

Evaluating Taman Sayang Barudak: A Child-Friendly Space Perspective

Silvia Deborah Ulag¹, Rahmi Elsa Diana^{1*}

¹Architecture Department, Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, Tangerang, Indonesia

*rahmi.diana@lecturer.umn.ac.id



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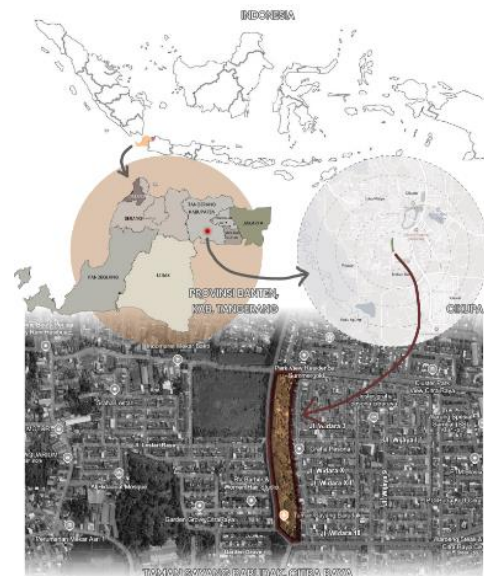
Abstract

The urgency of creating child-friendly public spaces is emphasized by UNICEF in a global and national context to ensure children's rights to a safe and healthy environment. Taman Sayang Barudak, located in Citra Raya, Cikupa, is one of the public open spaces that functions as a playground and as a green open space (RTH). However, the condition of the park shows problems with the quality of play facilities and park management that are not optimal, including damage to play equipment and lack of access and supporting facilities. The purpose of this study is to determine the activities in this park based on child-friendly public space criteria. The research method uses a qualitative approach through field observations and interviews with visitors and park managers. The data collected was analyzed using Child-Friendly Spaces theory and RBRA standards to measure aspects of facility quality and visitor activities. The results showed that although this park has potential as a child-friendly public space, there are aspects that need to be improved, including maintenance and repair of play facilities, providing other infrastructure, increasing park security, this is necessary to meet RBRA and Child Friendly Spaces standards to achieve Child Friendly Cities (KLA) and to provide a safe and comfortable environment especially for children.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to UNICEF's *Convention on the Rights of the Child* in 2014, which addressed children's rights to a safe environment that supports their development, the document *A World Fit for Children* states that every child has the right to protection and physical, social, and mental development, including access to a safe environment for play. This principle underscores the importance of public spaces that facilitate children's growth while safeguarding their rights. Every child has the right to play, and play is a crucial process through which children learn. High-quality play opportunities significantly impact child development (Moore & Robin, 1992). Ideally, public open spaces should function as child-friendly environments to ensure that children, as one of the most vulnerable groups in society, have access to adequate, safe, and comfortable spaces for play and social interaction.

Playgrounds serve as essential components in upholding children's rights, providing spaces for interaction, communication, and self-expression that are accessible to children from diverse backgrounds. They also align with the role of public open spaces as areas for relaxation and green spaces (Gallion & Eisner, 1994). In response to these global policies, the Tangerang Regency Government has implemented the national *Child-Friendly City (KLA)* program since 2008. This initiative is part of the government's commitment to ensuring children's rights are fulfilled through various regulations in Indonesia. The KLA policy is crucial for government institutions at all levels, from villages and sub-districts to the broader Tangerang Regency, in realizing a child-friendly environment.



**Figure 1. Research Object Location
 Taman Sayang Barudak, Citra Raya, Cikupa**
 (Author, 2024)

With the continuous population growth over time, there is an increasing demand for spaces that provide adequate infrastructure to support children's development. According to Kabupaten Tangerang Dalam Angka (2024), the majority of the population in the regency

falls within the 0–14 age group, exceeding 300,000 children. This age range is classified as childhood, encompassing the stage of compulsory education as mandated by the Ministry of Education's *12-Year Compulsory Education* policy (Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia, 2009). This demographic reality highlights the need for play facilities tailored to the needs of children in Tangerang Regency.

The research focuses on *Taman Sayang Barudak*, located in Citra Raya, Cikupa, as the study site related to children's play spaces (see Figure 1). This park is a public open space with facilities that have the potential to serve as a child-friendly area due to the presence of play areas. Through this study, the researcher aims to examine the current condition of facilities in *Taman Sayang Barudak* and the activities occurring within the park, based on the concept of child-friendly spaces.

