

# **Big Cities, Small Children: Urban Planning and Early Childhood**

Course and Seminar, 49836, Wednesdays at 12:30 – 14:00, room 3613. Spring 2019.

Course Teacher Dr. Emily Silverman [Emily.silverman@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:Emily.silverman@mail.huji.ac.il)

TA Luisa Venancio – [luvenan@gmail.com](mailto:luvenan@gmail.com)

How does growing up in cities affect young children? What urban policies and design and planning interventions can help to promote early childhood development in cities?

This seminar course exposes you to readings, videos, and lectures on the cutting edge of urban planning for early childhood in Israel and internationally. By the end of the course, you will be able to propose a spatial policy or practice intervention to improve early childhood development, illustrating the intervention on a particular site of your choosing, perhaps with a municipal or national practitioner who is interested in implementing the proposals.

This is an inter-disciplinary course, appropriate for graduate students in urban planning, early childhood, architecture, NGO management, public health and community development studies, among others. The course employs a range of experiential education methods including interviews, site visits, and a great deal of class discussion.

The course will be taught in English, because it is also intended to form the basis for an international course for MA urban planning on this topic. We will also be testing a draft “starter kit” of interventions to improve child-friendly urban planning, distributed in the first week of class. So you are both students in this course, and assistants in building international materials! You may choose to present your assignments in Hebrew, though English is preferable in order to allow all students in the course to access your work.

The seminar course is also an appropriate basis for writing a seminar paper, on any related research topic.

## Course Readings and Assignments

This course is built on readings, videos, and practical assignments as well as in-class lectures and discussions. Students are expected to read materials each week, and to prepare four short assignments and one final project over the course of the semester. These assignments are short papers or presentations that rely on reading/videos presented on the Moodle site, and your own site-based observations and analysis.

**Required assignments: All students will complete assignments 1 and 2 (10% each or 20% of final grade)**

### Assignment 1 - User Stories (due 25.03)

This assignment is an introduction to the experience of getting around in the city with a small child under age 3. You will be preparing a poster/prezzi or powerpoint presentation of a day in the city with a small child, for presentation to your classmate. In order to do this exercise, you will need to interview /walk about with a parent and their small child. It is FINE to choose your own life and your own child.

#### Selecting your interviewee:

This exercise will form the basis of the assignments for the rest of the semester, so you need to choose carefully. We recommend choosing someone who :

- lives close to you, in a place you can revisit in the next assignments.
- is interested in the idea of evaluating the 'child-friendliness' of their neighborhood - the challenges and opportunities and possible fixes (or just someone who loves you enough not to mind!).
- gets out of the home (ie, probably not a new parent with one new-born baby !).

#### What to ask:

In the interview/walkabout: try to elicit a full description about a typical day in the city (ie not just in the house!) with the child/children. Be sure the description relates to the perspective of both the child, and the caregiver: You can use the interview guide below.

- Where and when does the typical day begin - for the child, for you?
- Where is the first place you go with this child, outside the apartment?
- How do you get there (car, bus, bike, walk, etc)? What does the child see, hear, smell, touch and feel on the route? What makes this route easy, playful or interesting? What makes it difficult?
- Tell me about the experience of the child at this destination. What does s/he do, touch, enjoy or dislike?
- Where else do you go with this child ? To play, shop, receive services, or meet other people? Describe the child's experiences at one or two more of these places?

- Are there destinations that you want to go to - but can't because of the child (ie cultural norms, transport access, cost, topography, etc)?

What to present:

What about this story do you want to present to your classmates – and how? Some ideas:

- Organize the material along e a timeline, or map or diagram
- Illustrate the journey and destinations with images that show the good and difficult aspects of the day. You can use real photos, google earth, or illustrations.
- Be sure the printed presentation tells the story on its own, without narration.

From a toddler's perspective:

The videos below are helpful to get a perspective from a toddler's experience. Each one follow a toddler in different parts of the world, showing how they experience the city.

