BOSTON SAND GARDENS

Dr. Marie Zakrzewska is generally given credit for introducing the idea of a supervised play environment to the Boston Women's club as a mean of keeping small children from playing in the poorer sections of the citys congested and dangerous streets while their parents worked in the factories. The club and the Massachusetts Emergency and Hygiene Association then organized the first sand gardens on the grounds of missions like the Children's Mission on Parmenter Street in 1885-1887. Dr. Z had observed a similar supervised play environment in Berlin.

A decade later, sand gardens were common in most school yards and a movement had begun.

This playground movement ...organized and supervised recreation activity...led eventually to the municipal recreation programs popular today.

Noteworthy, according to Dickason, is the observation that these sand gardens evolved into supervised playgrounds and should be distinguished from other playgrounds that were essentially un-supervised areas for play of self-organized games.

Supervision is the key......because it is the supervised, organized format that evolved into the publicly supplied, programmed recreation services we enjoy today. The unsupervised areas also enjoyed their own but slightly separate evolution into parks systems.

Work cited:

Jerry Dickason (1983) Journal of Sport History, New York University, Vol 10, No 2, Oliva, L. (1985). Boston sand garden kicks off the playground movement. Parks and Recreation, 20 (8), 36-39