



# URBAN95

## Urban95 introduction

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If you could experience the city  
from 95cm – the perspective  
of a toddler and their family...

What would you change?



# The importance of the early years



## Scale of the problem

By 2050, it's projected that nearly **70%** of the world's children will live in urban areas. Currently, approximately **1.18 billion** children reside in cities. In many urban areas, child poverty rates are alarmingly high

**350 to 500 million** children live in slums or informal settlements globally



## The potential

**USD 6.40– 17.60:** estimated return for every USD 1 spent on high-quality early years programmes



## Brain building

**One million synapses** are created in a baby's brain every second.

# The **Urban95** approach

An integrated approach that combines improving urban spaces and providing services that support the health and wellbeing of babies and toddlers but also their caregivers.



# Where a child grows up profoundly shapes their development , especially in the early years

- Children in neighborhoods with high levels of violence, poor housing, environmental hazards, or limited access to health and learning services are more likely to experience toxic stress, which disrupts brain architecture and lifelong outcomes.
- Conversely, place-based approaches which align urban design, early childhood services, and caregiver support within specific communities can buffer these effects by promoting stability, safety, and responsive relationships.
- Place-based efforts that foster collective efficacy, accessible green space, and integrated service delivery are especially effective in supporting resilience and reducing disparities.

Harvard Center on the Developing Child (2021).  
*Place Matters: The Environment We Create Shapes the Foundations of Healthy Development*





# The evidence is solid demonstrating how caregiver wellbeing directly impacts early childhood outcomes.

01

Parental mental health are key determinants of early childhood development

02

Parental psychosocial wellbeing as a predictor of the social competence of the child

03

Maternal social isolation in both prenatal and postnatal periods has been associated with an increased risk of developmental delays in early childhood

04

Early childhood interventions that include support for the wellbeing of caregivers have been successful in improving outcomes for children.

# Caregiving changes you

**Becoming a parent is a major life transition, now backed by concrete evidence, making clear that caring for caregivers is critical during the early years.**



# Three stages of significant transformation

The maternal brain undergoes one of the most profound rewiring processes in human development, enhancing empathy, vigilance, and emotional depth



## Early Childhood

Formation of brain networks, more than one million new connections per second.



## Adolescence

Reorganization of brain circuits (synaptic pruning) were pubertal hormones play a critical role. (second window of opportunity)



## Matrescence/patrescence

Change in terms of structure and functionality. These changes can increase the vulnerability of their mental health



**Over 500 million parents of  
children under five worldwide**



# Caregiving today

- A third of parents experience chronic loneliness
- 15-18% of new mothers in industrial societies experience **postpartum depression** – this increases to more than 30% among women living in low-income countries or in poverty, insecurity or violence
- **The likelihood of depressive episodes doubles during pregnancy**
- More than 40% of the world's children do not have access to affordable and high-quality childcare
- 68% of women and 57% of men with mental health problems are parents
- Sleep deprive: 6 years after birth for sleep to fully recover
- Care load: The amount of daily caregiving that women do compared to men: 3 to 7 times as much



