



Inclusion in Design Briefs

The following text was written for local authorities and organisations developing play areas to use as a template when writing about inclusive play in design briefs. It is reported that there are many misunderstandings about what inclusive play is. Therefore this template has been created to try and universalise understanding and enable designers and play manufacturers to develop genuinely inclusive play areas.

All children and young people have the right to play and be included in their local communities. The national Play Strategy makes it explicit that all new play provision must be accessible and inclusive – and that disabled children and young people are to be consulted in the process. _____ Council are committed to ensuring that this happens.

These are six inclusive design principles which _____ Council will be looking to follow when developing play spaces.

1. **Diversity and difference** – Recognise that disabled children are not a homogeneous group and that consultation and play equipment should address this diversity. Play opportunities for all children should be provided (children with sensory, physical and social impairments as well children with learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties). Also recognise that parents and carers of children may be disabled, and thus considering this when choosing design features.
2. **Ease of use** – Ensure no-one is forced to exert undue effort, experience discomfort or a loss of dignity whilst accessing the space.
3. **Freedom of choice and access to mainstream activities** – Where possible children should be able to use the facilities independently, but equally support and assistance should be required to those who need it. All children should be able to exert some choice over what to play with, and how to play in an area regardless of their abilities or likes. All children need and like to experience risky play, so varied levels of risk need to be designed in.
4. **Quality** – Aspects of design incorporated to meet the specific requirements of disabled children should be produced to the same high standard as the whole development. Where possible accessible toilets should be made available and sign posted.
5. **Legibility and predictability** – Signs and maps should be in an accessible format to all, and sites should be logically orientated, with some visual cues to ease movement around the space.
6. **Safety** – the environment should be free from unexpected hazards.

For further information on designing and building inclusive play spaces, contact the KIDS Inclusive Playground Project (01482 467540 or victoria.turner@kids.org.uk). For more information on developing and embedding inclusive practice, contact KIDS National Development Department (0207 359 3073 or pip@kids.org.uk).