The findings of this research are anticipated to contribute to the broader literature on urban public spaces and child-friendly environments, offering insights into the interplay between infrastructure quality, user activities, and governance. Practically, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for stakeholders, including local authorities and community groups, to optimize *Taman Sayang Barudak*'s function as a child-friendly space. This aligns with broader sustainability goals, supporting the welfare and rights of children while enhancing the inclusivity of urban environments.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 GREEN OPEN SPACE

According to Carmona (2008), public open space refers to areas designated for the general public that can be accessed by all groups without physical or social barriers. These spaces accommodate various human activities, ranging from recreation and social interaction to economic-related activities. Public open spaces may include parks, squares, and other green areas, commonly referred to as green open spaces (RTH), which serve as gathering places for the surrounding community, particularly in urban areas. Additionally, public open spaces often feature facilities for children, providing environments that stimulate movement and outdoor activities (Rizani et al., 2017).

In simple terms, public space can be understood as a "place to be public" or a "place to be free," signifying a space for communal use and unrestricted access. Public spaces are regarded as areas where all segments of society have the right to freely utilize them (Pradinie et al., 2016). Public open spaces can also serve as venues that generate economic benefits while providing a gathering place for communities to express solidarity and voice their opinions (Pratiwi, 2015).

Green open spaces can be categorized as a type of public open space. According to the Regulation of the Minister of Public Works (2008), green open space (RTH) refers to an elongated or clustered area that is predominantly open and serves as a place for plant growth, whether naturally occurring or intentionally cultivated. Green open space is also a part of urban open spaces that contain plants, vegetation, and greenery, contributing to ecological, socio-cultural, and architectural functions while also providing economic benefits that support community well-being.

The availability of green open space in urban areas can be assessed from ecological, socio-cultural, aesthetic, and economic perspectives. Green open spaces within an area offer significant benefits to both the surrounding community and the environment (Pradinie et al., 2016). From an ecological perspective, green open spaces regulate the climate by serving as an oxygen source, reducing noise pollution, and mitigating glare from sunlight. From a socio-cultural standpoint, green open spaces function as communal areas that foster social interactions and cultural activities. Green open spaces (RTH) can serve as venues

for recreation, education, sports, and even culinary hubs. Additionally, from an aesthetic perspective, RTH contributes to enhancing the visual appeal of urban environments while also fostering creativity and productivity among city residents (Imansari & Khadiyanta, 2015).

2.1 CHILD-FRIENDLY SPACES PRINCIPLE IN PUBLIC OPEN SPACE

The creation of child-friendly public spaces has become a crucial focus in urban development, driven by the need to provide environments that support children's growth, safety, and holistic well-being. The concept of Child Friendly Spaces emphasizes environments designed to meet children's physical and social development needs. According to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), these spaces should include multipurpose play areas with facilities for physical activities such as climbing, sliding, and balancing, complemented by accessible amenities like toilets and storage areas. These spaces aim to stimulate exploration and creativity, fostering an inclusive and safe environment for learning through play.

In Indonesia, the development of child-friendly spaces is further guided by the National Standard "*Standar Nasional Indonesia*" (SNI) on Child-Friendly Play Space "*Ruang Bermain Ramah Anak*" (RBRA). This standard outlines the design and management requirements for play areas, emphasizing safety, accessibility, and quality of facilities. It serves as a benchmark to evaluate public spaces like *Taman Sayang Barudak*, ensuring they meet the minimum criteria to support children's activities. Similarly, the City Child-Friendly "*Kota Layak Anak*" (KLA) policy, regulated under Regent Regulation of Tangerang Regency No. 36 of 2016 and Regional Regulation No. 12 of 2022 in Tangerang Regency, provides a framework for creating child-friendly environments. This policy aims to uphold children's rights, including their right to safe and engaging public spaces, and emphasizes the importance of community involvement in space management.

Beyond the time required for cognitive development, socialization, and other formative experiences gained through play, children also need spatial settings—play areas, learning environments, and built spaces that shape their world and sense of identity. Childhood is closely linked to the physical environment in which children grow. Buildings, spaces between structures, streets, green fields, and play areas play a significant role in shaping children's experiences and perceptions of the world. There is a natural tendency to associate childhood with joyful experiences, such as sliding down a playground slide, swinging in a park, drawing or reading at home, hiding in spaces under tables, swimming in a pool, or playing in a backyard tent (Diana, 2024).

