



ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND DESIGN STANDARD

JULY 2025



Alt Text: A photo of a playground with a colorful play set. The sky is blue and there are tall green trees in the background. In the foreground is a bright red Prairie Lily flower pattern in the green rubberized surfacing. In the near-centre of the photo there is a large yellow circular climbing structure that stands out amongst blue and green play equipment.

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1. Scope

This accessible playground standard shall guide the design of playgrounds in City of Regina (City) parks including existing playgrounds that have been selected by the City for refurbishment or replacement. This standard shall also guide the design of all City funded or partially funded playgrounds. This design standard does not apply to fitness equipment.

This standard describes design requirements for two types of City playgrounds:

1. **Neighbourhood Playground with Accessible Elements:** located approximately 800 metres from most residences and provides a gathering area that is intended to accommodate small groups and short visits.
2. **Destination Accessible (DA) Playground:** located at a neighbourhood hub and is approximately 3 kilometres from most residences. A DA Playground is intended to accommodate extended visits and large groups of people.

2. Annex H

The design requirements of this standard are supplementary to the accessibility design minimums described in CSA Z614:20 *Children's playground equipment and surfacing* – Annex H (informative) *Children's playgrounds and equipment that are accessible to persons with disabilities*.

3. Design Review and Approvals

Design requirements of playgrounds and gathering areas shall be approved by the City's Manager, Planning & Partnerships or their designate.

4. Have questions about this Standard?

Contact City of Regina Coordinator, Parks & Recreation Planning at cbachins@regina.ca.

All questions related to a City of Regina playground design actively in the tender process shall be directed to City Procurement at procurement@regina.ca

5. Design Requirements: **Gathering Area**

		Design Requirement? Y/N	
Item	Description	Neighbourhood Playground with Accessible Elements	Destination Accessible Playground
5.1 Universal Design			
	All gathering areas will adhere to the seven (7) principles of universal design. See Glossary.	Y	Y
5.2 Accessible Pathway			
	Accessible Pathway(s) shall provide a direct route of travel to playground from park entrance(s).	Y	Y
	Accessible Pathway(s) shall provide a direct route of travel to supporting amenities, such as washroom building, designated accessible parking stall(s), where applicable.		
	If site analysis determines the need, benches shall be provided along the accessible pathway for rest.		
	Accessible Pathways shall have a minimum width of 1525mm and		
	have a slip-resistant, continuous and even surface, and		
	provide ramps, wherever required, to overcome a difference in elevation greater than 13mm. e.g. at sidewalks, parking areas, transition from pathway into safety surfacing etc. and		
	have a maximum vertical slope 5% and		
	have a maximum cross slope 1%.		
5.3 Shade			
Shade Trees	See Plantings below for further information.	Y	Y
	The Gathering Areas shall provide trees for users to rest in shade.		
	Trees shall be located to create shading opportunities during peak hours of summer sunshine (July, August).		
	A playground and/or gathering area shall be sited to take advantage of existing trees, whenever possible.	if applicable to project site, yes	if applicable to project site, yes
Shade Structures	A permanent shade structure e.g. shade sail, gazebo, picnic shelter etc. shall be provided for the provision of shade.	upon approval by the City's Manager, Planning & Partnerships	Y
	Size, materials, construction and location of shade structure to be approved by the City's Manager. Planning & Partnerships or designate.		

