

North American “Smart Playground™” Unveiling Announced for National Head Start Conference

KOMPAN Unique Playgrounds, the world leader in designing and manufacturing creative playgrounds that are relevant to today’s children, will unveil its new Smart Playground™ at Head Start’s national conference in Long Beach, CA on April 28-May 2. The goal of the new playground product is to expand learning from the classroom into the play yard through the use of QR codes placed on the play structures and associated learning apps and stories that tie into them.

Tacoma, Washington ([PRWEB](#)) April 20, 2014 -- Inspired by Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Ugly Duckling,” “The Little Mermaid” and “The Tinderbox,” “the playground structures were created to enhance language and movement development as well as social learning with parents and teachers in truly fun ways,” explained Torben Hundevad, Innovation Director for KOMPAN.

Creative literacy environments: stories, play, apps and teacher curricula guides

Teachers are looking for creative ways to engage the whole child in learning, recognizing that young children often learn best through experiential learning and do not usually sit still for too long. In response to this need, the playground structures and accompanying small pieces “tell” stories. Additionally, each structure consists of two façades, one per side, allowing children to play on two playgrounds, or in two worlds, as they desire.

Social Conduct/Moral Lessons

On one of the façades, children follow the story of “The Ugly Duckling,” who starts life as a duckling in a farm’s chicken run, and because he is different, suffers taunts and bullying from the chickens. When he ultimately turns into a beautiful swan, his life changes for the better. Not only do the chickens accept and even admire him, they also realize that they have been unfair to him. Importantly, the swan has also accepted himself. The plot appeals to all children, and is a great way for teachers and caregivers to address the issues of the differences among us and the unkindness of bullying in an age-appropriate way. On the other side of the structure, children find themselves submerged into the world of “The Little Mermaid.” The structure is designed so that her story begins at the bottom of the sea (children will recognize this at the bottom of the structure) and continues up into the structure to the ship where she encounters the prince and a whole new world. From this story, teachers and caregivers can discuss issues such as personal decision-making and its outcomes, which are sometimes not perfect.

Cognitive Development/Sensory Play

The structure features numerous manipulatives that offer an array of tactile and explorative experiences. On “The Ugly Duckling” side, children can move eggs along grooved openings; fill and then dump the scoops with sand, playground material, or whatever is handy; shift the duck’s tail; or push down the hen’s head so she lays an egg. With “The Little Mermaid” façade, children can play with the crab and starfish game or move the mermaid’s tail.

Additional Educational Benefits: Language Development, Apps, and Teacher Curricula Guides

The developmental benefits from free play for children's physical, social and cognitive skills are well documented. However, KOMPAN believes that play structures can do more. One area of particular importance to our educational system and country in general is language development. Because of our hectic lives, many families do not have the time to read to their young children. This can affect a child's future success. So the job of teaching a child to develop language facility is often left up to the school system or the community at large. The Hans Christian Andersen stories featured with this play structure are an excellent way for children to understand that language learning and reading are fun.

Additionally, immigration to the United States continues to create large numbers of children who live in homes where English is not the first language used to communicate. As a result, child care centers and schools around the country are creating "differentiated classrooms" to accommodate the different cultures and languages that are coming into their realms.

This play structures supports both of these educational goals. The associated apps include the stories, spelling games, and strategic running games. There are also teacher curricula guides - developed by curricula specialists, evaluated by teachers, and aligned with the US Common Core State Standards - for playful learning activities.

Visit the Smart Playground™ website for more information at www.smart-playground.us or www.kompan.com

Plan to visit our booth #335 at the NHSA Conference during Expo Hours: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. on Wednesday and Thursday (4/30 and 5/1) for a demonstration of a play structure, educational apps and teacher guides.

About KOMPAN

KOMPAN is the world's No. 1 playground supplier.

KOMPAN develops, produces and markets an extensive range of playground equipment that covers all age groups.

All KOMPAN's playgrounds are designed using extensive research into child development to improve childhood health and learning. KOMPAN is renowned for their compelling design, uncompromising safety, unique innovation and long-lasting quality.

The SMART Playground™ is the first children's playground to have its own app. The SMART Playground™ represents a significant investment by KOMPAN, which is committed to pioneering breakthrough innovations for play and learning. The Smart Playground™ is patent-pending.



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