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2018, Mar 23). Trailer: Life in Istanbul from a Toddler's Perspective. [Video File]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZRh7JfX\\_s4&t=204s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZRh7JfX_s4&t=204s)

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2019, Feb 5). Walking with Amadou: Antou Walking to the Market. [Video File]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81iA5pUNm84&trk=organization-update-content\\_share-video-embed\\_share-article\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=81iA5pUNm84&trk=organization-update-content_share-video-embed_share-article_title)

Krupnick, J. (2016, Dec 28). Young Explorers. [Video Files]. Retrieved from <https://www.youngexplorers.club/home>

OCARA urbana (2017, Jun 6) Strolling with Tim Tim! English Subtitles. [Video File]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHu\\_idPv2kY&t=141s&list=PL7luYUNzXezrjXiwVrbHXIC-SuguOXjn&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHu_idPv2kY&t=141s&list=PL7luYUNzXezrjXiwVrbHXIC-SuguOXjn&index=2)

## **Assignment 2 - Impact of Neighborhood on Early Childhood Development (due 08.04)**

This week's reading is 'Can the Neighborhood Built Environment Make a Difference in Children's Development? Building the Research Agenda to Create Evidence for Place-based Children's Policy', Villeneuve et al (2015). The authors review research on the impact of neighbourhood and the built environment on early childhood development in three key areas: housing density, access to nature, and traffic exposure. They argue that improved evidence-based research can and should help decision-makers to design neighbourhoods that enhance early childhood development.

This reading is a foundation for the course, and we will return to it for references and ideas as we move through each of the experiential assignments.

Writing assignment (about 500 words)

1. The first half of the article surveys evidence for the impact of the built environment on children's development, in the fields of housing density, traffic exposure, and access to nature and other neighborhood destinations. Choose one of these fields that you think is most important for urban planning and design of

neighborhoods in Israel. Describe the research findings in your own words. Focus on the findings that are most relevant for very young children, in the early stages of brain development - from pregnancy through age three...

2. Return to your User Story from Assignment One – or to the neighborhood which you are choosing for the rest of the course assignments. Try to use these research findings to help you more deeply interpret and analyse the challenges and opportunities shown in your User Story.

3. The second half of the article argues for the importance of better evidence, to help city builders ensure that neighborhoods better support early childhood development. The article concludes by discussing the importance of indicators. Looking again at your User Story - what might be a relevant indicator? A good indicator should be measurable, significant, comparable across areas and population types, and communicable (emotional, narrative, understandable, intuitive). Don't worry – you're not committing to measure it!!

**Villanueva, K., Badland, H., Kvalsvig, A., O'Connor, M., Christian, H., Woolcock, G., Giles-Corti, B., & Goldfeld, S. (2016) Can the Neighborhood Make a Difference to Children's Development? Building the Research Agenda to Create Evidence for Place-Based Children's Policy. *Academic Pediatrics, 16* (1) 10-19.**

Goldfeld, S., Woolcock, G., Katz, I., Tanton, R., Brinkman, S., O'Connor, E., Mathews, T., Giles-Corti, B. (2015) Neighbourhood Effects Influencing Early Childhood Development: Conceptual Model and Trial Measurement Methodologies from the Kids in Communities Study. *Social Indicators Research, 120* (1), 197-2012.

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2014). Small Children, Big Cities. *Early Childhood Matters, 123* 37pp.

Churchman, A. (2003). Is There a Place for Children in the City? *Journal of Urban Design, 8* (2) 99-111.

Goldfeld, S. (2016). *A Place-based Approach to Improving Outcomes for Children: How Can Research Help?* Presentation at Rashi Foundation and Goshen.

Goldfeld, S. Kids in Communities Study Presentation.

Goldfeld, S. (2015). Kids in Community Study Information Sheet. 3pp.

**Choice of assignments: Students will choose 2 of the following 3 assignments (20% each, 40% of final grade).**

### Assignment 3 - Play and Playgrounds (due 13.05)

In this assignment, we lay the foundations for understanding the importance of playground design for early childhood development. You will learn to evaluate the contribution of a playground, nursery school yard or other public space to core early childhood development capabilities, and to assess a play space using an assigned assessment tool and supplementary materials.

Please read the attached Urban Clinic guide to evaluating playgrounds for early childhood development. WE strongly recommend watching the Darrell Hammond KaBoom video as well as the Tim Gill video on play and risk. Recommended supplementary materials below include the lecture with Alexandra Lange and the Gehl-Kaboom 'Play Everywhere' document.

