

## **MCNA statement regarding new Horseshoe Road Playground**

The Murphey Candler Neighborhood Association (MCNA) is supportive of the City of Brookhaven's initiative to update and expand playground opportunities for our city's children through the Park Bond Capital Improvement Program.

On March 19, 2021, the city officially opened the new Murphey Candler Park Horseshoe Loop Playground while simultaneously removing the playground structures previously installed in the Park.

The MCNA is concerned that by installing new playground structures and swings for older children and removing playground structures appropriate for young children, many families who utilize the park are left with a loss rather than a gain. In addition, the lack of age-appropriate equipment increases the risk of accidental injuries by young children using the new playground.

Of the newly constructed playground, procured at a total cost of over \$300,000, only the three spring riders are designated by the manufacturer's specifications as age appropriate for children under the age of five<sup>1</sup>. This means that only 6% of the total Park Bond funds spent on Murphey Candler playground hardware went towards equipment appropriate for this young age group<sup>2</sup>.

According to Child Trends, approximately 30% of children under the age of five have home-based childcare as their primary arrangement<sup>3</sup>. Children in this age group frequently utilize playgrounds as their schedules are not limited by school time and active play is a critical part of their daily routine.

The MCNA supports the use of Park Bond Capital Improvement Program funds to address the significant lack of age-appropriate playground structures for young children currently in the Horseshoe Loop Playground. Active play structures suitable for children under the age of five could easily be installed on the level graded surfaces previously occupied by the old playground equipment. See attached for example age-appropriate structures sold by KOMPAN that match the new equipment.

We feel strongly that the cost of such equipment is feasible in the Park Bond Budget, and the addition of this equipment would have high approval ratings from residents. In this regard, we commend Councilmember Linley Jones and Mayor John Ernst for their recent statements acknowledging the lack of age-appropriate equipment and their commitment to addressing these concerns.

Moving forward, we are confident a solution can be found which provides long term benefits for children of all ages.

**Murphey Candler Neighborhood Association (MCNA) Board**  
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<sup>1</sup> KOMPAN website accessed 4/21/2021: <https://www.kompan.us/play/nature-play/robinia-springers/dolphin-springer> and <https://www.kompan.us/play/nature-play/robinia-swings/double-swing-combination>

<sup>2</sup> \$7,884 of \$123,162 KOMPAN playground equipment purchased per the contract purchase agreement approved by Brookhaven City Council on July 28, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.childtrends.org/blog/nearly-30-percent-of-infants-and-toddlers-attend-home-based-child-care-as-their-primary-arrangement>

**Attachment - KOMPAN “Robinia” Example Structures for children under 5 years old:**

**Wizard’s Hideaway**



<https://www.kompan.us/play/nature-play/robinia-village/the-wizard-s-hideaway-ada>

**Little Beaver’s Stream**



<https://www.kompan.us/play/nature-play/robinia-village/little-beaver-s-stream>

**Theatre & Music Cottage**



<https://www.kompan.us/play/nature-play/robinia-play-act-and-learn/robinia-theater-music-cottage>

**Playhut**



<https://www.kompan.us/play/nature-play/robinia-village/playhut-w-side-gable-desks-2>