



A GUIDE TO  
**CREATING ACCESSIBLE  
PLAY SPACES**



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## Message from Rick

One of the greatest joys of being a child is the ability to play, socialize, and interact with other children. This toolkit has all the information and best practices your community needs to design an accessible play space that children of all abilities can engage in and enjoy. From the development of new spaces to the renovation of existing playgrounds, my hope is that all communities will become fully accessible and inclusive.

— Rick Hansen





# 1. About This Guide

The Accessible Play Spaces Toolkit is a practical guide to creating accessible play spaces for children of all abilities. Whether you are developing a new play space or renovating an existing one, this guide offers a general set of guiding principles for designing an accessible and inclusive play space that all children, including those with disabilities, can engage with and enjoy.

*Disclaimer: This toolkit is for information purposes only. The Rick Hansen Foundation encourages each project to engage the services of a qualified and professional access consultant to ensure that site anomalies or other factors do not adversely affect the design intent.*

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## 1.1. Objectives and Learning Outcomes

In this toolkit, you will:

- Learn the benefits of inclusive play
- Understand the principles of inclusive, accessible, and Universal Design for play spaces
- Recognize the play space design needs of children and caregivers of various abilities
- See different play experiences
- Learn best practices in play space design
- Understand common problems in play space design
- Learn how to evaluate your existing play space for accessibility and inclusion using a simple checklist
- Be able to create a new play space from the sample plan provided

## 2. About Accessible Play Spaces

Regular play and exercise are essential for a child's physical, social, and emotional well-being. Accessible play spaces that are designed for all children provide inclusive access to physical education classes or recreational play.

Play spaces provide a critical thread through our communities. They are often neighbourhood gathering places, bringing children, parents, and neighbours together. They also offer children with diverse abilities the opportunity to play alongside one another.

**Even when play spaces are built to existing building code regulations, they are not typically based on Universal Design principles.** That's why the Rick Hansen Foundation has developed this Guide to Accessible Play Spaces; a guide for designing beyond minimum regulations so that people of all abilities can be included.

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### 2.1. What Are the Benefits of Accessible Play Spaces?

Play offers opportunities to improve intellectual, social, physical, and sensory abilities. Children of all abilities are provided with a greater range of learning and developmental opportunities when they get to manoeuvre through spaces, manipulate objects, and interact with others.

When children play, they are:

- Strengthening their bodies, working out stress, and improving their overall health



- Learning how to make decisions, experiment, generate ideas, practice skills, role play, and invent
- Building social skills while interacting with their peers and caregivers, which includes people with a variety of abilities

A study conducted by Physical and Health Education Canada underlined the importance of physical exercise for both the mental and physical health of all children. The research found that:

**38% of Canadian children with a disability almost never get physical exercise after school, compared to 10% of typically developing children**

(Physical and Health Education Canada, 2013)

Since a lack of physical activity can lead to an increased risk of anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as secondary health conditions like cardiovascular disease, it is vitally important that we design play spaces that all children can access.

Outdoor play is especially important for maintaining well-being for both children and adults. The sounds, visual images, and scents found in nature have been shown to reduce stress, stimulate the senses, and benefit all children, particularly those with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorder, behavioural issues, and mental illness.

A few benefits of accessible play spaces include:

- Children with disabilities can enjoy the benefits of active play, enhancing social skills and overall health
- All children learn valuable lessons about the world, including that everyone has similarities and differences
- All children develop concepts related to tolerance, diversity, and acceptance
- Everyone can access, interact, and have fun in the play spaces, including parents, grandparents, and members of the community with disabilities

## 2.2. What Is Universal Design?

The purpose of Universal Design is to make products, communications, and environments usable to as many people as possible without the need for adaptations or specialized designs (Center for Universal Design, 2008). Accessibility and inclusion are naturally incorporated into Universal Design.

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### Seven Principles of Universal Design

**1**

#### **Equitable Use**

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

**2**

#### **Flexibility in Use**

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

**3**

#### **Simple and Intuitive Use**

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or education level.

**4**

#### **Perceptible Information**

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.

**5**

#### **Tolerance for Error**

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

**6**

#### **Low Physical Effort**

The design can be used effectively and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.

**7**

#### **Size and Space for Approach and Use**

Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach and manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

## What Does a Play Space Based on Universal Design Mean?

When a play space is designed with Universal Design principles in mind, the space offers something for everyone to participate in. The layout, equipment, and features are designed and selected with consideration given to the needs of caregivers and the diverse developmental needs of children.

Therefore, opportunities for access and inclusion are natural outcomes of the design.

In this toolkit, we use the term “Universal Design” to describe the features making a play space accessible and inclusive. Universal Design focuses on creating a space to meet the needs of the greatest number of people.

A play space may include the following elements:

- Accessible features and amenities, such as planter boxes and benches of different heights and sizes to accommodate all abilities
- Opportunities to enjoy some features of the play space in separate ‘quieter’ areas adjacent to the main play equipment that allows for low stress play experience

## What Are Accessible Play Spaces?

Play spaces based on the principles of Universal Design are inclusive and offer a rich variety of physical and creative play opportunities. They are designed specifically to allow children of all abilities to play and enjoy the same activities together.

Accessible play spaces are designed to:

- Consider accessibility for children at a wide range of developmental stages and abilities
- Appeal to the five senses
- Create safe spaces where children can explore
- Support parents with disabilities to supervise and participate in their child’s play environment.



## 2.3. How Accessible Is Your Current Play Space?

Whether you're thinking through the design of a new play space or retrofitting an existing space, start by asking two big-picture questions:

- How will this play space encourage children of all abilities to interact and share play time together?
- How accessible is our current play space?

When evaluating a play space, apply accessibility and Universal Design principles to the entire space and its features, including entrances, pathways, layout, signage and displays, enclosures, equipment, game areas, play space surfaces, outdoor environments, and gathering spaces.

Provincial and local requirements should also be part of a play space evaluation. This includes safety standards, accessible design requirements, and the possible need for public consultation.

For example, in Ontario, organizations must incorporate accessible design and features for children and caregivers with various disabilities, and are required to consult with the public and people with disabilities when constructing or redeveloping outdoor play spaces.

Evaluate the accessibility of a play space from the perspective of children and caregivers with a wide range of disabilities. Here are some questions to consider:

- Can the play space be accessed and enjoyed by users with various forms of vision loss, hearing loss, mobility limitations, mental illness, and sensory disabilities such as autism?
- Can anyone, regardless of ability, move into, out of, and through the play space?
- Does the play space offer various experiences and challenges for children?
- Is the play space equipment and surfacing safe, but still stimulating enough that children can make their own decisions about what activities to try and what risks they want to take (e.g., climbing up multiple levels using a ramp, or hanging off overhead features such as monkey bars)?
- Is the space multi-functional, taking into account factors such as colour, sound, texture, movement, and versatility?
- What equipment is available and accessible for all children to help develop their cognitive function? Activities such as swinging, sliding, climbing, spinning, and rocking have both physical and cognitive benefits.
- Does the play space have a good mix of active and quiet play areas? Do rest spots include shade, seating, or undercover areas to encourage children to relax and work on social skills?
- Does the design provide caregivers access to the play space?
- Does the play space provide clear lines of sight for caregivers?



**Tip:** To evaluate your existing play space for accessibility, consult the questionnaire in the *References* section at the back of the toolkit.

## 3. Designing for a Wide Range of Abilities

When planning and designing all features of an accessible play space, consider both its natural features and equipment, and how these relate to each other. A play space is more than a structure – it encompasses the total environment in which play occurs. From vegetation to signage, all the elements of a site can become objects of play and learning.



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### 3.1. Considering a Wide Range of Abilities

This section includes play space considerations for children and caregivers with various disabilities, including mobility, vision, and hearing, and with sensory disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder.



## Mobility Disabilities

Children and adults may have challenges with mobility due to various factors.

Planning for the space should take into consideration:

- Wheelchair users
- Mobility device users (e.g., walker, braces, crutches, or cane)
- People with poor stamina
- People with poor balance
- People with muscle weakness
- People with limited use of their arms and hands
- People with limited dexterity
- People with anxiety and/or certain cognitive difficulties

Planning considerations for people using wheeled mobility devices or other mobility aids include provision of:

- Accessible paths of travel
- Multiple access routes into and out of the play space
- Multiple ways to use and access play equipment

- A mix of ground-level equipment integrated with elevated equipment accessible by a ramp or transfer platform
- Ramps that lead to a play component
- Ramp landings, elevated decks, and other areas that provide sufficient turning space for mobility devices
- Space to park a wheelchair or other mobility device beside transfer platforms
- Space for a caregiver to sit beside a child on a slide or other play element
- Transfer platform at the base of the slide wide enough so that children with mobility disabilities can transfer off the slide without blocking others from using the slide
- Seating space with back support adjacent to the slide exit where children can wait for their mobility device to be retrieved
- Back support and/or grips on certain play components such as swings
- Elements that can be manipulated with limited exertion

## Hearing Disabilities

Caregivers with hearing loss require clear lines of sight throughout the play space to observe their children and to identify when they need assistance.

Scraping or sharp clanging sounds, such as the sound of dropping stones and gravel, are uncomfortable and irritating for hearing aid users and should be avoided.

The use of plastic slides has been shown to generate static electricity that may damage cochlear implants. As a result, children are left with the choice of avoiding slides or removing their implants and playing without the ability to hear. Static electricity is avoided with the use of metal slides. However, sun exposure can leave metal slides hot enough to burn skin. Where only plastic slides are provided, children may need to remove the exterior portion of their implants or may avoid the slides.

## Vision Disabilities

Vision loss occurs in a wide variety of types and degrees:

- Colour-blindness
- Low vision, sometimes called vision loss
- Blindness

Appropriate use of colour, texture, and sound can help users with vision loss access and use equipment and find their way throughout a play space, and can be used to help:

- Orient children and caregivers to different areas
- Define different spaces throughout the play area
- Identify different skill areas
- Identify play element features
- Identify pathways and changes in direction
- Define play space boundaries and areas where children should be cautious, such as around high traffic areas like slide exits
- Define the edges where there is a level change like at the top of the stairs or at a drop-off using a tactile warning surface

The use of strong contrasting colours can improve safety by highlighting different elements and spaces, such as:

- Play equipment components
- Pathways for wayfinding
- Boundaries, edges, and drop-offs
- Transfer platforms
- Rise and run on steps by including colour contrast on the edge of each step



- Posts that people might walk into
- Railings that contrast with the supports to make them easier to find
- Tripping hazards that may exist in an older playground
- Safe zones around swings, slide exits, and other play areas that might not be noticed when people are moving around the playground
- Changes in levels and hazardous areas, identified by tactile warning features and colour contrast
- Hand railings that need to be seen by children with vision loss who gain a sense of security when using the railings to navigate the play space



**Note:** Shiny surfaces should be avoided, as they can produce a disturbing glare that can inhibit the ability of people with vision loss to orient themselves.

