

Plan for Play in public spaces, 2030 horizon in Barcelona

The importance of a context-specific deployment in the poorer areas of the city.

In collaboration with



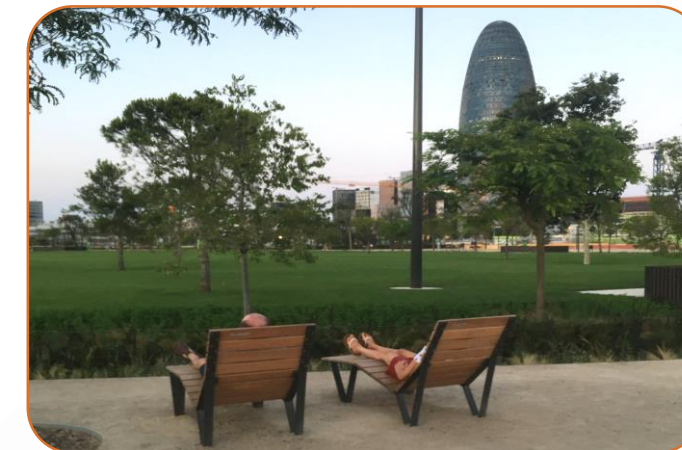
- 1- Why a Plan for Play in Public Spaces?**
- 2- Public play spaces from a fresh perspective**
- 3- Core ideas and actions in the Plan for Play**
- 4- A plan for the whole city**
- 5- A look at poorer areas child's indicators**
- 6- The need of context-based actions**
- 7- Public play spaces 2030: what is our vision?**

1. WHY A PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES?

4 REASONS

*“There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children.”
(Nelson Mandela)*

4 REASONS



1

Because it is a right

Because children and
adolescents have a **RIGHT TO
PLAY and LEISURE TIME**

*A Plan to foster child and
adolescent development*



**LET'S MAKE THE CITY MORE
CHILD FRIENDLY**

2

Because it has benefits

Because play and physical
activity are beneficial for
PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

*Plan to improve the overall
health and well-being of all
citizens*



**LET'S MAKE THIS A HEALTHIER
CITY**

3

Because it enriches
community life

Because **COMMUNITY LIFE** is
enriched by play, and public space
becomes an inclusive place, a
place for social gatherings

*A Plan to reclaim the streets
with more inclusive
community life*



**LET'S MAKE THE CITY MORE
INCLUSIVE, FULL OF STREET LIFE**

4

Because of improvements to
public space

Because improving play areas is
an opportunity to **GREEN, CALM
and MAKE** public spaces **SAFER**

*A Plan to transform everyday
urban settings*



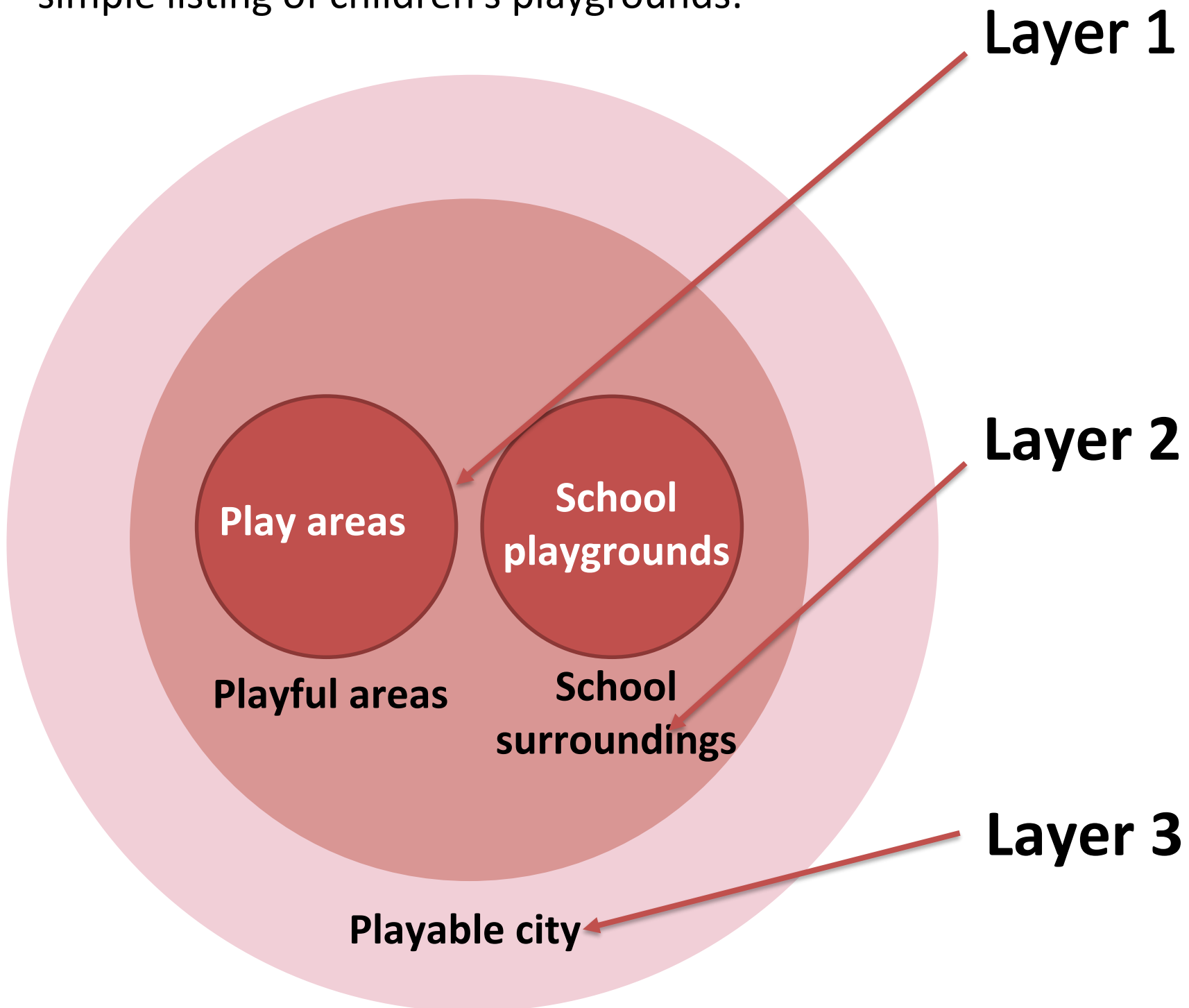
**LET'S MAKE THE CITY MORE
SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT**

