


LET'S PLAY

CREATING INCLUSIVE PLAY SPACES FOR
CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

TOOLKIT





LET'S PLAY IS DEDICATED TO ENSURING THAT YOUNG CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLAY AS THEIR PEERS. A JOINT INITIATIVE OF THE RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION AND THE PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA, LET'S PLAY OFFERS GRANTS FOR THE CREATION OF ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC PLAY SPACES AND BUILDS AWARENESS ABOUT ACCESSIBLE PLAY AND RELATED BEST PRACTICES.

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Let's Play links directly with the **Rick Hansen Foundation's Schools In Motion** and **Wheels In Motion** programs to make a difference in communities throughout British Columbia. The Rick Hansen Schools In Motion program was developed to celebrate the spirit of the Rick Hansen Man In Motion World Tour and provide students with the understanding that they can play a role in improving access and inclusion in the world around them.

To learn more about the Schools In Motion program, visit www.rickhansen.com/schools.

Let's Play was made possible with the support of the Province of British Columbia and its \$2.5 million investment. Accessible play spaces complement **ActNow BC**, the Province's health and wellness initiative that promotes healthy living choices to improve the quality of life for all British Columbians. ActNow BC aims to encourage all BC kids to increase their physical activity levels. ActNow BC: every move is a good move.

For more information on ActNow BC, visit www.actnowbc.ca.

1) WHY ACCESSIBLE PLAY?

All children need to play. It's essential for their physical, social and emotional wellbeing. Through play, they learn about themselves and their world and lay the foundation for a healthy, happy future.

Accessible play spaces are inclusive – they welcome children of all abilities to play together. These spaces ensure that children with disabilities don't miss out on important opportunities for social interaction and physical activity. They also allow parents and caregivers with physical disabilities to be nearby and play with their children.

2) ABOUT LET'S PLAY GRANTS

Let's Play will be distributing grants over two funding cycles for projects that make play spaces accessible for young children with mobility-related disabilities. Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to qualified community groups for accessible play space projects involving new construction, renovation of an existing space, and/or the purchase of equipment.

MANDATORY GRANT CRITERIA

- Improves accessibility for children and caregivers with mobility-related disabilities
- Focuses on accommodating children ages 0-6
- Located in the province of British Columbia
- Play space is open and freely available for community use
- Funding request does not exceed \$50,000
- A sponsoring organization that is a "qualified donee," as defined by the Canada Revenue Agency, is selected to administer the grant funding. (For further information, refer to "Grant Application Guidelines" on the Let's Play website)

FUNDING PRIORITIES

We also assess grant applications based on how well they align with our funding priorities:

- Allocating funding to each of the five health regions
- Preference for play spaces located on school grounds
- Projects with additional sources of support – in the form of cash, goods or services – from community groups, foundations, volunteer labour, material donations, etc.
- Working with schools involved in Rick Hansen Schools In Motion or groups involved with Rick Hansen Wheels In Motion

FUNDING CYCLE

- Application deadline: Midnight Tuesday January 15, 2008
- Notification of results: March 2008
- Grants distributed: May 2008

We will begin accepting applications for our second funding cycle in **October 2008**.

3 HOW TO APPLY

You'll find our online grant application form at www.rickhansen.com/play. Please email us at letsplay@rickhansen.com or call the Let's Play Coordinator at **604.709.6320** if you require a hard copy of the application form.

BELOW IS SOME OF THE INFORMATION YOUR APPLICATION WILL NEED TO INCLUDE:

GOAL STATEMENT

- A brief statement of your project's goals/objectives.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- Why does your organization or community want an accessible play space?
- Why do you have a need for the grant funds?
- Describe the site materials that you intend to use (e.g. specially designed equipment, scent garden, landscaping, surfacing).
- Include information about any community discussions or focus group consultation you have done and the impact you hope to see as a result of this project.

FUNDING AND BUDGETING

- Please provide budget information outlining your best estimate of how the grant funds would be spent. Indicate if these estimates include any quotations you have received prior to applying for the grant, etc.
- Provide information about any additional sources of funding that you have secured in the form of cash, goods or services, grants from community groups or foundations, volunteer labour, or material donations.