### Colour-Blindness and the Use of Colour



Approximately 10% of males and 0.5% of females are colour-blind. The inability to distinguish red and green is the most common form of colour-blindness followed by the inability to distinguish green and blue.

To make your design more inclusive, avoid the use of red and green or green and blue components adjacent to each other.

### Autism Spectrum Disorder and Other Sensory Disabilities

Outdoor play, especially play in natural settings, has been shown to have a soothing effect on children with autism spectrum disorder. Activities that involve natural settings, motion, visual interest, and water play can be good choices. As mentioned above, care must be taken if selecting noise-making equipment. Play space committee members should research this subject with specialists, school board staff, and parents before selecting equipment and designs.

## 3.2. Considering Accessible Design Elements

When designing for a wide range of abilities, it's important to consider the following suggestions for your play space equipment and configuration:

- Select equipment that provides motion and allows children to climb, swing, and slide
- Choose play panels that provide the ability to build tolerance to different types of sensory stimulation, such as tactile activities and sound elements
- Offer opportunities for independent play and visually interesting equipment, such as tic-tac-toe play equipment, large sand timers that are visually stimulating when turned, and water play
- Avoid overcrowding of play space equipment where children are constantly bumping into each other
- Include cozy spaces
- Offer clear lines of sight throughout the play space like see-through equipment such as ropes or holes in plastic
- Install clear alcoves, separate elements, or benches where children can go when overstimulated and where they can observe other children
- Use signs and picture boards to assist communication
- Limit the use of bright colours while considering the needs of children and caregivers with vision loss
- Limit the use of shiny or glaring surfaces
- Provide look-out areas with railings all around
- Use visual and/or tactile boundary indicators that help to identify boundaries around certain play zones or play components, such as swings, slide drop-off areas, and play zones of different skill levels

### 3.3. Considering a Wide Range of Play Experiences

When designing for a wide range of abilities, it's important to consider the following suggestions for your play space equipment and configuration:

- Crawl tunnels
- Roller tables
- Elevated sand and water tables
- Balance bars
- Pulse tables
- Sliding
- Spinning
- Swinging
- Climbing
- Tactile elements
- Braille and tactile graphics
- Zip wires
- Wheelchair-accessible roundabout
- Ground-level trampolines



#### 1. Tips About Sensory Play

Sensory elements are an important play component for all children and particularly so for children who are not able to enjoy the more physically challenging components of a play space.

Sensory elements also offer clues to help children orient themselves to the different areas and elements within the play space. This equipment typically includes the use of:

- Sound and musical elements, such as talk tubes or falling water
  - Textures and shapes
  - Moving components like tic-tac-toe
  - Colour, patterns, and light
  - Smell (Some plantings, such as pine, lavender, and roses, are a great sensory element but can cause allergic reactions in some children)
- Examples include:
- Textured paths, textured designs, and shapes
  - Colour contrast or patterns to mark and identify spaces
  - Elements that can be manoeuvred and that move and respond to touch



## 2. Tips About Quiet Areas

Children with autism spectrum disorder or Asperger syndrome, and some children with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, prefer to play autonomously for some or all of the time at the playground.

These play areas are best if they:

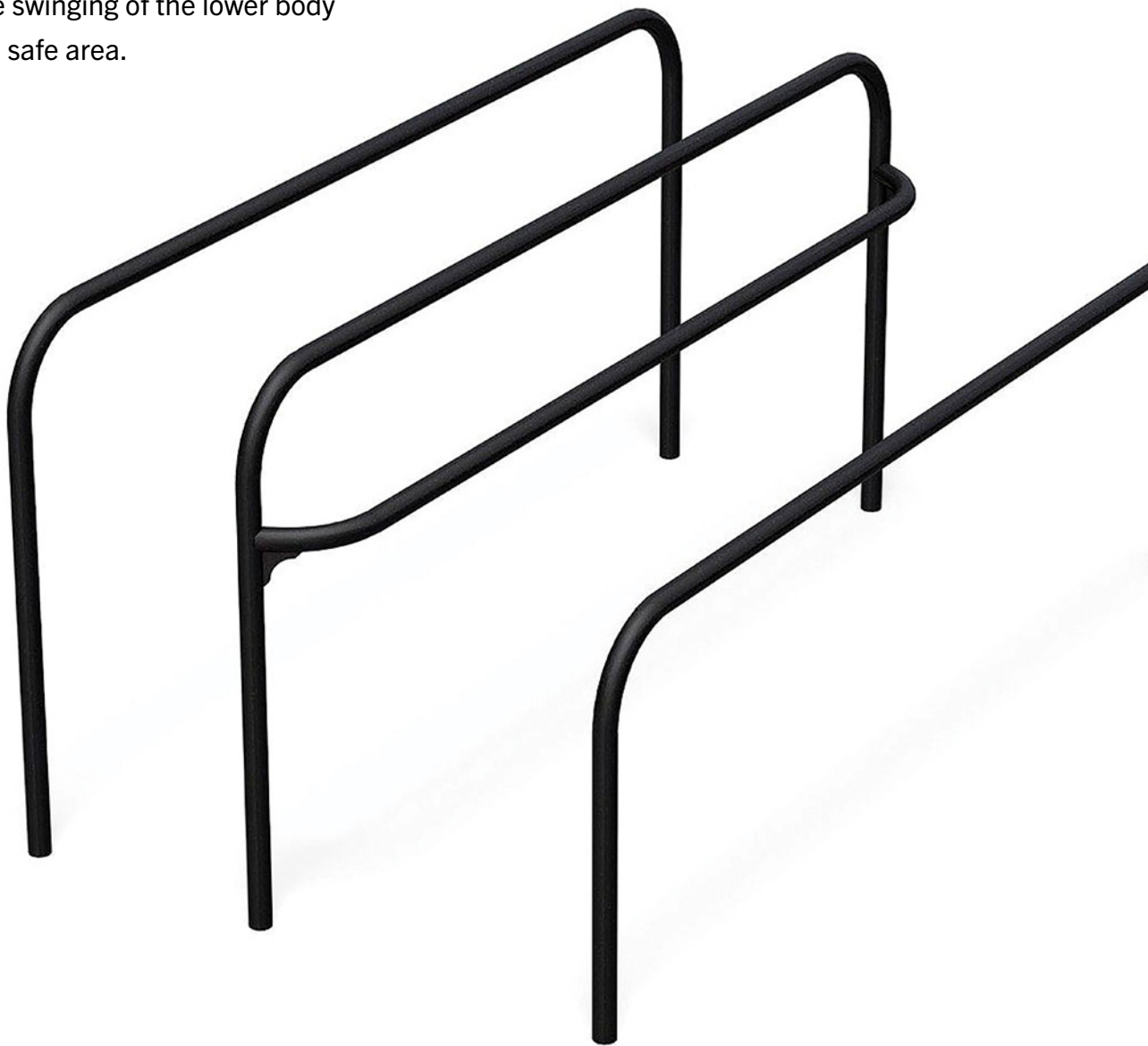
- Are placed beside an accessible path that is connected to but somewhat isolated from other active and noisy playground elements and spaces
- Are placed in a secure area that provides adult or caregiver visibility to allow for supervision, avoids unobserved leaving of spaces, but also allows children a sense of independence
- Are designed with neutral and calming colours, which are recommended in creating a soothing environment, with a different-coloured surface material in the area to better define it
- Include a variety of subtle design elements, such as visual details, soft noises, soft tactile elements, and calming or lightly fragranced plantings, providing minimal stimulation
- Are composed of predictable and repeated pattern design elements within the space that act as anchor points
- Consider wayfinding and navigation to and within this space





### 3. Tips About Balancing Bars

- Balancing bars are helpful to children with Down syndrome or who are deaf because these children can benefit from activities that help improve their balance.
- The bars are great for building upper body strength and allow free swinging of the lower body in a safe area.
- Providing multiple heights of bars, if space and budget allow, gives shorter and taller children opportunity to join the fun.





## 4. Tips About Swings

- Providing a safe boundary area around swings, which is identified by colour, texture, or both through the surface material, is great for everyone.
- Providing swings in a variety of sizes can accommodate younger and older children who enjoy and benefit from motion, such as children with developmental disabilities and autism.
- The accessible seat swings or basket swings that require transfer are a great addition, but placement in the swing set should be considered carefully. Sometimes these are placed in the baby swing area and are not as attractive to older children as a result. If size and space allow, provide two accessible swings for friends with disabilities to be able to swing together.
- Platform swings eliminate the need to transfer, which is especially beneficial for larger children using wheelchairs. However, due to the risk of bystanders being hit when the swing is in motion, platform swings should be used with caution. They are often placed in a fenced-off area where access can be controlled but where people might feel segregated.
- Generational swings are a new product on the market. Currently, there are two kinds. The first is a more traditional swing that allows older and younger children or parents and toddlers to swing together facing each other, which is a lot more fun than standing behind and pushing. The second is a type of rocker that allows for a larger group to sit together while swinging.



## 5. Tips About Slides

- Double slides (side by side) allow caregivers to accompany and, if needed, support the child.
- Slide exits should not be directed into busy play areas.
- Transfer platforms at the base of slide exits will allow for a space where sliders who use assistive equipment can transfer off the slide while they wait for mobility devices to be retrieved.



### Metal Versus Plastic Slides

As mentioned above in the hearing disabilities section, when children slide down plastic slides, static electricity is generated and under some circumstances cochlear implants can be damaged. The use of metal slides can avoid this problem. However, sun exposure can leave metal slides hot enough to burn skin. Where only plastic slides are provided, children may need to remove the exterior portions of their cochlear implants or may avoid the slides.

More about slides:

- Roller slides are another new item showing up in product catalogues. These are usually gentler in slope and provide both a tactile and a sliding experience.
- In addition to ramps, stairs with handrails are easier to use.
- Inclusive slides are wider at the bottom to allow sliders to get out of the way, and those with mobility devices have a transfer bench to transition back into their mobility assistive equipment.



## 6. Nature-Inspired Play Spaces Versus Traditional Play Spaces

Nature-inspired play spaces that are well designed can offer several benefits. When selecting play space design and equipment, consider the needs of users with a wide range of disabilities. For example, consider how children and caregivers with vision loss and

mobility limitations would manoeuvre throughout the space and access its features. Suppliers may need to make modifications to the use of colour and the design of features and equipment to address the needs of users with vision loss and other disabilities.







