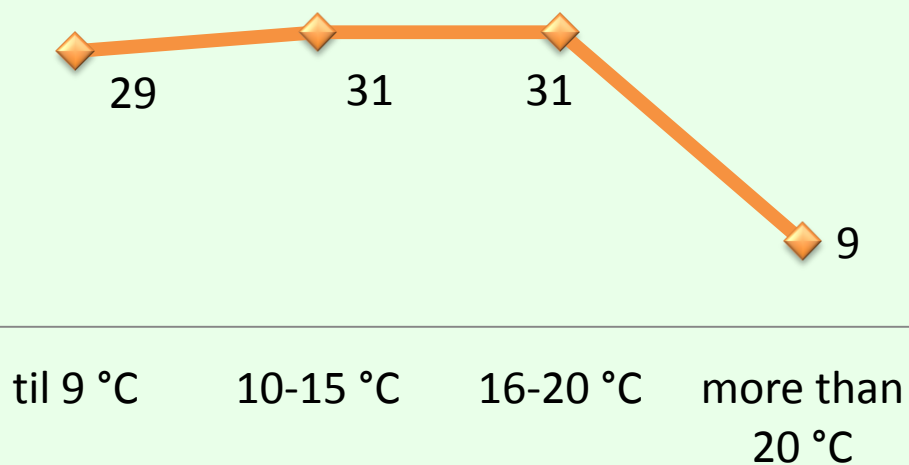
Visiting during weekend and working days, %



