Designing Cities for Children and Families

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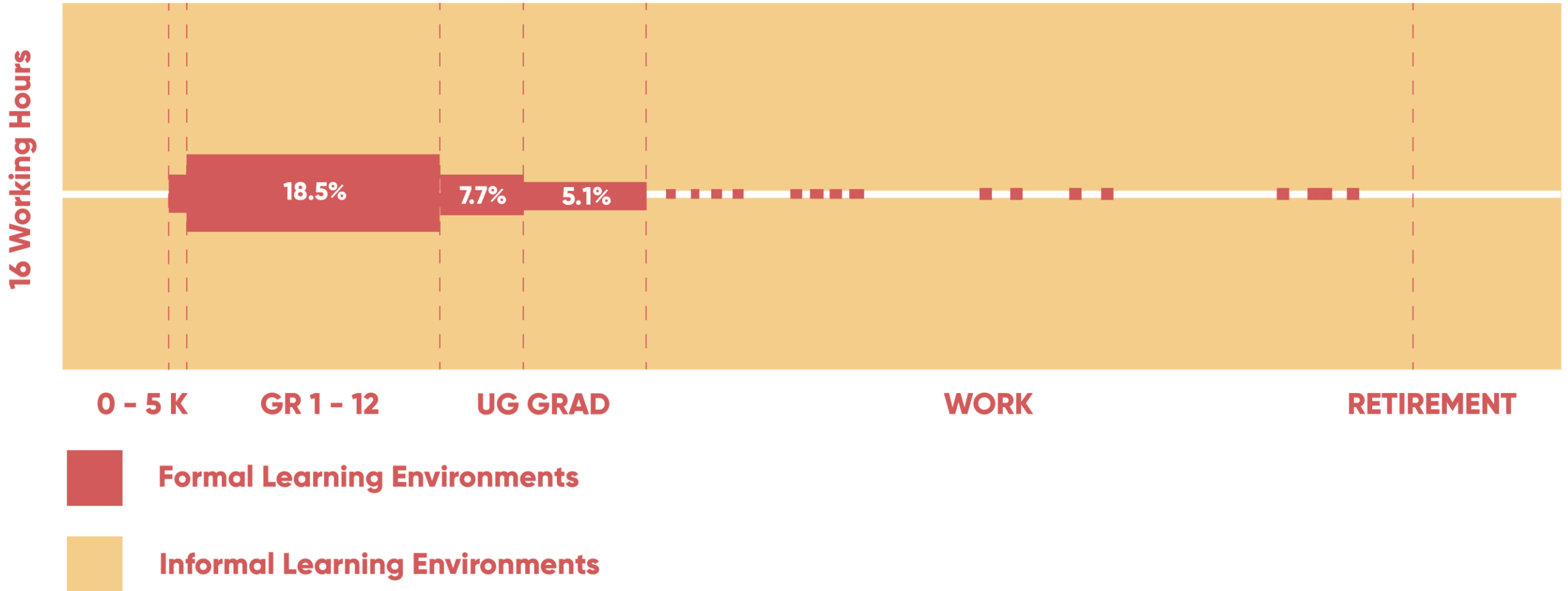
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Where are children?

16 Working Hours

18.5% 7.7% 5.1%

0 - 5 K   GR 1 - 12   UG GRAD   WORK   RETIREMENT

Formal Learning Environments

Informal Learning Environments

Meltzoff et al., 2009

Why Design Cities for Children and Families?

- Environment affects health, well-being, physical and cognitive development (GDCI, 2020)

- SDG 11 – Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable

- Importance of social interaction and joint engagement

- Need for places to pause and stay (GDCI, 2020)

Playful learning

| Free play	Guided play	Games	Direct Instruction
child-led	child-led, adult scaffolded	Adult designed/scaffolded Set rules and constraints for play	Adult designed/controlled Set constraints for activity

