



# The Therapeutic Play Areas

Red Cross War Memorial  
Children's Hospital  
Progress Update

September 2022





# In a world of imagination, children are the most powerful creators.

Suddenly a cardboard box is a magical vehicle for extraordinary adventures; a makeshift tent of blankets and chairs becomes a cave with a sleeping bear inside. For many of the little patients at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital, all they dream of is being healthy and happy again, to be with their families and to play with their friends. Based on global statistics, half of the world's 2 billion children have been victims of at least one or more types of serious traumatic experiences. The Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital sees over 250 000 patients each year with various high-risk and specialised medical conditions. Medical professionals who perform life-saving interventions on patients recognise the need for Therapeutic Play as it plays a crucial role in the journey of healing and rehabilitating patients back into their normal lives



**Every little one counts**

# Our aim

To provide rich, inclusive indoor and outdoor play spaces that cater for **children of all ages and abilities**, including outpatients, their caregivers and other family (siblings etc.) members, as well as inpatients who are well enough to leave the ward with supervision.

Each area is designed to stimulate the physical, sensory and social experiences **crucial for a child's development.**



## **Budget:**

**R12.6 million**

## **Funds Raised:**

**R11 502 695**

## **Project Completion Date:**

**31 January 2023**

## **4 Therapeutic Play Areas:**

- **Main Therapeutic Play Area**
- **Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
Therapeutic Play Area (DCAP)**
- **Occupational Therapy and Neuro Development Play Area**
- **Outpatients Play Area**





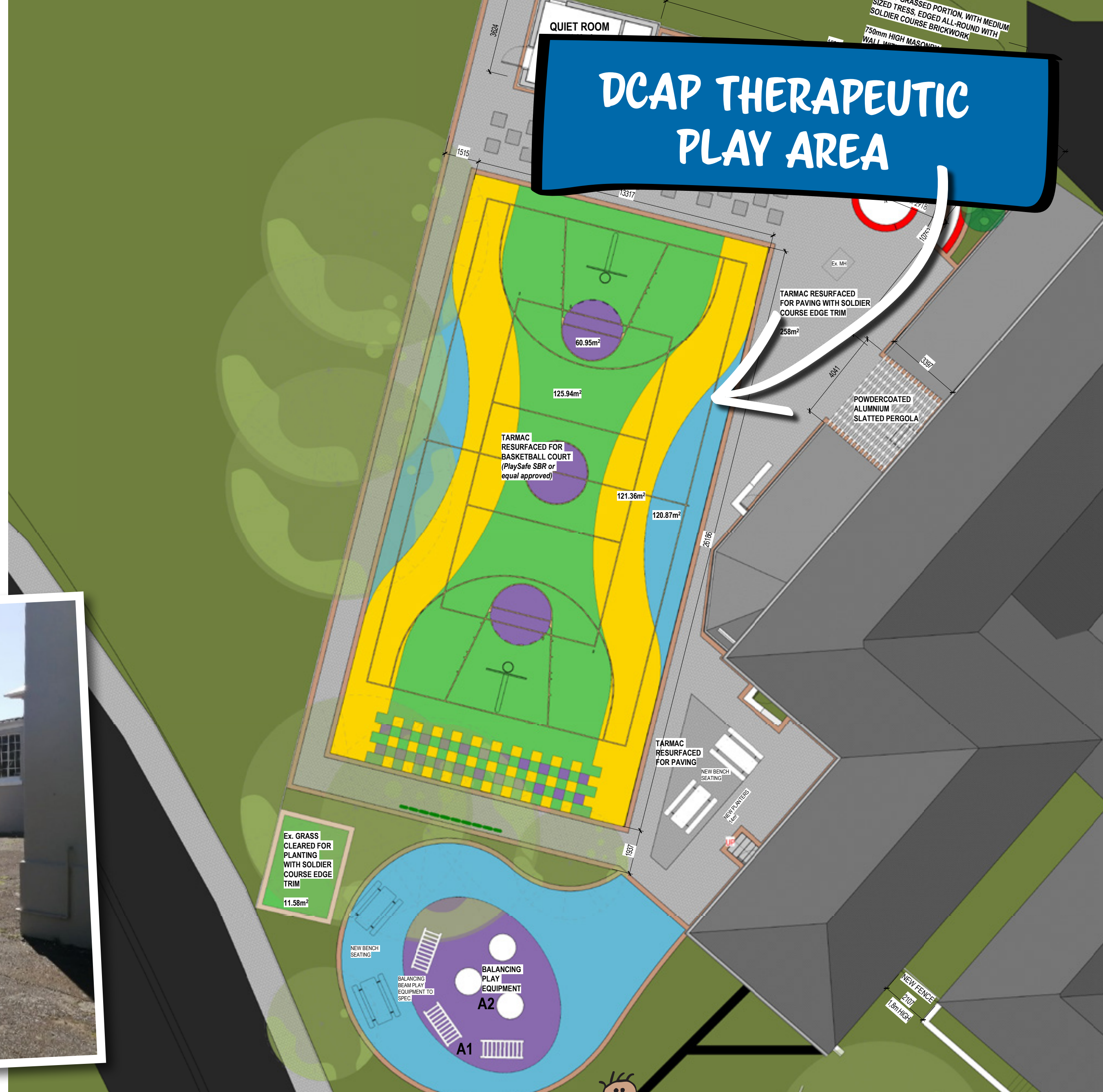
The first phase of this area has been completed. It consisted of the civils work with the preparation of the play area base with reinforcement and the allowance for drainage and planters.