Visiting during the day, %

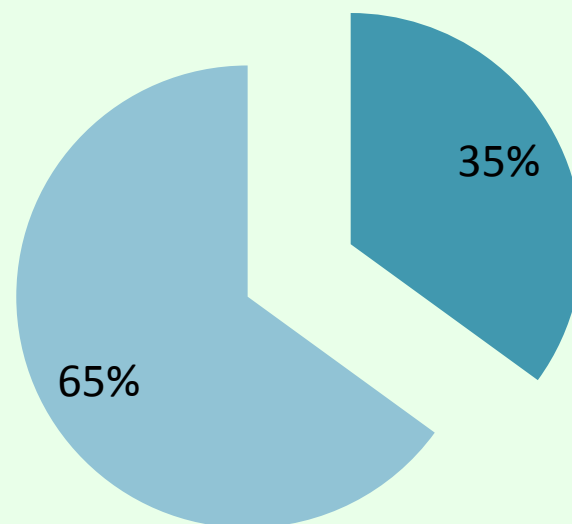


Temperature, %

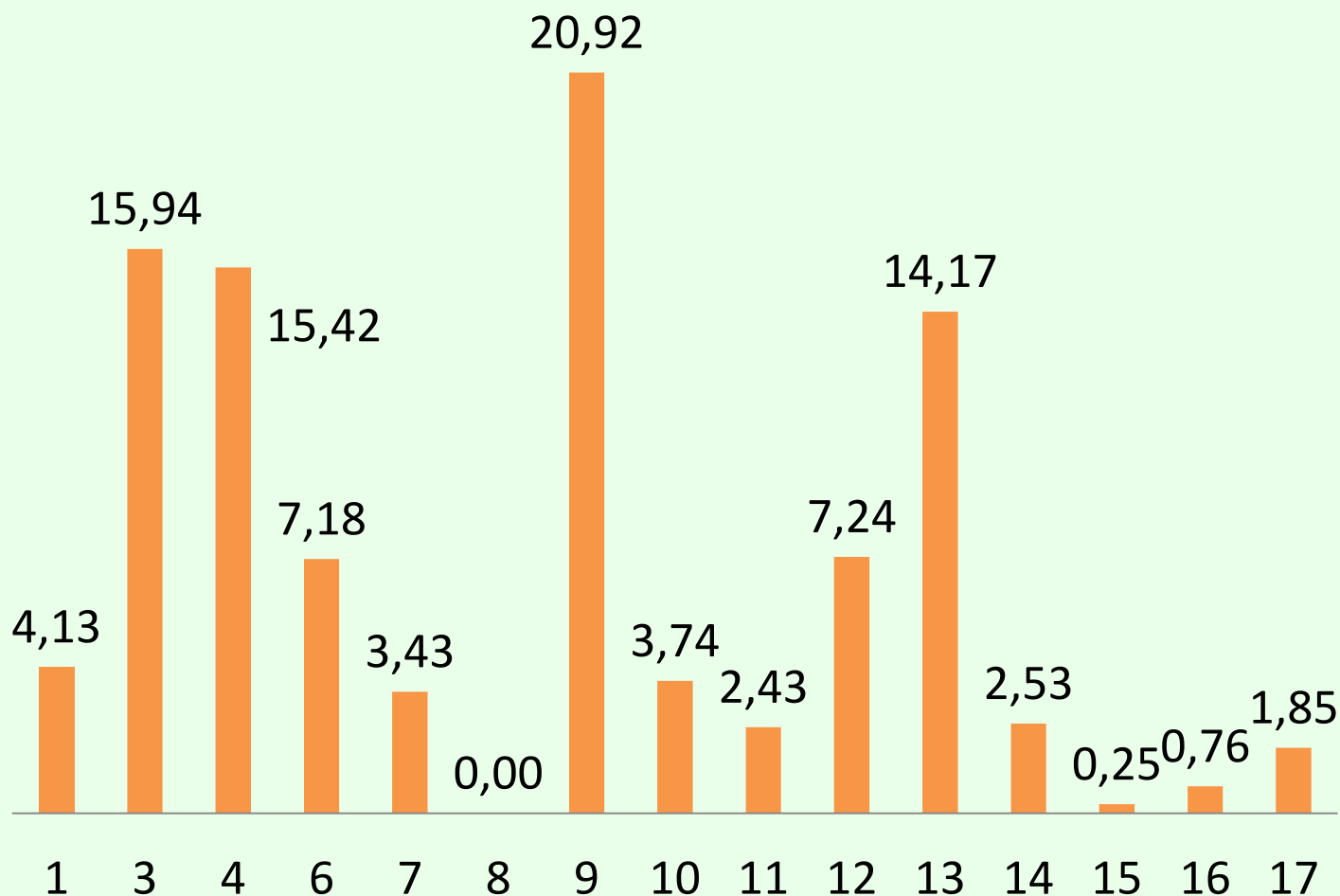