Previous studies summarized in Table 1 highlight the multifaceted role of playgrounds in urban settings. For instance, a study on playgrounds in Semarang assessed their contribution to child-friendly cities using variables like safety, accessibility, and facility adequacy. The findings revealed the importance of enhancing safety and visibility to improve the functionality of these spaces. Another study in Balikpapan analysed public perceptions of child-friendly green spaces, emphasizing the need for better infrastructure planning to accommodate both active and passive play. These studies underscore the potential of public spaces to support not only recreational activities but also social and educational engagement.

Table 1. Literature Review

No	Article Title	Method	Theory	Variable	Discussion
1	How Does the Playground Role in Realizing Children Friendly City?	Descriptive quantitative: questionnaires & interviews.	Child-Friendly City (KLA)	Safety, comfort, play facilities, accessibility	This study was conducted to understand the role of playgrounds in realising KLA in Semarang. And the result is that the availability of playgrounds is adequate, but needs to be improved to fulfil the indicators of a Child Friendly City. Playgrounds currently function more as a place for socialisation and recreation, but have not fully fulfilled the educational role.
2	Suitability of Public Open Space as Child Friendly Play Space Based on Community Perception (Case Study: South Balikpapan Sub-district)	Qualitative & quantitative: field observation and questionnaire	Child-Friendly City (KLA)	Accessibility, Safety, Health, Comfort, Completeness of play (passive and active)	This study is to formulate guidelines for the development of supporting elements of RBRA in RTH of South Balikpapan sub-district. As a result, some facilities are adequate, but there are still aspects that must be improved to fulfil KLA standards, and this study recommends improved facilities and better planning to support optimal child development.
3	The Public Value of Child-Friendly Space: Reconceptualizing the Playground	Ethnographic methods: observation & interview	Public space and value, Child-Friendly City (KLA)	Safety and protection, intergenerational interaction, public value, engagement with public spaces	The result of the analysis of this research is that the safety-based design of playgrounds often limits children's involvement and interaction in public spaces. On the other hand, the surrounding areas of parks that are not specifically designed for children are more supportive of cross-generational interactions, so this research proposes to create more exclusive play spaces as part of public spaces.

3. METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach using a combination of field observations, interviews, and literature reviews. This study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the playground's facilities and visitor activities of the park. The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to capture contextual and subjective insights, particularly from the perspectives of children, parents, and other park users. Data collected through:

- a) Field Observation
 Observations were conducted directly at Taman Sayang Barudak to document the condition and functionality of the facilities. This process included examining infrastructure quality, assessing accessibility, and noting visitor activities during both weekdays and weekends to capture variations in usage patterns.
- b) Interviews
 Semi-structured interviews were carried out with key stakeholders, including parents, children, and park managers. The aim was to gather information on visitor activities, perceptions of playground safety and quality, and the roles of park management. These interviews also explored how well the park aligns with child-friendly standards and addresses the needs of its users.

The study focuses on facilities and visitor activities as the main variables. Facilities observation to examines the physical condition, functionality, and accessibility of playground equipment and supporting infrastructure. Visitor activities were analyzed based on the types of activities children engage in, their interactions with facilities, and the role of parents as supervisors.

The collected data were analyzed to identify recurring patterns and key issues. Observational data were systematically mapped to illustrate the spatial distribution of facilities and user activities, allowing for the identification of problem areas and potential improvements. Interview responses were categorized to facilitate a comparative analysis of user experiences and perceptions, while insights from existing literature served as a theoretical foundation for the study's recommendations.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Taman Sayang Barudak, located in Citra Raya, Cikupa, serves as a vital public open space designed for recreation, social interaction, and family engagement. It is located in close proximity to various facilities catering to children, such as schools, mosques, childcare centers, sports facilities, and other parks. This strategic location indicates that Taman Sayang Barudak has the potential to serve as a child-friendly space that accommodates children's needs for play and social interaction.