1. Choose a playground and/or day care center/nursery school yard from your user story. Evaluate the playground/ yard using the tool shown in the guide - and attached below, in English and in Hebrew. Where possible, base your evaluation on observations of a young child at play. If you can, ask the caretaker you interviewed to evaluate the site along with you, and/or for feedback on your assessment. If appropriate, you might choose to contrast two sites.
2. Discuss your findings, referencing the research literature:
  - which developmental skills are well-supported at this site? Which are not?
  - What are the developmental outcomes associated with these skills?
3. Would you suggest any changes? Use the 'Starter Kit', or other online sources, for ideas and illustrations. At this stage, just show a few ideas, with images or drawings, without going into detail. Readings:

הערכת גינות משחקים ותרומתם להתפתחות ילדים בגיל הרך

**The Urban Clinic, Drier Shilo, Y. (2018). Playground Evaluation Tool. Jerusalem: The Urban Clinic.**

Also available in Hebrew: הערכת גינות משחקים ותרומתם להתפתחות ילדים בגיל הרך

Columbia GSAPP (2018, Nov 28). Urban Playscapes Conference: Alexandra Lange - Introduction to the 'Can play be without risk?' panel. [Video File] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=613pec--QTY&feature=youtu.be>

Villanueva, K., Badland, H., Hooper, P., Koohsari, M. J., Mavoa, S. Davern, M., Roberts, R., Goldfeld, S., Giles-Corti, B., (2015) Developing Indicators of Public Open Space to Promote Health and Wellbeing in Communities. *Applied Geography*, 57, 112-119.

Gehl and Bernard van Leer Foundation (2018). *Toolkit for Measuring Urban Experiences of Young Children*. 40pp. Retrieved from <https://bernardvanleer.org/publications-reports/urban95-tools-for-studying-public-life-public-space/>

The Grabble Foundation (2018). If Kids Built a City: Possibilities for Play in Pittsburgh, PA. 24pp. Retrieved from [https://moodle2.cs.huji.ac.il/nu18/pluginfile.php/359339/mod\\_resource/content/0/If-Kids-Built-a-City%20-%20LEGo%20Pittsburgh.pdf](https://moodle2.cs.huji.ac.il/nu18/pluginfile.php/359339/mod_resource/content/0/If-Kids-Built-a-City%20-%20LEGo%20Pittsburgh.pdf)

Salzburg Global Seminar (2017) The Child and the City: Health, Parks and Play. *Parks for the Planet Forum Session Brochure*. 8pp. Retrieved from <https://www.salzburgglobal.org/multi-year-series/parks/pageId/session-574.html>

Ben Attar, D. (2017). *Open Space in Urban Areas: Applying an Early Childhood Lens*. Presentation Cities4Kids Urban 95 Conference in New Delhi, India.

Bernard van Leer Foundation. (2018, Jun 8). Creating spaces to play in Bucaramanga [Video File]. Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=jlz1WVZ0IEA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=jlz1WVZ0IEA)

Hatzer 4-1 (Hebrew)

Children & Nature Network (2016). Building a National Movement for Green Schoolyards in Every Community. *Green Schoolyard for Healthy Communities Report*, 27pp. Retrieved from <https://www.nrpa.org/contentassets/741159fc4c1741019ae96273c1a0a0f0/cnn-green-schoolyard-report-2016.pdf>

## Assignment 4 - Urban Mobility with Small Children (due 27.05)

1. Review either the Healthy Streets Indicator (London) or the Infant Toddler Caregiver Friendly Neighborhood Guidelines (India). There are 2 main documents for each. For ITCF (India) focus on the "streets" section.
2. Choose 3-4 indicators that speak to you as appropriate for Israel/your city/neighborhood as important for toddlers and caregivers. Why did you choose each of them (consider importance for very young children, relevance for Israel, for your user route, the combination of indicators)?
3. Evaluate the route in your user story, using each one of the selected indicators. For each indicator, show the scores for different legs of the routes, and explain how you derived these scores. Use images to explain your scores, and text to explain the images.
4. Where possible, ask the caregiver from your User Story to review your evaluation. Does his/her analysis differ from yours? How does the perspective of the young child differ?
5. Recommend some interventions that might help to improve the weakness – use the starter kit, or the compendium (India docs) or documents from our "International study cases" section in the moodle for good examples and inspiration. Consider adaptations for the local context, including climate, politics, religion, numbers of children per family, or other reasons for adaptation.