Precipitation, %

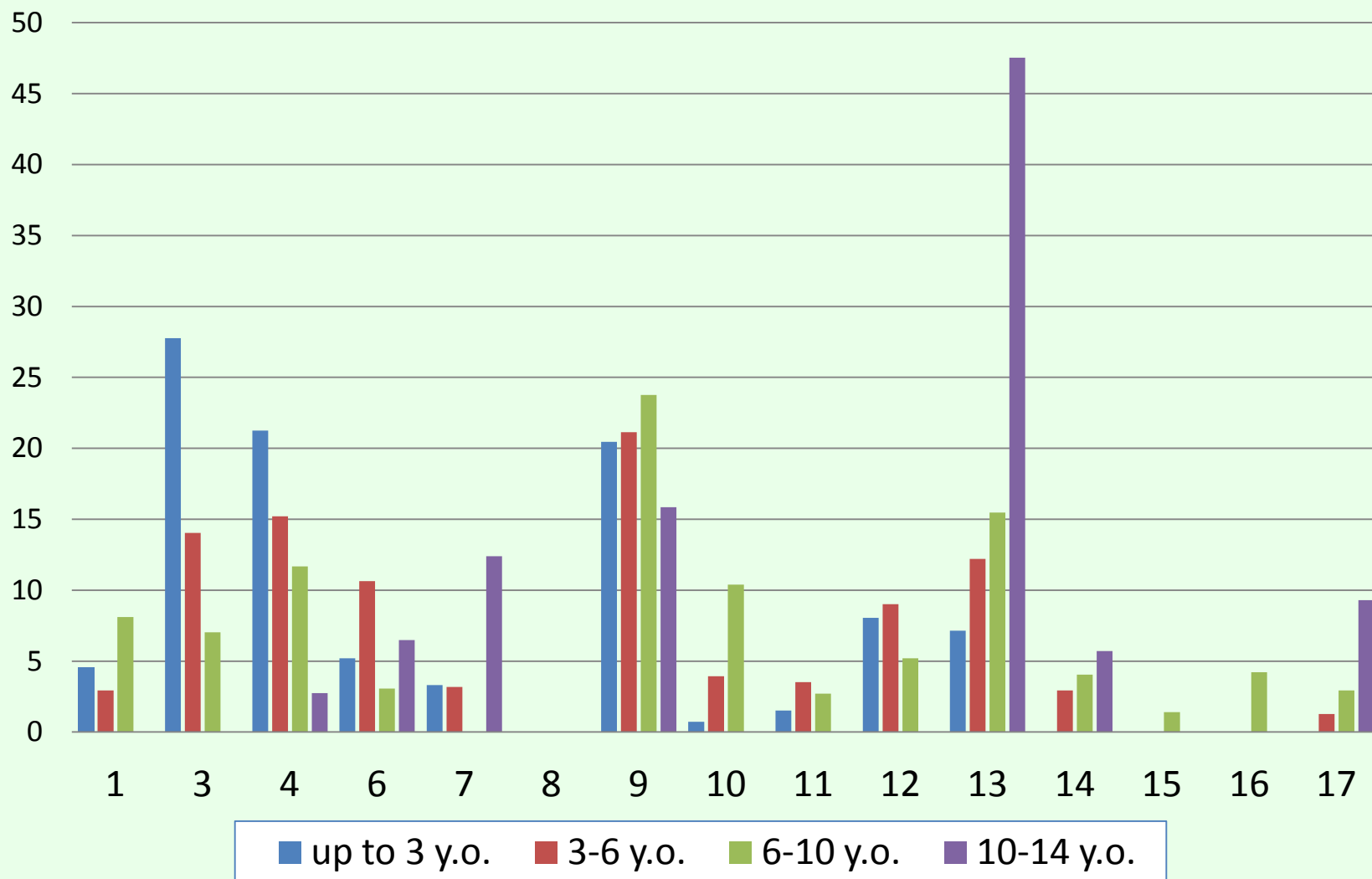
■ rain ■ without rain



Popularity of playgrounds, %