EVIDENCE OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Include two letters of support from your community. Letters may be from parents, care-givers, school principals, teachers, local community leaders, representatives of municipal governments, or others who have a direct interest in the accessible play space. Letters from the qualified donee or project contact are not acceptable.
- Letters of support must provide full contact information for the writer; an explanation as to why the grant money is needed, and how the play space will make an impact in your community. Letters should be in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

PHOTOS OF THE SITE

- Applicants are to provide up to two photographs (in .jpg format if part of an electronic application) of the play space in question. If possible, these photographs should highlight the specific need to be met by the grant money.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

- For grant applications over \$35,000, applicants are also asked to provide a site sketch of the play space with the changes to be funded by the Let's Play grant clearly marked. This image may be sent as a MS Word document, a .jpg image, or a PDF file. A hand-drawn sketch, as long as it is legible, is also acceptable.

4 PLANNING AN ACCESSIBLE PLAYSPACE

Accessible play spaces welcome children and caregivers with disabilities in, rather than leaving them on the sidelines. They provide a variety of play opportunities for children of all abilities and emphasize shared play.

“I never played on a playground when I was a kid; there just weren't any accessible places around. I didn't want my son to miss out on that experience too, just because I'm in a wheelchair.”
– **MARIKA VANDOMMELLEN, RHF AMBASSADOR**

Until recently, Marika felt it was unsafe to take her son to the neighbourhood playground. With ten feet of sand between them, there was no way she could help him if he got hurt. “It's awful for a parent to have to rely on other adults at the playground to assist their child,” says Marika. The construction of an accessible playground in her community has made a world of difference for Marika and her family, and for other people with physical disabilities.

When planning an accessible play space, consider both natural and manufactured play elements. Creative features that stimulate the senses, such as water play areas, scent gardens, wind chimes and winding pathways, are particularly effective at fostering inclusive play. They are also very inviting to younger children, who play and learn with all five senses.

THINGS TO CONSIDER AS YOU DEVELOP YOUR PLAN:

MOVING AROUND

It's important to think about how people move into, out of and through the space and how it can be made accessible to children and caregivers with physical disabilities.

- Pathways between playground equipment and seating areas should be wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter (at least 60 inches / 153 centimetres) and surfaced in an accessible material. They should be as level as possible, with slopes of no more than five percent.
- Surfacing under play equipment must meet CSA Accessibility Guidelines.
- Sidewalks or roads leading into the play space must have curb cuts (dropped curbs).

PLAY FEATURES

Providing a variety of play features will encourage the children that use your play space to interact and play together in different ways.

HANDS-ON PLAY

Making a stick stand up in the sand, watching water drip through a hole in a cup: young children love simple, hands-on activities like these, and they learn a lot while doing them.

- Sand boxes or tables
- Water tables
- Sensory play panels

PHYSICAL PLAY

Physical play builds strong bones and muscles, improves coordination and burns off excess energy!

- Swings
- Slides
- Climbing structures

SOCIAL PLAY

What's play time without friends? Good play spaces provide opportunities for children to get to know one another, engage in a bit of make believe and play cooperatively.

- Play houses
- Interactive equipment (music / sounds, games)

DYNAMIC PLAY

New and different sensations are a real thrill for young children.

- Spinners
- Rockers/spring toys

CONSULTATION IS KEY!

Ensure your play space is well used and enjoyed: consult with disability organizations and children and caregivers with disabilities in your community as you develop your plan.

5 PROJECT PLANNING TIPS

You don't need to be an expert to direct a Let's Play play space project, but good planning is essential. Use the project checklist and budgeting information in this section to help keep things on track.

✓ PROJECT PLANNING CHECKLIST

GETTING STARTED

- Determine the specific needs of your site
- Consult with stakeholders, including families of children with disabilities, disability resource groups, and groups that will be using the play space, such as a child care centre
- Develop ways to communicate with and involve the community
- Inform yourself about the need for permits for construction/renovation where applicable
- Research funding opportunities in cooperation with school and/or community partners

PLAYGROUND DESIGN

- Research playground supply and design professionals by gathering and reviewing catalogues, websites, etc.
- Create a labour and materials budget (e.g. surfacing, borders, etc.)

