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## Playground Planning 101: The basics of advanced playground design

When you're planning a playground, many questions run through your mind. But BCI Burke's representatives offer top-notch service to help guide you through the process.

### Assessment and Design

From budgeting and safety to installation and age appropriate equipment, our representatives will conduct a free needs assessment to figure out your needs and expectations. They will also do a site analysis to help determine the spacing and site requirements and work to help you understand and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines.

After determining what type of playground you want, how big it can be and which extra events or accessories you may wish to include, our representatives will make it come to life.

Through using our [EZ Design](#) software, your rep will be able to show you your playground in both 2D and 3D drawings.



### Funding

We offer many ways to help you [fund](#) your playground, and our reps can help you determine the options that would be most beneficial to you. Our Funds for Fun® program gives you the tools to start fundraising, while our Grant Resource Center allows you to search a database full of grants. Through our partnership with *The School Funding Center*, you can even have professionals write your grant for a modest fee.

### Delivery and Installation

We manufacture your playground and deliver it to your site. In fact, our goal is 100 percent on-time, correct and complete shipments. And once it arrives, we can take care of the installation. Our representatives make sure the site is properly prepared and monitor the installation to ensure it's done correctly and in compliance with industry safety guidelines.

### Instruction

Now that you have a new Burke playground, what's next? We give you the [information](#) you need to help keep your kids safe and your playground well maintained. We give you a free playground safety kit developed by the National Program for Playground Safety (NPPS) that teaches playground supervision. We also give you a maintenance kit that includes a customized maintenance schedule and manual plus touch-up paint and graffiti remover.

We've also created the [Intensity@ Curriculum](#) that comes with each Intensity playground. It helps you teach kids how to get the maximum fitness benefits from each Intensity play event. You'll receive the curriculum booklet, along with a pen, stopwatch and flashcards of each event. You'll even have access to the curriculum's web site that shows videos of kids and teachers properly using each event.

## Mastering the art of play

By Tim Ahern

I love watching children on Burke playgrounds, especially when they're learning or perfecting a new skill. But often, I think the most useful life skill they're learning is how to play and have fun.

After all, the day will come (far too soon) when they begin dealing with grown-up problems and taking life seriously. When that happens, too many will forget the playground lessons they learned in Fun 101.

In fact, we can forget what's work and what's play. We all assume we know the difference, but sometimes I'm not so sure. The line gets awfully fuzzy as we grow up.

A while back, a couple of economists tried to sort things out with survey data on how people rank their enjoyment of various activities on a scale of 1 to 10. They arbitrarily decided that anything ranked higher than a 7.3 qualified as "leisure," while everything else would be classified as work, according to *Freakonomics* authors Steven Levitt and Stephen Dubner.

The top three--sex, playing sports and fishing--were all higher than 9. Predictably, housecleaning and laundry scored below 5. But it's in the middle that things get gray. Cooking can be work if you view it as a substitute for buying prepared food. But if you enjoy cooking on the grill or creating a gourmet masterpiece, it's probably play. Gardening might be drudgery if your only goal is to save on your grocery bill or avoid paying someone to trim your hedges. But if getting your hands dirty is your way of relaxing, it's all good fun.

It seems to me that exercise also falls into that gray area between work and play. For those whose only purpose is to improve their health, a trip to the gym can be sheer torture. For others, it's a game. If you regularly visit a fitness center (and I hope you do!), you know what I mean. Walking through the facility, you might see a bunch of sweaty guys in the midst of an intense basketball game. Around the corner, you'll find other folks working on elliptical trainers and stair climbers. Others will be jogging on the track, lifting weights or swimming laps.

These people are all getting exercise, but some are working and others are playing. At the end of the day (or the workout), I guess it doesn't matter so much who's "working" and who's "playing," though I have to think the players are more likely to keep getting the exercise they need.

Fortunately, many who start out "working" at their exercise programs get hooked on them. For these fortunate individuals, exercise is often the high point of the day.

The earlier we learn to play at exercise rather than work at it, the more likely we are to form lifelong fitness habits. That's why I'm so excited about the popularity of our fitness-oriented playgrounds like Intensity® and Circuit Play®.

In a world where so much of our health dollar--for children as well as adults--is spent on preventable Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular problems and the many other obesity-related conditions, it's hard to imagine a more important lesson.

## Burke rep Tommy Harper receives President's Award for TRAPS service

BCI Burke representative Tommy Harper has received the President's Award from the Texas Recreation and Park Society (TRAPS) for his service to the organization.

Harper, president of Austin-based T.F. Harper & Associates, is a longtime member of the TRAPS board and played a key role in the organization's success during the past year, according to TRAPS Executive Director Michal Lord.

"Tommy has been instrumental during the past year, greatly enhancing the communications between the TRAPS board and our membership, especially commercial members and exhibitors," said Lord.

T.F. Harper & Associates serves approximately 65 percent of Texas, including the panhandle, West Texas, Central Texas, South Texas and the Louisiana border.





Burke CEO Tim Ahern said Harper's recognition was well deserved.

"Tommy has spearheaded BCI Burke's commitment to TRAPS, and he's shown the same commitment that he shows every day in meeting the needs of his customers," said Ahern.

## Burke quality brings customers back

When developing long-term relationships with customers, there's no substitute for products that last. And because George Herberger takes pride in the relationships he builds with his customers, BCI Burke's durability and industry-leading warranty play a critical role.

"When you sell long-lasting products, you develop long-lasting relationships. Some customers have Burke structures that are older than 20 years and still have kids playing on them. They know Burke products last, and they return to add more events to their playground," said Herberger, owner of [Ben Shaffer and Associates](#), which represents Burke products in central and north New Jersey.

And customers aren't worried about future problems because they know that Burke stands behind its products with the industry's longest and strongest warranty.

"Their warranty is simply the best in the business. It's called the Generations Warranty™, and it really does span generations. In fact, some parts are covered for 100 years, and our customers love that it's not prorated," he said.

But Burke's quality products and warranty aren't the only things that set them apart from their competitors. The company also excels in responding to customer feedback, he said.

"Burke is very open to suggestions and new ideas. They listen and investigate the ideas before coming to a decision, and sometimes policies or services are changed. They care about what their customers and representatives think, and that helps them to stay current with what their customers want," he said.

Another way Burke stays current in the market is in its use of technology.

"They've come a long way with technology. For instance, their innovative EZ Design program lets customers see the playground before they buy it. Customers can easily visualize how the structure will look in real life after looking at the 2D and 3D images," said Herberger.



Back: Caroline Stokes, Debbie Lopez, George Herberger, Ida Smith, Jaye Joyce; Front: Eileen Herberger