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5.4 Site Furnishings			
General	All site furnishings shall be commercial grade and tamper resistant.	Y	Y
Benches	Minimum Quantity Required:	2	4
	Benches shall be provided in both sunny and shaded areas within the gathering area.	Y	Y
	Benches shall be accessed by an accessible pathway or accessible play route.		
	Benches shall have good sightlines to play area.		
	Benches shall be installed on a reinforced concrete pad and will accommodate a stroller or mobility device beside the bench.		
	Benches shall have back and arms. Any other bench style to be approved by the City's Manager, Planning & Partnerships or designate.		
Trash Units	Minimum Quantity Required:	1	3
	Trash Units shall be provided in the gathering area of all playgrounds.	Y	Y
	Trash Units shall be accessed by an accessible pathway.		
	Trash Units shall be located away from benches, play structure, picnic tables and other gathering places to reduce user's proximity to odors and insects.		
	Trash units shall be anchored onto a reinforced concrete pad.		
	Trash Units shall be 32 gallon receptable with liner and lid.		
Bike racks	Minimum Quantity Required:	no minimum	6 bikes
	Bike racks shall be provided within the gathering area of playgrounds.	Optional	Y
	Bike racks shall be installed on a reinforced concrete pad accessed by an accessible pathway.	Y	Y
Picnic tables	Minimum Quantity Required:	No minimum	3 tables
	Picnic tables shall be provided within the gathering area at playgrounds.	Optional	Y
	Picnic tables shall be provided in both sunny and shaded areas of the playground.	If applicable, yes.	Y
	All picnic tables shall be accessible such that each table will accommodate a minimum of one wheelchair user.		
	Picnic tables shall be anchored onto a reinforced concrete pad.		
Mobility devices and stroller parking	The gathering area shall provide a level accessible surface to serve as parking for mobility devices and/or strollers. This parking area will be in addition to the space for mobility devices next to benches and separate from bike parking. This area shall be adjacent to an accessible pathway and have a minimum dimension of 1525mm x 1800mm.	Optional	Y

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5.5 Sensory Relief Area			
	A sensory relief area is a quiet or cozy spot to find refuge away from the excitement of the playground.		
	A minimum of one sensory relief area shall be provided within the playground or gathering area.	Optional	Y
	The sensory relief area shall be located along an accessible play route or accessible pathway.	If applicable, yes.	Y
	All areas designed for accessibility devices including quiet spaces shall include space for an adult caregiver or friend.	If applicable, yes.	Y
5.6 Park Amenities			
Washroom Facilities	A washroom is not a requirement for an accessible playground but is encouraged.	Optional	Y
Accessible Vehicle Parking	Playgrounds shall provide off-street accessible parking.	N	Preferred
	Playgrounds shall provide accessible on-street parking.	Y	Yes if off-street parking is not available
	Accessible parking stalls shall be sited a maximum of 125m from playground.	Y	Y
	Accessible parking stalls shall be clearly designated with line paint and signage.		
	Quantity of on-street accessible parking stalls shall be determined in consultation with Traffic Engineering.		
	Accessible parking design process: Consultant shall conduct site analysis to identify proposed location for accessible parking. Consultant to submit parking plan for review by Traffic Engineering. Parking plan drawing to include: proposed accessible stall location, stall dimensions, line paint design, sign location, proposed site changes e.g. ramps, sidewalk extensions etc.		
5.7 Plantings			
Plantings General	All plant material in gathering areas and/or playgrounds shall be Zone 2b or hardier.	Y	Y
	If adjacent to pathways, plant material shall not drop any fruit or debris that can create a barrier on pathways for mobility devices.		
	Fruiting or coniferous trees shall not impede the clear headroom of 2100mm when overhanging accessible routes and shall be planted away from playground safety surfacing to avoid fruit and needles falling onto the playground's safety surfacing.		
	Refer to CSA Z614:20 Annex G.8 Plant materials in children's playgrounds, for minimum requirements regarding plant selection safety.		
Trees	A minimum of 15 large-canopy shade trees shall be provided within the gathering area.	Y	Y

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Sensory Planting Beds	Sensory Planting Beds may be incorporated into the gathering area and/or playground.	optional	optional
	Sensory Planting Beds shall provide sensory experiences including sounds, sight, touch and smell and	If applicable, yes.	If applicable, yes.
	be composed of trees and woody shrubs (perennial plants to be considered at the discretion of the City's Manager, Planning & Partnerships) or designate and		
	be accessed by an accessible play route and/or accessible pathway and		
	have a minimum of 20% of the beds raised to the following accessibility dimension requirements; have a top surface of 860mm maximum; and have knee and toe space for a front approach that is 735mm minimum high at the front edge, 500mm minimum deep, and 900mm minimum wide.		
5.8 Perimeter Fencing			
	Perimeter fencing shall be provided around the gathering area of playground.	N	Y
	Placement of fencing shall provide adequate offsets from site furnishings to ensure the gathering area provides sufficient room for gathering and play.	N	Y
	Provide limited number of person entry/exit points (typically 2). The quantity of entry points may vary depending on the size of the playground and gathering area. Person entry/exit points to have a minimum clear opening width of 1100mm. Fence entry points shall not have a gate with closure. Rather, fence entry points shall have an overlap of fence with 1525mm clear space measured at a right angle to the entry way.		
	Fencing shall be 1070mm height black chainlink fence, or equivalent material approved by the City's Manager, Planning & Partnerships or designate.		