## 7. Water Parks

Water parks are fun for everyone and can be designed with accessibility and inclusion in mind. An example of best practices in action is shown at Morgan's Inspiration Island – a water park in San Antonio, Texas ([www.morganswonderland.com](http://www.morganswonderland.com)).

This private non-profit water park allows visitors with and without disabilities to enjoy the park's activities. Here are a few of its accessible features:

- The park is completely wheelchair accessible.
- Waterproof wheelchairs are available for rent.
- Private areas are available where guests can transfer from one wheelchair to another.
- Guests who are sensitive to cold have the ability to quickly change the water temperature.
- There are quiet areas for those who may get overwhelmed by crowds.
- Fast passes are offered for those who have trouble waiting in line.
- Upon entrance, each child receives a waterproof wristband for ease of identification, which is useful for those who tend to wander.
- Several employees at the water park have special needs, and they are stationed throughout the play areas to help answer questions and help guests feel more comfortable.





## 8. Children Using Assistive Devices

To accommodate the needs of children and caregivers who use assistive devices, your play space design should:

- Provide a reachable safe place for children and caregivers to leave canes and other assistive devices to help prevent devices from being misplaced or obstructing play areas
- Provide a transfer platform at the bottom of each slide that's sufficient in size to give children a place to wait for their wheelchair or other assistive device without blocking others from using the slide





## 9. Caregivers and Service Animals

### Caregivers

The ability of caregivers to see and access children should be taken into account when determining play space design and choice of equipment.

Consider the following features in your play space design:

- Junior and senior play equipment placed within easy view of each other
- Sitting areas that offer a clear line of sight to play areas and equipment
- Clear lines of sight throughout the play space allow caregivers to identify situations where children require assistance
- Access to play areas so caregivers may easily provide assistance
- Play elements that do not require caregiver assistance to transfer children
- Sitting areas with back support, armrests, and shade
- Benches and other sitting areas placed on a firm, stable area for people using assistive devices such as wheelchairs

### Service Animals

Children and their caregivers may require the assistance of service animals. Play space users and their service animals will benefit from the following features:

- Nearby safe and shady places where service animals can wait and have a clear view of their handlers when they are not assisting them
- Spaces where dogs can relieve themselves
- Available drinking water



## 4. Building Your Accessible Play Space



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### 4.1. Planning Public Consultations

It is highly recommended that you consult with the people who will access and enjoy the play space, such as children, their parents, and their caregivers. It is also important to invite local disability organizations to the consultation sessions, and to ask for their input as you develop your play space design. However, remind disability representatives that the play space must address a wide range of abilities and disabilities. Play space design should not be restricted to only reflect the interests of those who provide feedback. Furthermore, you should also consider how your community's values and requirements can be reflected in the development of the play space.

Several methods of providing feedback should be available, such as email, telephone, and in person, in order to accommodate people with various disabilities. If meetings are held, they should take place in accessible spaces with nearby accessible parking, entrances, and washrooms. Additionally, it's important to clearly inform potential respondents of the deadline for consultation input, such as through notices in newsletters.

A few suggestions for working with consultation input include:

- Determine who will be responsible for planning and implementing consultations.
- Assign someone to record comments during meetings.
- Record comments on a flipchart to help participants recall previous suggestions.
- Determine who will be responsible for analyzing the findings. A team should review, compile, analyze, and summarize the responses.



## How to Conduct a Public Consultation Workshop

1. Start by making sure it's inclusive to everyone.
2. There is no preferred time to hold a consultation. However, when done early in the process, they can generate excitement to capture lots of great ideas before the design begins.
3. Bring together a target group of users (children, parents, teachers, and members of the disability community). The creative and innovative elements designed by children often inspire groups to create a unique play space that goes beyond standard models.
4. Gather images of accessible and inclusive play spaces from this book and from other sources to spark discussion and interest.
5. Provide a brief overview of how play spaces can be designed to include children and adults of all abilities, using the images you have collected to illustrate accessible design. Include play space designs, elements, and features that address the needs of children and caregivers with a wide range of disabilities.
6. Encourage participants to work in small groups to come up with ideas.
7. Consider asking participants to design a model play space with materials you provide (play dough, modelling clay, paper, markers, and pens).
8. Ask each small group to present their designs to the larger group.
9. Ask participants to give feedback on the other designs and to list and rank their favourite design elements. The ranking process would consider the needs of children and caregivers with a wide range of abilities.
10. Summarize the ideas so that they can become part of the ideas and elements under consideration in the play space design. These ideas should reflect the project's overall goals, objectives, and needs, and they can be used to develop a concept design that shows where each element is placed, and how the elements relate to each other.

## 4.2. Choosing a Play Space Designer

A designer with a background in accessible and inclusive landscape architecture or playground design can have a major impact on the quality and accessibility of a play space. The cost for design services varies depending on the extent of the designer's involvement and their level of experience. A designer can offer a brief consultation early in the process for help with a concept plan or can be involved throughout the entire construction process.

### Tip: A designer can...

- Contribute creative ideas
- Pull together design ideas as well as identify site issues and challenges to help inform the concept design
- Lead a visioning process with community members and play space users
- Determine the feasibility of the final vision
- Develop an overall design program, and from that, a concept design incorporating Universal Design principles and accessible play spaces guidelines
- Lead the process of choosing appropriate equipment and site features
- Work with a play equipment supplier to configure equipment
- Prepare a budget, or a phasing plan if the entire project can't be completed at once, and outline construction requirements to ensure safety and accessibility needs are met
- Put together construction drawings
- Finalize the budget
- Coordinate construction and tradespeople, and coordinate volunteer labour

**Construction drawings may include grading and layout plans for more complicated projects including:**

- locations and dimensions of existing and proposed site elements, proposed evaluations to accommodate drainage and contouring of the site
  - planting plan (plant name, size, location, quantity, and spacing)
  - site details (borders, paving, and site furnishings)
  - specifications (detailed written requirements for installation)
- 

**Tip: To pick a good designer or landscape architect, look for someone with:**

- Strong knowledge of Universal Design concepts
- Strong understanding of the play space needs of children and caregivers with a wide range of abilities, such as those discussed in *Section 3, Designing for a Wide Range of Abilities*
- Extensive experience designing accessible and inclusive play spaces
- Experience incorporating natural features into play spaces
- Work samples and relevant references, and if possible, ask those who use and maintain the play spaces about how well the sites work for users with various abilities
- Experience working with groups, children, and stakeholders
- Experience working with contractors and overseeing the construction of play spaces



## 4.3. Selecting Play Space Equipment Suppliers

To ensure best practices and avoid common problems, here are four categories of questions you may want to ask equipment suppliers.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>1</b> <b>Good overall questions to ask all suppliers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this equipment meet Universal Design principles? Is there a warranty for the equipment? What does the warranty cover, for what period of time, and what are its limitations?</li> <li>• What consumer feedback has been received on the play space design and equipment?</li> <li>• Can you provide references and contact information from former clients? (Ask former clients about the strengths and weaknesses of the products, and their experience working with the supplier.)</li> <li>• Does this equipment comply with CSA safety standards?</li> </ul> | <p><b>2</b> <b>If you don't yet have a playground design worked out or finalized, you may wish to ask:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the play equipment area relate to the overall site?</li> <li>• How does the equipment accommodate various interests and abilities?</li> <li>• How does the play equipment foster inclusive play and allow for children with disabilities to be part of the action?</li> <li>• What age group is this equipment suitable for?</li> <li>• Can children with various disabilities use the equipment? Which disabilities?</li> <li>• How is this space unique? How is this space fun?</li> <li>• Is this space also accessible to parents and caregivers with disabilities?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

3

If you already have a playground design developed that you love, you may wish to ask:

- Can we mix and match your equipment with our existing play elements or with other manufacturers?
- What is the warranty on your products, and what happens if something goes wrong when equipment is still under warranty?

4

If you are still developing a funding strategy for the project, you may wish to ask:

- Do you have lease-purchase options?



**Tip: How to collect bids and quotes from play space vendors and designers:**

1. Get it in writing. Make certain to have written contracts/letters of agreement with any professional you work with, including designers, landscape architects, vendors, and contractors. Contracts/letters of agreement should outline proposed tasks, expectations, timelines, and costs.
2. Have meetings with designers and vendors, and ensure they understand your vision.
3. Request and collect bids, quotes, and estimates from multiple vendors, designers, and contractors.
4. Get approval, if applicable, from appropriate contractors, school boards, and municipal governments.
5. Decide if contractors or volunteers or a combination of both will install the equipment.
6. Make certain that play space suppliers adhere to CSA safety standards.

## 4.4. Paying for the Play Space

While parents, schools, and communities aspire to build new or refurbished playgrounds for their children, these playgrounds can be costly endeavours. The good news is that funding can come from a number of sources, including individuals, organizations, sponsorships, grants, and community fundraising events. Here are some things each type of funding may involve:

- Donations from individuals or organizations can be made in the form of money or materials. Donors generally require nothing in return for their support (other than a thank you). If your play space project is being run through a registered charity, you may be able to issue tax receipts for donations (for more information refer to the Canada Revenue Agency website: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca)).
- Sponsorships are typically made public and involve marketing, communications, and advertising materials that promote the sponsor's support. They are based on a business proposal, with mutually agreed upon rights and benefits for both parties.
- Grants from charitable foundations and other organizations often have a competitive nature. Typically, you must complete an application and be part of a contest between applicants. The organization is likely to require some reporting on use of funds.
- Community fundraising events, such as bake sales and sponsored activities, are a great way to raise funds for a play space and involve your local community.

## How to Start Fundraising

Below is a list of how-tos for starting the fundraising process. For more information, see *Section 4, Building Your Accessible Play Space*.

1. Create a list of possible sources of funding, such as local businesses, charitable foundations, and community fundraising events. Think about all the people connected to your school and community, including parents and residents. Ask if they can provide a personal introduction to a potential funder to increase the likelihood of securing funding. See the *Resources* section for a list of potential funders.
2. Obtain letters of support to highlight the value of your project to the community. Contact accessibility organizations, local sports clubs, businesses, hospitals, and universities.
3. Create a pitch package to seek support. Make sure you have all the information you need to answer questions from funders. Include a detailed image of the planned play space, detail the benefits to the school community, and highlight any letters of support.
4. Get it in writing and keep track. Sponsorships should be recorded in writing, outlining the benefits offered to the sponsor, funding due dates, and your obligations around reporting and use of the funds.
5. Keep a running total of funds received and spent so you can update everyone involved on the progress of the fundraising and how much more money you need to raise. And remember to thank your donors and supporters and provide them with regular updates, as well.