Popularity of playgrounds, %



The most popular playground



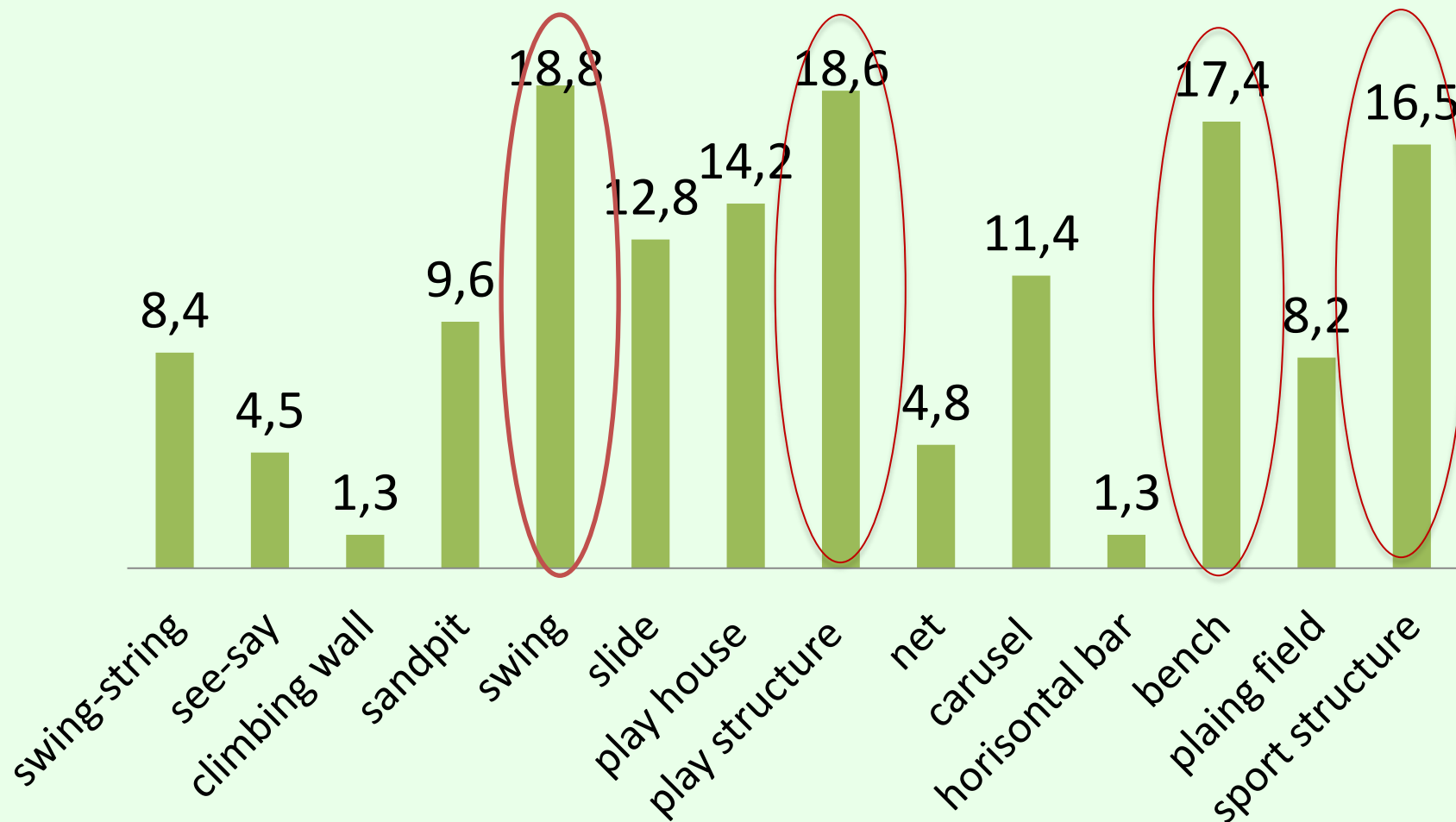