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6. Design Requirements: **Playgrounds**

		Design Requirement? Y/N	
<i>Item</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Neighbourhood Playground with Accessible Elements</i>	<i>Destination Accessible Playground</i>
6.1 Universal Design			
	All playgrounds will adhere to the seven (7) principles of universal design. See Glossary.	Y	Y
6.2 Playground Siting			
	Destination playgrounds are to be located on a transit route.	N	Y
6.3 Accessible & Inclusive Playgrounds			
	All new playgrounds are to meet the definitions of accessible and inclusive playgrounds as defined below:	Y	Y
	Accessible playground: Accessibility is about travel, movement and approach or entry. A playground that is accessible is one that is easy for a person who uses a mobility device to maneuver to and around.	Y	Y
	Inclusive playground: designed to meet the needs of a variety of disabilities such as visual impairments, hearing impairments, communication, cognitive disabilities, sensory sensitivities, physical disabilities etc, designed thoughtfully to encourage engagement and interaction of multiple abilities.	Y	Y
6.4 Materials - Play Components			
	Play component materials shall meet safety standards described in CSA Z614:20 Children's playground equipment and surfacing.	Y	Y
	Manufactured playground components shall be made of steel and plastics.		
	Other manufactured play component materials to be approved by the City's Manager, Planning & Partnerships or designate.		

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6.5 Materials – Safety Surfacing			
	Safety Surfacing shall meet safety requirements as described in CSA Z614:20 Children’s playground equipment and surfacing.	Y	Y
	All new and refurbished playgrounds shall provide accessible safety surfacing that meets ASTM1951 standards.		
	Loose materials, including but not limited to, Engineered Wood Fibre (EWF), sand and pea stone shall not be accepted as accessible safety surfacing material at new or refurbished City playgrounds.		
	All high-wear locations e.g. bottom of slides, under swings etc. shall double the thickness of the specified Poured in Place Rubber wear layer to provide increased durability.		
6.6 Total Play Area			
	Playground shall have a minimum total area of 300m².	No minimum	Y
6.7 Accessible Play Route			
	An accessible play route is an unobstructed route that connects users to play components. An accessible play route shall be monolithic safety surfacing (e.g. poured in place rubber surfacing), a play structure ramp, or a play structure platform accessed by a ramp.	Y	Y
	Transfer stations shall not act as the primary means of access to an accessible play route but may be included as a secondary access option. A transfer station may be used as the primary means of access to individual play components (eg slides) that otherwise meet the requirements of this document.		
	An accessible play route shall have a minimum width of 1100mm.		
	A minimum of a 1525mm turning diameter, must be provided at the end of an accessible path, walkway or corridor, including platforms for slides/poles/climbing structures.		
6.8 Play Components			
	Minimum percentage of play components along an accessible route.	50%	75%
	A maximum of 15% of accessible play components requires a person to exit their mobility device.	Y	Y
	Play components shall be quantified based on: 1. the type of play experience they provide; and 2. if they are functionally linked. Functionally linked play components are play features that have been laid out to provoke continuous or circuit play, but provide the same play experience.	Y	Y

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	Functionally linked play, such as a parkour climbing system, where the primary type of play provided is 'climbing', which requires advanced upper body strength and fine motor skills, will be counted as one play component. Similarly, if 5 steppingstones and a balance beam are grouped together, they would be counted as one play component, promoting balance. Each slide will be counted as one play component, so long as each slide differs in their slide experience. i.e. double slide, curve slide, rumble slide etc. Swings will be counted based on the type of swing provided and not on the number of individual swings provided. For example, if a swing set has 5 swings and of those swings, 4 are belt swings, 1 is a rotomolded swing this swing set would be counted as 2 play components. Because the swing set provides 2 different swing experiences. ** Note: Baby (swing) bucket will not contribute towards the count for play components, as all children must be lifted and placed in the swing. The swing must be placed at a height suitable for a caregiver in a mobility device to place the child in the swing and push them. Each panel will be counted as one play component, so long as each play panel provides a different play experience to the play panel(s) located adjacent.		
	Sensory plantings or plants are not to be included in the count as play components;		
	A minimum of one of each type of play experience is to be accessible. Type of play experiences is listed in Appendix A. Preference for side-by-side play of varying abilities.		
	Accessible play elements must be appropriate for a person with a mobility device to maneuver around.		
6.9 Elevated Play			
	Elevated play is not a requirement of an accessible playground.	Y	Y
	If elevated accessible play is provided in the playground the design professional shall avoid creating a 'ramp to nowhere'. Whereby, the elevated play route shall have play components along its route and/or shall have an engaging and fun accessible play event/component at its terminus.	If applicable, yes.	If applicable, yes.
6.10 Sensory Cues and Contrast			
	A play structure's surface colours (platforms/ramps) shall be in high contrast to	Y	Y

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	its vertical elements (hand/guard rail colour). e.g dark brown ramp and light blue handrail.		
	To show change in elevation, a high contrast colour horizontal strip shall be located along the edge of each stair tread and at the top and bottom of each ramp. e.g. dark blue ramp and yellow horizontal strip.		
	A high contrast colour shall be used on accessible safety surfacing to indicate obstacles, such as the end of the slide, or free-standing items like a post of a swing set. Additionally, high contrast colour shall indicate the safety areas of swinging, spinning or other movement-based play features.		
	A high contrast colour shall be used to indicate the boundary or perimeter of the playground.		
6.11 Communication Board			
	The playground shall include a City-approved communication board.	Y	Y

7. Glossary of Terms

The terms of accessibility and disability are complex and ever-changing as society grows and develops. The Saskatchewan Government defines Accessibility as follows:

“Accessibility means that all people can take part in their communities through work, play and other daily activities. Accessibility is about removing barriers so people can feel included and have independence. Accessibility is important for everyone, especially people with disabilities.” - *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act - Summary | Accessibility Legislation for Saskatchewan, 2023*

Disability: A complex term that is based on a person’s physical body experiencing barriers created by the environment that prevent a person from fully participating in the community to the greatest extent possible. Many members of the disability community prefer the term disability, however this is not necessarily the case for everyone and other terms may be preferable for some members of the community.

The Accessible Saskatchewan Act defines disability as: “Any impairment that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual’s full and equal participation in society and includes:

- (a) a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment; and
- (b) a functional limitation;

whether permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, or evident or not.” - *The Accessible Saskatchewan Act - Summary | Accessibility Legislation for Saskatchewan, 2023*

Inclusion: “Inclusion is a universal human right and its objective is to accept, welcome and embrace all people irrespective of race, gender, disability, medical or other need. Inclusion consists of the efforts and practices to ensure groups or individuals with different backgrounds are culturally and socially accepted and treated equally.” – *What is Inclusion? Inclusion Ontario. 2022*

Accessible Pathway: An accessible pathway is a continuous, connected and unobstructed pathway that leads directly from park entrance(s) and park amenities to the playground’s safety surfacing. An accessible pathway shall be absent of changes in elevation greater than 13mm (0.5”).

Accessible Play Route: An accessible play route is an unobstructed route that connects users to play components and has a minimum width of 1100mm. An accessible play route shall be monolithic safety surfacing (e.g. poured in place rubber surfacing), a ramp or play structure platform accessed by a ramp.

Accessible Playground: Accessibility is about travel, movement and approach or entry. A playground that is accessible is one that is easy for a person who uses a mobility device to maneuver to and around.

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Inclusive Playground: designed to meet the needs of a variety of disabilities such as visual impairments, hearing impairments, communication, cognitive disabilities, sensory sensitivities, physical disabilities etc, designed thoughtfully to encourage engagement and interaction of multiple abilities.

Play Structure/Equipment/Components/Elements: An element intended to generate specific opportunities for play, socialization, or learning. Play components shall meet safety standards described in CSA Z614:20. Note: Within this standard the terms play structure, play equipment, play component, play event and play element have been used interchangeably.

Playground: A portion of a park intended for play that meets safety requirements described in CSA Z614:20. A playground typically includes a play structure within an area of safety surfacing defined by an edger or curb. See Figure 1.

Gathering Area: A portion of a park surrounding and/or adjacent to a playground with supporting amenities for the purpose of creating a welcoming environment to rest and socialize. See Figure 1.

