



The Accessible Playgrounds for Parents with Disabilities Project

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Background

Playgrounds are valuable environments for outdoor play (Boxberger & Reimers, 2019; Loebach & Cox, 2020).

- Increased moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- Increased diversity of opportunities for play.
- Creativity, problem solving, risk-taking/challenge.
- Social contacts with peers.

Parents have an important role in child access and use of playgrounds (Boxberger & Reimers, 2019; Morgenthaler, Schulze, Pentland, & Lynch, 2023)

- Can restrict or facilitate outdoor play.
- Children value adults playing with them and watching and encouraging play.
- Children feel connected to and safe at playgrounds when caring adults are present.
- Playgrounds are family spaces and include social opportunities for parents.

Accessibility features at a park or playground are clear determinants of whether an individual with a disability will visit the space (Jacob et al., 2017; Perry et al., 2021; Perry et al., 2018).

- Information about features like location of accessible bathrooms, seating, available shelter and shade, and transportation access, make decisions about whether to go to a park easier.
- Information is often difficult to find for neighborhood (non-destination) parks.

Proposed Solution

Searchable national database of playgrounds focusing on accessibility features for parent.

Want to Participate?

We are setting up capstone projects and looking for individual therapists to contribute.

Contact Stacy Frauwirth at sfrauwrith@lookingglass.org

Modified PARCs (Parks for Activities and Recreation in our Communities) “Evaluation Tool for Assessing the Accessibility and Usability of Community Parks and Playgrounds”

(Perry et al., 2018; mod. Gipson Showalter)

ADA regulations

- Connected routes
- Number of parking spaces
- Accessible bus stops
- Routes and doorways with width minimums
- Slope/grade

Universal design

- Placement of routes, i.e. through play structures
- Landscaping around parking spaces accommodating adults with disabilities as drivers
- Bus stops nearby parks
- Routes allowing rest along travel and space for passing/movement at different speeds

Path Surfaces

	Yes	No
1. Are there tactile markers to denote changes in path direction?	1	0
2. Are there tactile markers to denote changes in path height?	1	0
3. Do the tactile markers have a contrasting color to improve visibility when noting changes in the path?	1	0
4. Are the surfaces regular/even? Mark NO if there are irregular surfacing, joins, un-beveled sloping sections, cracks, holes, ½” (6.4mm) or more (ADA).	1	0
5. Are the surfaces stable? Mark NO if the surface contains loose gravel, sand, bark, clay, etc.	1	0
6. Presence of lighting along main paths? Mark NO if there is no/poor/uneven/dazzling lighting along the circulation paths.	1	0
7. Are there routes without steps?	1	0

Visual information

	Yes	No
1. Are there high contrast colors between play equipment and the orientation path?	1	0
2. Are there high contrast colors to indicate different heights?	1	0
3. Are the colors of the surfacing material different within and outside a fall zone? <i>HINT: the fall zone is the area under and around a piece of equipment where a child might land or exit that equipment.</i>	1	0

Factors Influencing Accessibility – What Can You Identify?