2. PUBLIC PLAY SPACES FROM A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

*“We don’t stop playing because we grow old, we grow old because we stop playing”
(George Bernard Shaw, Nobel Prize for Literature)*

3 LAYERS FOR A PLAYABLE CITY

The Plan offers a new concept of playful infrastructure and analyses for the first time everything the city offers in terms of play spaces and activity in the open air by going beyond the simple listing of children's playgrounds:



Other urban spaces (traffic-calmed areas, free-access skateparks, etc....), natural areas and pedestrian routes (walk to school) with opportunities for spontaneous play

7 CRITERIA FOR A PLAYABLE AND PLAYED-IN CITY

- 1 Multiple proposals for challenging and creative games that aid a child and adolescent's healthy development.
- 2 Diverse, stimulating, versatile, connected and accessible physical space.
- 3 Inclusive playgrounds for people of different ages, genders, backgrounds and abilities.
- 4 Contact with nature, greenery and play with natural elements such as sand and water.
- 5 Shared, intergenerational and collaborative play.
- 6 Place for meeting and community life.
- 7 Playful ecosystems and safe, playable environment.

3. CORE IDEAS AND ACTIONS IN THE PLAN FOR PLAY

*“Mr Mayor, we don’t want swings or slides, we want the city”
(An illustrated child by Frato - Francesco Tonucci)*

PLAN FOR PLAY IN PUBLIC SPACES

3 strategic
lines

- Line 1.** More and better play spaces in the urban environment.
- Line 2.** Stimulating playful and physical activity outdoors.
- Line 3.** A drive to bring about a paradigm shift

63 actions

- 1** Removal of signs saying “Ballgames prohibited”.
- 2** **Sundays on the streets:** a high street in each district closed to traffic.
- 3** **‘Let’s play in our squares’:** playful proposals promoting the habit of meeting in public places.
- 4** **Give priority to play in squares** and streets on Saturdays for kids and youth clubs.
- 5** **Transformation of school playgrounds**
- 6** **Micro-interventions around schools** to turn them into meeting places
- 7** **More games with water and sand**
- 8** **Create new urban sports parks** and original play spaces.
- 9** **Open cafe-bars in playful areas** with toilets and a game-lending service.
- 10** **Create more functionally diverse games for kids.**

10 lead
projects



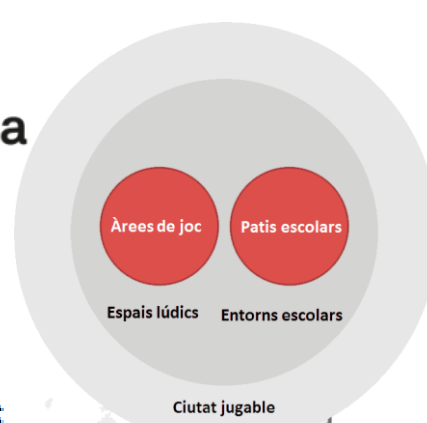
4. A PLAN FOR THE WHOLE CITY

Diagnosis of its playful infrastructure

*“Children playing in the street is a good indicator of the quality of community life”
(Jan Gehl, urban planner)*

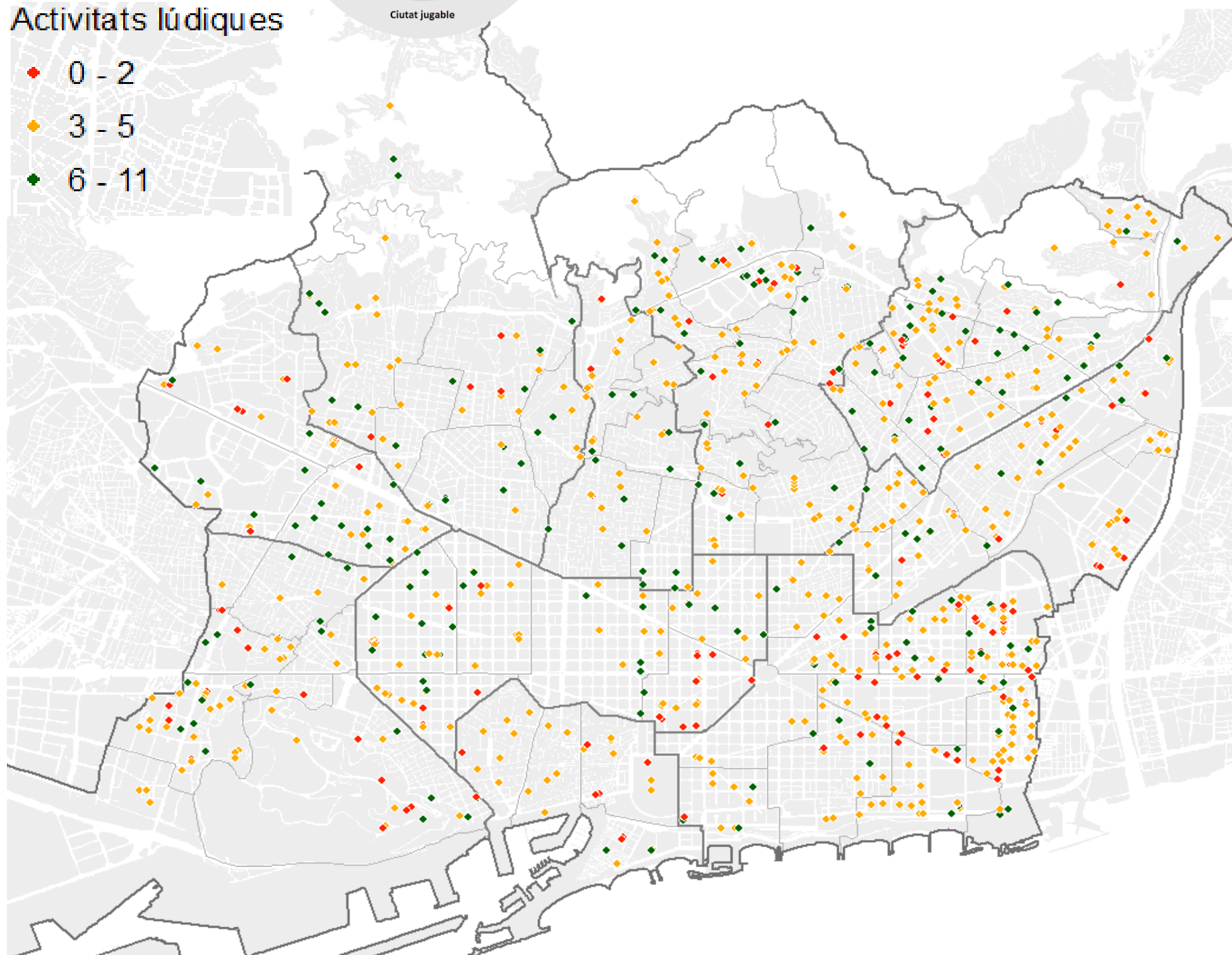
LAYER 1:

The main problem is neither a lack of play areas nor their unequal distribution throughout the city but rather their lack of quality



Activitats lúdiques

- 0 - 2
- 3 - 5
- 6 - 11



- Only 2 of every 10 play areas offer 6 or more activity options.
- There is no global citywide planning nor standards of minimum quality.
- Play areas are all very similar and standardized, with designs that prioritize safety, maintenance, and adults' peace-of-mind, rather than the interests of the children of different ages and functional capacities that play there.

The current situation - little variety



Almost half (47%) of the city's children, regardless of their socio-economic level, are not satisfied with the play spaces and other playful areas in their districts.

Survey into Children's Subjective Welfare in Barcelona. Barcelona City Council and Barcelona Institute of Childhood and Adolescence (EBSIB 2017).

The current situation – small play areas



51% of the city's play areas are classified as 'small' as they are less than 150 m² in size.

The future situation – a variety of creative, collective and challenging games.

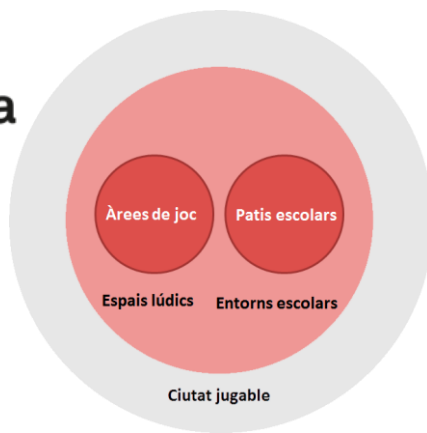


Glòries Park

The future situation – natural play areas that are better integrated into public spaces

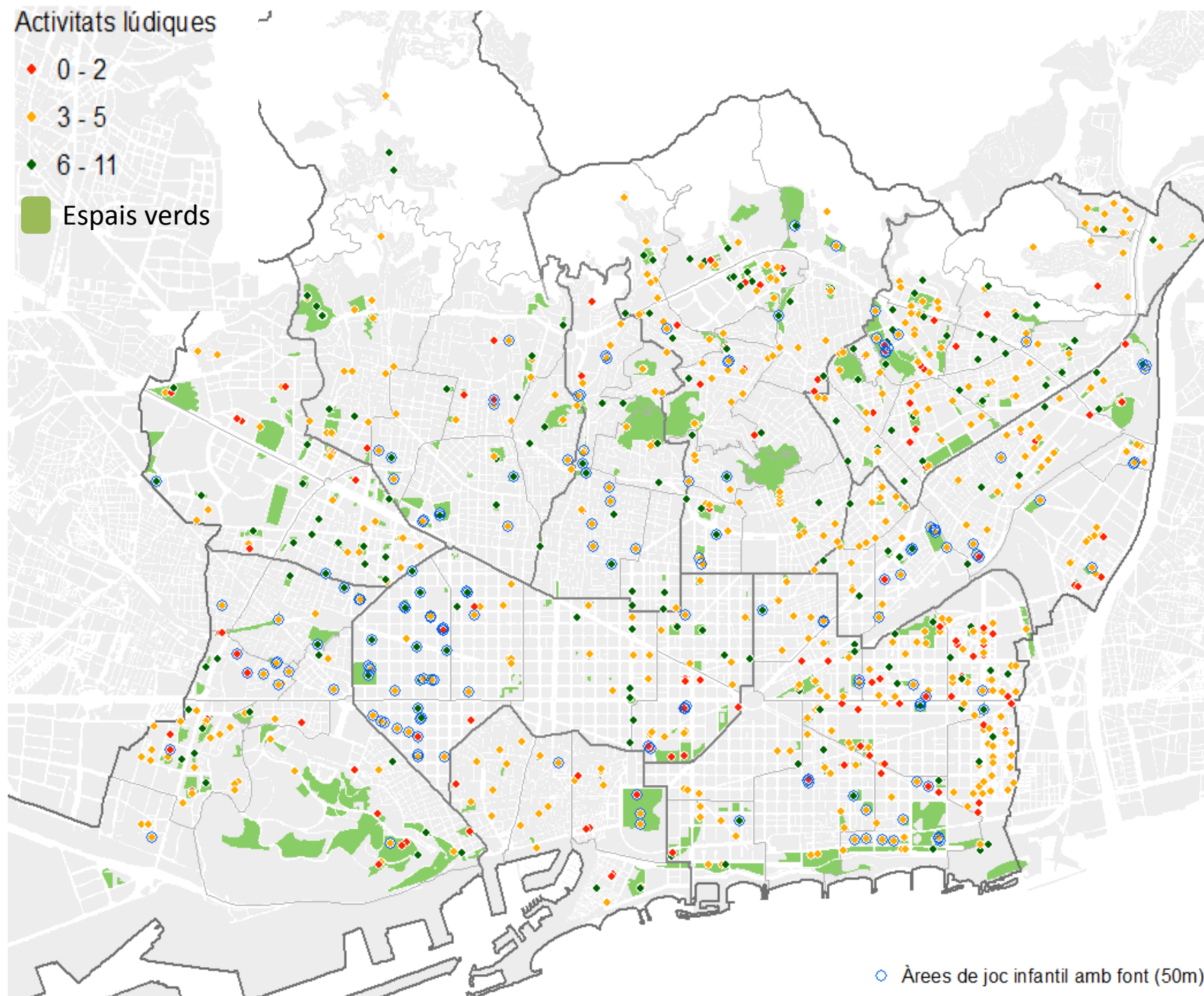


Pegaso Park

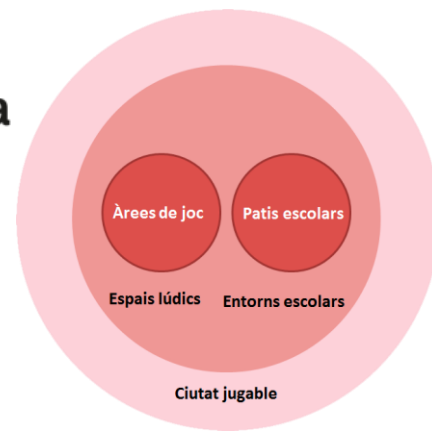


Layer 2:

The potential of green areas to act as playful spaces for all and motors of community life is not taken advantage of.