Balance of child-adult involvement and constraints

Design Principles for Playful Learning

1. Robust community engagement benefits everyone
2. Spark interaction between children and caregivers
3. Identify learning goals
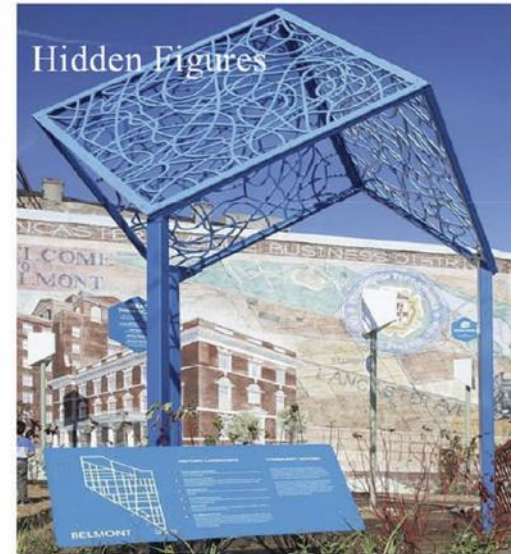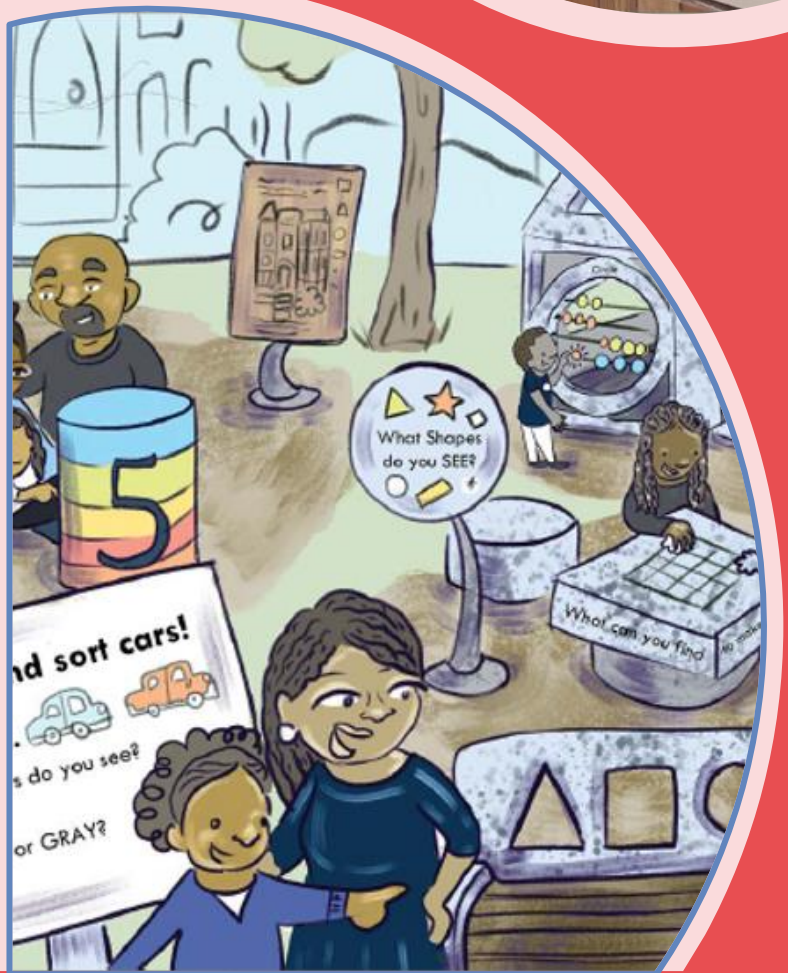4. Iterative process leads to better outcomes
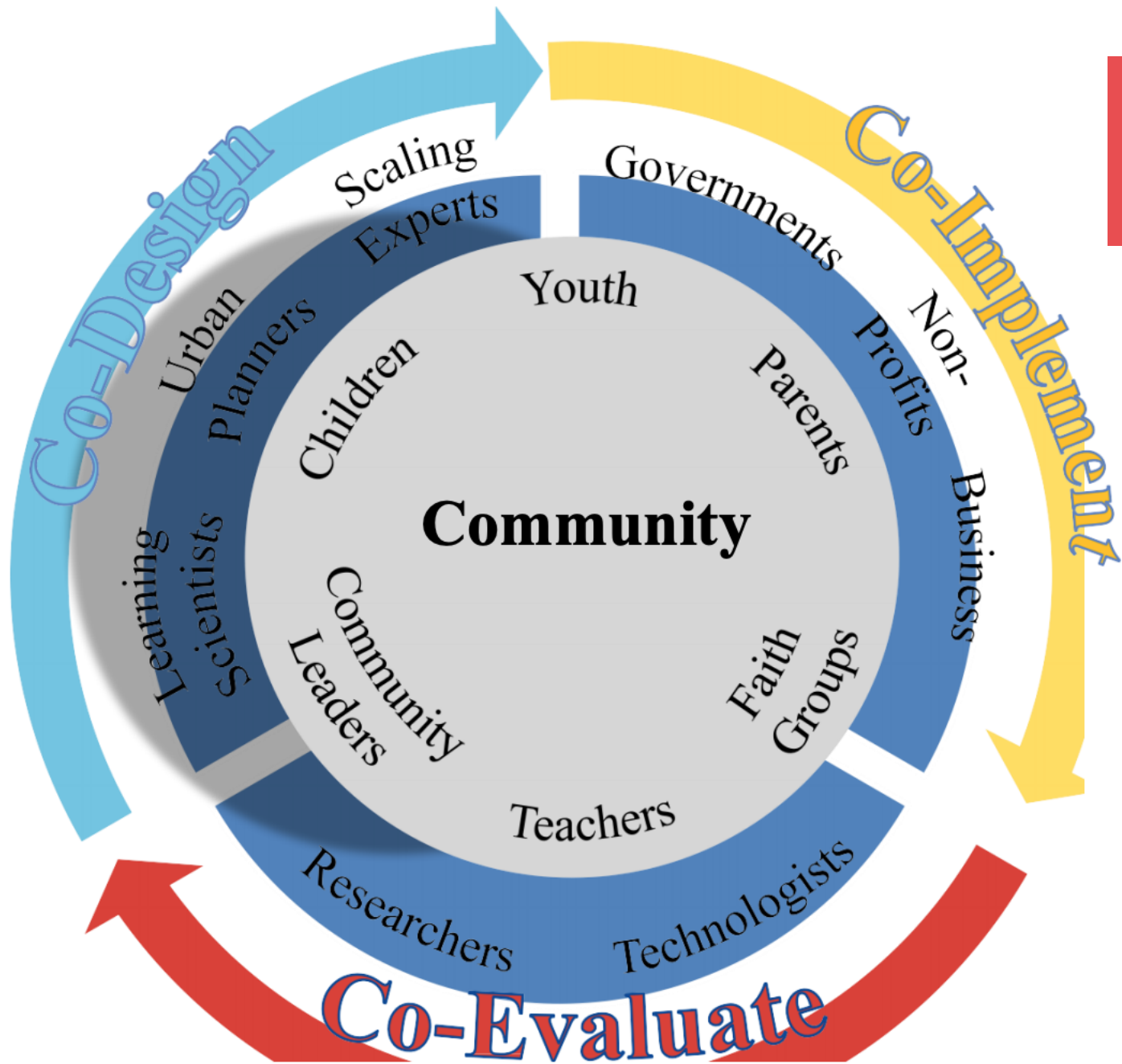
Case Study

Urban Thinkscape

Belmont bus stop | Philadelphia, PA

Photo credit: Sahar Coston-Hardy

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Targeting everyday spaces: Urban Thinkscape

- ↑ verbal engagement
- ↑ caregiver-child interaction
- ↑ language (overall)
- ↑ language (STEM)

Chicago, São Paolo, and beyond…

PLAYFUL Learning
LANDSCAPES
ACTION NETWORK

Who we are

A nonprofit that brings together educators, learning scientists, community organizers, and architects to create playful learning spaces

What we do

Coaching and Design Review

Technical Assistance and Design

Training & Webinars

Science Dissemination

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