You can find a *Project Planning Checklist*, which provides an overview of this section, in the *Resources* section of this toolkit.



### Tips:

1. When applying for research grants, submit your application on time and ensure you follow up.
2. Make a sponsorship package. Create a package that includes a list of offerings (what will sponsors get in return for their funds) for potential sponsors. Try to come up with three or more levels of sponsorship.
3. Write a design program statement that outlines the goals, objectives, needs, and elements to include in a design. The statement also describes the basic requirements of the play space, the experience that the space should offer, and what it should feel like to be in the site. It can include specific functions required in the play space, such as a quiet space for reading and a place for older children to climb, as well as details on the ages and numbers of children using the space.



## 4.5. Working With a Modest Budget

You can enhance the accessibility of a new or existing play space without planning a major installation or renovation. Here are some examples:

1. Replace inaccessible surfacing (pea gravel or sand) with accessible surfacing (fine wood fibre or rubber tile).
2. Provide a curb cut or ramp into a play box.
3. Add an accessible seating area, right next to an accessible path, that includes benches with backs and armrests. Other nice items to have include tables, child-sized seats, and shade.
4. Add pathways and improve pedestrian circulation to and within the play space.
5. Add an accessible sand play and/or small water play area.
6. Purchase and install a few small, inexpensive pieces of accessible play equipment (e.g., an accessible swing, a ramp, or tactile surfaces).

Here are examples of inexpensive features you can add to create an enhanced experience for children of all abilities:

- Natural features including boulders, trees, logs, and plants
- A sensory garden with colourful and fragrant plants with seasonal interest
- Fruit or shade trees
- Small grassy hills to encourage imaginary play
- An interesting piece of public art (e.g., giant chair or sculpture)

## 5. Best Practice Ideas and Solutions to Common Issues



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### 5.1. Best Practice Ideas

Keep in mind the overall principles of play space design when selecting the individual elements for your play space. The design should engage children, parents, and caregivers with a rich variety of activities to stimulate the senses, and foster rich and imaginative opportunities for shared play. For more information and updates, please visit the Rick Hansen Foundation website: [www.rickhansen.com](http://www.rickhansen.com).





## 1. Location

Ensure the playground is near parking and walking paths and preferably near washrooms.



## 2. Surfacing Materials

The play space surface is one of the most important components in designing safe, accessible play spaces. Too many existing play spaces use non-accessible surfacing materials (pea gravel and sand) that unfortunately exclude most people with mobility challenges.

Here are five play space surface options to consider, listed from most to least expensive:

1. Pour-in-place rubber surfacing wears well overall and is installed much like concrete, with a resilient layer (the buffings) trowelled into place, and then the wear course (the EPDM) added on top. This surface is quite smooth and known for having few if any trip points as the rubber changes size with changes in weather. Be aware that, if not prepared properly during installation, over time shrinkage will be noticed at the edge of the pad. More excessive wear may occur if the rubber surfacing is used around spinning elements. Check your local jurisdiction for grants associated with using recycled rubber such as the Tire Stewardship BC grant.
2. Rubber tile is softer underfoot and more even to walk on than other choices, but site preparation is key. A concrete slab or compacted road base that provides a firm, flat surface is required under the tiles. Without a properly prepared base, the finish will have dips and rises on the surface that can create tripping points in the tile. As rubber will expand and contract with changes in weather, the perimeter needs to be installed with care to ensure proper fitting.

3. Engineered wood fibre is the most cost-effective material, but there are more ongoing maintenance costs associated with it. As a loose-fill material, wood fibre needs frequent raking and topping up as it deteriorates. This surface is not ideal for those using mobility devices or those with stability issues.
4. Engineered carpet, artificial turf, and crushed rubber products are smoother than other choices, reducing maintenance and installation costs. These surfaces will be only as smooth as the base beneath, and they should be used with caution.
5. Sand used to be a popular choice for playgrounds, but this is no longer considered an accessible surface. Wheels cannot roll in sand without difficulty, and those with fatigue issues often cannot move across it without struggling. Sand is also used to bury all kinds of things, many of which we wouldn't want to accidentally step on or have children dig up. Sand is, however, great for play elements for all ages.



**Note:** For all of the items in the following section, you are advised to refer to the requirements for your jurisdiction.



### 3. Accessible Parking and Curbs

If provided, parking areas should allocate at least one clearly marked space for people with disabilities with a safe, accessible route to the play space.



## 4. Walkways/Path of Travel

Access routes that allow people to get to a play space are the most important elements of a play space. Walkways connecting to the play space from buildings, sidewalks, and adjacent parking lots are important in creating an easy-to-navigate site. Play happens along walkways and pathways, and attention should be paid to the design of the route, including places to sit.



## 5. Accessible Signage

- Accessible signage at the entrance to the park is recommended
- Provide large colour-contrasted text, pictograms, Braille, and a raised line map
- Provide signage at each play element with a title and Braille where possible
- Consider identifying the types of accommodations the play equipment might be suited for

Grange Park is a great example of an accessible play space developed in the UK where they have addressed wheelchair access, vision loss accommodations, hearing loss accommodations, and sensory processing accommodations. Visit their website at [www.friendsofgrangepark.com/playground-design](http://www.friendsofgrangepark.com/playground-design).



## 6. Accessible Pedestrian Routes

- Routes should have firm surfaces, such as asphalt, concrete, compacted crushed stone, or pavers. (Pavers can be problematic if not installed properly to prevent settling, which causes trip hazards. Porous surface materials are also available, but they can be expensive.)
- Routes should be wide enough to accommodate people using assistive devices with a companion by their side.
- Routes should be gently sloped to be accessible to people with mobility disabilities such as those using wheelchairs.



## 7. Slopes and Ramps

A site does not need to be level to make it wheelchair accessible. To add interest and stimulation, use existing slopes and excavate the site to create a shallow depression, or add a slight slope to flat terrain. Slopes should be at a gentle grade to remain wheelchair accessible.

**Ramps to a structure, if required, can be combined with landscaping to blend equipment** into the setting more effectively. Variety in surfaces and textures that creates zones, edges, and approaches helps to improve circulation for people with sensory disabilities. This variety also provides more diverse sensory experiences for all children.



## 8. Borders and Access to Equipment

- Include entry points anywhere along a border to a play area. This is provided through flush access with a slight drop from the adjacent path onto the play surface.
- Some school districts have incorporated an equipment installation standard. Refer to your school board and local jurisdiction for surface installation standards. Some school boards use excavating pea gravel as a base covered with a geotextile and compacted wood fibre. A border is required for containment and does not create a barrier when installed in a site that follows this standard, as long as more than two access points into the site have been provided. If the border is raised above grade, it can create a trip hazard. To minimize tripping hazards, the border should be in a colour that strongly contrasts with the ground surface and its surrounding area to improve visibility.
- Other options to create access include curb cuts, dropped concrete curbs, and ramps over wood borders made from asphalt, concrete, or plastic.
- Using grading, berms (small mounds), and boardwalks to provide access to raised equipment eliminates the need for additional ramps, and is a more cost-effective manner of providing universal access to raised areas.



## 9. Clearances and Reach Heights

- For universal access, knee clearance helps to provide wheelchair access at tables, counters, and drinking fountains.
- Consider reach heights for seated or small users.
- Items such as gate latches and dispensers should be installed within a reachable range.
- Clear ground space provides unobstructed room to accommodate a wheelchair user in front of a play component or amenity.





## 10. Amenities: Seating Areas, Drinking Fountains, Trash Cans, and Pathways

Benches and seating areas are important components of a play area. They offer social spaces for students, caregivers, and teachers. Here are some considerations to ensure that they are accessible:

- Benches and seating areas integrated into a site should provide comfortable back support and armrests for easy movement in and out of the bench.
- Seating areas should be located on firm, stable surfaces (e.g., asphalt, concrete, compacted crushed rock, or pavers).
- Sufficient space to manoeuvre beside benches should be provided to allow for wheelchair users to sit beside or transfer to a bench.
- All amenities, including drinking fountains and trash cans, should be located on firm, level surfacing and at varying heights.
- The pathway leading to the accessible washrooms must also be a firm, level surface without any obstacles (e.g., curbs or barriers).



## 11. Play Equipment

See the list in *Section 3, Designing for a Wide Range of Abilities*, for all kinds of play equipment options and tips for choosing equipment. Here we're focusing on design.

Equipment choices should be selected based on the following key principles:

- Provide imaginative play opportunities for both active and quiet play. Prioritize features that stimulate open-ended, social, and creative play rather than limited play opportunities, such as static play panels.
- Offer a rich variety of ground-level play features to enhance accessibility for children with mobility impairments.
- Ensure access to high-interest, fun areas of the play space. Too often, ramps lead to a platform where there is not much to do for a child using a wheelchair or mobility aid.



Equipment suppliers offer a wide variety of equipment. While specialized equipment may also be available, a universal approach offers more opportunity for interaction and fun for all. What follows are some examples of equipment that can be made accessible to promote the development of all children.



Equipment that promotes social and emotional development, including integration and cooperation:

- Work, sand, and play tables
- Play counter, play hut/fort
- Roller slide
- Saucer swing
- Spinning nets
- Crawl tunnel

Equipment that promotes perceptual motor development, especially important to consider if children have difficulty perceiving shapes, form, depth, or movement:

- Saucer
- Swing
- Spring
- Teeter-totters like spring rides, platforms, spinners (bowl or net), or slides

Equipment that promotes perceptual motor development, especially important to consider if children have difficulty perceiving shapes, form, depth, or movement:

- Monkey bars
- Inclined ladders
- Parallel bars
- Nets
- Slides, bridges
- Basketball hoops

Equipment that promotes sensory development, with features incorporating texture, manipulative devices, contrasting colours, and sound to enhance auditory, tactile, and sensory awareness and to encourage artistic and aesthetic development:

- Sound panel or music panel
- Sand and water play
- Aromatic plants and gardens



## 12. Landscape Elements

Natural elements offer some of the most interesting and meaningful play experiences for all children, instilling a sense of autonomy, curiosity, and discovery. The elements listed below can be configured with Universal Design principles in mind, creating a sensory-rich and stimulating environment for children of all abilities.

