



ACCESS AND FACILITIES

- Where are the accessible Playgrounds? Most Councils now provide attractive booklets giving locations of parks and playgrounds and may even include details of barbecue locations. However, very few indicate whether the area is accessible to the physically disabled by the provision of special car parking facilities and accessible toilets. The use of signs to indicate accessibility is important.
- Is special car parking for disabled persons available adjacent to the playground?
- Are the car parking spaces designed to allow the disabled to manoeuvre adjacent to the car for ease of egress and ingress?
- Are the spaces located at the end of a parking bay or parallel to a kerb wide enough or clear on one side to enable disabled people to get in or out of the vehicle?
- Is there at least one entrance to the facility that is usable by the disabled from the car parking spaces?
- Is there level access between each car parking space for the disabled and adjoining walkways?
- If there is a level change from the parking space to the adjoining walkway is there a ramp provided?
- Are the car parking spaces paved with a level, non-slip surface with minimum texture?
- Are the reserved car parking spaces identified with signs "For Use by Disabled Only" and accompanied by a symbol of access?
- Are toilets placed in an accessible position and are they planned for use by the disabled?
- Are the public toilets accommodating chairbound disabled people on level sites or have ramped access, and are they identified by special signs?
- Are suitable paths and ramps provided to allow disabled persons to enter the playground from several parts of the park or adjoining areas?
- Do the paths actually reach the beginning of the undersurfacing of the playground?

DESIGN OF PLAYGROUND

- Is the play area designed so that wheelchairs can get around it?
Ramps, bridges and hard surface paths may be needed to ensure full access to all parts of the playground. In designing paths, curves should be gradual and right angles should be avoided. The same system will serve for persons wheeling prams or children riding bicycles.

The technical problems found-in manipulating wheelchairs on gravel paths, similarly to those experienced by parents wheeling prams, should be considered in the design of paths.

- Are the facilities accessible to a disabled user?
Because of the effort and planning involved in getting a family with disabled members to a playground it often becomes a longer period stay and so the following facilities are of importance -picnic tables, barbecues, drinking fountains.
- Is the overall design of the playground appropriate for a family of children of a variety of ages, including a child/children with disabilities?
- Is the actual play environment safe for a disabled child?
- Has the need for fencing been considered?

The need for some space restriction is often required by children with disabilities. While not suggesting that all playgrounds should be fenced, consideration should be given to the need for some selected playgrounds to be fenced, using an aesthetically satisfactory closing off with wood and/or trees and shrubs.

- Do the design features encourage quality play for children with disabilities?
- Does the playground maximise opportunities for social inclusion for all children?

The placing of fixed equipment is important to all children, but even more so for a disabled child who may not see, hear or perceive inherent danger in closeness to moving equipment.

- Is there a duplication of activities in the playground to enable children with different abilities to enjoy similar experiences?
- Does the play equipment enable shared play experiences ?
eg a hammock
- Does the setting in the playground allow for a disabled parent to participate, converse with others, see and be involved with their children at play?
- Does the play equipment enable parents to assist children to use the equipment?
eg placing a child on a slide, getting to the run out in time to collect child
- How many of us can get out of some of those aesthetically pleasing curved park benches without using our arms and legs?
The elderly also would appreciate some seating with arms.
- Is there shelter and protection from sun and rain for the children at play and their adult companions? A sand tray under trees?

Children with disabilities are, first and foremost children. They desire and need opportunities to engage in child's play, as do all children.

With today's emphasis on mainstreaming disabled individuals and getting the most cost-effective outcome, separate playgrounds for the disabled generally are not only unnecessary, but also not financially responsible.