Trees and plants have been planted already.

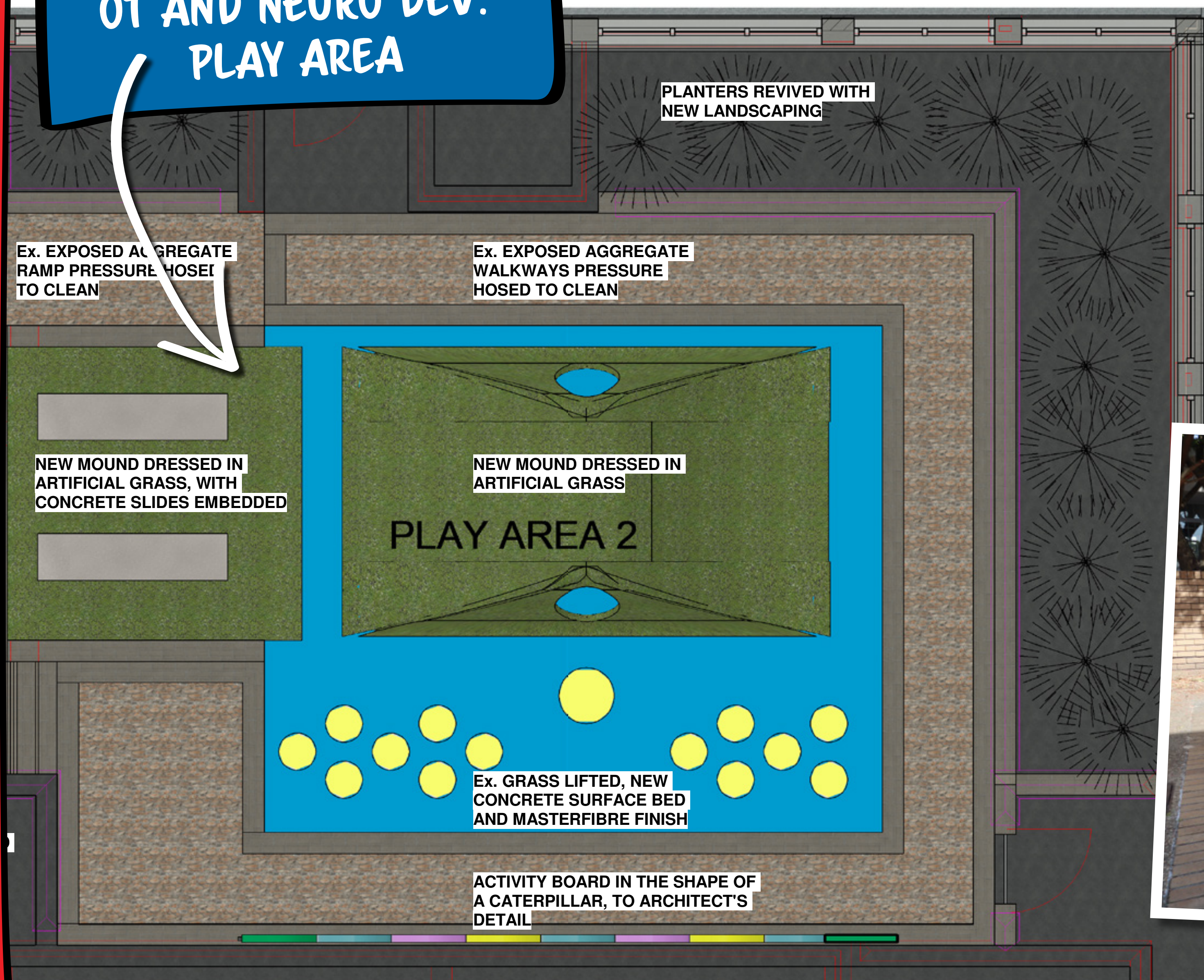


A plan is in place to ensure patients can still utilize some of the play area until the flooring needs to be installed. A section of the external area will be closed off and will be accessible for the patients while building is in process.

This new therapeutic space will allow for both quiet and active areas to meet the needs of the patients. A toilet and quiet internal area will be provided in the small, existing stand-alone building. This will allow the DCAP staff to easily monitor the patients without having to go into the main building. Additional landscaping will provide a welcoming external space and seating near the entrance to the therapeutic play area and will provide a space for external therapy sessions in the fresh air.