Many play spaces have incorporated low-cost, low-maintenance materials to create more natural spaces, including:

- Pathways and boardwalks (supporting exploration and providing better access)
- Garden space offering aromatic plants and opportunities for children to grow vegetables or create a native plant garden, with raised planter boxes to provide universal access
- Performance spaces (stage) for free play or school programs
- Painted games area (oversize chess board, chalkboard, mazes, four-square, ball games, or hopscotch)
- Landforms/topography (exploration of movement)
- Seating and gathering spaces for informal play or outdoor classroom
- Games tables and work spaces
- Trees and plants for shade, exploration, and creating a habitat for butterflies and other wildlife
- Boulders and logs for climbing, discovery, seating, and social play
- Sand, water, and other loose components for manipulation and discovery (in accessible boxes)
- Rain garden to demonstrate where stormwater goes
- Public art pieces, such as murals or sculptures, for play and discovery
- Arbour or trellis for shade and visual interest



### 13. Phased Design

Unfortunately, budget restraints may limit what you can include in your design. A realistic approach is to plan for the modest playground if you only reach \$10,000 with your fundraising, the mid-range playground if you raise \$40,000, and the high-range playground if you raise \$100,000 or more. Just do the best you can with what you raise. Ensure your design allows for future phases so it's easier to expand your playground in the future.

## 5.2. Solutions to Common Problems

To ensure you are prepared, here are examples of three types of common problems:

### 1 Problems with Equipment

- Ramps are built so children can access the play equipment, but inaccessible ground surfacing (sand or pea gravel) means children are unable to access play features on the ground, circulate freely around the play area, or even reach the ramps.
- Ramps are built so children can access different levels on play equipment, but once they arrive on a platform, they don't have any features to play with.
- While specialized equipment for children with disabilities may be useful at facilities or centres designed specifically for their needs, it can segregate and isolate them from their peers in a playground, and it is also more expensive to maintain (platform swings). Platform swings should be located in a separate and fenced area to avoid accidentally hitting children and adults when in motion.
- Play is limited to manufactured equipment, without any natural features, such as gardens or trees, present in the site.
- Poor use of colour that can create barriers for children with vision loss such as colour-blindness.
- Poor use of colour where edges and borders are not identified with a contrasting colour to warn users of drop-offs and other sudden changes.
- Activities are not available for children with vision loss, autism, or mental illness.
- Opportunities are not available for solitary play with the ability to observe others playing.
- Ramps lead to areas that have insufficient space to manoeuvre.
- Ramps lead to areas that lack activities of interest.
- Poor sight lines exist for caregivers to observe children.

- Play space design does not sufficiently consider caregivers with disabilities such as hearing loss, vision loss, and mobility disabilities.
  - Shade and seating is inadequate for caregivers and service animals.
  - Insufficient space exists for assistive devices.
- 

## **2** Problems with Installation

- Raised borders around the park, or a lack of curb cuts, make it unnecessarily difficult for those with mobility challenges to access the play area or equipment.
  - Play area or equipment has a single access or entry point. This often forces users to circle around the entire area to reach the entry point.
  - If the top of the fall surface is too far below the entry access point, it causes a drop-down into the play space, which creates a barrier for wheelchair users.
  - Ramps are installed with sharp turns or steep grades.
  - Furniture, trees, or plants block access points.
  - Poor drainage installation creates wet areas in play zones and slip hazards across pathways.
- 

## **3** Problems with Maintenance

- Fall surfacing is not maintained to adequate height to work with access points.
- Ruts are not smoothed out in play surfacing, creating inaccessible areas.

## 6. A Sample Plan for Creating Your Accessible Play Space

The following provides suggestions on how to work through the process of creating a new or improved play space. We have organized this section into three phases. An abridged version of this sample plan is found in the *Resources* section at the back of the toolkit.



### Phase 1 – Kickoff



#### Step 1 – Form a Planning Committee

1. Form an accessible play space planning committee that may include parents, teachers, and members of the disability community.
2. Consult with the school principal about the involvement of school board staff.



## Step 2 – Hold the First Planning Meeting and Identify the Play Space Audience

1. Organize and hold the first play space planning meeting.
2. Create awareness among committee members on accessible play spaces. Use this toolkit and refer to the [Resources](#) section in this toolkit for information.
3. Follow best practices for holding accessible meetings. Refer to the *Resources* section for tips on holding accessible meetings.
4. Determine play space project objectives.
5. Define the play space audience:
  - a) What age ranges will likely use the play space?
  - b) How many children live within walking distance of the park?
  - c) Consider a wide range of disabilities and abilities. Keep in mind that students and community residents continually move into and out of an area.
  - d) Is the play space site on public or private property?
  - e) If the play space is on a school site, include users who will use the park outside of school hours.
6. Create play space planning subcommittees, such as research, accessibility/inclusion awareness, fundraising, communication, play space installation, and volunteer coordination and training.
7. Establish a meeting schedule.



### Step 3 – Select and Evaluate Potential Play Space Sites

1. Select potential play space sites.
2. Determine site availability. Confirm the ownership of potential sites and determine if any permits or other forms of permission are required. Clearly define school property lines and community or private property lines with the municipality.
3. Check zoning regulations, power locations, and sewage locations with the city or municipality.
4. If located on school property, find out the school district or union policies and standards, and if they have any safety issues and long-term maintenance concerns.
5. Evaluate the existing play space against Universal Design principles and accessible play space best practices.
6. Make a list of the things your committee likes or dislikes about the site and the worries they have about the site.
7. What do children and caregivers like and dislike about the site? Survey the stakeholders.
8. Use the questionnaire provided in the *Resources* section of this toolkit to evaluate the existing site.



### Step 4 – Research Play Space Designs, Equipment, Designers, and Budgets

1. Review the ideas in this guide:
  - a) Consider play space equipment, surface materials, ground preparation, labour, construction equipment and tools, play space designer fees, construction team supplies, food for the construction day volunteers, taxes, etc.
  - b) Consult with school board staff on surface material safety standards.



2. Research other guidelines on accessibility and accessible play spaces:
  - a) *The Canadian Standards Association Guidelines on Accessible Play Spaces and Equipment Annex H* is an excellent resource but focuses primarily on children with mobility disabilities. Children and caregivers with other disabilities, such as vision loss and hearing loss, are included in this guide.
  - b) Refer to the *Resources* section of the guide for some of our favourite additional accessibility and inclusion playground sites.
3. Research the costs of accessible play spaces:
  - a) Many products included in this guide link to stores where you can see the prices for a complete playground kit or for parts to build your own unique space.
  - b) Recruiting volunteers is a terrific way to help with construction costs but does require some assistance and organization. Consider how eager volunteers might be able to help.
4. Research play space equipment vendors:
  - a) Ask vendors what experience they have in creating play spaces that include children and caregivers with a wide range of disabilities.
  - b) Even without requesting a formal bid, vendors will provide cost estimates for play space equipment, features, and installation.

5. How do I know if I need a designer or accessibility consultant?

a) If your team has no previous experience with building a playground, an experienced designer is essential.

b) Designers can help source products and materials, help with budgets and bids, review the work done during construction, and help ensure quality construction.

c) Is your current or proposed playground site a little complicated? Are there hills or drainage issues? An experienced designer will be able to help ensure your playground can accommodate all of these things.

d) Finding a good designer means doing some interviews. Your school board may have a pre-selected list of preferred designers, so ask about this. Invite five to 10 designers out to the site to have a look, and then ask the designers to submit an introduction to their services and a list of references. Pick three preferred options and invite those designers to make a presentation to your committee. Be selective! Hiring a designer is going to be a significant but worthwhile cost, and you want to be happy you spent the money.

e) Generally, don't hire a friend or family member. Don't hire someone just out of school. Find someone with experience and good references and who is willing to point you to their previous jobs.

f) Many vendors offer design and installation services, which may be a more affordable option to choose.

g) See *Section 5, Best Practice Ideas and Solutions to Common Issues*, for more information.

6. Research play space designers and determine whether one is needed for the project:
  - a) If you use a designer, he or she might have their own preferred vendors.
  - b) Ask your play space designer or landscape architect to show you their accessible, inclusive, and Universal Design that is specific to play spaces. Look for someone with considerable experience, who has completed at least five playgrounds, but also someone who is open to your ideas and community feedback.
  - c) Ask the designer to describe how the needs of children and caregivers with a wide range of disabilities, such as vision loss, hearing loss, autism, mental illness, and mobility disabilities, will be accommodated in the design.
  - d) Review all bids, level of expertise, services, and costs. Evaluate your research and decide whether or not to hire a professional.
  - e) Also see *Section 5, Best Practice Ideas and Solutions to Common Problems*, for more information.
7. Begin forming relationships with people you will work with as you develop play space plans. Your project will need to be reviewed by a variety of people. Ensure clear, accurate, and regular communication throughout the project.

## Phase 2 – Planning the Project



### Step 1 – Consult with School, Neighbourhood Community, Vendors, and Professionals

1. Consult with the school and local community on what accessible play space design means to them. In some places this might even be a legislated requirement:
  - a) Include student input and consult with the principal on student consultation strategies.
  - b) Include the local community, vendors, and local agencies.
  - c) Confirm your obligations. In some provinces under certain circumstances, consulting on the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities is a legislated requirement.
  - d) Contact your local city or town hall. Municipal staff may be able to contribute their expertise to the project.
2. Consider holding a “design day” workshop. We have a fantastic Play Spaces unit in our K-12 Program, and if you book ahead, we might be able to help with this presentation:
  - a) Invite the school, local community, disability associations, and play space vendors.
  - b) Build awareness among consultation participants of accessible play spaces. Provide images and resource materials.
  - c) Follow best practices for conducting accessible consultations, e.g., post “design day” notices in school newsletters and on posters, and offer a variety of methods to provide input, such as phone, online survey, print survey, in person, and email.



## Step 2 – Decide on Your Play Space Design, Equipment, and Costs

1. Review ideas with groups that you consulted with and decide on a play space design.
2. Request and review bids from vendors/suppliers for play space equipment and designs.
3. Select a vendor.
4. Select play space equipment.
5. Determine the need for professional installers or volunteers or both.
6. Review costs of equipment, surface materials, installation, labour, and other project expenses against the project budget. Play space vendors/suppliers and play space designers will help you to identify and calculate costs.



## Step 3 – Discuss a Preliminary Project Plan and Approximate Budget

1. Review survey results from the committee, children, and caregivers that was collected during Step 1 and Step 2 to inform your choices.
2. Ensure your plan includes a wide range of abilities and disabilities. See *Section 4, Building Your Accessible Play Space*, of this toolkit:
  - a) Keep in mind that only a portion of potential users will provide input into the play space project and that play space users continually change.
3. Review the play space objectives in addition to the community's values and needs when creating the project plan.
4. Once you've created a list of your favourite ideas and equipment, you may find there are a few different design ideas. Even if you can't afford to incorporate numerous elements, don't let that stop you. A phased approach may work better if you have a limited budget.