- The city's green spaces bring children closer to nature (this is especially important for children living in built-up areas).
- The vegetation in green spaces is not designed for children to interact with it.
- Only 18% of play areas have drinking water nearby.
- Only 9% of green spaces have picnic tables.



Layer 3

In the city there are spaces that should form part of its playful infrastructure and be regarded as 'playable areas' for all.



Skateparks



School surroundings



Urban sports facilities



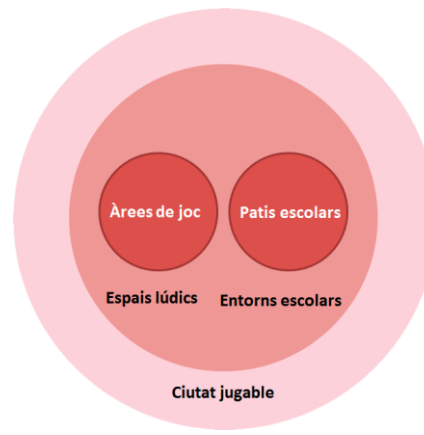
Pedestrian precincts



Free-access sports facilities



Traffic-calmed areas



The Plan for Play in Public Spaces targets the whole city because the main deficits in its playful infrastructures are common to all districts.

Activitats lúdiques

• 0 - 2

• 3 - 5

• 6 - 11

Menys densitat

Més densitat

IRFD 2017

Molt baixa

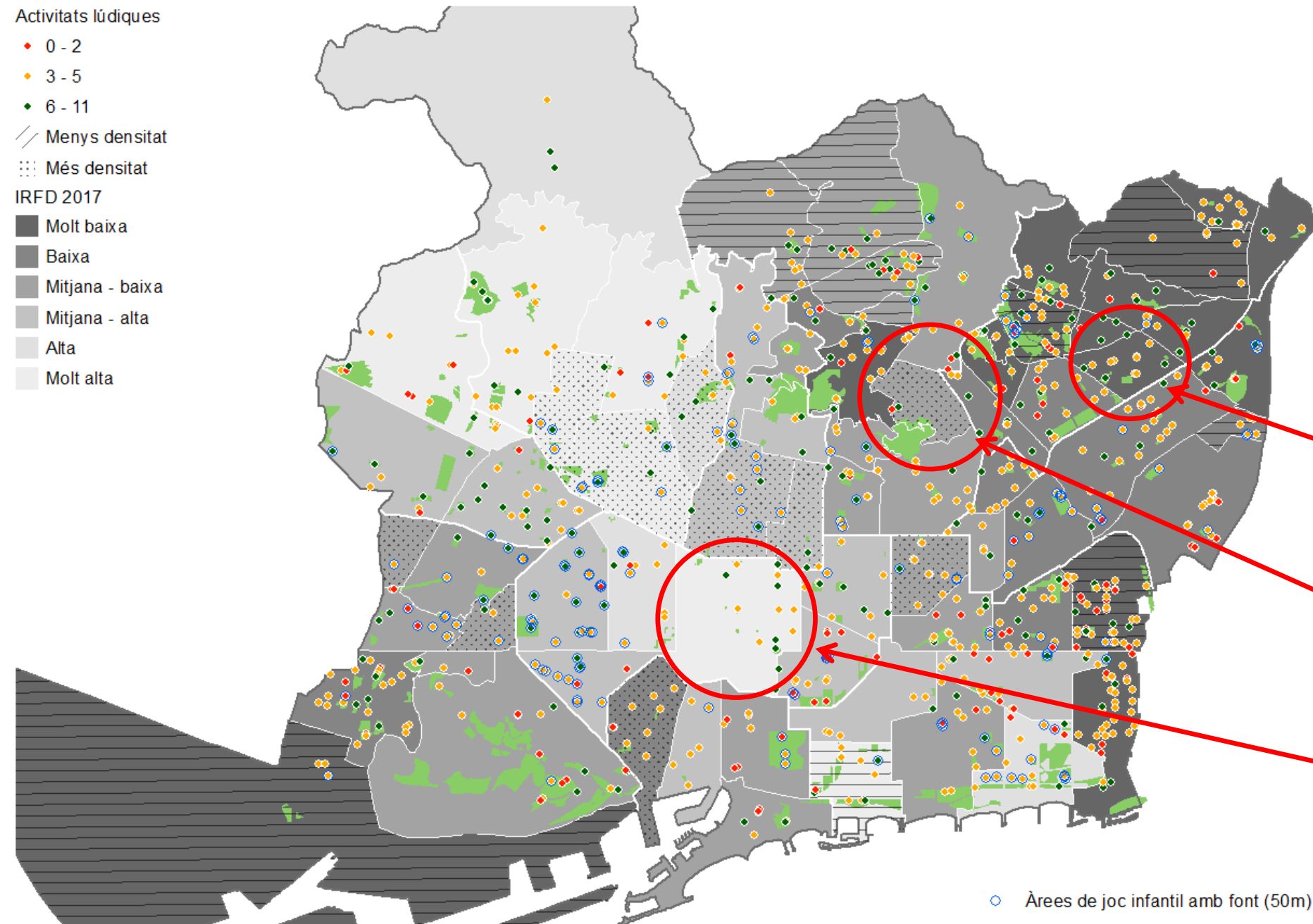
Baixa

Mitjana - baixa

Mitjana - alta

Alta

Molt alta



➤ The deficit in play areas that possess a variety of play options, the lack of green spaces and playful infrastructure designed to foster community life, and the high density of resident children is common to all of the city's districts, poor and rich alike.