Healthy Streets Toolbox: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets>

<https://bernardvanleer.org/news/five-publications-help-indias-smart-cities-to-serve-infants-toddlers-and-caregivers/>

**Bernard van Leer Foundation. (2018). *Urban95 Starter Kit - Ideas for Action*. 90pp. Retrieved from <https://bernardvanleer.org/publications-reports/an-urban95-starter-kit-ideas-for-action/>**

Feigelson, M. (2016, Oct 24). Why Walking Is So Good for Parents, Toddlers and the Cities Where They Live. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*. Retrieved from [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/why\\_walking\\_is\\_so\\_good\\_for\\_parents\\_toddlers\\_and\\_the\\_cities\\_where\\_they\\_live](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/why_walking_is_so_good_for_parents_toddlers_and_the_cities_where_they_live)

## **Assignment 5 - Under the Home and in the Neighborhood (due 17.06)**

Very young children often spend a great deal of their time in or around the home, in apartment buildings in particular. In this assignment, you will analyze one good practice and one poor practice promoting early childhood developing in and around the home.

Please read either the Toronto guidelines for high-density housing and children (English) or, in Hebrew, the draft Urban Clinic analysis of neighborhoods and apartment buildings for small children (Esakov, 2018).

Select one or two apartment buildings in the area where your User Story takes place. Consider the basement, the ground floor and lobby, the parking area, inside the home, shared spaces within the building (play room, roof-top, etc). Identify at least one 'good practice' and at least one 'bad practice example'.

1. Document and describe the good practice and the bad practice examples, using images, sketches and photos.
2. Refer to literature to describe the positive and negative potential impacts on early childhood development at each of these sites.
3. Where possible, ask the caretaker from your User Story to review your responses. Does his/her analysis differ from yours? How does the perspective of the young child differ?
4. What interventions from the 'Starter Kit' or elsewhere might help to improve the weaknesses? Describe at least one of the Starter Kit interventions, using international and local examples as appropriate. Where would you suggest using it? What adaptations would need to be made locally? Consider climate, politics, religion, numbers of children per family, or other reasons for adaptation.

**City of Toronto (2017, May) *Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities – Draft Urban Design Guidelines*. 57pp. Retrieved from <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/planning-development/planning-studies-initiatives/growing-up-planning-for-children-in-new-vertical-communities/>**

Esakov, L. (2018) *Dense Neighborhoods Friendly to Toddlers in Israel*. Jerusalem: The Urban Clinic. 53pp.

## Final Assignment

### Complete User Story and recommendations for improvement.

#### presentation draft due 24.06

*40% of final grade.*

This assignment pulls together your previous assignments into a full 'user story'. Your user story begins with an introduction to the people (child and caretaker) and the neighborhood. You will include your analysis of the experience of the child and the caretaker for two of the following three topics: play and access to nature; mobility; and the home, building, and immediate environment. For each topic, be sure to describe the experience, cite the literature on relevant considerations for early childhood development, and analyse the challenges and opportunities.

In this final assignment you will add your recommendations for improvement at each of the two topics. We encourage you to use the Starter Kit to generate ideas -- <https://bernardvanleer.org/publications-reports/an-urban95-starter-kit-ideas-for-action/>.

For each improvement/proposal:

- 1. Describe the proposal/improvement:** What issues does it address, where has it been tried.
- 2. Explain why you choose this intervention:** what is the problem it is solving or opportunity that it is addressing? Can you identify specific places on your route where it is appropriate? Why?
- 3. Adaptation:** what factors about this site require adaptations from the Starter Kit proposals or other original site. Consider issues of culture and demography, climate and topography, religion and politics, and among others.

## Additional Resources

These can deepen your understanding of the course and be relevant for your final assignment.