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

- Meets CSA Standards
- Includes a satisfactory warranty for quality and durability of each type of material and for parts, service, and other maintenance

SURFACING MATERIALS

- Meets CSA standards for equipment and layout
- Satisfies this project's specific needs for accessibility, safety, cost and maintenance

SITE DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS:

- Parking area nearby (if applicable) that includes designated parking spaces for people with disabilities
- Pathways and alternate routes that connect the play area to the surrounding area

ONGOING CONSIDERATIONS

- Has an adequate schedule for inspections and maintenance to be carried out

COST CONSIDERATIONS

A typical play space project will incur costs in these areas:

SURFACING

- Pour in place rubber
- Rubber tiles
- Wood fibre plus filter cloth
- Sand for sandbox

Base material

- Clear crush (crushed rock)

BORDERS

- Landscape ties
- Concrete curb

Drainage materials

- 4" PVC, filter cloth, aggregate
- Swales

PLANTING

- Trees, shrubs and groundcover

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

- Equipment
- Installation (20-30% of equipment cost)

PAVING

- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Concrete pavers

OTHER COSTS TO CONSIDER

- Professional design fees, if applicable
- Machinery costs
- Labour
- Grading work and excavation
- Landscaping (grass seeding, boulders)
- Water hookup, drainage, electricity
- Demolition and disposal fees
- Shipping costs
- Taxes
- Include at least a 10-15% contingency for unknowns

6 HELPFUL RESOURCES

Below are a few resources you might find helpful in creating your accessible play space:

WEBSITES

- A Guide to the ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Play Areas
- Communities and Local Government – Developing Accessible Play Space: A Good Practice Guide
- BC Society of Landscape Architects
- National Center on Accessibility
- Neshama Playground
- Freeplay Network

PUBLICATIONS

- *Play For All Guidelines: Planning, Design and Management of Outdoor Settings for All Children.* Moore, R., Goltsman, S. & Lacobano, D. 1987.

7) THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

LET'S PLAY DRAWS ON THE SUPPORT AND EXPERTISE OF ITS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

MARYLOU WILMOTT

MaryLou is a certified CPRA playground inspector that has worked in the playground design and equipment distribution industry for almost six years. Her clients include municipalities, school districts, day cares, preschools, landscape architects and developers. She is passionate about creating relevant recreational and play spaces that will become legacies in our communities.

PATTY CLARKE

Patty has supported people with disabilities through her work in the field of recreation for over 20 years. She currently works as the Access Coordinator for Burnaby Parks, Recreation and Cultural services. Patty has had a number of opportunities to work with local community agencies and schools in addressing the needs of children and parents with disabilities in neighbourhood parks.

SHIRA GOLDEN

Shira is a park designer working with the City of Burnaby, and has done consulting work with other municipalities and organizations to help enhance accessibility in public open spaces. Shira is trained as a landscape architect, is an avid outdoors-person, and a wheelchair user.

SHERRY CAVES

As a parent who is herself a wheelchair user, Sherry understands the needs of parents and children who are unable to access community play spaces. Sherry is an advocate for barrier-free society through, among other things, her work as a volunteer with the Rick Hansen Foundation.

SUSAN HERRINGTON

Susan is an Associate Professor in the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture at the University of British Columbia. Since 2003 Susan has led a research project called "Outside Criteria," that is focused on children's outdoor play spaces at child care centres in the City of Vancouver. Susan is interested in creating naturalized outdoor play spaces that are inclusive for all children.

LILLIAN BIRMINGHAM

Lillian became interested in accessible play spaces when her 11-year-old daughter ran successfully for vice president of student council on the issue of playground upgrading and expansion. Lillian was involved in the student surveys, correspondence with playground professionals, playground proposal analysis, consensus building, media coverage and fundraising that followed. Lillian joins us from Port Hardy.

MARILYN KRUEGER

Marilyn is a mental health therapist and Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner specializing in Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). FASD affects the brain and neurological system in multiple ways, including balance and mobility problems. Through her work, Marilyn was involved in the development of an all-accessible, sensory development playground in Moricetown, BC.