Prosperitat: Low income; poorly diverse play areas: lack of green areas and drinking water.

Font d'en Fargas: Middle income; large number of children but few play areas and with little variety; lack of green areas and no drinking water.

Dreta de l'Eixample: High income; low-quality play areas, lack of green areas and drinking water.

○ Àrees de joc infantil amb font (50m)

5. A LOOK AT POORER AREAS CHILD'S INDICATORS

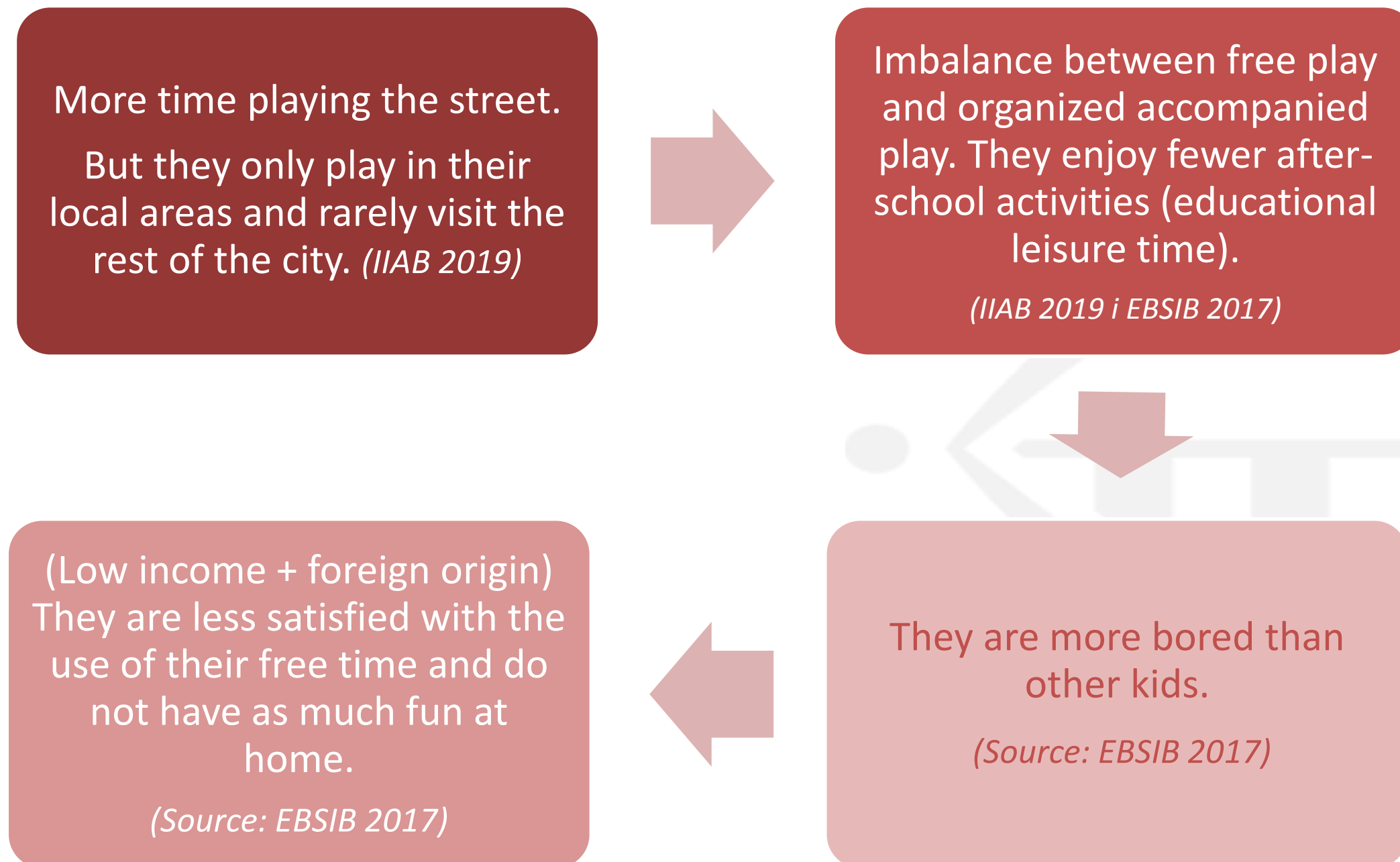
In Barcelona there are serious inequalities between children: 3 key figures:

29.5% of the city's children live in a situation of moderate poverty; 8.5% live in severe poverty.

In 2 of the city's districts, 4 of every 10 children are unable to go on holiday "at least once a year" (i.e. they rarely leave the city).

62% of children and teenagers live in districts with low family incomes (low-incomes are associated with other specific needs).

1) Children in less well-off districts spend more time playing in the street but are less satisfied with the way they use their time (less educational time, more boredom and less quality family time)



Source: Ethnographic study. playful and inter-personal dynamics in poorer districts of the City of Barcelona. IIAB 2019

Source: Survey into Children's Subjective Welfare in Barcelona. Barcelona City Council and Barcelona Institute of Childhood and Adolescence (EBSIB 2017).

2) Adolescents in poorer districts are less healthy and there are serious gender-based differences (differences between children are much less marked)

Awareness of their state of health as either 'reasonable' or 'poor', above all in girls

- 14% of girls in low-income districts, almost double the figure for girls in high-income districts (8%).
- Boys have a more positive health-awareness: only 6% feel their health is only 'reasonable' or 'poor' (irrespective of the district they live in).

