



# New playground experiences with sand and water

**To many families the playground visit is an important part of everyday life. While children get rid of excess energy they also learn about themselves and the world around them. With a focus on children's development new playground products have been designed.**

What does a product look like that enables children to play with sand and water while developing their social and motor skills? In this master thesis, three product concepts have been developed in collaboration with the Swedish company HAGS. The products within the line Jungle Club are designed with the goal to encourage sand and water play while giving children the opportunity to grow and develop their skills. Jungle Club consists of three products – Thirsty Monkey, Bug Race and Café Parrot – which work well as both individual products and as one unit placed together on a playground.

Thirsty Monkey is a water system where children are challenged to use their minds. With its many different play functions it offers space for many children of different ages to play. The tap at the top of the tree provides the playground with water, which can be collected in three different places of the product!

Bug Race is a maze-like game where the children need to collaborate in order to reach their goal. Since the table is mounted on a spring, it creates a perfect exercise to promote fine motor skills when leading water through the track. Thanks to the track being a

closed loop, Bug Race can be enjoyed for a long time with just a bottle of water – or why not after a rainfall?

The third and final product, Café Parrot, is a place for everyone to enjoy together! It is a place where the children's imagination can flow – it can be a restaurant, a house, an ice cream parlor or a big ship sailing on the ocean. By placing the product between the sandbox and solid ground it provides the perfect space for a child in a wheelchair to play with his or her pals. The table height is adapted to a wheelchair and the seat next to it invites a parent to join the play and have a “sand cake” served on one of the plates. Both the plates and the compartments in the shop create opportunities to play with sand while being on solid ground. This can be an advantage for a child with bad eyesight or a grandparent who might not feel comfortable walking in the sand.

All the products have been developed in close contact with the end users – children, parents and preschool teachers – to make sure that the products are fun and meet the user's expectations. To ensure this, interviews with parents and observations at a preschool were conducted in an early stage of the project. Later on, another preschool class was invited to play with the prototypes and it was a success – the children had a lot of fun playing with them!

**Julia Burgén and Hanna Börjesson**