OT AND NEURO DEV.  
PLAY AREA



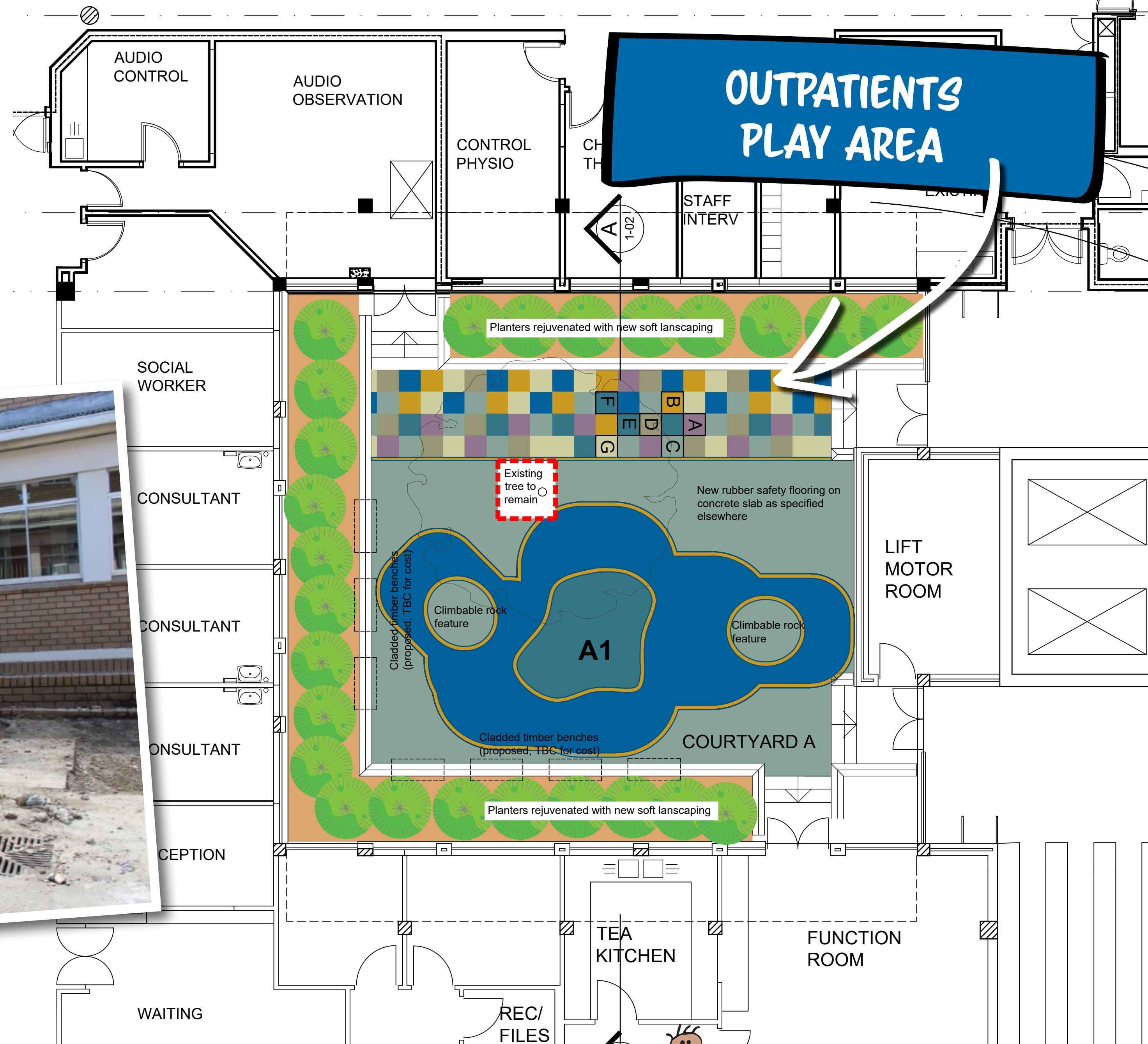
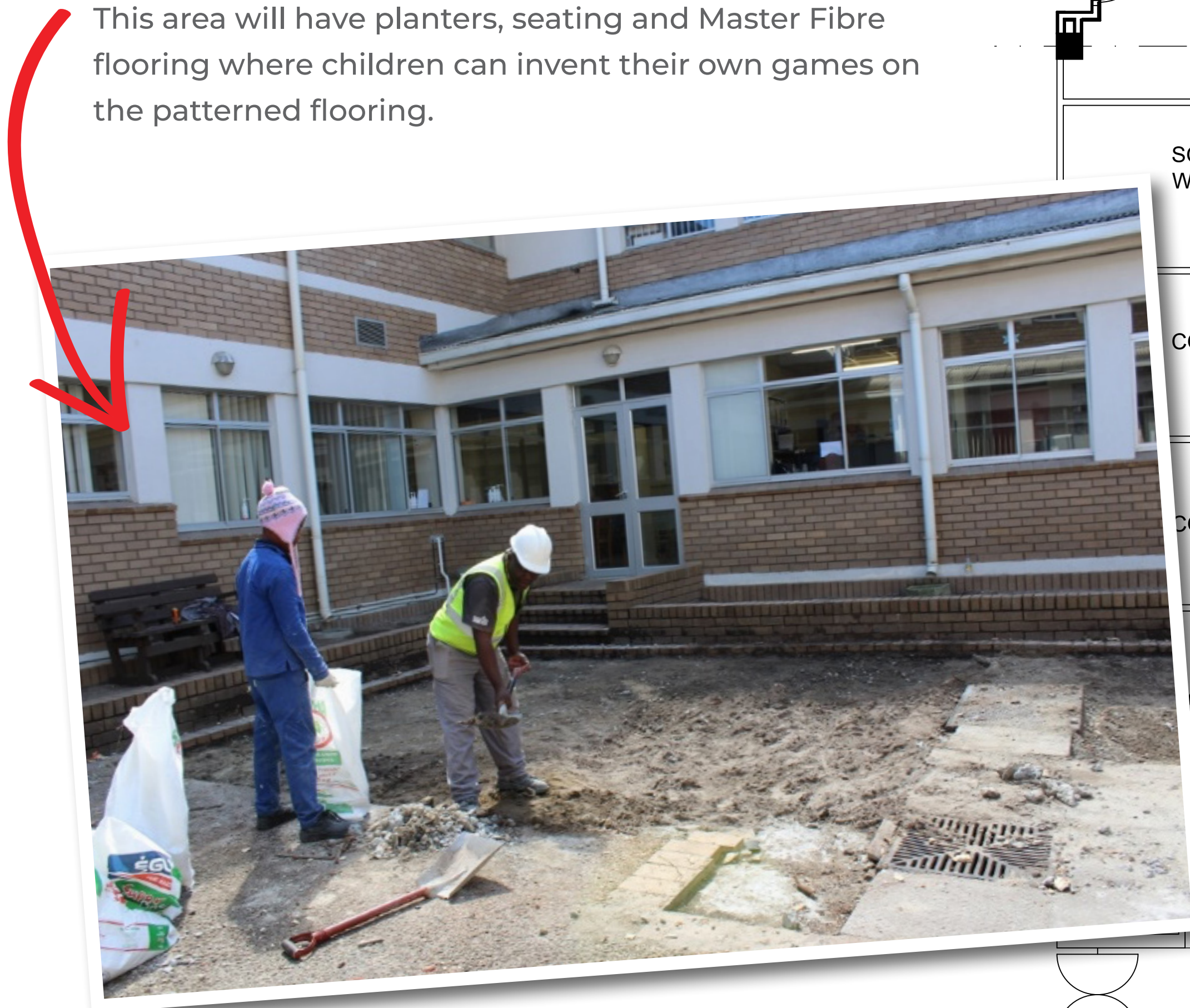
This area is used by Occupational Therapy and Neuro Developmental Clinic patients while they wait for their check ups. Currently this area is very run down but with the new play equipment and mounds, this space will provide a more active and fun filled play area.