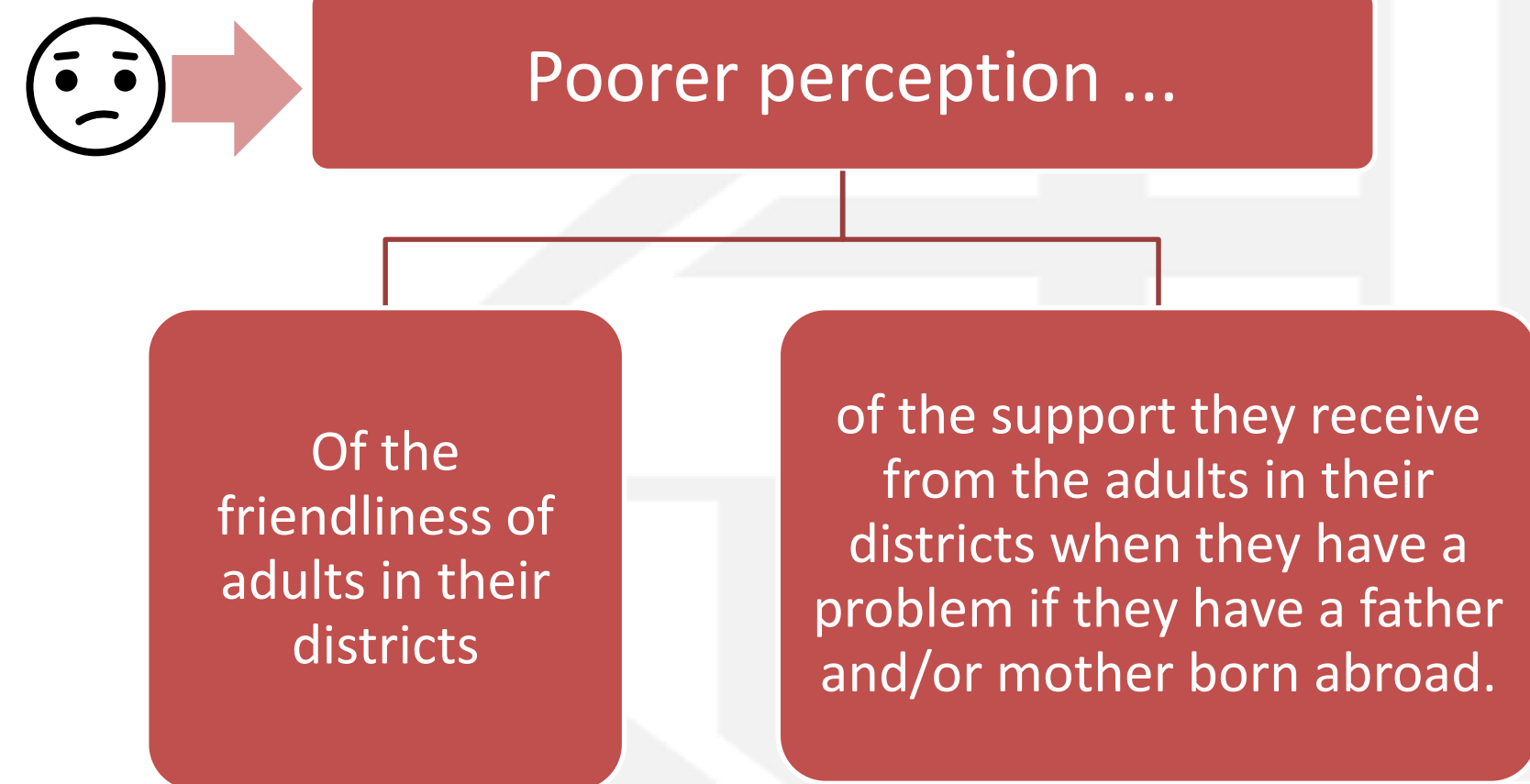
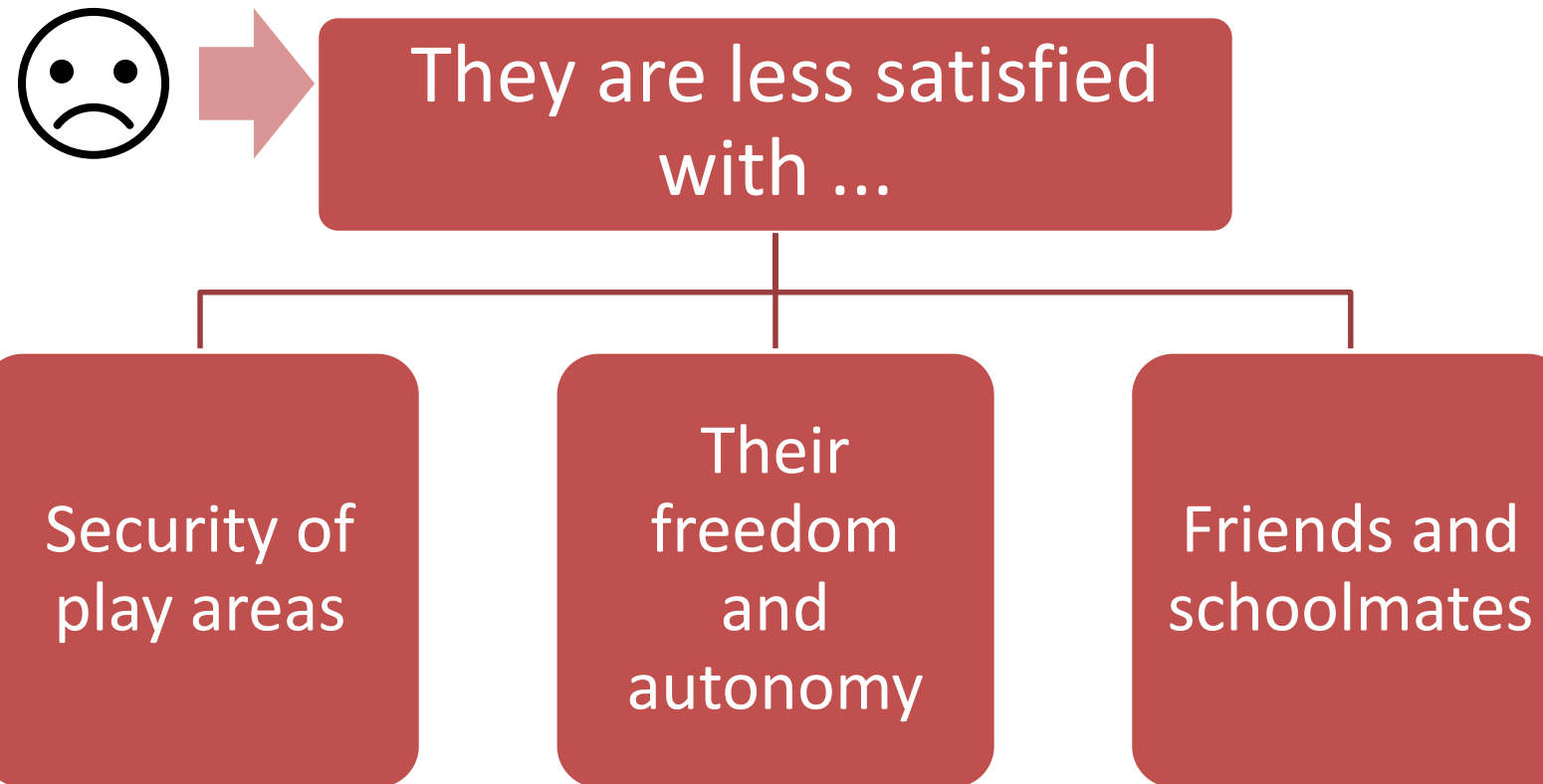
Physical inactivity, most noticeable in adolescent girls

- 18% of girls from low-income families and 15% girls from high-income families are physically inactive.
- The situation is less serious amongst boys: 9% in low-income families and 7% in high-income families are physically inactive.