Playground 8 has not ever been visited



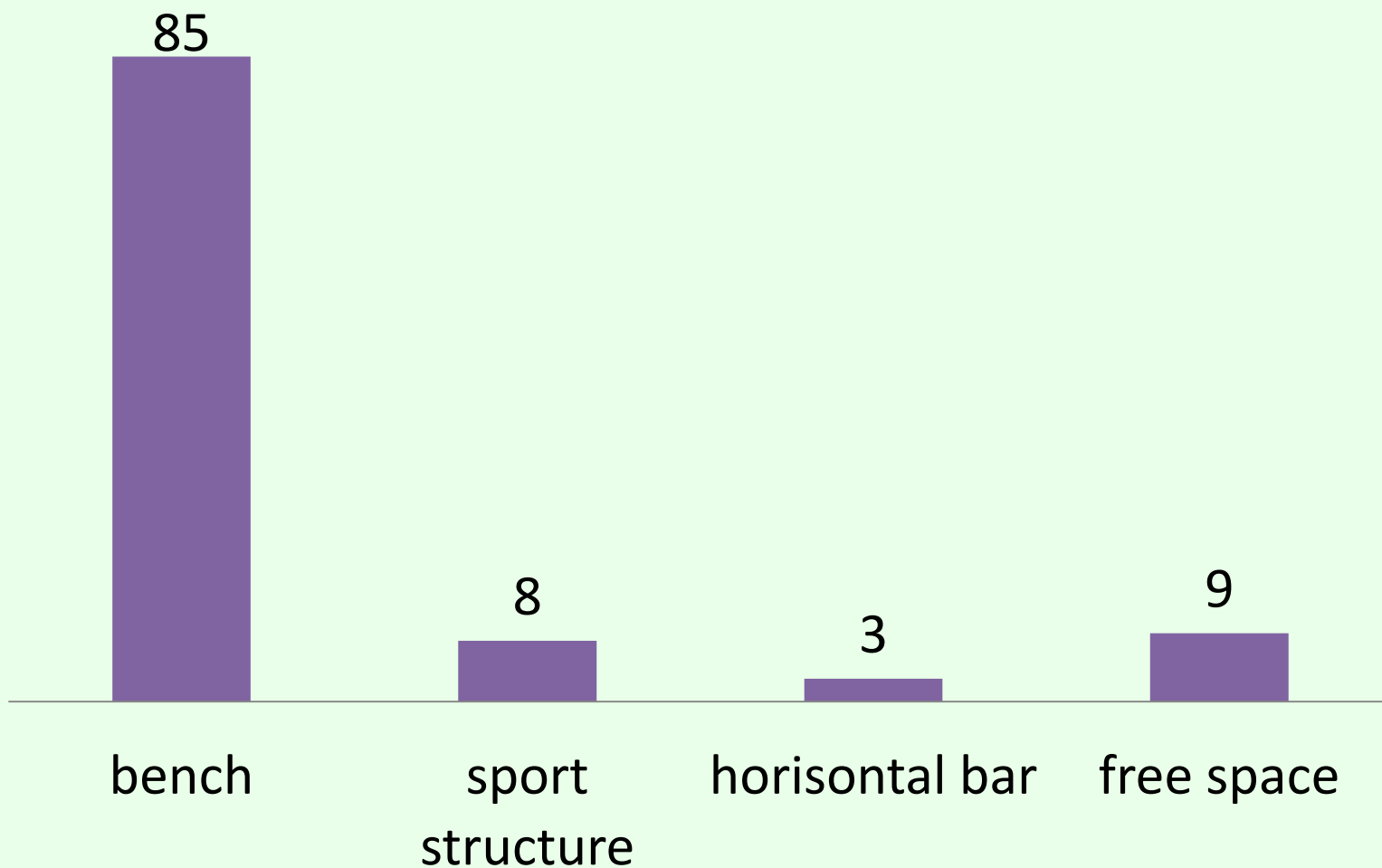
Playgrounds 11, 15, 16 и 17 have been visited rarely