## Step 4 – Develop a Project Budget, Timelines, and Milestones

1. Determine your estimated construction costs (e.g., demolition, installation of shock-absorbent surface). Play space designers and vendors bidding on your project will provide this information.
2. Establish a project budget:
  - a) Review your research and the information obtained from vendors and designers and from school board staff to assist in the development of a project budget.
3. Establish project milestones and timelines:
  - a) Research and discussions with play space vendors and designers can help you estimate project timelines and milestones.
  - b) Firm timelines and milestones can be established with vendors, designers, and installers once decisions about play space design and equipment have been confirmed.



Landscape Structure Inc



## Step 5 – Create a Fundraising Plan

1. Our *Resources* section provides a list of Canadian sources for funding options. Also see *Section 4.4, Paying for the Play Space*, of this toolkit.
2. Create a fundraising plan:
  - a) Create a list of potential funding sources (see *Resources* section).
  - b) Investigate sponsorships.
  - c) Research potential grants.
  - d) Solicit donations from individuals and organizations.
  - e) Discuss possible partnerships with your local city or town hall.
  - f) Obtain letters of support to highlight the value of the project to community interests.
  - g) Create a marketing and communication plan.
  - h) Consider sending notices to local politicians, media, and school newsletters, using social media, and investigating free website building and hosting sites.
  - i) Establish fundraising timelines and milestones.



## Step 6 – Start Fundraising

1. Hold fundraising events and follow best practices for accessibility in meetings and events. See the *Resources* section. Fundraising may include great ideas like:
  - a) Cookie and bake sales
  - b) Candles before Diwali Festival of Lights
  - c) Poinsettias before Christmas
  - d) Chocolate rabbits in the spring
  - e) Student lunchtime change races
  - f) Staff fundraiser to wear jeans to school on Fridays
2. Track the fundraising progress on a giant thermometer in the cafeteria.
3. Record all sponsorships, donations, and funds received:
  - a) Include donor contact information.
  - b) Thank donors and update them on the progress of the project.

## Phase 3 – Getting It Done



### Step 1 – Before You Order the Equipment

1. Review all designs, equipment decisions, and equipment specifications with applicable school board staff and committee members.
2. Make certain you have the required permits and approvals.
3. Confirm the selected design, equipment, colours, and surfacing choices with the suppliers.
4. Confirm all costs and delivery timelines with suppliers, and set a realistic target date for completion.
5. Obtain final approvals from the school board, local municipality, or others.





## Step 2 – Plan the Installation

1. Identify who will be installing the play space. Will the project require professional installers and volunteers?
2. Recruit team leaders and volunteers for the installation day.
3. Maintain communication with installation team leaders and volunteers throughout the remaining project stages.
4. Identify building stages (e.g., mapping the build site, levelling the site, removing old equipment, creating an installation day task matrix to organize volunteer teams and their projects).
5. Create contingency plans for bad weather and emergencies.



## Step 3 – Prepare for Equipment Arrival and Installation

1. Determine delivery timelines for equipment arrival and surfacing installation.
2. Train installation day team leaders and volunteers on safety and the use of tools and make certain volunteers know where all tools are located.
3. Where applicable, confirm the availability of professional installers and designers for the installation day.
4. Provide written specifications and directions to installers and contractors.
5. Organize play space materials and equipment before the installation day.
6. Prepare and secure the area for construction.
7. Make certain a maintenance and safety plan is in place. Your school may already have a plan in place.



### Step 4 – Installation Day

1. If you have volunteers, make certain team leaders and volunteers understand their roles.
2. Make sure certain safety equipment and first aid supplies are on-site.
3. Provide food for volunteers and staff.
4. Take photos of the site before, during, and after the installation day.
5. Prepare for a ribbon cutting ceremony.



### Step 5 – Project Completion – Time to Celebrate!

1. Send out official thank-you letters.
2. Inform applicable staff of play space completion and begin maintenance procedures.
3. Hold a final play space committee meeting and celebration.
4. Hold a ribbon cutting ceremony.



## 7. Resources

The resources in this section offer additional information for planning your own playground. Resources include case studies for four different parks, a questionnaire for evaluating an existing playground, a sample plan for creating an accessible play space, a glossary of terms, and other resource documents and websites.



### 7.1. Case Studies



#### Case Study 1: Carnarvon Elementary School – Vancouver, BC

Elise Jackson, a kindergarten student at Carnarvon Elementary, has cerebral palsy and uses a walker and a power chair. The Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at her school, located on Vancouver’s west side, were proud of the school’s accessible design, but acknowledged the existing 30-year-old playground, with a wood chip surface and limited features, needed to be redesigned for accessibility.

### **Planning a Park That Considers All Users**

The PAC, led by parent Brittany Downey-MacDonald, set out to create a playground designed for children of all abilities, including Elise. As they discussed how to make the playground more accessible for children with disabilities, they began thinking about the needs of all people who use a playground, including the elderly and parents with strollers, and realized that increased accessibility would benefit everyone.

The project team wanted to install a 3,400-square-foot playground built for ages 2 to 12, with areas allowing older children to play separately from their younger peers. To make the space completely in line with universal accessibility standards, they turned to the Rick Hansen Foundation’s accessible play space resources, in conjunction with the input of kinesiologists, school support workers, parents, children with disabilities, and psychologists.

### **Bridging Needs with Financial Considerations**

The team set a fundraising goal of \$135,000 and decided on key components:

- Rubber surfacing
- Ramps to areas for imaginary play
- Horizontal monkey bars permitting children in wheelchairs to pull themselves along
- A Bouncy Bus that could hold two wheelchairs, but be usable by all
- Various built-in level changes so children can get around, through, under, and over all equipment
- Accessible pull-up rings
- Two lanes of race track markings around the playground’s perimeter
- Accessible sand box with digger
- Tandem slide with low-impact bottom and little or no drop at the bottom so children can slide down accompanied by another person
- Wide stairways and long, slow angles so people who have challenges walking can get around safely

They were fortunate to secure a Tire Stewardship BC grant of \$23,400, which provided half of the 100% recycled rubber surfacing. Most of the money raised came from small community fundraisers and community sponsors such as a realtor (\$5,000) and a local grocery store chain (\$7,500).

The playground was completed in just over a year. Downey-MacDonald credits the playground's success to:

- Extensive planning
- Clear goals
- Open communication of needs
- Regular updates to sponsors and community partners

The fully accessible playground was a first for that community. It gained support from advocates for accessibility, sports, and education, including the Rick Hansen Foundation, BC Wheelchair Sports Association, G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre, and Vancouver United Football Club. Now everyone, regardless of ability, can play safely for years to come.





## Case Study 2: An Accessible Playground for a School and Its Local Community

*Our Lady of the Assumption School, Lethbridge, AB*

### **Challenge: Creating a Bigger, Better, More Inclusive Playground**

Our Lady of the Assumption School had a functional playground, but one that didn't fit the needs of all students.

After school hours and on weekends, the playground is also open to the entire community of Lethbridge and needs to be a fun, accessible space for children of all ages and abilities. With these factors in mind, the school took on the challenge of building a bigger, better, and more inclusive playground that would reflect the principles of Universal Design and allow everyone to play.

### **Collaboration Across Communities**

**“It truly takes a community to build a project like a new playground.” – Mr. Kostiuk**

Led by a Parent Fundraising Committee (PFRC), and two parents who tackled the challenge of grant writing, the school raised a total of \$350,000 toward the playground's construction. The PFRC not only raised funds for the playground, but also helped build a community around the project at the school.

A group of volunteers rallied to dismantle the old playground, which was then donated to an organization that is moving it to a developing country for repurposing and reassembling.

## The Volunteer Challenge

Finding enough volunteers with time to help during the playground's four-day construction was one of the biggest challenges. The school knew they needed a lot of volunteers but underestimated how many they would actually require.

While the construction company was responsible for the actual build, 40 adult volunteers were needed each day over the entire build period. Some of the work was highly physical, carrying and putting playground pieces together; other jobs included attending the first aid station, helping at the water station, or being part of the clean-up crew.

To grow the volunteer base, Mr. Kostiuk connected with people online through his blog, requesting additional help and demonstrating the need to provide a safe, happy space for all children.

## Up and Running!

In September 2015, the school year opened with a blessing for the newly constructed playground. It is now in use, with several accessible features. The base is made from rubber tiles and can be accessed from all points around the playground. A portion of the equipment is accessible from a ramp.





### Case Study 3: Developing a Play Space Accessible for Students of All Ages and Abilities

*Broxton Park School, Spruce Grove, AB*

#### **Challenge: Creating a Bigger, Better, More Inclusive Playground**

Having worked with the Rick Hansen Foundation for many years, in 2014 Broxton Park School made one of its playgrounds accessible. Many of the play areas were built so they could be used by children regardless of ability, with components allowing children to transfer on their own, or with assistance, to use the equipment.

As first, the play space mainly met the needs of students in Grades 3 and up, but in 2016 the school's parent group decided to go further and upgrade a second, older playground on the site, making it accessible for students of all ages and abilities.

#### **Consultation**

To prepare for the new project, the school consulted with parents and school committees that had worked on similar projects. The school is now sharing its experience with other groups in return.

*“This is invaluable. You may choose to do things the same or differently, but at least you will know why you are making the choices. For example, always choose to have the playground company provide a site supervisor – it’s the best money you’ll ever spend.” – Randy Hetherington, Principal*

The school also worked with special needs and early education specialists to determine some of the key features that a fully accessible, inclusive playground would have, including equipment all children could use easily and safely.



## Fundraising

Parent committees approached local businesses and organizations for financial and in-kind support, raising \$250,000. Many of the fundraising events served the dual purpose of involving students in promoting literacy and service while also raising project funds. With the initial funds raised, the school also became eligible for a \$125,000 grant from the Alberta provincial government.

## Making the Dream Playground a Reality

The school is working hard to recruit and retain volunteers for the two-year project. Keeping people motivated over the course of the project can be challenging, as is finding dedicated people with enough time and capacity to volunteer during regular business hours.

Broxton Park School has also worked hard to embed the message of access and inclusion throughout its culture. The school has used the Rick Hansen School Program for many years to introduce students to the different ways they can make a difference in their homes, schools, and communities, and to highlight the importance of inclusion. The program's messages of access and inclusion match well with the school's values and have played a big role in developing the school's play spaces.





## Case Study 4: Variety Park Accessibility/Inclusion Enhancement Initiative

*Variety Park, Calgary, AB*

“We believe that every child has the right to be active, be social, and belong, and when playgrounds are not inclusive, they eliminate a segment of society from play.”

