

Inclusive Play

A guide to applying a wholistic design approach.

Brought to you by a_space Australia



What is play?

... and why is it so important?

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PLAY

Playing is a way of learning, of gathering information from the surrounding environment, in order to gain physical, emotional, social and cognitive development.

Children of all abilities deserve access to engaging and stimulating play environments to meet their developmental needs.

The Benefits of Play

Childhood developmental needs

Developing motor and social skills through play, as well as enabling mental development is the most common way of supporting children so that they are able to grow into individuals advancing as part of the community.



PHYSICAL

- Motor skills
- Cardiovascular Endurance
- Muscular endurance
- Co-ordination
- Renewal of energy
- Release of surplus energy
- Stability/balance
- Agility



EMOTIONAL

- Developing confidence
- Motivation
- Self perception
- Practice for adulthood
- Emotional regulation
- Sensory development
- Self expression
- Imaginative play



SOCIAL

- Relationships
- Empathy
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Ethics
- Society and culture
- Speech & communication
- Emotional connections



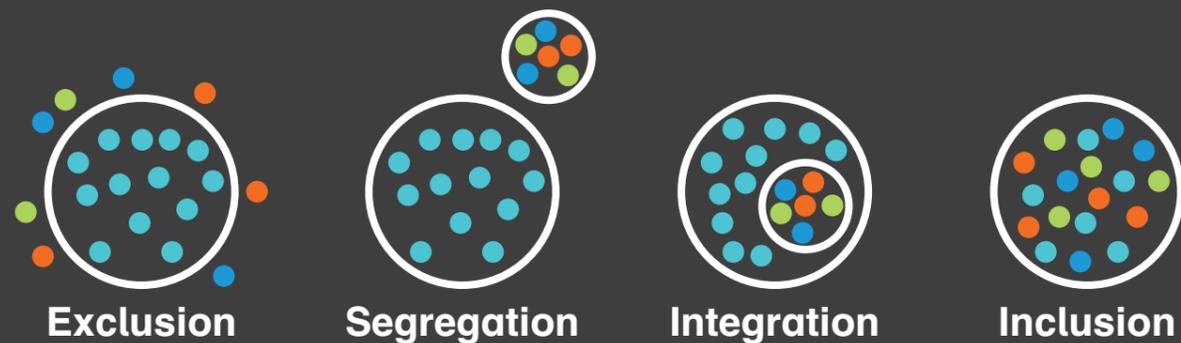
COGNITIVE

- Content knowledge
- Safety and risk assessment
- Rules
- Reasoning
- Strategy & planning
- Complex problem solving
- Perceptual awareness
- Tactics



Inclusive Play

Inclusive play is about removing barriers and making play opportunities available to all children regardless of background or ability. It aims to create accessible spaces where everyone can play together side by side through a combination of experiences that adds something equally great to each child.



The Importance

of inclusive play spaces

Once we understand the importance of play it is vital for us to create spaces that better cater to the vast developmental needs of all children.

We need to meet the needs of people living with both physical and cognitive disabilities, which are becoming more and more common in our society.



Engage in free play activities outdoors every day.

Natural Fun, (2010)



Aged 0-17 year old live with a disability in Australia.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2015)



Ages 4-17 experience a mental health condition.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2015)



Disability types are intellectual and sensory/speech.

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, (2015)



Attend mainstream schools in Australia.

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Young People with Disability, 2012 (2012)



Are on the Autism Spectrum in Australia.

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) (2018)

What makes an Inclusive Playspace?



A wholistic approach.

An inclusive playspace takes into account the varied needs of children of all abilities, providing greater opportunity for discovery, growth and development. It incorporates the following elements.



PHYSICALLY inviting

Incorporate equipment and play activities that are easily accessible and somatically engaging to children with a range of different physical abilities.



EMOTIONALLY inviting

Include elements that facilitate emotional engagement and development through confidence building, self-perception and connection to nature.



SOCIALLY inviting

Create opportunities for teamwork, cooperation, and friendship building. Include activities that encourage children to play together.



COGNITIVELY stimulating

Incorporate activities that supports the learning and development of cognitive and intellectual skills such as problem-solving and risk assessment.

Designing Inclusive Playscapes

A successful inclusive playspace includes a combination of experiences that adds something equally great to each child regardless of ability.



By providing varied play opportunities that cater for the different needs of children, this playspace shows how an inclusive environment can be fully integrated, so that children of different abilities and those living with disabilities can play together sided by side.



Physical



Emotional



Social



Cognitive

What could go into an Inclusive Playspace?

Good inclusive design takes a wholistic approach. It does not mean that every play item is accessible to everyone, because everyone's needs vary so much. It's about combining opportunities for play so that all children have access to fun and engagement.



	Multi-play Unit	Basket Swing	Whirly go Round	G-Pod Spinner		Bongo Drums	Talk Tubes	Activity Panels	See-Saw Rocker	Cubby
PHYSICALLY Inviting	Encourages integration through an easy access ramp which allows all children to play throughout the unit.	Provides full body support as kids have the ability to either sit upright or lie down.	Supports users of all abilities by being in line with the ground. this helps to create play opportunities for wheelchair users.			Low level event easily accessible to kids of varying physical abilities	Low level event easily accessible to kids of varying physical abilities	Can be integrated into a play unit or at ground level for all users to engage with.	Wide seats hand rails and side support allows for more inclusion for users of varying physical abilities.	Includes wide entry points at ground level allowing children of varying physical abilities to engage in play.
EMOTIONALLY Inviting	Thematic elements encourage imaginative play and opportunities for role play.		Develops confidence by allowing users to challenge and explore boundaries.			Creates sensory stimulation through music and sound. Also encourages self expression				Quiet zone for kids to retreat, enjoy solitary play or a moment of respite.
SOCIALLY Inviting	Allows children to play together regardless of physical ability, meaning more social interaction and opportunities for building friendship.	Encourages social opportunities through cooperation, as users must work together to push the swing and take turns.	Assists in cooperation, and teamwork as users must all work together to spin each other on the unit.	Assists in cooperation, and teamwork as users must all work together to spin each other on the unit.		Provides social opportunities as users create music together.	Develops speech and communication skills, while fostering friendships as users play together.	Interactive panels with games encourages children to play together and problem solve as a team.	Creates opportunities for friendship building and teamwork, as users must work together to rock the unit.	
COGNITIVELY Stimulating	Integrated play panels and activities throughout develop problem solving, dexterity and hand eye co-ordination.	Allows users to engage in risk assessment whilst swinging.	Helps develop perceptual awareness.	Helps develop perceptual awareness.				Challenges users cognitive and problem solving abilities through matching pairs of images		Develops users risk assessment skills, whilst also aiding in strategy planning.



For assistance
in planning your
inclusive playground
please call us on
1800 632 222 or
visit our website
aspace.com.au