Relative popularity of playground equipment, % Children



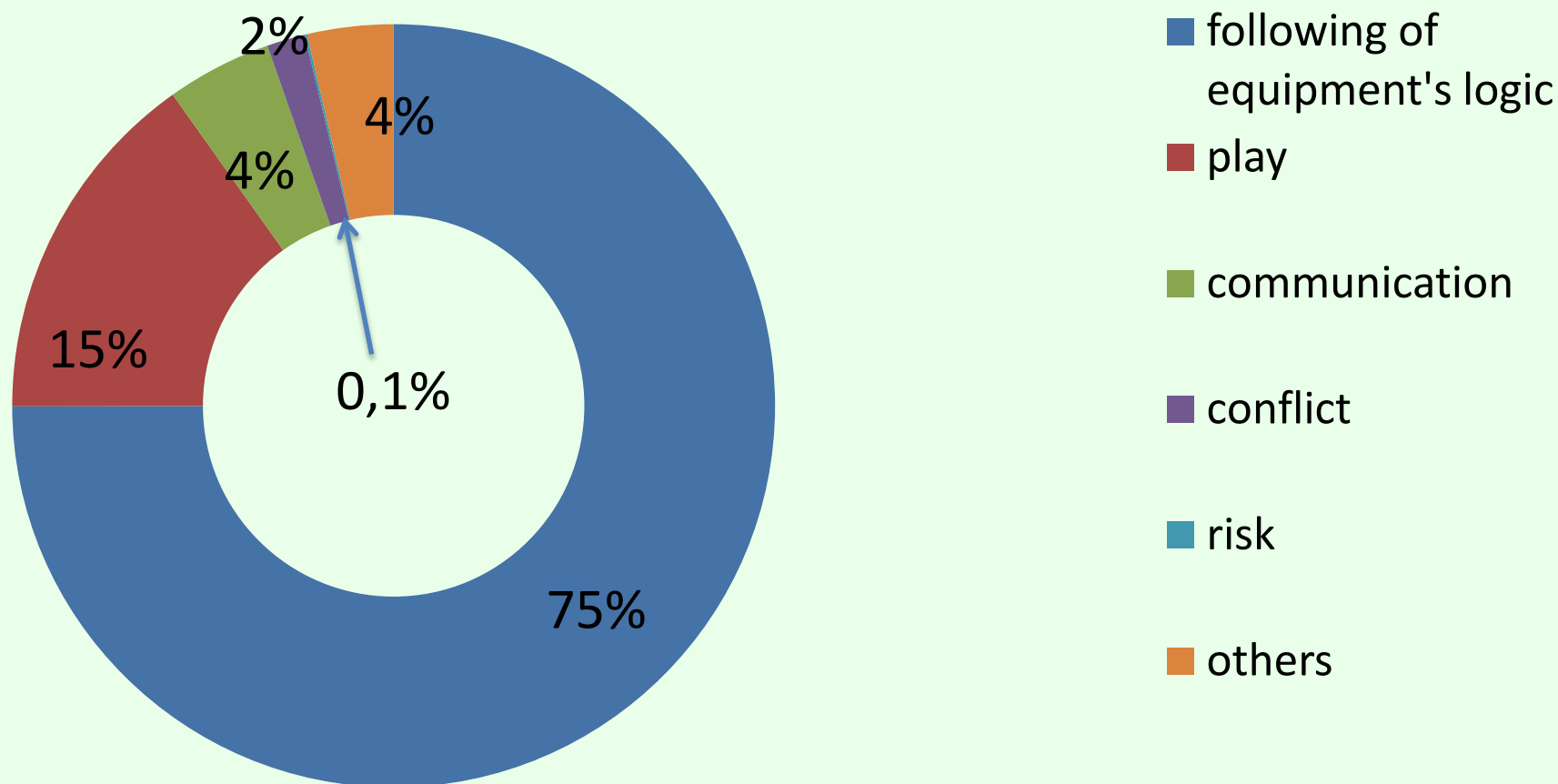
Relative popularity of playground equipment, % Adults without children