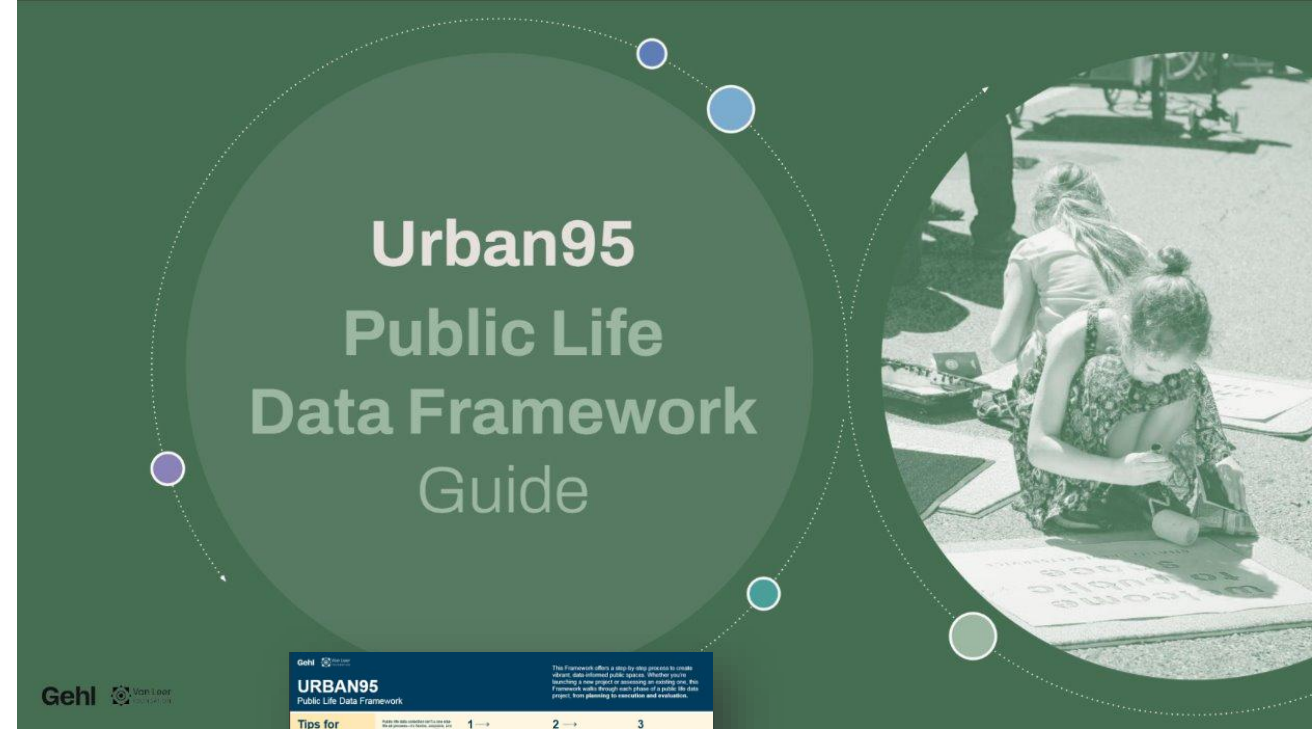


# Data-driven decision-making

# Measuring urban experiences of young children

People moving count, stationary activity mapping, intercept surveys and sensory mapping are among the tools that can be used to gather data on young children and caregivers in cities.

- Gehl - Urban95 Public Life Framework – [Link](#)
- Brooking – Playful Learning Landscape Metrics – [Link](#)
- OECD - The importance of monitoring neighbourhood conditions for children's well-being and development [Link](#)



The image shows a page from the 'URBAN95 Public Life Data Framework Guide'. The page is titled 'URBAN95 Public Life Data Framework' and features a table with five rows and three columns. The rows are: 'Tips for applying the framework', 'Plan and Define', 'Build a Coalition', 'Measure, Test, Refine', and 'Share and Scale'. The columns are: '1', '2', and '3'. The page also includes a 'Resources' section at the bottom.

	1	2	3
<b>Tips for applying the framework</b>	1. Plan your framework and identify where you currently stand in the process.	2. Measure which steps you have already accomplished or which are most urgent to start or tackle later.	3. Consider all project partners that lend the your team's goals and capacity.
<b>Plan and Define</b>	<b>Define Constraints and Challenges</b> Identify the constraints and challenges that may impact your project. Consider the needs of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Identify a Site</b> Select a site that is representative of the community and has a high level of public life. Consider the site's location, size, and accessibility.	<b>Identify a Site</b> Select a site that is representative of the community and has a high level of public life. Consider the site's location, size, and accessibility.
<b>Build a Coalition</b>	<b>Engage Stakeholders</b> Identify and engage the stakeholders who will be involved in the project. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Build a Shared Public Life Vision</b> Develop a shared vision for the public life of the site. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Build a Shared Public Life Vision</b> Develop a shared vision for the public life of the site. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.
<b>Measure, Test, Refine</b>	<b>Create an Evaluation Plan to Study Public Life</b> Develop an evaluation plan to study the public life of the site. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Planning for Change</b> Develop a plan for change to improve the public life of the site. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Planning for Change</b> Develop a plan for change to improve the public life of the site. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.
<b>Share and Scale</b>	<b>Collect Inspiring Stories</b> Collect and share stories of success from the project. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Scale for Impact</b> Scale the project to other sites in the community. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.	<b>Scale for Impact</b> Scale the project to other sites in the community. Consider the needs and interests of the community, the resources available, and the time and budget constraints.

## Behavioural Change

# Encouraging healthy behaviours

- Alma Hub – Pe de Infancia: The [toolkit](#) includes ideas for urban interventions and community actions, a WhatsApp journey, audio and video materials.
- Save the Children - The little parenting book – [Link](#)



# Listening to parents

## Family Voices



### Family Voices Toolkit

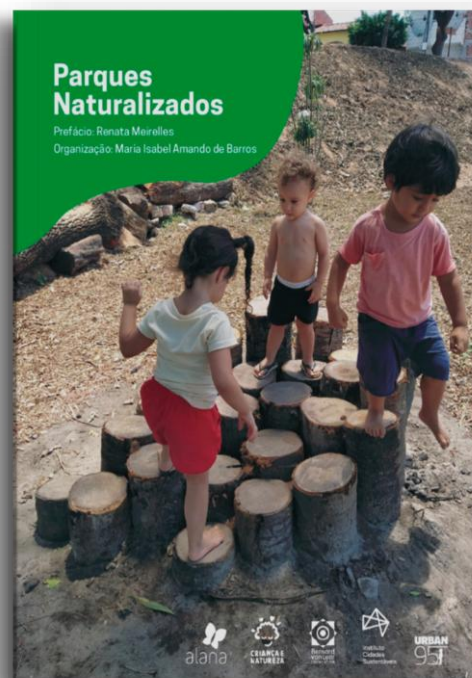
Practical tools to include families with young children,  
building better homes and communities for all

## What is Family Voices?

Family Voices is a simple toolkit designed to help you effectively involve parents and carers with children aged 5 and under in the planning, design and management of family housing.

# Workforce development

# Design Guidelines





# Pop-up Play

Istanbul - Turkey

# Parks, gardens,

Green & Blue Schoolyards - Netherlands





# Playgrounds

Addis Ababa - Ethiopia



# Healthcare, childcare and community centres

Childcare design guidelines intervention Israel