### Introduction to Early Childhood Development

Maria Farinha Filmes (2016, Mar 17). The Beginning of Life - Official Trailer [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LHqUMqvL1RQ&feature=youtu.be>

Heckman, J. J. (2016). Skill Formation and the Economics of Investing in Disadvantaged Children. *Science*, 312, 5782. 1900-1902.

## Design of Daycare and Early Childhood Centers

Rinaldi, C. (2004). In dialogue with Reggio Emilia: Listening, researching and learning. Routledge.

## Planning Policy

Ben Attar, D. (2016). Designing Cities that Support Healthy Childhood Development. Presentation at the Healthy Cities Conference.

## International Examples

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2018). Small Children, Advances in Early Childhood Development. *Early Childhood Matters*, 127, 116pp. Retrieved from <https://bernardvanleer.org/publications-reports/early-childhood-matters-2018/>

Denboba, A. D., Sayre, R. K., Wodon, Q. T., Elder, L. K., Rawlings, L. B., & Lombardi, J. (2014). *Stepping Up Early Childhood Development: Investing in Young Children for High Returns*. Retrieved from <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21094>

Urban 95 Bogotá (2018) Experiments and Public Space Interventions in the Circuit Neighborhood La Acacia. *Experiments Report*. 14pp.

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2017). A Good Start for Children. Annual Report 2016, 95pp. Retrieved from <https://bernardvanleer.org/app/uploads/2017/04/BvLF-AnnualReport16-LowRes-SinglePages.pdf>

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2017). Urban95 Strategy Memo. 8pp.

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2018, Nov 21). A Window into Urban95 Bogotá [Video File] Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F\\_tnMqmK4Ug](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_tnMqmK4Ug)

Friedman-Rudovsky, J. (n.d.) *The Buried Seed: How Nicaragua Came to Have One of the Most Progressive Early Childhood Learning Policies on the Planet*. Bernard van Leer Foundation. Retrieved from <http://historical-cases.bernardvanleer.org/the-buried-seed/>

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2015). Small Children, Big Cities: Impact Through Design Intervention. *Report on the National Conference Small Children, Big Cities: Building Smart Child-Friendly Cities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century India*. Retrieved from [https://issuu.com/bernardvanleerfoundation/docs/small\\_children\\_big\\_cities\\_impact\\_th](https://issuu.com/bernardvanleerfoundation/docs/small_children_big_cities_impact_th)

Bernard van Leer Foundation (2011) Culturally Appropriate Approaches in Early Childhood Development. *Early Childhood Matters*, 43pp. Retrieved from [https://issuu.com/bernardvanleerfoundation/docs/culturally\\_appropriate\\_approaches\\_in\\_early\\_childho](https://issuu.com/bernardvanleerfoundation/docs/culturally_appropriate_approaches_in_early_childho)

## Israeli Context

לגיל הרך בישראל Viaplan final report

Ben Attar, D. (2018). *It takes a city: making early childhood a strategic priority in Tel Aviv*. Bernard van Leer Foundation. Retrieved from <https://bernardvanleer.org/ecm-article/2018/it-takes-a-city-making-early-childhood-a-strategic-priority-in-tel-aviv/>

## Weekly Schedule

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
13.03	Introductions and course rationale.	Videos: recommend one to classmates
20.03	Urban 95 International Strategy, with Daniella Ben Attar – Bernard Van Leer Foundation	
27.03	User Stories – Class discussion	Assignment 1 due 25.03
03.04	Noga Adler and Devorah Fried – Urban 95 Israel	
10.04	Neighborhood Impacts discussion	Assignment 2 due 08.04.
01.05	Basmat or Michal Tausig on Tel Aviv? Or Roi on Beersheva?	
15.05	Play and playgrounds assignments and discussion	Assignment 3 due 13.05
22.05	Basmat or Michal Tausig on Tel Aviv? Or Roi on Beersheva?	
29.05	Mobility assignment and discussion	Assignment 4 due 27.05
05.06	Liat Esakov on Elad and adaptation to a Haredi neighborhood?	
12.06	Consultations on final presentations during the week	Proposal for final presentations due 09. 06
19.06	Neighborhoods Assignment and discussion	Assignment 5 due 17.06
26.06	Final Presentations with guests (class to select best assignments on Playgrounds,Streets and around-the-home.	