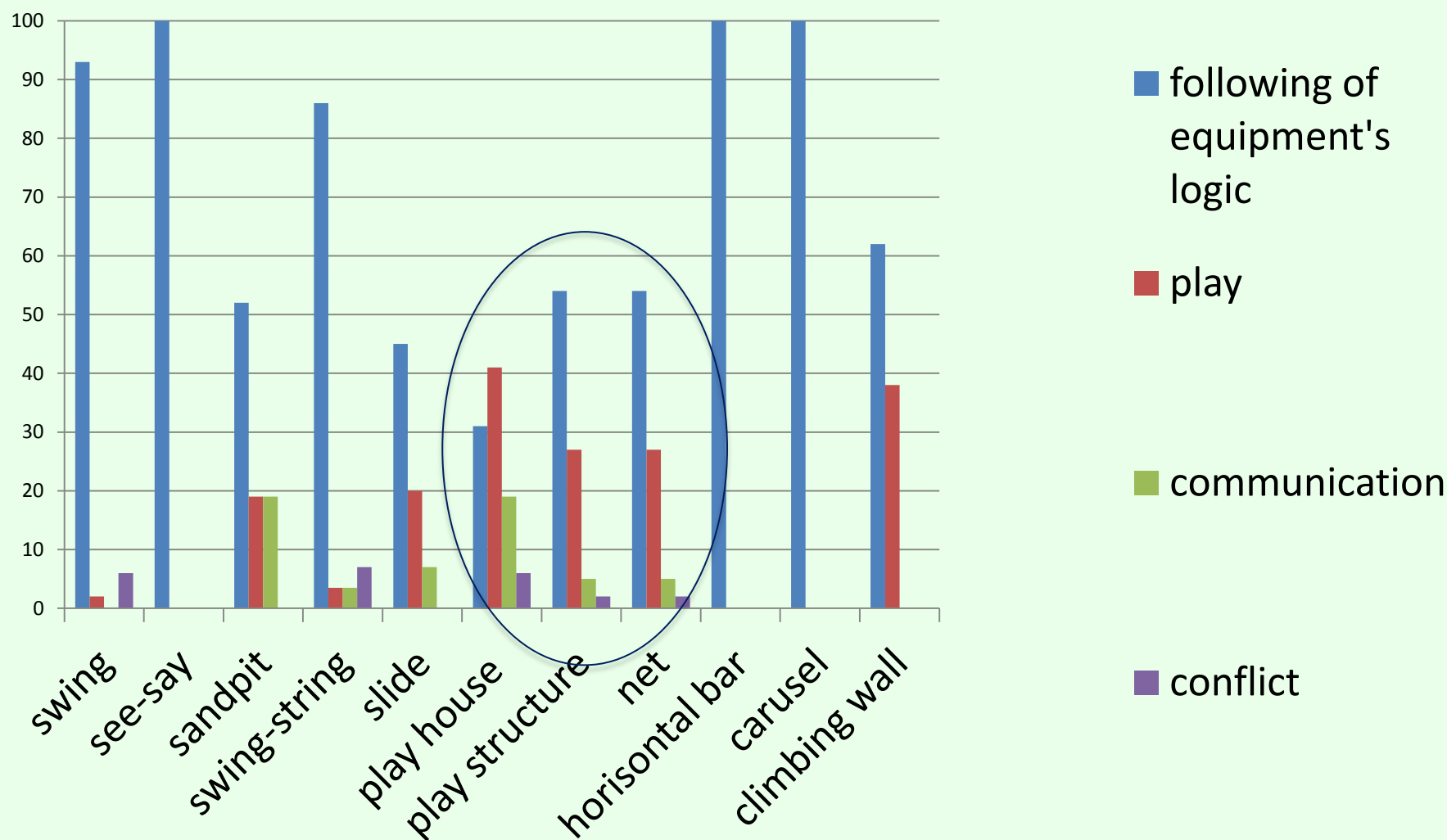
What children do in the playground?



