

TimeOut
New York

Kids

Think outside the sandbox

Architect and designer David Rockwell, known for creating immersive environments for adults (L.A.'s Kodak Theatre, the Nobu restaurants), is debuting his first complex for kids—the \$4.5 million Imagination Playground in the Financial District.

The Tribeca dad of two (son Sam is 10 and daughter Lola, 8) tapped the European tradition of adventure playgrounds, in which creative fun is prioritized over the exercise of gross-motor skills. The space's perimeter is an infinity-symbol-shaped wooden runway, and the area within is dominated by loose parts—wheelbarrows, buckets, rope and white sheets,



plus a load of foamy blue shapes manufactured by Rockwell's design team. There's also plenty of sand and water.

Although Parks Department-trained "play associates" will be on hand, things are bound to get messy—which is a good thing. Rockwell says: "There's that control-freak moment, when you think, Oh god—the kid is going to get his socks wet. But then you let go." —Tom Roston

At press time, the Imagination Playground was set to open July 27. Burling Slip, John St between Front and South Sts (imaginationplayground.org).

©2010 DAVID ROCKWELL GROUP

On the Web timeoutkids.com

Imagination Playground

See images of the South Street Seaport's new outdoor play space.