– **Jana Hands and Larry Horeczy,**  
**Co-Managing Directors**

In 2002, Variety, the Children’s Charity of Alberta (Variety Alberta), opened Variety Park, the first barrier-free spray park and playground in Calgary. After 15 years and with over 100,000 visitors every year, the playground became a tremendously successful destination. In 2016, Variety identified that the park, though mostly accessible, was not truly inclusive, and set out to change this.

Variety began their planning by looking at the entire space and identifying what was working and what needed to be changed. Though they had raised a healthy funding base, they still had limitations and couldn’t replace all of the playground pieces. As such, they based their playground plan on inclusivity. Their must-have list included:

- Making sure all of the play areas were connected with paved pathways
- Adding playground equipment that would develop and cultivate various skills through sensory, mobility, and cognitive play experiences, and through physical development

- Adding new barrier-free and inclusive surfacing that included the use of colour highlights to guide children to the different play features and to identify equipment transfer points while adding fun
- Adding new playground equipment with inclusive design principles that would maximize play value for all children while encouraging interactive play
- Adding more accessible washroom facilities on-site

Within nine months, Variety was able to implement all of their must-haves and create a better, more accessible and inclusive park. Changes to their playground equipment included:

- Replacing the inaccessible swings with adaptable spinning and climbing features. Within these pieces, they incorporated seating platforms with strategically placed transfer points to provide an equal opportunity for children of all abilities to engage and play.
- Adding sensory play equipment and sensory panels for children to experience various types of textures, sounds, colours, and movement to inspire creativity and promote a full spectrum of development through hands-on and active learning.
- Adding a horizontal roller table and a high-backed support merry-go-round offering both developmental and play benefits.

Though the playground will require additional work within the next few years to replace the rest of the playground equipment, they are happy with the end result, as are those who come there to play.

Variety is thankful to the Rick Hansen Foundation and to their other supporters who each played a part in helping them realize their vision and create a truly inclusive play experience for all children.

## 7.2. Questionnaire for Evaluating an Existing Play Space

*Modified from the Playability Tool Kit: Building Accessible Playspaces, produced by the Ontario Parks Association*

If you are thinking of retrofitting an existing play space, this questionnaire is designed to give you a sense of what will meet the needs of all users. As you work through the questionnaire, you may want to take photos on-site to illustrate important issues.

		<b>Entrance to the Play Space</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	The entrance sets the tone in creating a welcoming space for all users, and also aids in wayfinding for people with visual impairments.
		Is there a formal entrance to the play space (archway, main path, sign, bulletin board, map, etc.)? If yes, describe. If no, what is the transition to the play space?
		Is there wheelchair access to the play space?
		Is the entrance free of obstructions such as gates or bollards?
		Is the pathway at or less than a 5% grade with no curbs or other barrier more than 1 cm high at the entrance?

Yes	No	<b>Pathways</b> Everyone moves more easily on wide, smooth, and level pathways.
		Is there a path connecting the adjacent street sidewalk or school to the play space?
		Is there a path connecting elements within the play space?
		Is the pathway in good repair? What is the surface material?
		Is the pathway free from obstructions (e.g., concrete barriers, tree roots, or garbage cans)?
		Is there a curb cut, a ramp, or level access to all elements of the play space? Play equipment is not accessible if the border is raised, the grade is more than 5%, or a barrier is more than 1 cm high.
		Is the width of the pathway a minimum of 1.52 m (allowing two wheelchairs to pass each other)? If no, what is the width?
		Is the surface texture of the play space different from the pathway, to help people with vision impairments detect the play space?

	<p>Is there a play structure made up of multiple components in the play space?</p>
	<p>What is the condition of the structure? (e.g., okay, needs repair, or beyond repair)</p>
	<p>What is the total number of play components making up the structure? A play feature could be a panel, steering wheel, talk tube, overhead climbing bars, slide, etc. Ramps, stairs, roofs, steps, and decks are not considered to be play features.</p>
	<p>How many features are elevated (accessed by a ladder or stairs)?</p>
	<p>How many features are elevated but accessible by a ramp?</p>
	<p>How many features are accessible by transfer steps (accessible to some users able to transfer from a wheelchair)?</p>
	<p>How many features are at ground level?</p>
	<p>Is there space on the structure for an adult to assist a child accessing the play structure?</p>

	<p>Are there stand-alone play features such as spring rockers or teeter-totters? (Stand-alone features often provide good universal access because they can be accessed from the ground surface.) If so, what are they? Could someone using a wheelchair transfer to use them? (Is there a backrest? Are they about the same height as a wheelchair seat?)</p>
	<p>Are there swings?</p>
	<p>What types of swings are present (e.g., belt swing, disc swing, or tot swing)? Do any have a backrest?</p>
	<p>Are there upper body activities at appropriate heights for children standing and sitting (e.g., low chin-up bars or rope climbers)?</p>
	<p>Is there a range of activities, providing different levels of challenge for different ages (e.g., big and small slides or high and low decks, play houses for smaller children, and challenging climbing equipment for older children).</p>
	<p>Are there manipulative play opportunities like sand, water, moving activity panels, and movable objects? (Objects children can move themselves are an important feature for children to experiment with, discover things with, and control their own environment.) How are they accessed? (e.g., Is there an accessible route to the objects?)</p>

Are there activities to stimulate the senses (e.g., things to touch or smell)? What are they? Consider whether there are colour contrasts, sounds, shade, and water.

Are there activities to stimulate imaginary play, such as a counter, clubhouse, or stage? If so, list them.

Yes	No	Surfacing
		What are the safety surfaces under the play equipment (e.g., sand, wood chips, rubber tiles, pea gravel, poured-in-place rubber, or grass)?
		Under swings?
		At the bottom of the slide?





Yes	No	Play Space Layout/Amenities
		<p>If structures and play features exist for different age groups, are they attached in any manner or are they separate from each other? (It is preferable to have a separate play area for younger children who have different needs.)</p>
		<p>Are there quiet spaces for children who need to play quietly or observe others (e.g., small play house or quiet seating area)?</p>
		<p>Is there wheelchair-accessible seating for both children and adults, out of the way but with a view of the main area of activity? (Seating would include a space wide enough for a wheelchair located adjacent to a bench. Benches with armrests and backs are preferable.)</p>
		<p>Are there shady areas to sit?</p>
		<p>Are there accessible amenities such as picnic tables? Are they located on level, firm surfaces? (Accessible picnic tables allow for knee clearance for wheelchair users under the table.)</p>

Yes	No	Social and Natural Features
		<p>What types of natural features are found on-site (e.g., trees, boulders, logs, or plants)? How are they used for play?</p>
		<p>Is there an area where plants and other features could be placed that would enhance the play area?</p>
		<p>What are some features, besides play equipment, that could be used by the school for outdoor learning (e.g., outdoor classroom, vegetable garden, performance space, or stormwater feature)?</p>



## 7.3. Project Planning Checklist

You don't need to be an expert to lead an accessible playground project, but good planning is essential. This overview of the entire process that is described in *Section 6, A Sample Plan for Creating Your Accessible Play Space*, will help you keep things on track:



### Phase 1 – Kickoff

1. Form a planning committee
2. Hold the first planning meeting and identify the play space audience
3. Select and evaluate potential play space sites
4. Research play space designs, equipment, designers, and budgets



### Phase 2 – Planning the Project

1. Consult with school, neighbourhood community, vendors, and professionals
2. Decide on your play space design, equipment, and costs
3. Discuss a preliminary project plan and approximate budget
4. Develop a project budget, timelines, and milestones
5. Create a fundraising plan
6. Start fundraising



### Phase 3 – Getting It Done

1. Before you order the equipment
2. Plan the installation
3. Prepare for equipment arrival and installation
4. Installation day
5. Project completion – time to celebrate

## 7.4. Glossary of Terms

### **AMA**

The AMA is short for the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, which is a piece of legislation passed in Manitoba in 2013. The act includes Standards that are requirements for different areas within the provincial jurisdiction. The goal of this law is to “achieve significant progress by 2023, making Manitoba more inclusive for everyone.”

### **AODA**

The AODA is short for the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, which is a piece of legislation passed in Ontario in 2005. The goal of this law is to make Ontario accessible by 2025. The act includes Standards that are requirements for different areas within the provincial jurisdiction. Playgrounds are included in the Design of Public Spaces and include the requirement to consult with the public for each playground.

### **Accessibility**

The term accessibility or accessible is a general term used to describe the intent to which a product, device, service, or environment is usable to people with disabilities. An accessible playground is one that can be accessed by the able-bodied and by people with disabilities, and can be enjoyed by everyone.

### **Dog/animal relief area**

People who use service animals (in Canada that’s still most often dogs) need to have a place to let these hard-working animals go to the bathroom. You may have seen these areas at highway rest stops or more recently in airports. The relief area is simply a patch of grass that’s easy to find, right next to the walkway, and is equipped with a sign and garbage can and maybe a light.

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion is a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging. It is an attitude and approach that embraces diversity and differences and promotes equal opportunities (Alberta Education, 2017).

**Pulse tables**

These are often what multi-sensory games equipment is called. They are meant to encourage movement and participation for a variety of senses and abilities. Colourful lights and engaging sounds are often used.

**Overhead hazard**

In the play area or along the path to the playground there may be items that are overhead, including exterior stairs, signage, or overhead play equipment. To keep everyone safe, try to ensure the design does not have anything placed lower than 2,100 mm. Where this is not possible, warn people of the hazard by providing something under the item. Solutions include cane-detectable guards, potted plants, or anything that requires people to walk around the low-hanging object. Adding a bright colour to the overhead item along the lower edge is also great but still could be missed by people who are not paying attention or who are blind or temporarily can't see well. If the hazard is tree branches, then this is a maintenance issue.

**Protruding hazard**

In the play area or along the path to the playground, there may be items that stick out horizontally, including pole-mounted garbage cans or ashtrays, signage, or other things. To keep everyone safe, try to ensure the design does not have anything placed that sticks out more than 100 mm.

**Rest area**

Many accessibility requirements require rest areas. This is an area that is paved and attached to the sidewalk or walkway, and that includes the space for a bench and the clear floor space immediately beside the bench for at least one assistive mobility device. The clear floor space should be in line with the bench, and the area should allow the wheelchair or scooter to not block the pedestrian path. This area is also good for people with strollers to use, and if there is space, allowing for friends using mobility devices to sit together is desirable.

**Specifications**

This is a construction document created by designers that contains all the technical details that don't appear on the drawings. This is an important part of the design documentation because if there is a conflict between the specifications and the drawings, the specifications win.