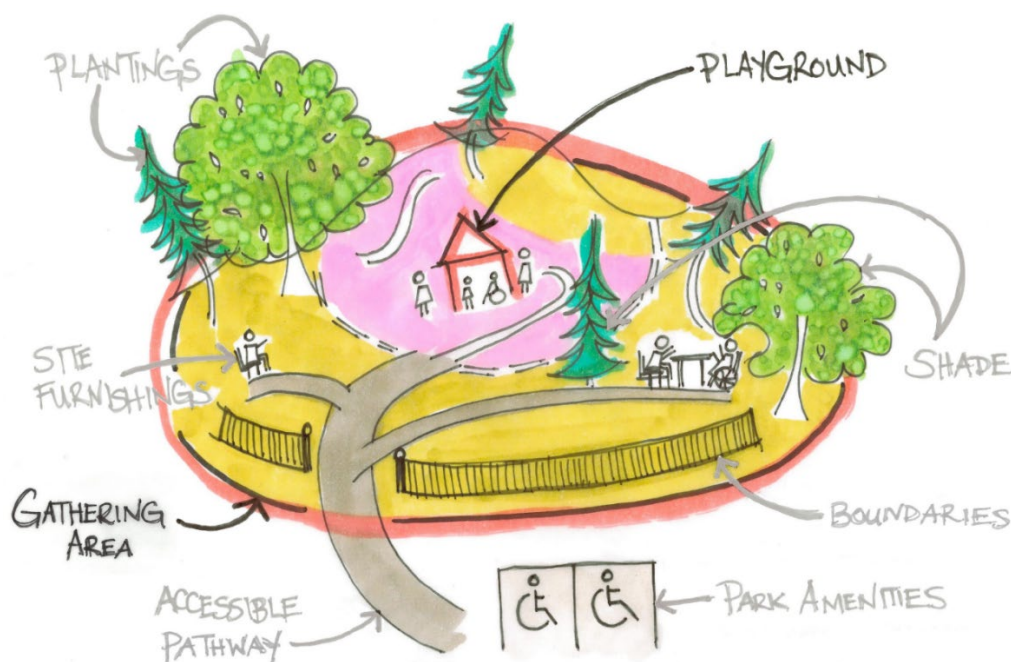


Figure 1 – Playground & Gathering Area Diagram

Alt Text: A drawing illustrates a pink and red playground surrounded by green trees with a grey pathway that leads to it. Benches and a picnic table are shown next to the pathway. The pink and red play structure is labeled 'Playground'. Encircling the whole scene is an orange/red circle labeled 'Gathering Area'.

Universal Design: Seven (7) principles

Principle 1: Equitable Use

The design can be used by people with diverse abilities.

Principle 2: Flexibility in Use

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

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use

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

Principle 4: Perceptible Information

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

Principle 5: Tolerance for Error

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

Principle 6: Low Physical Effort

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with minimum fatigue.

Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use

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

Appendix A – Play Experience Types

Play Experience Types

Providing a rich and inclusive play space involves integrating a variety of play experiences into the fabric of the playground. Play experiences should be available to users of all abilities and provide graduated levels of challenge within each play experience. There are three overarching categories of play experience: Physical, Sensory and Social.

1. **Physical Play**

When selecting physical play components, it is encouraged to integrate pieces that will offer a range of opportunities that provide various, graduating levels of challenge. Physical play components help children to develop muscle memory, balance, spatial awareness and coordination.

1.1 Seven (7) types of physical play:

1. spinning/rotating,
2. sliding,
3. gliding/rocking,
4. swinging,
5. balancing,
6. climbing/crawling,
7. running/walking/rolling.

1.2 Physical Play Experience Examples

Below are examples of play experiences that stimulate these aspects of physical play. Designers can employ the examples below; however, through the design process they are also encouraged to research and explore different examples of physical play and incorporate them into the playground design.

1. Spinning/Rotating

- a. Individual seated and standing spinners
- b. Dish spinners
- c. Rotating climbers
- d. Merry-go-rounds and carousels with wide entries and are flush with the adjacent playground surface to accommodate a mobility device.
- e. Tire swings that allow for rotation.

