

Making Playgrounds Inclusive for All



Inclusive Playground Bonding Proposal

All children deserve access to a safe place to play. Playgrounds should not only accommodate physical disabilities but also include the unique needs of children with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need fencing, separation from water hazards, and physical barriers on busy streets to keep them safe.

This bill provides funding to cities working in partnership with community stakeholders for pre-planning, design, and construction of playgrounds that are truly accessible and inclusive to all children, including those with all types of disabilities.

The lack of inclusive playgrounds affects children with disabilities and their parents who want a safe place for their kids to interact with children with and without disabilities.

"I still have clear memories about what it was like for my school's playground to not be accessible nor safe for me to play on. From a safety standpoint, I knew that climbing on the jungle gym or on high platforms was dangerous for me because of my trouble with staying balanced. From a social standpoint, however, I wanted to be able to play with my friends who grew tired of swinging on the swing set—the only playground equipment that I could use during recess—very quickly."

"Thinking about this from the perspective of sociology—which is what I am majoring in now—makes me realize the social implications of playing separately or playing either on certain parts of the playground or none at all. Being forced to choose between either an inaccessible playground or no playground at all made recess almost unenjoyable. Playing, and playing together, is at the core of what it means to be a child. The sooner we can empathize and mobilize the idea that kids of all abilities should be able to play together, the easier it will be to combat ableism as kids get older and engage in the world outside of play."

Katie Allee, 20
Gillette Children's Patient

"We so desperately wanted our child growing up to have fun on a playground. To freely explore. To play with other kids. For us as parents to connect with other parents/guardians. But our local neighborhood playgrounds were places of huge stress and exhaustion. They were not welcoming to our family."

From age 18 months to age 6 we never got to know families. My husband and I often marveled at how others could just stand around, or even sit and just chit-chat with neighbors while their kids played freely. Meanwhile, our dear kiddo couldn't see the difference between a 5-inch drop and a 5-foot drop and could absolutely not be left alone because she would step off the ledge of all playground equipment thinking it was the ground and fall. Or on the swing we would get her on it but she would forget, let go and fall off. We had to "helicopter" and we were judged for it, but it was absolutely necessary due to her invisible disabilities. It was a matter of life or death."

Accessibility and being inclusive is so much more than an ADA-compliant path to the playground and a wheelchair symbol. We can do better. Playgrounds must be designed and built with input from people with disabilities so that they are truly accessible to all."

Kate Quale
Minnesota Parent

City Partners:

Apple Valley
Fridley

Supporting Organizations:

