

What is an Inclusive Playground?

An Inclusive Playground provides opportunities for people of all abilities to play together and find challenges at their own level, including people who have autism, intellectual disabilities, hearing impairments, cerebral palsy, spina bifida and other disabilities. It also addresses the needs of able-bodied children.

While all inclusive playgrounds are also accessible to people with physical disabilities, not all accessible playgrounds can be considered inclusive playgrounds. An accessible playground does not always create the optimal space for disabled and able-bodied children to play and interact with each other. Inclusive playgrounds go above and beyond the minimum standards of accessibility to promote a truly inclusive experience so every child at the playground can feel like they belong.


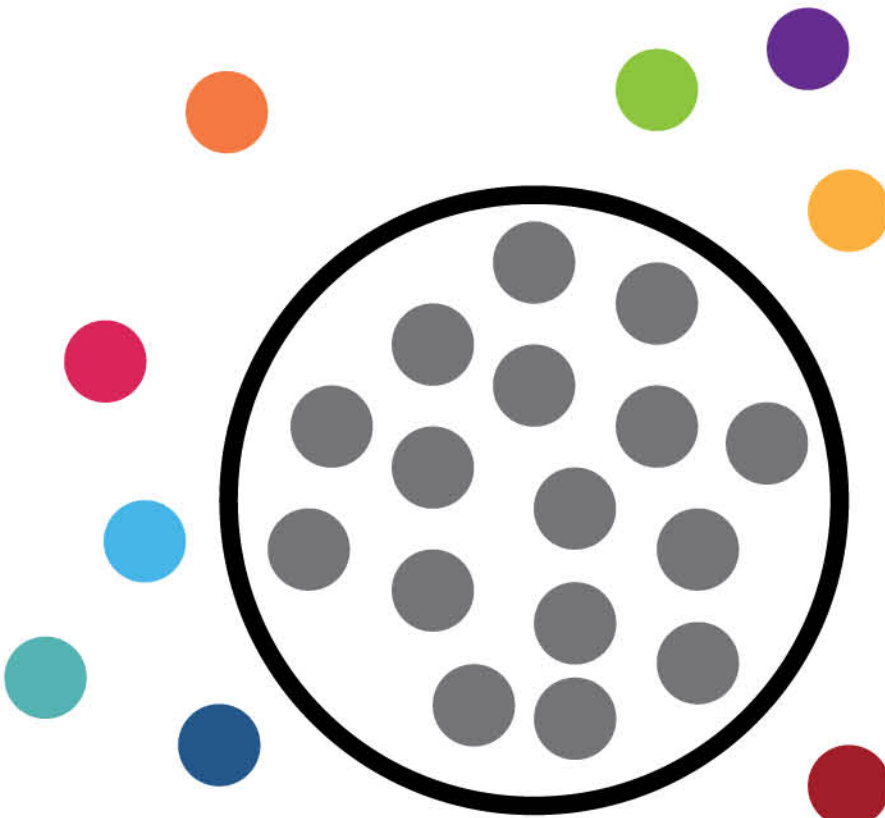
- Key Features of Inclusive Playgrounds:**
- 1. Unified accessible surface materials
 - 2. Clear Maneuverable Routes
 - 3. Clear Playground Edges and Play Zones
 - 4. Social Play Spaces and Social Play Equipment
 - 5. Calm Areas
 - 6. Sensory Components that engage all the senses
 - 7. Various Levels of Challenge

{1} Source: <https://playworld.com/blog/inclusive-playgrounds-vs-accessible-playgrounds/#gref>

Traditional Playgrounds and Accessibility:

Exclusion


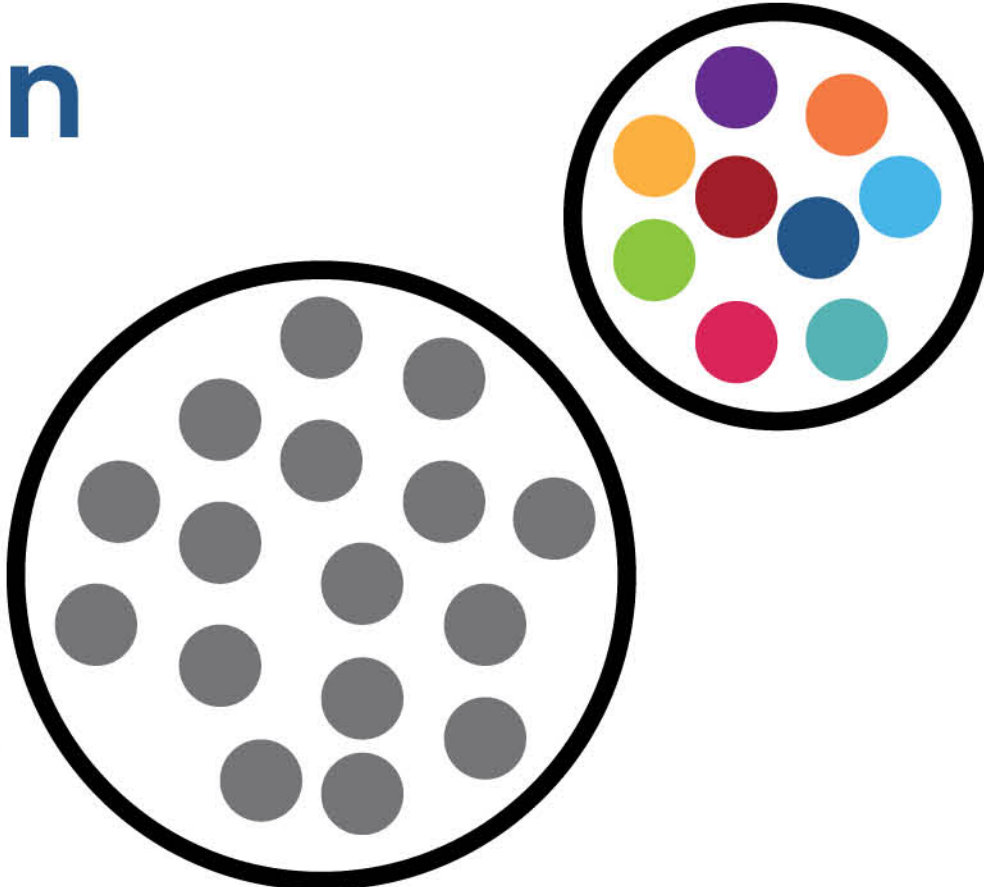
Many traditional playgrounds exclude people who use wheelchairs or mobility devices, even when complying with Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) guidelines.



