

# ENGAGING WITH OUR GREEN SPACES

An activity to do after reading *Sofia Valdez, Future Prez* by Andrea Beaty

## Description

Practice your problem-solving skills by planning and designing (or redesigning) a green space for your community, inspired by the efforts of Sofia Valdez in *Sofia Valdez, Future Prez* by Andrea Beaty.

## Audience

Children ages 3–6+, with adult support

## Time

30–45 minutes

## Materials

Sketch paper

Pencil

Colored pencils/markers

## Guiding questions

- How do parks and playgrounds make us feel? How do you feel when you get to visit the park?
- Why are places like parks and playgrounds so important to us?
- When brainstorming what your green space will look like, it is important to consider: Who will be using this green space with me? What are some activities that my community likes to do? What does my community need from this green space? What does every good park need?

## Instructions

- 1 Sometimes when we embark on a project, it can be difficult to know where to start. Ask people around your home (or call friends and family) to learn what *they* would want in a green space. Would they want benches? A playground? Find out and record their responses.
- 2 Now it's brainstorming time! Take the information you learned from others and add in your own thoughts. Write a list of all the things you want to include in your green space. It can include the ideas of the people you spoke to, or not. How long did your list get? Could you accomplish all of these things? Which ideas would you want to put in your green space first?
- 3 Now that you have all of your ideas written down, let's draw them out. Sketch how big you want your green space to be. If you are redesigning a green space in your community, is it roughly the same size as your chosen area? Once you have decided how big your green space will be, begin sketching out what you want to be included in your park. Consider a few questions: How will people get around your park?

What activities can people do in your park? What makes my green space unique?

- 4 Be sure to color in your green space design with colored pencils or markers. Present your design to people in your home, or share it with us through our hashtag, #ChiArchitecture!

## Share your work

We'd love to see your work! Share your creation with the Chicago Architecture Center on Facebook or Instagram, using the hashtag #ChiArchitecture

## Take it a step further!

Help younger designers get started by creating an instant green space with a green piece of construction paper cut to any shape. Talk with each other! Planning and gathering ideas builds essential critical thinking and communication skills. Additional materials like stickers or colored tape can add to their drawing. Label each part of the park to practice reading, writing and developing sight words.

With a trusted family member, send your proposed design for a green space in your community to a local representative. Who would you send this letter to? The mayor? Your local alderman? The Park District? Research and find out! Make sure you include a note about why you think your design would be an important contribution to your community.

Many more challenges await. Visit our website [www.architecture.org/learn](http://www.architecture.org/learn) where we regularly post new activities for you and your young one.