



PRESS RELEASE

New Generation HDB Playgrounds to Inspire Imagination and Exploration

Playgrounds in HDB estates are set to be reinvented, as HDB embarks on a new generation of thematic playgrounds that encourage imaginative play and exploration among children, and draw families and the community closer. To date, six thematic playgrounds have been completed, with another nine to be ready by 2021.

Evolution of HDB Playgrounds

2 Playgrounds are an integral part of HDB estates. They form part of our shared social space and play a significant role in bringing families and the community together. Over the past decades, these playgrounds have evolved in design, form and function.

3 In the 1960s and early 1970s, playgrounds in HDB estates comprised functional play equipment such as slides and swings. From the mid-1970s to early 1980s, playgrounds took on identifiable forms such as dragons and animals. The mid-1980s brought on playgrounds inspired by nursery rhymes and children's games such as Humpty Dumpty and Snakes and Ladders. Playground designs depicting local fruit and vegetables such as mangosteens and water melons also sprouted in the late 1980s.

4 Playgrounds in the early 1990s featured proprietary play equipment with a combination of play structures, growing in the 2000s, to become even more inclusive community spaces with the introduction of the 3-Generation Family Playground which catered for the elderly, adults and children.

A New Generation of Thematic Playgrounds

5 To enhance the experience of this key communal space for residents, young and old, HDB has embarked on a new generation of thematic playgrounds in new housing projects. The designs of these playgrounds are anchored on three key features:

- **Stronger Town Identity** – Every town has its own character and distinct features. Conceptualised from the outset together with the precinct design, the design of each playground will take into account the historical background and unique characteristics of the town. *For instance, the theme of the playground could reflect the history, heritage, or design intent of the town. In some precincts, the site context or precinct theme could also guide the design of the thematic playgrounds. This helps to reinforce the town's character and identity, and strengthen the community's attachment to their town.*
- **Enhanced Play Experience** – Beyond a place for fun and laughter for children, thematic playgrounds are designed to inspire their imagination and nurture an adventurous spirit through exploration and role play. *For instance, the selection of play equipment allows a wide array of activities such as climbing, swinging, balancing and jumping, to build confidence and resilience in children. Coupled with the immersive theme, the playground will encourage role play and interaction amongst the children, as well as with their parents.*
- **Closer Bonds** – As popular gathering points, playgrounds are conducive for interaction. The distinctive design of each playground, and their story as told through the accompanying storyboards, can serve as a conversation starter amongst family and neighbours. Play features that involve adults are also purposefully added to encourage parents to play an active part and bond with their children through play. *For instance, the playgrounds may revolve around well-loved children's stories (e.g. Alice in Wonderland) or the shared-experiences of Singaporeans (e.g. National Service), which can spark spontaneous conversations.*

Six Completed Thematic Playgrounds

6 To date, six thematic playgrounds have been completed in Choa Chu Kang, Sengkang, Woodlands, Sembawang and Toa Payoh (refer to Annex A for details). Among them is the military-themed playground cluster in Keat Hong estate, where play equipment resembling military vehicles and structures whisk residents into an alternative reality.

7 Military camps once occupied the sites where HDB precincts Keat Hong Mirage and Keat Hong Quad, and the neighbourhood park Keat Hong Garden now stand in Choa Chu Kang. Paying homage to its roots, the playgrounds in the estate have been designed with hints of the military theme.

8 In particular, two distinctive military-themed playgrounds have been built at Keat Hong Garden and Keat Hong Mirage. Here, fathers and grandfathers can regale their children and grandchildren with stories from their National Service days. Children get to climb and “drive” a “military tank”, or make a quick getaway from “enemies” via a fire-man pole after being warned by their lookout stationed at the nearby “watch tower”. They also enjoy the thrill of a mini obstacle course as they scurry through an enclosed vertical play structure. Marking the “army camp” boundary is the playground’s rubber flooring, which is designed to mimic military camouflage colours. Harnessing the area’s natural terrain, the playground features a mini hill installed with “cannons” for children to fend against make-believe intruders.



The thematic playgrounds at Keat Hong pay homage to the town's military heritage

National Archives of Singapore

More Thematic Playgrounds

9 Over the next few years, more residents can look forward to such immersive play as HDB completes another nine thematic playgrounds in Bukit Panjang, Dawson and Clementi by 2021.

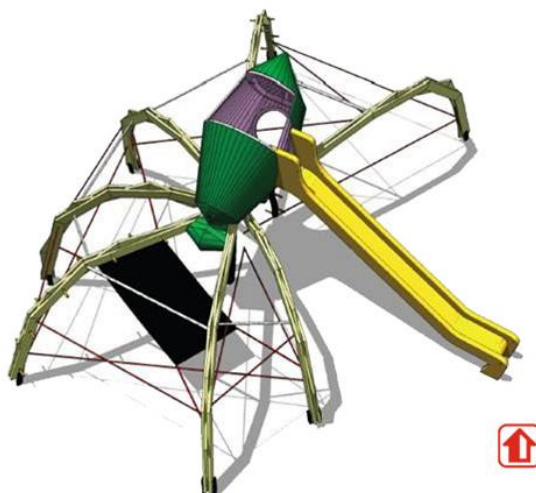
10 Five of these playgrounds will be located in Dawson estate, which will be ushering in five new housing projects with 5,000 new households by end of 2020. In line with the “Housing-in-a-Park” vision for Dawson, the playgrounds will be designed along nature themes:

- The **Wonderland Playground at Dawson Vista**, inspired by the children's classic "Alice in Wonderland", will be a visually stunning playground that sets the imagination ablaze. After swinging under the Cheshire Cat tree, sliding down the rabbit's hole and getting lost in a maze of cards, adventurers can take it easy at the **Giant Green Net playground next door at Forfar Heights**. Here, they can chill out on the hammock-like seats or scale the netted climbing course reminiscent of giant creepers.



