

Sharon Exley MAAE President

Principal

Sharon Exley makes “play” an art. Under Sharon's direction, Architecture Is Fun has become one of the most respected specialty practices focusing on architecture for children. Elevating learning and play environments to sophisticated design, she has successfully executed award-winning projects that include museums, playgrounds, outdoor learning environments, children's ministries, healthcare facilities, experiential and exploratory environments for children, their caregivers, and their communities.

Sharon understands what makes “play” work. Directing the interior design process, Sharon envisions and brands meaningful purposeful environments, holistically sensitive to children, clients and project type needs, while infusing them with texture, color, light and an identity of place and purpose. She uniquely melds her roles as educator, designer, author, and parent to bring experience to the educational content, planning, programming, design and implementation of spaces for children of all ages.

It is all about trust and making kids and clients know they count. Sharon's leadership, creativity, and educational focus inform the participatory process of design that is the hallmark of Architecture Is Fun and its success. Sharon has developed the firm's core philosophy of educative design: design is educated through interactions with the child, the client, and the community and in turn, design educates through the articulation of space for interaction, experience, and self-discovery. It is this filter of collaboration and inclusiveness that ultimately creates “places” of participation, play and learning, which are indispensable for everyone's growth.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Fine Arts
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Masters of Arts in Arts Education,
Museum Emphasis
School of the Art Institute of Chicago

PROFESSIONAL AND COMMUNITY AFFILIATIONS

Member, Association of Children's
Museums
Board Member, Archi-Treasures
Community-Building Non-Profit
Co-Host Pecha Kucha Night Chicago

Educative Design™ Workshops
Building Architectural Meaning, MCA
Mies in America: Cozy Homes, MCA
Space Travel in Literature and Media, AIC

AUTHOR

Design For Kids
Images Publishing Group

The Best of Everything For Your Baby
Prentice Hall



**“All you need
is trust and a little
bit of pixie dust!”**

Peter Pan,
by J. M. Barrie