The mulch surface on this playground is considered accessible but excludes people with physical disabilities.

Segregation


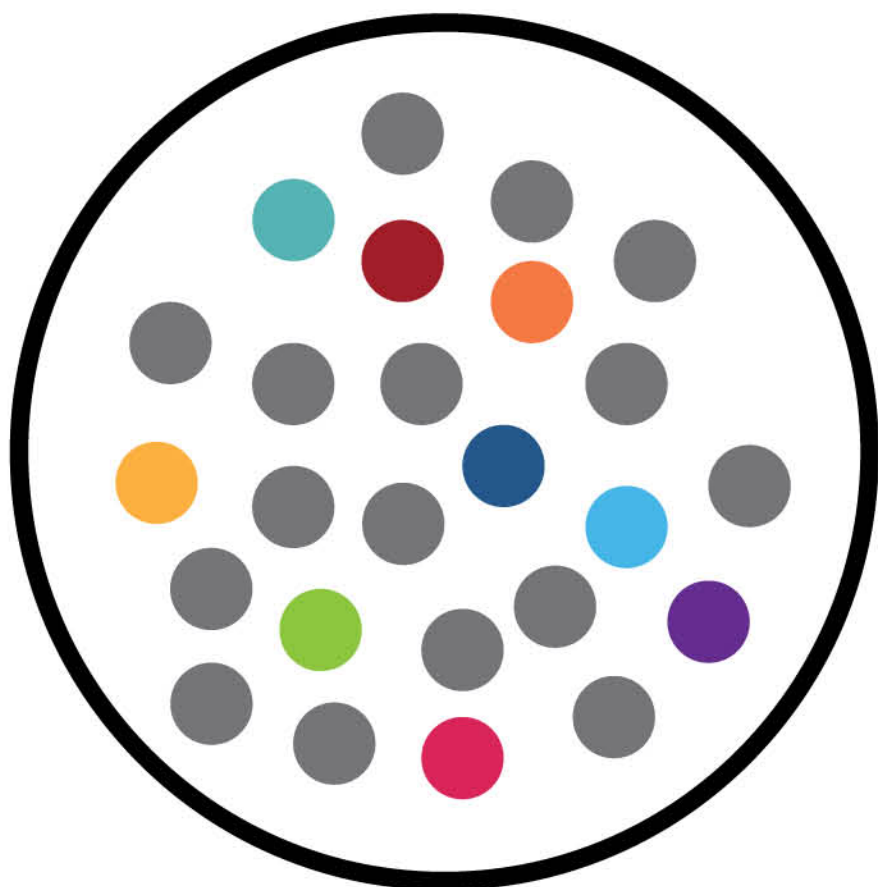
Sometimes playgrounds have special equipment for people who use wheelchairs but the equipment is isolated from other play areas.



This is an example of a playground that segregates equipment designed for physical disabilities away from other types of equipment.

Inclusion

Inclusive playgrounds expand upon accessibility by creating an environment that encourages kids of all abilities to interact with the playground equipment and play together.



This is an example of a playground that has different levels of challenge right next to each other so kids of different abilities can play together.

Examples of Inclusive Play Features:



Example of an inclusive carousel that is fun for everyone



Example of a play zone with spinners of different challenge



Example of a 'coolest thing' - A play hill that is accessible to everyone



Example of different types of swings next to each other



Example of calm area for kids who want to take a break



Example of sensory zone with music

Inclusive Playground at the New Community Park in Lincoln City

Principles of Inclusive Playground Design

1. Be Active, Fair, and Included

- Include levels of challenge for all ages and abilities
- Include different levels of the same type of activity near each other (e.g. spinning)

2. Be Independent, Safe, and Comfortable

- Create easy to understand zones
- Create clear circulation
- Provide Shade
- Provide Seating
- Provide a balance of active zones and quiet zones