Each thematic playground is designed with a unique storyline to inspire children's imagination and develop their creativity

- The **"Hills and Ribbons" playground at SkyResidence @ Dawson** echoes the design of the project's "Green Ribbon" landscaped deck. Children will enjoy a course of climbing ropes, slides and trampolines which meanders through the gently undulating terrain of the precinct's playground. They can also challenge their balancing skills as they immerse themselves in imagining a quest among the hills, as they venture into the lair of the adjacent **Giant Spider playground at SkyOasis @ Dawson**. Designed to resemble the common garden creature, the spider-themed playground with its rope-climbing structures set amidst giant plant-like climbers, weaves a web of adventure for the children.



The spider-themed playground at SkyOasis@Dawson weaves a web of adventure for children

- For nature-lovers, the **Eco Adventure playground at SkyParc @ Dawson** runs through the eco-corridor located between the SkyVille@Dawson and SkyTerrace@Dawson precincts. In the spirit of connectivity, the playground will feature a variety of bridges, among other play equipment such as swings and slides. The use of timber features strongly in this playground, blending in with the surrounding greenery.

Playground Exhibition at National Museum

11 The memories of our playground adventures form an important part of our collective experience of growing up in Singapore. To celebrate this, the National Museum of Singapore, in collaboration with HDB, will be presenting an exhibition on playgrounds in Singapore, titled *The More We Get Together: Singapore's Playgrounds 1930 – 2030*. Running from 20 April to 30 September, the exhibition will chronicle the evolution of Singapore's playgrounds over the different eras, including the many well-loved playgrounds in HDB estates. All are invited to visit the exhibition, to reminisce and reimagine the significance of our everyday playgrounds.

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Annex A

Six Completed Thematic Playgrounds

Choa Chu Kang

Keat Hong estate used to be home to the old Keat Hong army camp

Playground at Keat Hong Mirage (Completed in August 2016)

Located in front of Block 817B Choa Chu Kang Avenue 1

- Army truck with “driver’s seat” featuring climbing elements and slide
- Rubber mat designed to replicate a field
- “Fallen” crates as sitting area
- Watch tower with fireman pole



Playground at Keat Hong Garden (Completed in August 2016)

Located in front of Block 815C Choa Chu Kang Avenue 7

- White military tank with climbing net
- Vertical play structure which provides a mini obstacle-course experience
- “Cannons” on mini hill
- Rubber mat flooring designed using camouflage colours



Sengkang

Sengkang means 'prosperous harbour' in Chinese, reflecting its past as a fishing village.

Playground at Compassvale Cape (Completed in March 2017)

Located between Block 286C and Block 287A Compassvale Cres

- "Sunken" ship play structure which features climbing play elements
- Sea-creature-inspired play equipment such as the shark-shaped rocking chair and a seesaw shaped like an octopus
- Blue rubber mat flooring imitating the waters of the ocean
- Storyboard of ship discovery playground, encouraging children to role play as seafarers exploring the oceans for treasure while avoiding encounters with pirates.



Woodlands

In its early days, the town gave the appearance of a heavily-wooded area when viewed from the Johor side of the Straits, hence the name Woodlands. Rich in bio-diversity, Woodlands was also home to many common insects.

Playground at Woodlands Glen (Completed in June 2017)

Located in between Block 573B and 573C Woodlands Drive

- Giant grasshopper incorporating climbing elements, a slide and two fireman poles for older kids.
- Giant ant with a slide, a climbing slope and a leaf bench for younger kids.
- Tree house with a viewing deck, a slide and climbing elements.



Sembawang

Named after the *Sembawang* tree, Sembawang was once a naval base with bustling shipyards.

Playground at EastBank @ Canberra (Completed in Apr 2017)

Located in front of Block 121B & 121C Canberra Street

- A double-decker ship where children can imagine taking command of the seas.
- They can slide down the upper deck or climb up the rope ladders to the upper deck.
- Colours of the rubber flooring are designed to resemble the sea and shore
- Stilt-like climbing structures with netting resemble a kelong with their fishing nets
- Children can “set sail” from the heart of the precinct, along the canal of nearby Sungei Simpang Kiri and into the sea. The overall paving and landscape design also meander like a river within the precinct.



Toa Payoh

“Toa Payoh”, in the Hokkien dialect, translates into ‘big swamp’.
The name takes reference from the large swampy area that the town used to be.

Playground at Toa Payoh Crest (Completed in June 2017)

Located in front of Block 131 & 131C Lorong 1 Toa Payoh

- Raised mounds resembling stepping stones, and climbing ropes leading to tunnel slides, re-create the experience of wading through swampy areas

