

Getting off to the right start—four important areas of consideration when planning to build an inclusive and accessible playground.



Provide sensory feedback.

Tactile, visual and audio stimulation helps the hearing and visually impaired.

- Locate chimes or bells throughout the playground to help those with visual impairments know where they are.
- Distinguish paths to help those with visual impairments navigate the playground.
- Use Braille lettering.
- Incorporate sensory items such as netting, swinging, textures, smells throughout the playground.
- Choose a metal slide versus a plastic slide as it will be better for kids with hearing implants.
- Use fencing for children who may have trouble understanding boundaries, as well as safety precautions.
- Supply temperature-appropriate clothing.
- Install UV-protective sunscreen to protect children from medication exposure.



Encourage the development of gross motor skills.

Provide opportunities for children to exercise the larger muscle groups.

- Vary climbers to challenge all levels of abilities. (Use curved climbing poles so children have "footholds" as a way to support themselves...as well as straight poles to provide a greater challenge.)
- Include swings with extra back and arm support for children who need it.
- Provide horizontal climbing bars at a level at which wheelchairs can pull themselves up.
- Use surfaces other than mulch or gravel, such as rubber mats, to provide easier access for children using wheelchairs.
- Use ramps and lift systems to allow access to higher play areas on the playground.



Help improve fine motor skills.

Promote the use of hands and fingers in coordination with the eyes.

- Install activity panels that encourage basic hand movements.
- Use games (such as tic-tac-toe) to nurture fine motor skills, as well as to promote cognitive development.
- Use different activities to offer varying degrees of difficulty in hand-eye coordination movements.
- Keep in mind that children may be accessing equipment and activity panels with body parts other than hands (elbows, forearms, knees, shoulders, etc.).



Address children's communication, social and emotional needs.

Remember, children need to play with other children!

- Encourage interaction between two or more children with activities such as double slides, talk tubes, games, etc.
- Provide themed play pieces that promote imaginary play or social interaction.
- Use equipment that promotes children working together to reach a common goal (for example, "Sway Fun" wheelchair-accessible glider swings).
- Keep in mind that accessibility features also allow adults with disabilities or older adults to interact with their children or grandchildren throughout the playground.
- Adding accessibility components and personal care considerations to the restroom facilities as well as providing a "family restroom" (An individual, self-contained unit.)

We're here to help!

If all these considerations seem a little overwhelming, remember that Unlimited Play is a valuable resource and can serve as a guide as you plan, design, fundraise and build your accessible playground.



Because all children should play together.



Creating environments where... differences are respected, similarities are celebrated, limitations are forgotten!

Unlimited Play is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps to plan, design and build fully accessible playgrounds that allow all children—regardless of their abilities—to play together. A valuable resource in our community, Unlimited Play has the unique expertise in this area, and are available to assist in the development of something important to all children—playgrounds.

Play is a critical part of the social, emotional, cognitive and physical development of every child. Especially for children with disabilities, play is therapy—both physical and emotional. Their muscles need to be exercised just like anyone else's. And more importantly, they need to interact and socialize with other kids.

Simply put, children need to play with other children. Yet for so many children with disabilities, their days are spent with parents, doctors, nurses, therapists and other adults. But on the playground, kids play with kids. And on accessible playgrounds, children can swing, slide and climb with friends—as well as siblings and parents—like they never even imagined.

Of course, the benefits don't stop with kids who have challenges. Able-bodied children also learn and grow on fully accessible playgrounds by interacting with others who are in some ways different from them. Social barriers are broken and everyone learns to respect and understand each other—and those are the kinds of lessons that can last a lifetime.

Our Mission:

To enrich lives by fostering the development of inclusive playgrounds that promote dignity, understanding and respect among children.

Our Vision:

To build playgrounds where all challenges and limitations, created by disabilities, are forgotten... a place where all children can play and interact side by side, developing understanding and respect for their similarities and differences.

