

SPACE IN THE FUNCTION OF PSYCHOLOGICAL STABILITY OF A CHILD

UDC 725.573:15922.7(045)=111

Danica Stanković

University of Niš, the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Serbia

Abstract. *The problem researched in this paper concerns establishing specific relations in child-space relationship. The concepts of child-space relation are here presented and defined in architectural context as: concept of "awareness" of a specific place, concept of child's bonding to some place in space, identification with and a feeling of belonging to a certain place, and then the phenomenon of a favorite place.*

Key words: *child, space, attributes, development needs.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The potential for "socializing" with a certain space, for the researchers dealing with this kind of problem is a valid form of the man-environment relationship. On the other hand, what still is a mystery to them is the question that is being asked frequently these days: "Can a **child** develop relation of "socializing" with a physical environment?" However, a number of empirical studies dealing with research of these relationships is not in proportion with the topicality of the subject.

There are various concepts of the child-space relation. A widely accepted concept is the "awareness of the place", which characterizes a larger scope and higher synthetic level because it includes other concepts describing human relationship towards the space. The most cited concepts of this type are:

- Binding to a place in space
- Identification and
- Belonging to a place

Trying to define *a place that a child is attached to*, it is often said that it is the space in which a child is happy, and regrets leaving it and feels dissatisfied when it has to go. However, the real reason for a child's bonding to a certain place in space is that such place has some special attributes.

2. CHILD-SPACE RELATIONS

From architectural point of view, a certain space and its arrangement as the structures with physical characteristics and measurable material attributes are primarily suitable for physical needs of children. However, it is just one aspect of child-space relation. The next and higher level of this relation is the child's feeling of attachment to a certain architectural unit in space, as a psychological connotation. Thus, the certain ambiance in which a child dwells with its architectural attributes is not only an answer to child's physical needs but has some essential qualities, primarily for psycho-social development (fig. 1). Regarding those facts, it is considered that during latent years of mid childhood the strong connection with family base gradually weakens and decreases in the child's experience, and a physical surrounding becomes more significant through bonding to those places that are architecturally designed in a certain way.

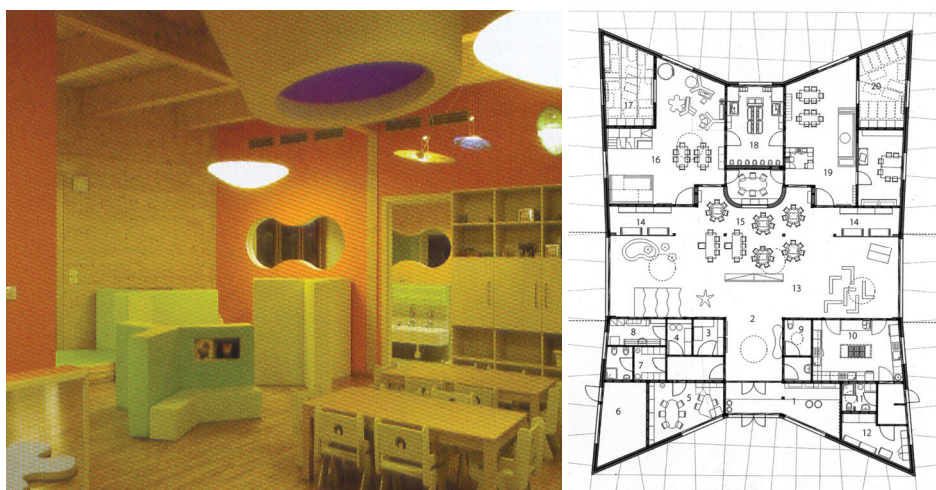


Fig. 1 and 2 Space and equipment suitable for needs of a child in certain age and architectural and ambiance values (Kindergarten "Nido Stelia" in Modena Italy, 2004.)

When talking about the *concept of identification with some place in space*, it is considered that kind of identification represents a "factor in the substructure of personal identity, which in a larger context consists also from the knowledge of physical world in which the person lives. Such knowledge consists of memories, ideas, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings and concepts of behaviors and experiences which refer to the wide complex of physical environment and defines, day in day out, existence of every human being". In the essence of such relation with physical environment is the knowledge of some architectural space (Fig. 2) in the form of the person's past, experienced in a certain environment and ambiance. In that way, the past of the person becomes the part of some place, and architectural space with what constitutes it and what is set inside of it and makes it an architectural unit, becomes an instrument that fulfills biological, social and cultural needs of the person using it.

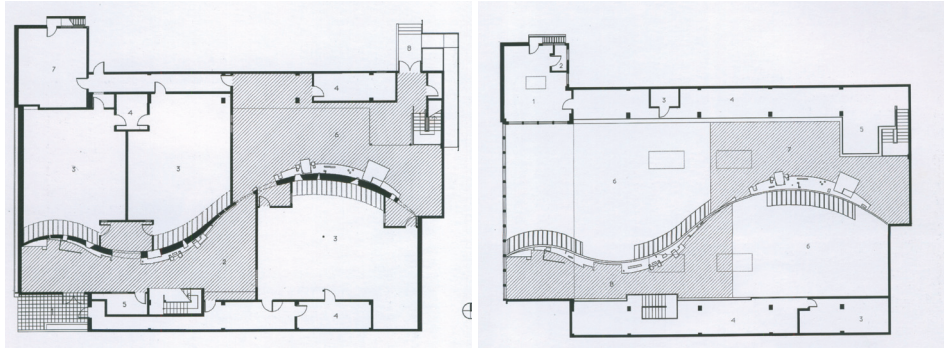


Fig. 3 and 4 Wavy wall line and new structures on it as dividing element in spaces for children and simultaneously a gathering place (The basis of ground and upper level of kindergarten "The Little School", San Francisco, Mark Horton, 2005.)

