

Not a Box

The built environment greatly impacts the way people use their spaces, indirectly affecting their emotions and overall behaviour. The way any space impacts, to an extent, depends on our experiences in the past or prejudices and premonitions that we hold connecting to certain elements, materials, architectural features, type of spaces, etc. In the case of children, the slate is relatively cleaner, and the scope for them to form their own unique opinions through their own experiences is much greater. The built environment contributes to dynamism and freedom, two significant factors that are conducive to creativity.

Creativity, as the term suggests, is the ability to 'create' something out of seemingly nothing. Kids naturally possess powerful imaginations and are instinctive innovators. Providing them an environment that nurtures their ability to express their feelings and experiences freely, without the fear of judgment is quintessential in the early years of childhood.

With a fast-evolving world and exponential growth of technology, they need to have agile and open minds, equipped with basic skills to adapt to their contemporary situations. Creativity in young children comes out best while they're left to themselves, they self-invent their games to play. They should feel empowered and have a sense of control over their space to bring out the best of their expressions. A design that encourages unhampered human interaction fosters creativity, collaboration and, innovation.

Curiosity, they say, is the mother of creativity. The school is designed as a spatial experience, not revealing its details altogether, but allowing kids to catch glimpses of what they are heading to before actually experiencing them. Adding elements that fascinate kids tend to draw them in, kindling their curiosity to seek and explore more of the place. A bright orange feature wall partially screens the central amphitheatre, allowing kids to view from a height into the space. Having a higher view angle than what they are otherwise used to comes across as an exciting experience for pre-schoolers.

The focus of this design is an amphitheatre that serves as a multipurpose space for congregation, reading, learning, interacting, socializing, and watching screens integrating smart classes. Strategic placement of aquaria in the field of view as one enters the space, then partially screening them from view, and then letting the users walk across it will enhance their eventual experience of a simple activity like watching fish. Learning for kids aged 3-6 years should be a comprehensive process that includes knowledge of human relationships, environment, health and, confident self-expression apart from the basic languages and math.

Glass elements are used to seamlessly merge the interiors and exterior spaces, in an attempt to give kids a hands-on experience of studying their environment. Lego is a great tool to encourage kids to build their playthings. The giant Lego playroom proposed in the design allows them to be a part of their toys and encourages creative play. Art counts among the best forms of self-expression and hence a dedicated space for it that also provides for group interactions.

The architecture focuses on minimizing walls or curbs, facilitating unrestrained circulation between different spaces. The contemporary and minimal architecture accommodates future technological advancements in the way this school functions. Circular geometry is used to express the absence of restraining edges and corners, lending a smooth and organic form to spaces and thus, their out-of-the-box experiences.