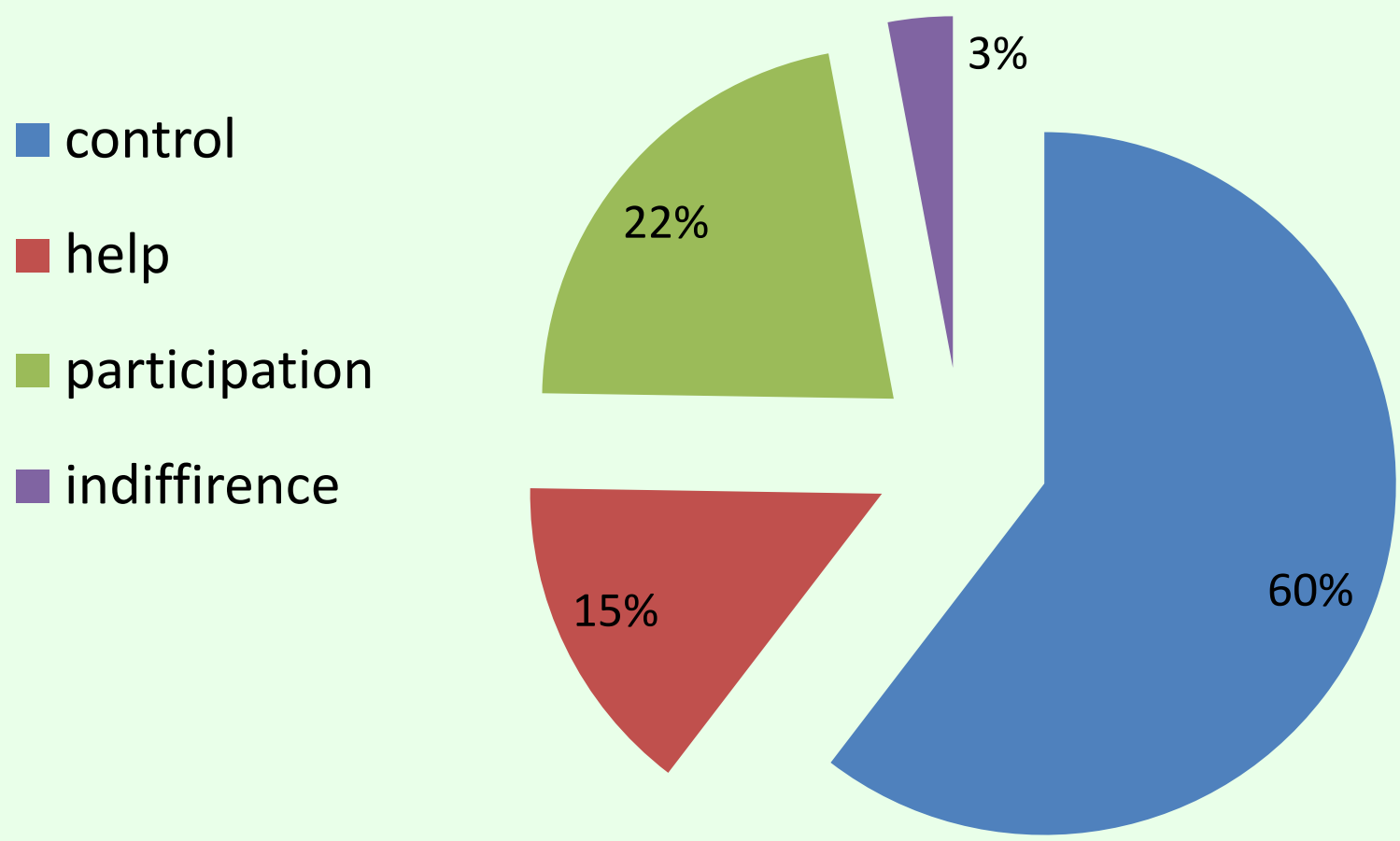
Main children's activities in playgrounds, %



Ratio of the main children's activities at the playground equipment, %



Main adults' activities in the playground, %



What we have observed

- Basically, children on the playground do what objects "prescribed" - *slide down the slide, swinging on the swing*.
- i.e. they are "users" of the play objects and rarely come up with new ways to use the equipment. Unfortunately, the time for interaction with the short-lived objects is too short, many children quickly lose interest in them.
- All this indicates that the playground objects do not meet the needs of children in free play, experimentation, transformation.
- Challenging and using the equipment outside the its intended purpose is an algorithm that promotes child development.

What we can suggest

Possible flexible age zoning of play environment

Playgrounds for ***toddlers*** may be enhanced by various sensory environments for investigation and play.

It is possible for ***preschoolers*** and ***schoolers*** to focus on their needs in collective games, converting and materials research, sport games, training and improvement of complex motor skills (rolling, jumping, climbing etc).

Play environment for ***teenagers*** should focus on their needs in communication, active motion and risk.

- Urban playgrounds need new equipment capable of creating and embodying new ideas and plans, as well as the updating of existing equipment.
- Preference should be given to the equipment made from eco-friendly materials.
- All the playgrounds are located on a horizontal plane. However, the positive impact of variable landscape on child development was proved.

- Create lanes for children wheeled traffic (cycling, skateboarding, scooter, runbike) protected from real traffic and interruptions.
- Development of new areas where the children are able to transform the play environment and interact with natural elements (Ex. adventure playground).

What is better?!?!