Within a 2-kilometer radius of Taman Sayang Barudak, there are several key facilities and locations frequently visited by children that support their various needs. These facilities can be categorized into education, recreation, sports, and religious institutions. In the spatial mapping (see figure 2), recreational facilities (marked in green) include other playgrounds and entertainment centers in the Citra Raya area, which are commonly visited by children. Educational facilities (marked in yellow) consist of formal schools and early childhood education institutions, such as elementary schools (SD), middle schools (SMP), early childhood education centers (PAUD), and kindergartens (TK). Additionally, religious facilities, such as mosques, churches, and monasteries, are present in the area. Sports facilities include public fields and sports centers (GOR) that are open to the public. Moreover, commercial centers, such as daycare facilities and

shopping malls, further contribute to the area's accessibility. The proximity of these diverse facilities presents a strong potential for Taman Sayang Barudak to become an inclusive space, attracting visitors from various backgrounds and providing opportunities for social interaction among different community groups.

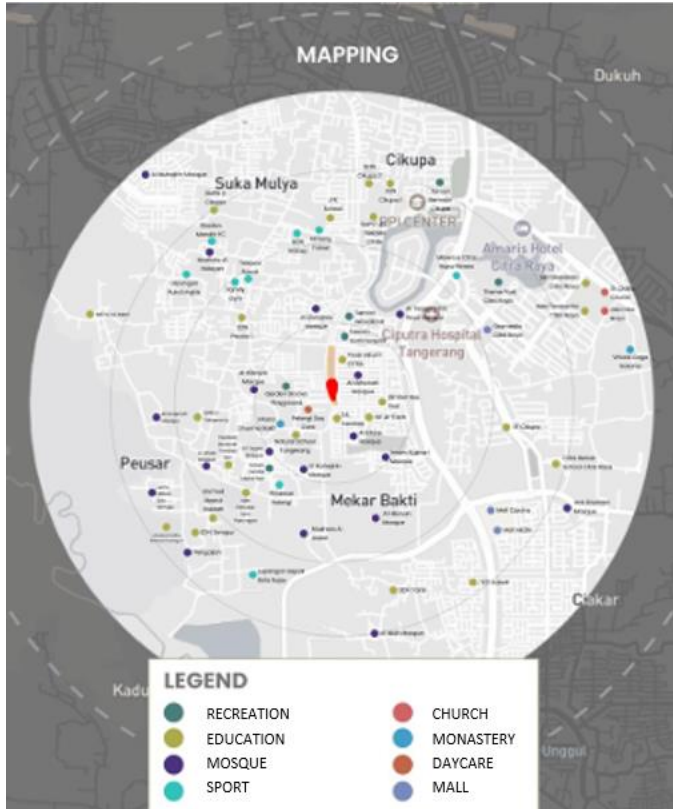


Figure 2. Mapping of the Surrounding Area
 (Author, 2024)

However, despite its potential to act as a model child-friendly space, several issues in infrastructure maintenance and facility management have limited its capacity to fully meet the needs of its users. These challenges necessitate a closer examination of its physical, functional, and managerial aspects to identify pathways for improvement.

4.1 FACILITIES' CONDITION

The park's facilities are categorized into play facilities, and supporting facilities. Play facilities consist of free playground equipment and paid attractions. Free playground structures, including swings, climbing frames, and see-saws, are heavily used but exhibit significant wear and tear. As highlighted in the analysis, rusted materials, faded paint, and broken parts compromise both safety and functionality, reducing their appeal to visitors. Conversely, the paid attractions, such as inflatable castles and coloring activities, are generally well-maintained and attract substantial interest, especially during weekends.

The cost of playing these games is relatively affordable, averaging between Rp 5,000 and Rp 10,000. However, during rainfall, to protect the equipment from potential damage caused by adverse weather conditions, these play facilities become temporarily unavailable. Caretakers cover them with tarps or relocate them to designated tents within the park. This process ensures both the safety

and comfort of children while playing and helps maintain the quality and durability of the play facilities.