More time spent watching TV and more sedentary lifestyles

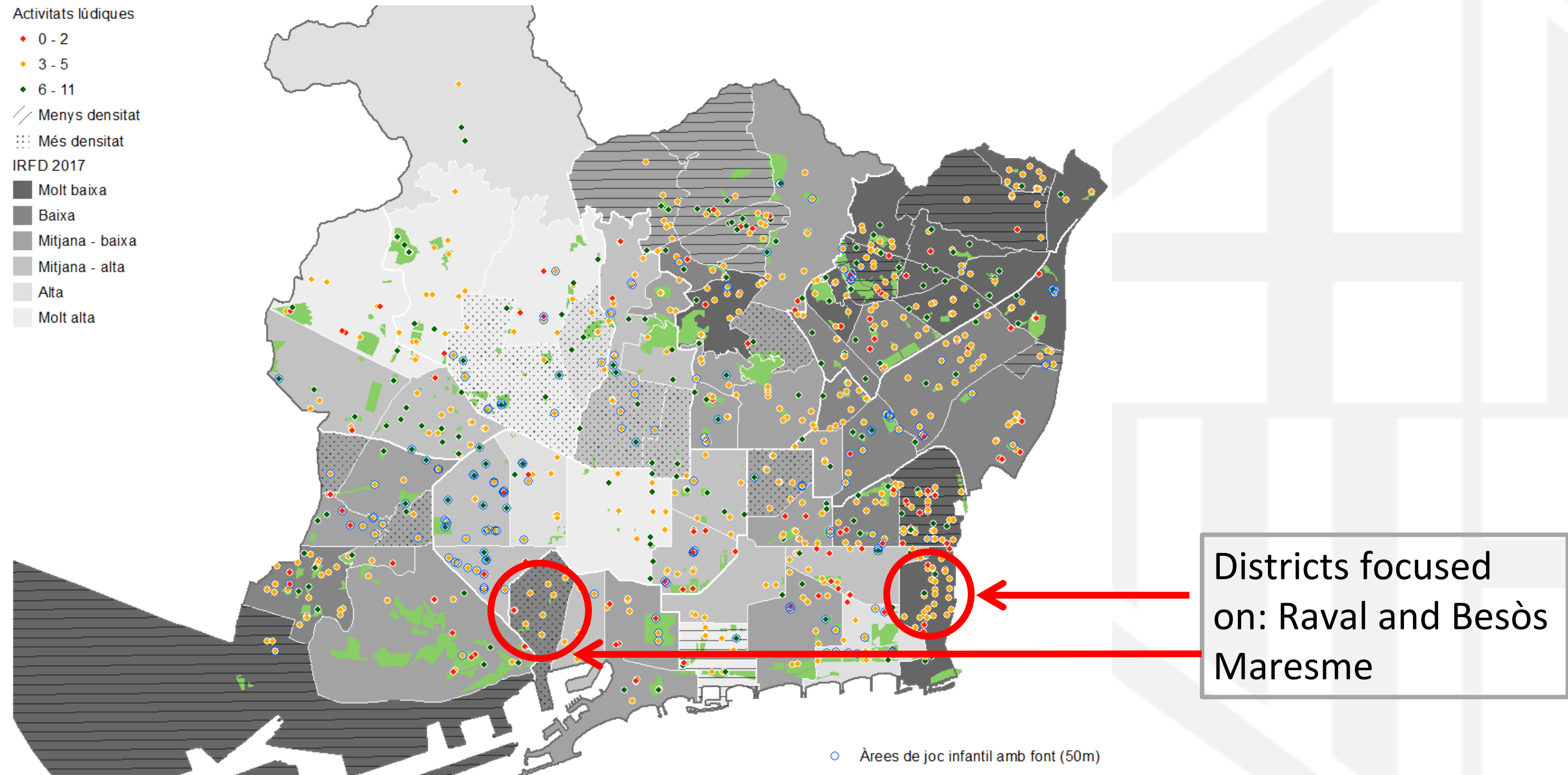
- 12% of adolescent boys and girls in low-income districts watch TV for 2 or more hours in their free time on school days.
- In high-income districts, the corresponding figure is only 5%.
- 10–12-year-old children in low-income districts who are deprived of certain material possessions spend more time watching TV. (EBSIB 2017)

3) Children in the poorest districts have worse socialization and community-life indicators



How should we identify priority districts when planning what actions are to be taken?

Analysing the three 'playability' layers + income inequalities + health indicators + daily life in the district



Map: Distribution of play areas according to the number playful activities and green areas, as well as drinking water, near the play area, highlighting the 10 city districts with the least and most number of children/m² of play areas, and different income levels (2018).

6. THE NEED OF CONTEXT- BASED ACTIONS

OBSERVATION OF THE PLAYFUL AND INTER-PERSONAL DYNAMICS IN TWO POOR

**Similar social
context**

Poverty, unemployment,
difficulties in finding housing,
insecurity in public areas,
fewer educational
opportunities (children do
fewer after-school activities)



**Similar
physical
conditions of
play areas**

Space available for play,
diversity of options for
games in the studied play
areas



**The dynamics in
the games and
inter-personal
relationships are
different.**



Besòs Maresme



Individual and more conflictive games
Gender-segrated play
Perception of insecurity
Spatial and temporal separation in play
Different children playing every day
Mistrust of adults present in play areas
Perception by local people of play areas as unsafe and uncared for
Presence of adults who only watch



Raval



Collective, more cooperative play
Intercultural and intergenerational play
Perception that play spaces are safe
Co-existence in the play area
Same playmates every day
Adults look out for all children in the play area
Perception of play areas as safe and well looked after
Play areas also act as places for adults to socialize

- More socialization, communication capacity, empathy and respect
- The ability to reach agreements and find collective solutions
- Learn from older people, a motivation to accept challenges and put motor skills to the test

All this contributes to the overall development of children and adolescents

What is the origin of these differences?





