



## International Journal of Architecture and Urban Development (IJAUD)

# Presenting Architectural Solutions to Improve Social Skills of Working Children

<sup>1\*</sup>Sara Soleimani, <sup>2</sup>Babak Khorshidi, <sup>3</sup> Shiva Emami

Received 2024.02.18 ; Accepted 2023.12.03

<sup>1\*</sup> Department of Architecture, Faculty of Art and Architecture, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Architecture, Faculty of Art and Architecture, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Architecture, Faculty of Art and Architecture, University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran

**ABSTRACT:** Working children, like any other child, must learn skills that are necessary for childhood in order to communicate with society and develop their personalities and emotions. Children who work typically cannot learn these skills because of their living circumstances. The current study aimed to provide a suitable environment and context for the improvement of children's social relations in educational and care centers by providing workable solutions that are appropriate to the morals and social needs of working children to improve their social ability and skills. This is because one of the most influential factors in learning and improving children's skills is providing an environment in harmony with the needs of children in line with that skill. This was applied descriptive-analytical research in terms of method and qualitative and was performed using direct and non-interventional field observation coding. According to the results, factors such as playability of the environment, a sense of security, environmental attraction, event-ability, proper furniture, curiosity about space, connection to nature, breadth of vision and scenery, permeability, climatic comfort, a sense of belonging and space flexibility affected the improvement of working children's social skills. Meanwhile, the playability of the environment and connection to nature play the most important role in the formation of social behaviors and the improvement of social skills in working children.

**KEYWORDS:** Working Children, Architectural Spaces, Social Skills, Playability, Naturalism.

## INTRODUCTION

Especially in developing nations, the phenomenon of "Child Labor" and "Working Children" is one of the most widespread problems in the world. Employing minors when they are at their most vulnerable has long-lasting effects on people and society. UNICEF defines street and working children as: "youth/children who live and work in the streets, unaccompanied by adults while in the street, and without protective care from parents" (UNICEF, 2001). In Iran, however, the concept of working children is defined slightly differently; most of the working children live with their parents, but they spend most of their time on the streets and return home at night (Hosseini, 2006). Accordingly, workers under the age of 18 are called working children (Tabarsi et al., 2017). It is estimated that there are more than 500 million working children in the world (Fassa et al., 2000) and about 1.6-2.1 million in Iran (Rashidian et al., 2014). This figure shows that children, who are the most vulnerable group and exposed to all kinds of psychological and physical injuries, make up a considerable portion of society. Children on the street experience significant pressure and are vulnerable to abuse, neglect, deprivation, violence, and crime due to a constant struggle among them (Ali, 2011).

Studies suggest that compared to other children in society, physical, mental, and social disorders are more common among working children. For instance, 35-85% of working children deal with emotional and behavioral issues, including low self-confidence, depression, and poor social interactions (Moradi et al., 2016). In fact, working children's social skills and abilities suffer the most because of their lifestyle and experiences. Because they live under constant pressure and tension, working children lack psychological

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\* Corresponding author's email: [S.soleimani@uok.ac.ir](mailto:S.soleimani@uok.ac.ir)