



University at Buffalo

Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access

School of Architecture and Planning

ACCESSIBILITY AND UNIVERSAL DESIGN BEST PRACTICES GUIDE FOR PLAYGROUNDS

KEY REQUIREMENTS + UNIVERSAL DESIGN

§ numbers refer to both ADA-2010 & A117.1-2017, unless otherwise noted. See Resources below.

1. Provide accessible surfaces such as a smooth, continuous, rubberized ground (ASTM F 1292 §106.2.10) from entry to play components.
2. Ensure at least one of each type of ground level play components are on an accessible route. Refer to the chart in ADA§240 for min. number of ground and elevated required on an accessible route.
3. Provide a clear floor space at accessible play components (ADA§1008.4.2) and a turning space on the same level as accessible play components (ADA§1008.4.1).
4. The ground-level accessible route must be 60 in. wide min. (or 44 in. wide min. in small play areas less than 1,000 sq.ft.)(ADA§1008.2.4.1).
5. Ensure ramps in play areas have a max. slope of 1:16 (6.25%) and a max. rise of 12 in. for any run (ADA§1008.2.5).
6. Transfer systems and transfer steps may be used to connect accessible route to some elevated play components (ADA§1008.3).

All images from Motion Junction Playground in Canandaigua, New York



This see-saw has back support and securement straps.



Amenities activate multiple senses, such as this music station.



This smiley face meet-up spot and buddy-bench help kids connect.



Ramps have a low slope and handrails are at children's height.

Disclaimer: This guide highlights key accessibility requirements only. It is not intended as a comprehensive substitute for applicable laws, regulations, or codes. Refer to such applicable requirements for details. Resources are for informational purposes only. The IDEA Center does not endorse any products, services, or opinions therein.

+ UNIVERSAL DESIGN

- Enclose playgrounds and provide exits observable from one location.
- Provide seating and shelters within playground enclosures.
- Provide equipment for different age, development, and ability levels, with a variety of sensory experiences (e.g., feeling, seeing, hearing).

RESOURCES

Universal Design - Books

- Inclusive Design: Implementation and Evaluation (2017)
- Universal Design: Creating Inclusive Environments (2012)

Universal Design - Websites

- IDEA Center: idea.ap.buffalo.edu
- Innovative Solutions for Universal Design: thisisUD.com
- Everyone Can Play Guidelines: everyonecanplay.nsw.gov.au
- Landscape Architects: asla.org/universalplaygrounds.aspx

Accessibility

- A117.1 Standard: webstore.ansi.org/standards/icc/ICCA1172017
- ADA Standards: access-board.gov/ada/
- ADA Guides: access-board.gov/ada/guides (See Chapter 10)

Universal Design Playground Manufacturers

- Landscape Structures: playlsi.com/en/playground-planning-tools/plan-your-playground/
- Playworld: playworld.com/inclusive-play/