**Tactile warning surface (also known as tactile attention indicator)**

Can be found on the site where there are stairs or a drop-off area and at street corners where there is a curb ramp. These are placed at locations where there is a safety hazard to warn of a change of level or that the pedestrian area is meeting a place where cars might be. These tactile domes are usually raised in a grid pattern in a strong or bright colour to help people see and feel the warning surface before they get hurt either from a fall or by wandering out into traffic.

**Tactile wayfinding (also known as tactile walking surface indicator)**

These highly colour-contrasted tiles include long raised bars that are placed parallel to the direction of travel to help people find features. Sometimes, like at passenger drop-off areas or at signage, they are placed perpendicular to the path to encourage those who can't see to follow the bars to an element they might have otherwise missed.



## Universal Design

Following Universal Design means designing for all ages and abilities to the greatest extent possible. Can it be used by left-handed and right-handed users? Can it be used by tall and short people? Can a variety of people and their assistive devices get to the object? Is the space welcoming instead of segregating or marginalizing?

This is a term developed at the Center for Universal Design, founded by Ron Mace at the North Carolina State University. To help designers understand the intent of the design ideal, seven principles were established to describe Universal Design:

1. **Equitable Use:** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
2. **Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
3. **Simple and Intuitive Use:** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current education level.
4. **Perceptible Information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
5. **Tolerance for Error:** The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
6. **Low Physical Effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.
7. **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach and manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.

## 8. External References

The lists that follow contain resources that you may be interested in or you may wish to share with your designer.



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### 8.1. Examples of Outdoor Play Environments

1. Design for Play. [www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk](http://www.freeplaynetwork.org.uk)
2. Playlink. [www.playlink.org](http://www.playlink.org)
3. Learning Through Landscapes (UK-based organization).  
[www.ltl.org.uk/basicneed](http://www.ltl.org.uk/basicneed)
4. Natural Learning Initiative. [www.aturallearning.org](http://www.aturallearning.org)
5. Play and Natural Learning Spaces Design, Construction and Maintenance Policy Template.  
[www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/files/PlayspacePolicyTemplate.pdf](http://www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/files/PlayspacePolicyTemplate.pdf)



## 8.2. Books and Articles

1. *Designing Outdoor Environments for Children: Landscaping schoolyards, gardens and playgrounds*, by Lolly Tai (McGraw Hill, 2006).
2. *Play for All Guidelines: Planning, Designing and Management of Outdoor Play Settings for All Children*, by Robin C. Moore, Susan M. Goltsman, and Daniel S. Iacofano (editor) (Mig Communications, 1992).
3. *The Universal Playground: A Planning Guide*, BC Ministry of Education (1993).
4. *Enhancing the Quality of Children's Lives Through Exceptional Play Area Design*, by S. King, S. Goltsman, and C. Brooke (2001).
5. *Power of Nature: Orientations of Girls and Boys Toward Biotic and Abiotic Environments*, by R. Moore, *Children's Environments Quarterly*, 3(3), 52-69.

## 8.3. Online Resources

1. Canadian Accessible Playgrounds. [www.accessibleplayground.net/canada](http://www.accessibleplayground.net/canada)
2. Alberta Education, 2017. <http://education.alberta.ca/inclusive-education/what-is-inclusion>
3. Canadian Standards Association Children's Playspaces and Equipment, 2014. (CSA Z614-14). <https://langara.ca/departments/recreation/documents1/TenKeyAreas-CSAStandard-Z614-14.pdf>
4. BC Landscape Architects. [www.bcsla.org](http://www.bcsla.org) (includes list of designers with skills in play space design).
5. Building Access Handbook 2014 (Illustrated Commentary on Access Requirements in the 2012 BC Building Code). <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/construction-industry/building-codes-standards/accessibility>
6. Center for Universal Design. [www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud](http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud)
7. Children's Playspaces and Equipment: A National Standard of Canada (CSA April 2008) CAN/CSA-Z614-07 (to order: [www.scc.ca/en/standardsdb/standards/23419](http://www.scc.ca/en/standardsdb/standards/23419))

8. Developing Accessible Play Space: A Good Practice Guide.  
[www.ncef.org/content/developing-accessible-play-space-good-practice-guide](http://www.ncef.org/content/developing-accessible-play-space-good-practice-guide)
9. Illustrated Guide to the AODA Design of Public Spaces, Section 2.5 Outdoor Play Spaces. [http://gaates.org/DOPS/section\\_2\\_5\\_0.php](http://gaates.org/DOPS/section_2_5_0.php)
10. Inclusive Design Research Centre OCAD University. <http://idrc.ocadu.ca>
11. Inclusive Play Design Guide, Playworld Systems. 2013.  
[www.accessibleplayground.net/2012/05/13/inclusive-play-design-guide-now-available](http://www.accessibleplayground.net/2012/05/13/inclusive-play-design-guide-now-available)
12. Morgan's Inspiration Island.  
[www.morganswonderland.com/inspirationisland](http://www.morganswonderland.com/inspirationisland)
13. Natural Playground. Humber College. Toronto, Ontario, 2014.  
[www.naturalplaygrounds.ca/portfolio/humber-college](http://www.naturalplaygrounds.ca/portfolio/humber-college)
14. Physical Health Education Canada. [www.phecanada.ca](http://www.phecanada.ca)
15. The Good Play Space Guide: "I can play too". State of Victoria, Department of Victorian Communities, 2007.
16. Whole Child: Developing Mind, Body and Spirit Through Outdoor Play. 2010, National Wildlife Federation.
17. Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines. [www.cnib.ca/en/services/resources/Clearprint/Documents/CNIB%20Clear%20Print%20Guide.pdf](http://www.cnib.ca/en/services/resources/Clearprint/Documents/CNIB%20Clear%20Print%20Guide.pdf)

## 8.4. Accessible Meetings and Events

1. Accessibility Checklists.  
[www.inclusionnl.ca/inclusive-workplaces/accessibility-checklists](http://www.inclusionnl.ca/inclusive-workplaces/accessibility-checklists)
2. Guide to an Accessible Public Engagement. [www.omssa.com/accessible-community-engagement/omssa-guides/view-the-guides/guide-to-accessible-public-engagement](http://www.omssa.com/accessible-community-engagement/omssa-guides/view-the-guides/guide-to-accessible-public-engagement)
3. Guide to Accessible Festivals and Outdoor Events.  
[www.festivalsandeventsontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Festivals-and-Events-Guide-EN.pdf](http://www.festivalsandeventsontario.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Festivals-and-Events-Guide-EN.pdf)

4. Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings. [www.publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-141-2009-eng.pdf](http://www.publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/rhdcc-hrsdc/HS28-141-2009-eng.pdf)
5. Guide to Conducting Accessible Meetings. [www.omssa.com/accessible-community-engagement/omssa-guides/view-the-guides/guide-to-conducting-accessible-meetings](http://www.omssa.com/accessible-community-engagement/omssa-guides/view-the-guides/guide-to-conducting-accessible-meetings)
6. Tips for Accessible Meeting Planning. [www.disabilitypolicyalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Tips-for-Conducting-Accessible-Meetings-Jun-2016.pdf](http://www.disabilitypolicyalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Tips-for-Conducting-Accessible-Meetings-Jun-2016.pdf)

## 8.5. Funding Playgrounds and Outdoor Classrooms: Possible Funding Partners or Grants

Note: This is not a comprehensive list.

1. Canada Post Community Foundation. [www.canadapost.ca/web/en/pages/aboutus/communityfoundation/about.page](http://www.canadapost.ca/web/en/pages/aboutus/communityfoundation/about.page)
2. Child and Nature Alliance of Canada. [www.childnature.ca](http://www.childnature.ca)
3. Evergreen Funding Opportunities: a non-profit working to improve the environmental, social, and economic health of cities, including parks and green spaces. [www.evergreen.ca/get-involved/funding-opportunities](http://www.evergreen.ca/get-involved/funding-opportunities)
4. Foresters, KaBOOM! [www.foresters.com/en-ca/foresters-difference/community-and-volunteering](http://www.foresters.com/en-ca/foresters-difference/community-and-volunteering)
5. KaBOOM! National non-profit dedicated to bringing balanced and active play into the daily lives of children; provides examples, online workshops, and fundraising information. [www.kaboom.org/grants](http://www.kaboom.org/grants)
6. Lowes Canada. [www.lowes.ca/articles/Community\\_a1227.html](http://www.lowes.ca/articles/Community_a1227.html)
7. Rotary Club (search for your local club office). <https://my.rotary.org/en>
8. Royal Bank of Canada. [www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/community](http://www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/community)
9. Safeway Canada Community Involvement. [www.safeway.ca/about-us/community-involvement](http://www.safeway.ca/about-us/community-involvement)
10. TD Friends of the Environment Foundation. <https://fef.td.com/funding/#areas>





Thank you for using the Accessible Playspaces toolkit! We hope that this document helped your organization create a more inclusive playground for children of all abilities. Please contact us with any feedback you might have, we are constantly striving to improve our resources.

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## Find out more about the other resources we offer:

### **RHF Ambassador Presentations**

RHF Ambassadors help create meaningful dialogue about disability, accessibility, and inclusion by providing free presentations from a diverse group of people with mobility, vision, and hearing disabilities to schools and communities across Canada.

### **Education Toolkits**

#### **Rick Hansen Story (Grades K-8)**

Using Rick's story as a focal point, students develop an understanding of the potential of persons with disabilities, while learning about geography, weather systems, mathematical computation, teamwork, and reading comprehension. Students are encouraged to analyze environments from others' perspective, empathize, problem solve, collaborate with peers, and communicate the importance of teamwork.

#### **Abilities in Motion Program (All Grades)**

These toolkits increases awareness about the importance of accessibility and inclusion while changing attitudes about the potential of people with disabilities. Have your students try this fun and effective tool to develop communication, teamwork, mentoring, and creative thinking skills, and foster an understanding of social responsibility.

#### **Difference Maker Program (All Grades)**

These toolkits introduces the idea that anyone can accomplish extraordinary things simply by thinking and acting beyond his or her own interests, and ends in an optional award ceremony recognizing students for making a difference in their school or local community. These four lessons can be taught over a week, a month or a term and is easily incorporated into existing curriculum.

#### **Personal Leadership Unit (Grades 9-12)**

This toolkit provides students with a new outlook on leadership, as something that already exists within themselves rather than outside themselves. As Rick says, "What saved me is I focused on what I could do." Lessons focus on problem-solving, decision-making, and communications skills.



Rick Hansen Foundation

WE Care for Kids

In Honour of the Ones We Love

Toldo Foundation

Helping Hands

Architecture Inc.

Italian Women's Club

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