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Op-Chart

DAVID ROCKWELL

Unpacking Imagination

In an age of childhood obesity and children tethered to electronic consoles, playgrounds have rarely been more important. In an age of constrained government budgets, playgrounds have rarely been a harder sell. Fortunately, the cost of play doesn't have to be prohibitive. In creating the Imagination Playground in Lower Manhattan — a playground with lots of loose parts for children to create their own play spaces — we realized that many of the elements with the greatest value to children were inexpensive and portable. Although traditional playgrounds can

easily cost in the millions to build, boxed imagination playgrounds can be put together for under \$10,000. (Land costs not included!) The design below is one that my architecture firm has done in collaboration with the New York City Parks Department and KaBoom, a nonprofit organization. But it needn't be the only one out there. There are a lot of ways to build a playground — and a lot of communities in need of one. Let a thousand portable playgrounds bloom.

-DAVID ROCKWELL, president of the Rockwell Group

