

A4LE LearningSCAPES 2025: New Horizons in Learning Environments

Joy is What We Do: Designing Schools That Spark Creativity

Page  Stantec





Agenda

- 1 The Story of Beta Academy
- 2 What is joy and why is it important to learning?
- 3 Why so much color?
- 4 Design Process
- 5 Confetti Campus



What and why is Beta Academy?

A group of graduates in blue gowns and red stoles are celebrating, throwing their caps into the air. They are standing in a line, smiling and looking up. The background is a modern, brightly lit interior space with large windows and bookshelves. The ceiling is decorated with large, colorful, abstract shapes. The overall atmosphere is joyful and celebratory.

VISION

An elite education for all children.

MISSION

To establish world-class schools through a culture of joyful rigor.



WHO WE SERVE

GRADES

PK-12

ECO DIS

73%

BIPOC

93%

OUR SOLUTION

Joy!



JOYFUL
TEACHING



JOYFUL
CULTURE



JOYFUL
SPACES



Why is joy and play important for learning?

What is joy?

- **Joy**, in the learning context, is a broad term that encompasses ‘enjoying a task for its own sake and the momentary thrill of surprise, insight, or success after overcoming challenges’.
- Experiencing joy during play supports motivation and interest, which in turn helps students persist in learning tasks. Joy—defined as intrinsic enjoyment or the thrill of discovery—**is a powerful motivator.**



What is play?

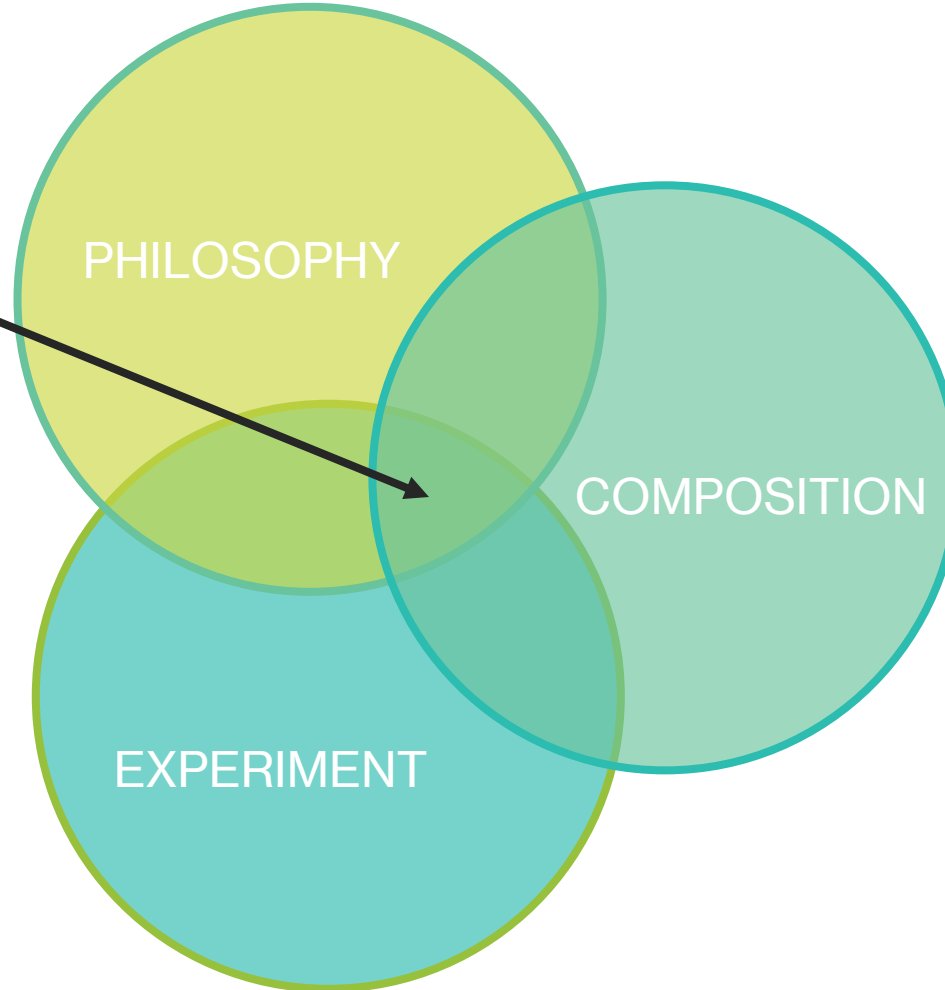
- **Play** has three essential components that are important in this context
 - Loss of self-consciousness
 - Altered perception of time
 - Intrinsic Motivation/Process Oriented
- Children's brains change during play as **new neural pathways are forged**, making play an extremely accessible way to teach.





How are joy and architecture linked?

Architecturally, we need to capture a moment where these cross at every scale of the project.