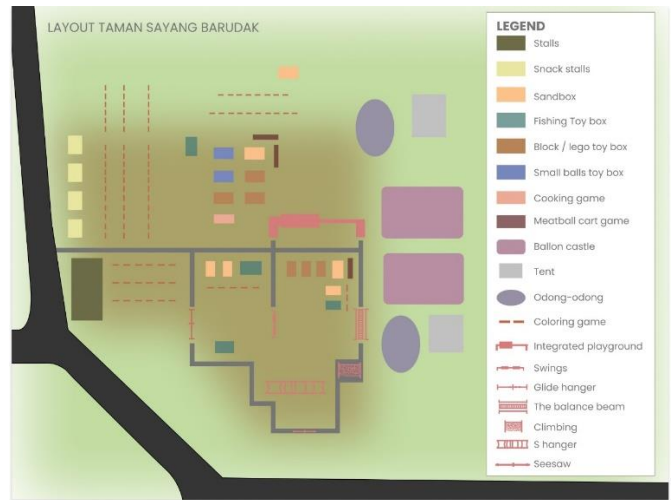


Figure 3. Taman Sayang Barudak Layout
 (Author, 2024)

Certain attractions, such as the fish-themed game, experience low engagement due to incomplete equipment and usability challenges. These shortcomings highlight the necessity of regular maintenance and equitable investment in all facilities to create a safer and more engaging environment for children.



Figure 4. Play Facilities Condition
 Top: Free Playground in Poor Condition
 Down: Paid Attraction are Well-Maintained
 (Author, 2024)

Meanwhile supporting facilities such as parking area, snack shop, pedestrian pathway, and trash bin are generally in poor condition. The entrance access route for pedestrians to the park is limited to a single main entry point located beside a small shop. This pedestrian entrance is relatively narrow and is confined within the park, obstructed by four bollards. The pathway is made of paving blocks but it does not cover the entire park area. Several trash bins are available at multiple points; however, their placement remains suboptimal as they are tied under trees. Additionally, these bins do not have separate compartments for waste sorting, making them less supportive of proper waste management principles.

A designated parking area for motor vehicles is also available, with motorcycle parking situated along the roadside in front of the park. When the parking area reaches full capacity, cars are often parked in an open space adjacent to the park. This situation indicates congestion may occur during peak hours, given the location's proximity to a three-way intersection between the park and a residential complex.

The park also features food stalls selling snacks and light meals, located near the pedestrian entrance. These stalls include small eateries and street vendors. In addition, some stalls provide mat rental services for visitors who wish to have a picnic. They also serve as temporary shelters during unfavorable weather conditions, such as rain. But due to the limited space available, overcrowding often occurs in these areas.



Figure 5. Supporting Facilities Condition
Top: Narrow Entrance for Pedestrian & Trash Bin
Down: Parking Area & Food Stalls
(Author, 2024)

4.2 VISITOR ACTIVITY PATTERN

Visitor engagement varies between weekdays and weekends, with peak activity observed on weekends. On weekends, the atmosphere in the park becomes significantly livelier and more dynamic. The number of visitors increases substantially, including families, children of various age groups, and teenagers gathering with their friends. The range of activities also expands, from utilizing free facilities such as the playground to engaging in paid attractions like coloring activities or inflatable castles. Additionally, many families use the park for picnics and to enjoy the snacks sold by vendors. The vibrant weekend ambiance establishes the park as a highly popular recreational destination for the local community.

In contrast, on weekdays, the park is relatively quieter, with fewer visitors compared to weekends. During these times, the park is primarily frequented by preschool-aged children and families who seek relaxation in the morning or late afternoon. Taman Sayang Barudak also functions as a space for various community activities, accommodating different groups, including parents and local community members. Parents primarily visit the park to supervise and accompany their children while they play. Meanwhile, other groups, such as teenagers and specific community organizations, utilize the park for a variety of activities. Young children are often seen playing in the designated playground area, whereas middle and high school students tend to gather in the park's rear section for picnics, relaxation, or socializing with friends.

While the park is primarily intended as a recreational space for children and families, it also frequently hosts events during major national and religious holidays in Indonesia, such as Independence Day celebrations on August 17 and Islamic festivities. Additionally, local government agencies, including subdistrict and municipal offices, as well as the police department, often organize official events in the park.

The majority of visitors to the park are families with children. The frequency of visits varies; some families visit multiple times each weekend, while most visitors come approximately once a month.



Figure 6. Visitor Activities
1st Row: Coloring and Playing Activities in Weekend
2nd Row: Coloring and Playing Activities in Weekday
3rd & 4th Row: The Park's Empty Atmosphere on Weekday
(source: Author, 2024)

The park supports developmental needs through activities like physical play on the playground and creative exercises such as coloring. However, the deteriorating state of the playground and limited options for older children and adolescents reduce the park's overall appeal and versatility. Weekday usage, primarily by preschool children and caregivers, highlights the park's potential for fostering quiet, focused engagement during off-peak hours. This variation underscores the need for adaptive programming and facility enhancement to cater to diverse user groups effectively.