2. Sliding

- a. Roller slide – allow for a gentler slope and provide a tactile and sliding experience
- b. Slides with and without curves and hills
- c. Tube and spiral slides
- d. Slides with transfer seating at both the top and bottom

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- e. Wide slides to accommodate an adult or for a child and care giver to slide together.
- 3. Gliding/Rocking
 - a. Rockers – individual and group use
 - b. Group gliders that can be accessed with a mobility device
- 4. Swinging
 - a. Belt swings
 - b. Bucket swings and harness swings for children and adults that provide back support
 - c. Tire swings
 - d. Saucer swings – allow children to lie down safely if they are unable to support self when sitting up
 - e. Accessible wheel-on swings that allow children to board the swing without having to leave their mobility device
- 5. Balancing
 - a. Balance beams (straight, curvy) at varying heights and with and without supports.
 - b. Balance bars for building upper body strength and allow free swinging of the lower body. When possible, provide bars of varying heights.
- 6. Climbing/ Crawling
 - a. Ladders with solid rungs
 - b. Stairs with a low incline and handrails on either side
 - c. Ramps
 - d. Rope ladders
 - a. Crawl events at ground level.
 - b. Play decks that encourage crawling.
- 7. Running, Walking, Rolling
 - a. Safety surfacing track or playground pathway that uses a different style or colour from the adjacent surface.
 - b. Pathway that undulates
 - c. Clear and wide pathways through the play equipment structures or to and from the playground.
 - d. Obstacle course on the playground surface that is accessible and allows for a child using a mobility device to participate.

2. **Sensory Play**

Sensory components encourage the use of sight, touch, hearing and smell. Sensory play components can provide play experiences for all users.

- 1.3 Five (5) types of sensory play:
- 1. tactile
 - 2. visual

3. auditory
4. natural elements
5. cozy spaces/sensory relief areas

1.4 Sensory Play Experience Examples

Below are examples of play experiences that stimulate these aspects of sensory play. Designers can employ the examples below; however, through the design process they are also encouraged to research and explore different examples of sensory play and incorporate them into the playground design.

1. Tactile

- a. Roller slide
- b. Boulders, rocks
- c. Rope
- d. Rubber components
- e. Braille and tactile graphics
- f. Moving components and puzzle games; elements that can be manipulated or respond to touch
- g. Textured paths, designs and shapes

2. Visual

- a. Visual variance in colour, patterns, light to help identify spaces
- b. Sensory maze
- c. Colour contrast or patterns to identify zones or spaces

3. Auditory

- a. Musical instruments or noise-making elements
- b. Talking tubes

4. Natural Elements

- a. Set playground within existing landscape and incorporate elements of landscape to provide strong sense of place
- b. Addition of items found in nature, such as boulders, logs, or hills

5. Sensory Relief Areas

- a. Quiet areas that allow for solitary play
- b. Quiet space located out of the main play area
- c. Area under play structure, 'cave' or enclosed element with windows

3. **Social Play**

Through play, children learn to socialize and interact with others while developing creativity and imagination. For this reason, the act of play is an important development tool that fosters emotional and cognitive functioning.

Below are Mildred Parten's six stages of play. Unoccupied play is identified as the first stage of play, or the simplest form of play. While on the other end of

the spectrum, cooperative play is identified as the most complex. Designing an environment that supports all six types of social play ensures that individuals at various developmental stages are accommodated.

These six stages of play are divided into two categories: non-social play and social play. The first three stages, unoccupied, solitary and onlooker are non-social or independent play experiences. While the remaining three stages, parallel, associative and cooperative are social play experiences that introduce playing with or interacting with others.

1.5 Six (6) types of social play:

1. Unoccupied play: a child explores or observes or acknowledges their environment or surroundings without structure. Sometimes referred to as "infant play," children can practice unoccupied play through movement and touch.
2. Solitary play: a child entertains themselves independently with little regard for those around them.
3. Onlooker play: a child actively watches others play without joining in the activity.
4. Parallel play: a child plays side-by-side with peers but without much social interaction.
5. Associative play: children begin to play the same games, use the same toys, or participate in the same activity. They will observe and imitate one another, but they are not following the same rules or goals.
6. Cooperative play: children play and communicate with each other. Together they follow the same rules and work towards the same goal

Revisions		
Description	Notes	Date
Accessible Playground Design Standard Initial Publication		July 2025