Architectural Fundamentals

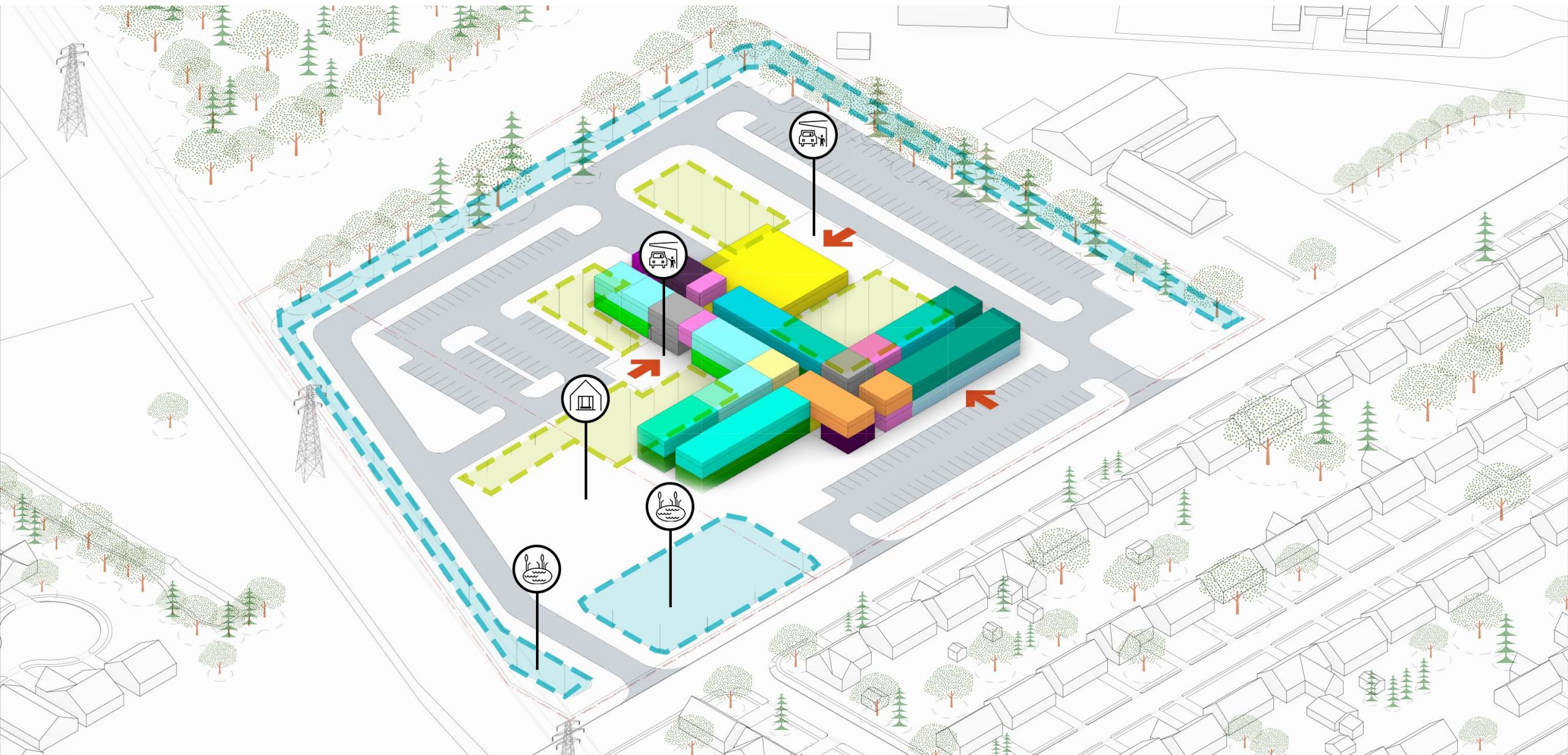
Stimulus



Experimental Task



OPTION 1



The Design Concept

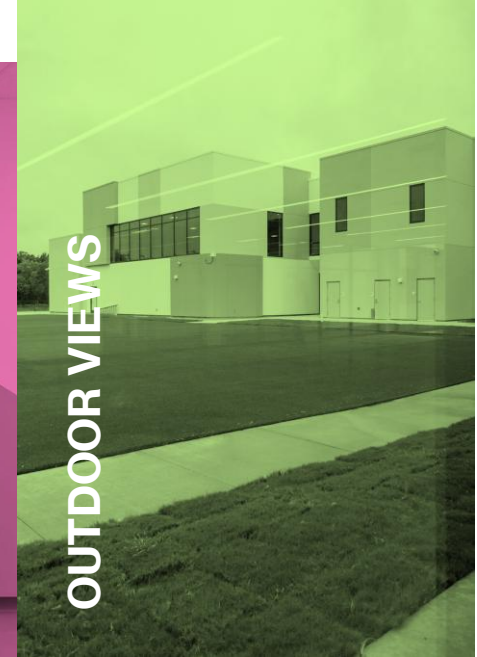


Design Drivers

Architectural elements that support learning, well-being, and joyful engagement in children's environments help shape **spaces that nurture cognitive and emotional growth.**

- *The Center for Conscious Design*

Design Drivers





COLOR

Balanced color variety creates a richer sensory environment that supports imagination, playfulness, and divergent thinking.



NATURAL LIGHT

Natural light and openness elevate mood, clarity, and engagement.



VISUAL CONNECTION

Leveraging visual connections fosters a sense of community, engagement, and collaboration. It also encourages curiosity and creates memorable experiences.



PLAYFULNESS

Playful design introduces elements of surprise, curiosity, and delight that stimulate engagement. It helps create environments where learning is an active joyful experience.



OUTDOOR VIEWS

Connection to the outdoors and nature reduces stress and invigorates the mind.



Questions