The flooring to be provided in this area will be a mixture of Master Fibre and artificial grass.



In the S1 courtyard adjacent to the outpatient waiting area, there will be a space where the parents can sit and watch their children run around in safety, until they go for their appointments.

This area will have planters, seating and Master Fibre flooring where children can invent their own games on the patterned flooring.





# How your support will make a difference to children and their families visiting the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital.

**250 000** patient visits to the hospital every year

Annually, the RCWMCH Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy Departments see approximately:

**10 000** patients visiting the Physiotherapy Department

**9000** patients visiting the Occupational Therapy Department



Every little one counts

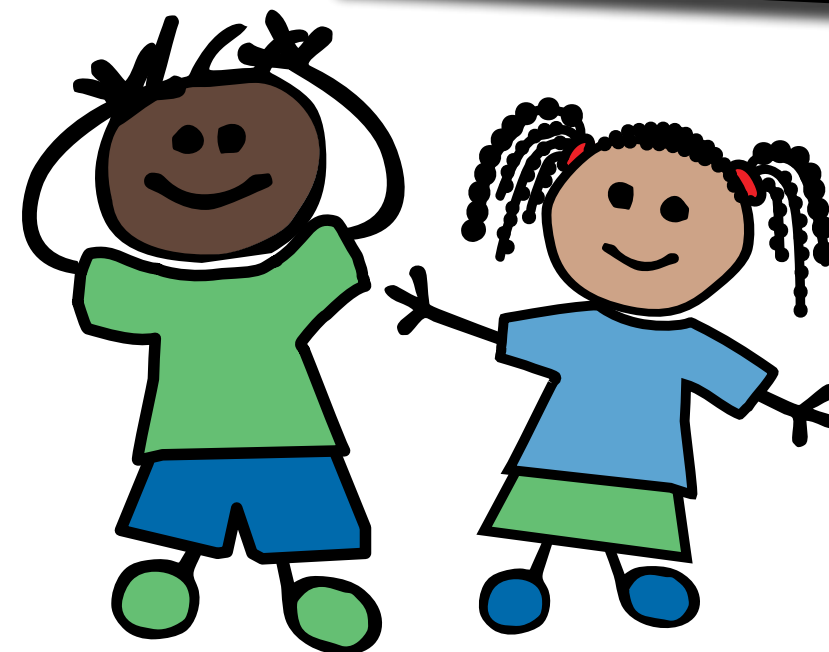
# Siya plays his way to healing

When she named him Siyabongakonke she was unaware of the depth that name would carry. Siyabongakonke means “we are grateful for everything”. And this very same gratitude fills Langa mom, Nomsa, as she thinks of her son’s healing journey. Over a month ago, Siya complained of leg and body pains. He lost his mobility, and he had this lax appearance. Nomsa’s six-year-old son was rushed to the Vanguard Day Hospital, where he was transferred to Somerset Hospital and later Red Cross War Memorial Children’s Hospital.

At Red Cross, he was immediately taken to ICU, dependant on a machine and unable to breathe or move independently.

Nomsa sheds tears of joy and gratitude as she looks at her son, now in a wheelchair showing significant mobility in his upper body. In the little wheelchair, Siya can move himself around because his arms have gotten stronger.

“God is good,” she says as she wipes the tears streaming down her face. She brightens as she watches Siya blow bubbles to physiotherapist, Eleonora Lozano.



