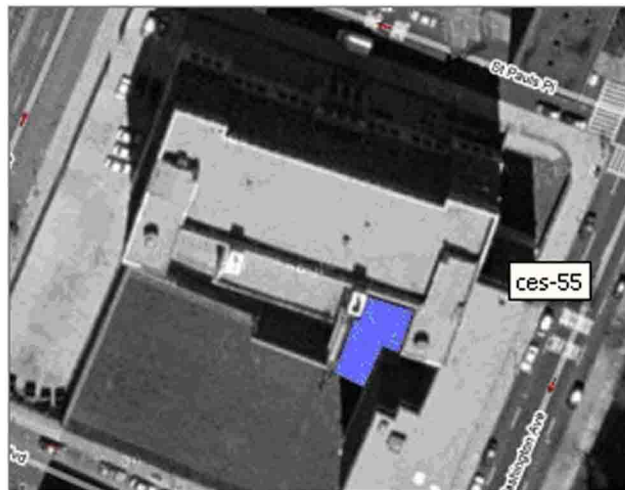


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Pint-sized playground

by [Kelly Vaughan](#)



Recess in a huge public school is so loud you can hear it six stories up. Children play basketball, kickball, double-dutch, and games of their own invention. Some cluster near the walls, laughing and gossiping. Others chase each other with abandon, zigging and zagging through the middle of more structured games. In some city schools, the "yard" is little more than a fenced-in, paved play area, perhaps with the pavement painted with lines delineating basketball courts, a running track, and four-square. So it is undeniably a good thing that [Out2Play](#), a New York City nonprofit organization, is [building playgrounds in the most underserved schools across the city](#). And the idea of the kids designing the playground for their own school sounds like a great way of involving kids in authentic, interdisciplinary projects where they can see, touch, and even climb on the final product. Here's a video of [opening day at the PS 55 playground](#) in the Bronx.

What's a little harder to see from the article and the video is how small the new playground at PS 55, a campus serving nearly 700 elementary and almost 300 middle school students, really is: a small jungle gym and a child-sized climbing wall tucked into one corner of the enormous schoolyard. The kids do love the new playground: any sunny day this spring, you'd have seen a dozen middle school girls and boys lining up for the slide, giggling and pushing each other into a heap at the bottom. Yet only a tiny fraction of the students can use the equipment at any one time. I hope that Out2Play and other initiatives are successful in building more playgrounds like this one, and expanding them so that even more students can make use of them.