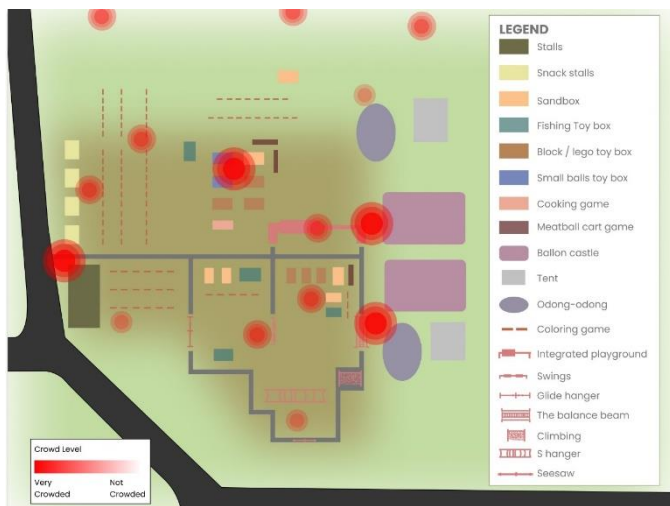


Figure 7. Crowd Level Mapping
(Author, 2024)

Based on the level of visitor density at Taman Sayang Barudak (see Figure 7), the most crowded areas are concentrated around the park entrance, the inflatable castle attraction, and *odong-odong* (mini train ride). The entrance experiences high congestion due to the presence of food stalls and its relatively narrow access, which can lead to crowding. Meanwhile, the inflatable castle and *odong-odong* are highly popular among children, making these areas consistently busy.



Figure 8. Odong-Odong (Mini Train Ride)
(Author, 2024)

High-density zones are also observed in sections where multiple play structures are clustered together. Areas with moderate visitor density are primarily found in the park's picnic area and around some free facilities. In contrast, the least crowded areas are generally located along the park's perimeter. This distribution of visitor activity suggests that children's most preferred attractions are play equipment, particularly those requiring payment, as well as areas where food and beverages are available.

5. CONCLUSION

This research reveals several issues in Taman Sayang Barudak that need to be addressed, but also highlights its potential to become a child-friendly space. The main concern is the poor condition of the playground facilities, which are damaged, rusty, and poorly maintained, posing a risk to the children. Additionally, there is a lack

of essential infrastructure such as seating, access paths, and shelters, hindering the park from meeting Child Friendly Play Space (RBRA) standards and providing a safe and comfortable experience for visitors.

The findings of the discussion can be summarized as follows:

Table 2. Research Findings

No	Variables	Parameters	Findings
1	Play Facilities	Physical Condition	Most of the playground facilities are still functional but in poorly maintained condition, posing a safety hazard to children. Most are in good condition, but there is a need for a place to be able to store the games to avoid bad weather and irresponsible people.
2	Visitor Activity	Children Playing Activities	There are games that can increase children's creativity such as coloring, blocks, and sand, showing that this park can also be a means of playing activities while learning for children.
		Other visitors' activities (parents, community)	Visitors who come besides children, are mostly parents who accompany their children. They supervise their children by sitting and relaxing in the green areas of the park, and often accompany their children while playing.

On the positive side, Taman Sayang Barudak has significant potential for development. Its strategic location in the Citra Raya area makes it easily accessible for children and families, acting as an activity centre. The park provides a pleasant environment for families to socialize and interact. Furthermore, it supports the concept of learning through play with facilities like colouring toys, sand, and blocks/lego, which not only appeal to children but also enhance their creativity, critical thinking, and social skills.

To optimize its potential, improvements and upgrades are necessary. The maintenance of play facilities should be conducted regularly to ensure safety and comfort. Infrastructure needs to be completed, including additional seating, toilets, and disability-friendly access paths. The park's management should be enhanced through better supervision, ensuring cleanliness, preventing damage to facilities, and ensuring visitor safety, especially at night. Taman Sayang Barudak has the potential to become a child-friendly space and a recreational centre that supports the well-being of children and families in the Citra Raya, Cikupa, and surrounding areas. It could serve as a space that offers both fun and education, as well as inclusive social interaction opportunities for people from all walks of life.

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