The most of knowledge about identification with certain environment suggests that dwelling in the environment that children attach pleasant feelings to, causes reduction of anxiety and helps them in daily social relations when certain psychological "stresses" should be sustained and when a child needs a help in self-preservation. Thus, a degree of attachment to certain architectural environment and feelings that a child may develop for it, suggest that those factors contribute in development of key aspects of persons identity, especially regarding self-respect and self-pity. This model of person's identity holds potential for understanding of phenomenon that formation of a personal identity of a child is also achieved through development of certain feelings for some architectural ambiances and building specific relations with them.

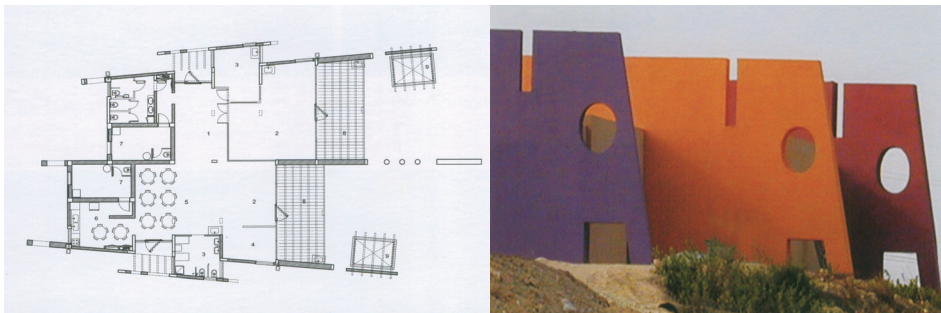


Fig. 4 and 5 Architectural expression finding place in the child's mind and making emotional attachment (The ground level layout and characteristic look of kindergarten in Caesarea in Israel, T.Klimor and D.Knafo, 2006.)

*The concept of phenomenon of a **belonging feeling** to a certain environment is related to certain advantages of an architectural ambiance and potential to achieve certain aims of behavior. That concept gives an answer to the question why a given specific environment is more suitable for something that someone likes doing than the others. This principle is defined as a possibility of belonging to a certain place in space and arises as a result of the*

way the quality of relationship to a certain place is experienced. The belonging to a space is different from attachment to a certain environment in two ways:

- May have a negative connotation when a given space limits achieving a value as a result and
- Strong impression of experiences in a certain environment can be less based upon fulfillment of specific goals of behavior than on feelings.

Attachment to a certain architectural space, identification with it, and possibility of regulating privacy and recovering of environment results in appearance of *favorite place* phenomenon. A place with such attributes has the role of regulating the relation between personal and emotional in a person, after some sudden and conflict situation. It is the place that allows an individual to amortize the negative and to reactivate positive emotions. Sometimes there occurs an anthropomorphic phenomenon when the favorite space is given a nickname.

Thus, positive forms of relation to a certain place in the favorable space fulfill emotional needs of a child and help in developing and maintaining identity.

3. CONCLUSION

The researches exploring potential of the relations in child-space relationship have found that when children are missing interpersonal support backup in their daily environment need for such relations they compensate by relying on themselves and resorting environmental resources.

The concept of "awareness" of some place as a general concept of synthetic type consists of three different forms of the child-space relation and those are: attachment to a some place in space, identification and belonging to a certain place. A child attaches to a certain place in the period of increase of the importance of physical environment while binding to a family base slowly weakens. A child feels comfortable and happy in a certain place when he space responds to a child's physical as well as psychological needs. The previous experiences become a part of some place, the space and what belongs to it, that is in it, becomes an instrument that may satisfy some biological, social and cultural needs. That concept gives an answer to the question why given specific environment is more suitable for something that someone likes doing and is in advantage over the others.

The possibility of regulating privacy and renewability of a space of environment results in occurrence of *favorite place* phenomenon. Thus, positive forms of relation to a certain place in the space that is favorable for spending time fulfill emotional needs of a child and help in developing and maintaining its identity.

REFERENCES

1. Cuito, A. : Kindergarten Architecture, Gingko Press Inc, Barselona, 2001.
2. Dudek, M. : Children's Spaces, Architectural Press, London, 2004.
3. Lawson, B. : The language of space, Architectural Press, Oxford, 2001.
4. Manojlović, A., Mladenović, U.: Psihologija predškolskog deteta, Centar za primenjenu psihologiju, Beograd, 2001.
5. Moore, G.T., Sugiyama, T. & O'Donnell, L.: The Children's Physical Environments Rating Scale, Australian Early Childhood Association Biennial Conference, Hobart, 2003.

6. Rot, N. : Osnovi socijalne psihologije, Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, Beograd, 2003.
7. Trancik, A.M., Evans, G.W.: Spaces Fit for Children: Competency in the Design of Daycare Center Environments, Children's Environments 12(3), 1995.

PROSTOR U FUNKCIJI PSIHOLOŠKE STABILNOSTI DETETA

Danica Stanković

Problem koji se istražuje u ovom radu odnosi se na uspostavljanje specifičnih odnosa na relaciji dete – prostor. Prezentuju se i u arhitektonskom kontekstu definišu koncepti relacije dete-prostor kao što su: koncept "svesti" o određenom mestu, koncept vezanosti deteta za neko mesto u prostoru, identifikacija i osećanje pripadnosti određenom mestu, a zatim i fenomen omiljenog mesta.