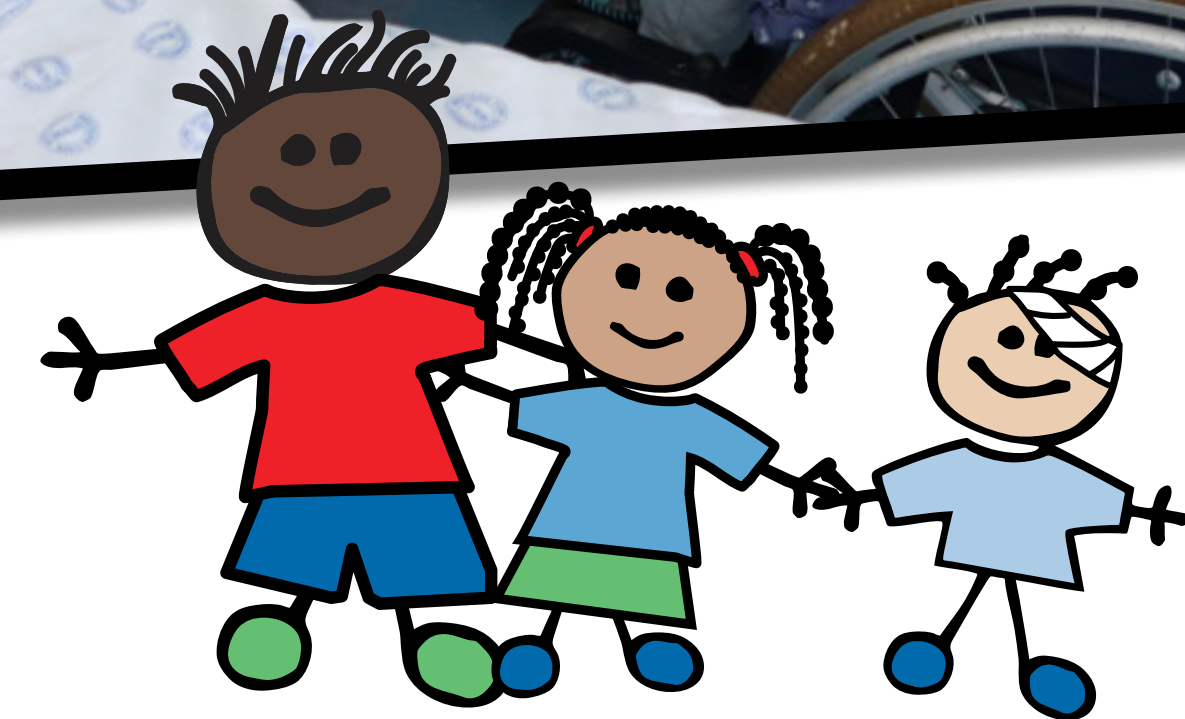
Since moving from ICU to the Breath Easy Ward E2, Siya has received holistic medical treatment, including physiotherapy.

“He loves it when the physiotherapist comes in. He just lights up. I think he gets excited about playing. I also am encouraged when I watch him do his physio exercises. At some point, I didn’t think I would ever see my child catch or throw a ball. I never thought he could speak again, but now, I am hopeful. Hopeful that eventually, he will be able to walk again,” Nomsa says.

Eleanor, the physiotherapist, walks into the ward armed with balls, stuffed dolls and even a water bubble toy daily. Children develop critical physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills through therapeutic play. They heal through play.

For Siya catching the bubble and throwing the beach ball helps in his healing journey. Therapeutic play benefits about 10 000 physiotherapy patients and 9 000 occupational therapy patients at the Red Cross Children’s Hospital. These little patients could benefit even more from the safe and stimulating new multi-purpose Therapeutic Play areas at the Hospital, where they can go outside and do what little ones do best. Ideally, Siya could be working on a mat, but Eleanor and other physiotherapists must work in the wards due to the ward not having a dedicated gym. The Playground Project will help little ones like Siya and his mother to continue their treatments and exercises in multi-purpose Therapeutic Play Areas during their free time.

On Siya’s development, Eleonora says: “He loves cars and playing with his mom. We would also like to start getting him to stand and learn how to walk again, all that would be improved with the new space and his mom would be able to take the lessons and play with him in a safe and purposeful playground area.”



**Every little one counts**

**Thank you for  
helping children  
heal through  
play as every  
little one does  
count.**