Factors that explain the differences:

- Greater presence and participation by local council-backed social entities.
- More ongoing projects designed to stimulate socio-communitary interaction.
- Participatory processes to design play areas.
- More regular use of play areas by families, schools, etc.

Community dynamics stimulate positive play
and positive play favours more community life.

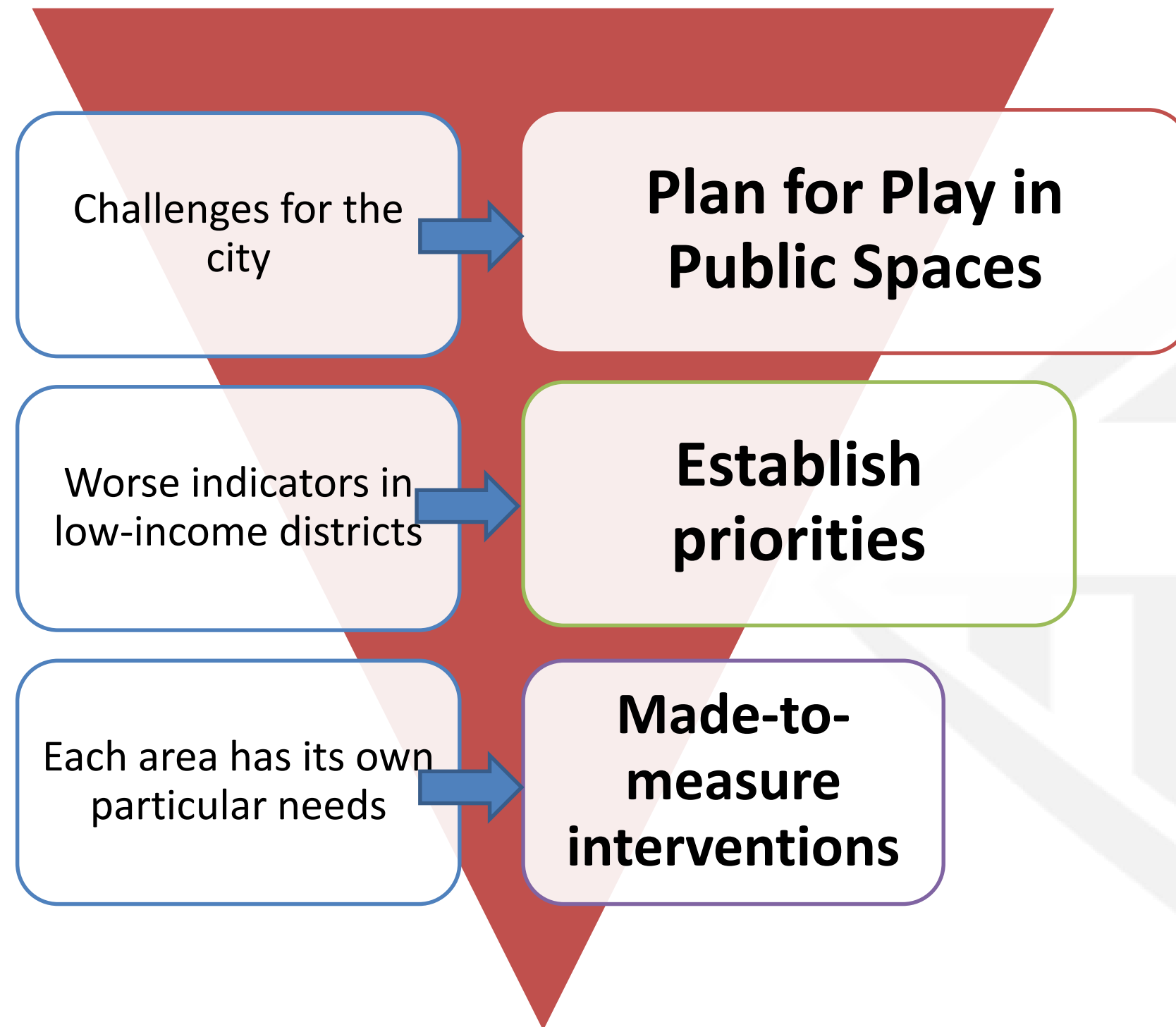
To offer more and better play possibilities it is not enough simply to build more play areas. We also need to act at a social level by identifying accurately the realities and needs of each area.

Context-based interventions are required



BESÒS-MARESME	RAVAL
A) FIRST CHALLENGE: improve interaction between peers through play.	A) FIRST CHALLENGE: Improve access to play areas that favour cognitive learning through play. Children in El Raval do less well at school and participate less in after-school activities.
B) DRIVING FORCE: Let's play in the square!	B) DRIVING FORCE: Let's play in the square!
C) ACTIVITIES: playful programs designed to promote joint play, popular street games, team games, games with monitors in public spaces linked to schools and other educational centres.	C) ACTIVITIES: promotion of table games that stimulate the acquisition of linguistic, mathematical and social skills.

To conclude ...



7. PUBLIC PLAY SPACES 2030: WHAT IS OUR VISION?

“Play is the highest form of research” (Albert Einstein)

HORIZON 2030: A PLAY-FRIENDLY BARCELONA IN 6 VISIONS

1

A city where children enjoy their **right to play and leisure time** and everyone rediscovers the joy of playing in public spaces.

2

A city that promotes **health, all-round development** and well-being through outdoor play and physical activity.

3

A city that offers and **integrates more and better opportunities for play**.

4

A city with **greened, safe and traffic-calmed settings** that allow people to play on the streets.

5

A city that **stimulates inclusive play** taking into account the diversity of ages, genders, backgrounds and functional abilities.

6

A city that **enriches community life and the mix of people** and uses around play.



Many thanks ☺



Pla del joc a l'espai públic

For more information

- [Full document](#) *Plan for Play in Public Spaces (City Council website)*
- [Summary of Plan](#) (Institute's website)
- [Article. A playable city and a city people play in: a diagnosis of play opportunities in public spaces in Barcelona](#) (Institute's website)