

# A Unique Inclusion Philosophy

## Planning for the Whole Child, Whole Environment, Whole Community

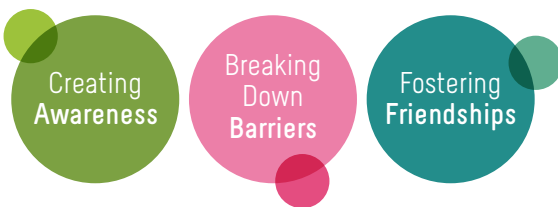


Fundamentally, inclusively designed play environments are a statement about a community's social values and every child's right to play. Our goal is to innovate play experiences and provide quality outdoor play for people of all ages and abilities that develop the whole child, the whole environment, and ultimately, benefit the whole community. We believe this broader approach to inclusive play will help community advocates and professionals in their planning, development, and revitalization efforts.

Respecting the developmental needs of the whole child and thoughtfully applying the 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design®, developed by PlayCore and Utah State University's Center for Persons with Disabilities, to outdoor play environments is a critical first step in offering high-quality spaces where both physical and social inclusion can occur. The Me2<sup>sm</sup> guidebook offers a unique design philosophy to help communities and professionals align evidence-based design considerations, intentionally select play activities that support inclusion, and advocate for outdoor play environments that move beyond the minimum accessibility standards to create truly meaningful universally designed play destinations.



### Inclusive Community:



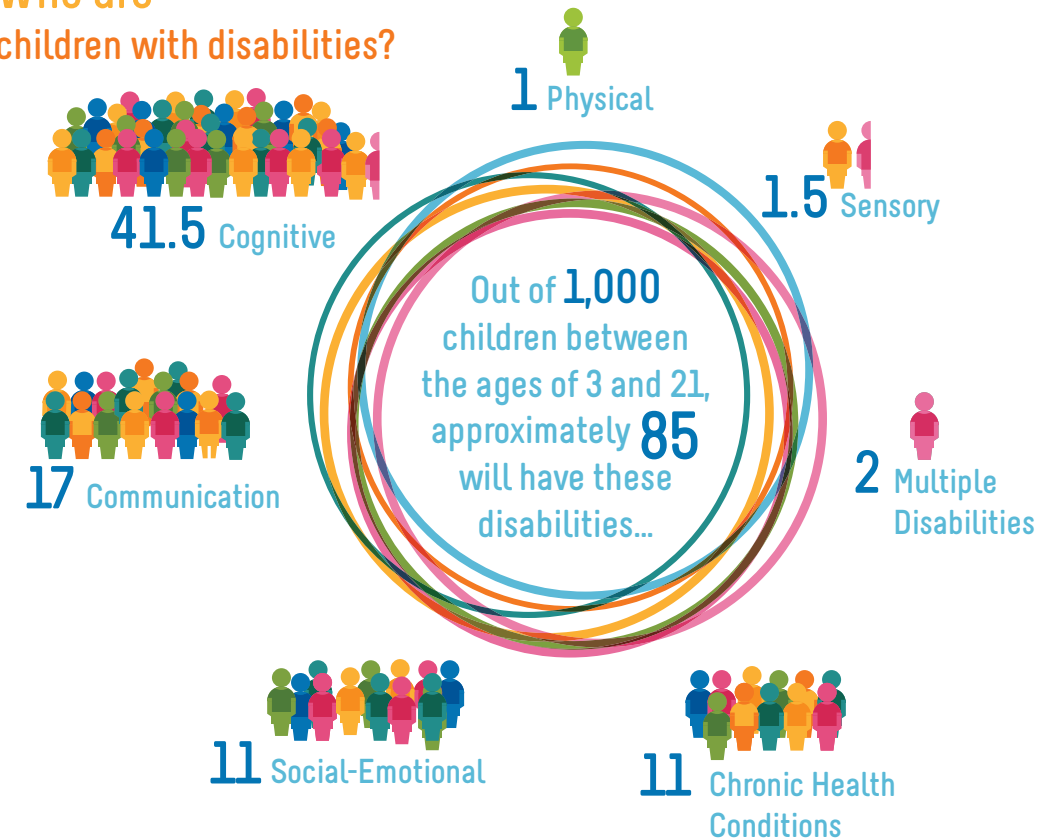
The best measure of an inclusive play destination's success is how the community actually uses it. An in-depth review of the literature indicates that social intervention strategies positively impact the inclusion of children with disabilities in play activities with peers and is cited as a key strategy to promote social inclusion. Disability awareness activities provide children the tools to ask questions, get accurate information, explore their feelings, and learn how to positively interact with their peers. 2 Play Together®: Fostering Friendships Through Inclusive Play provides programmers with strategies, tips, and playground activities to create awareness, break down barriers, and foster friendship through inclusive play experiences.

Together we can effectively promote inclusive play as a valid solution to enrich and enhance the quality of life for children, families, and communities across our nation. Join us as we share our passion for inclusive play and advocate for every child, every play environment, and every community across nations.

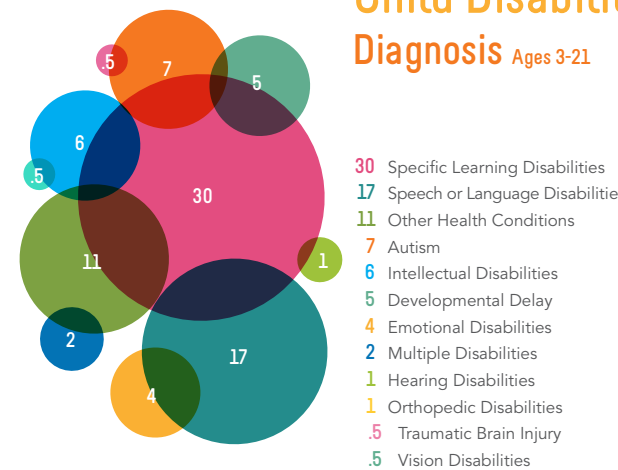
# RESEARCH

Research supports the need for inclusive play environments and programming that bring more meaningful play experiences to more people, to the greatest extent possible. Addressing the developmental needs of the whole child to create inclusively designed whole environments support the diverse needs of the users across the whole community.

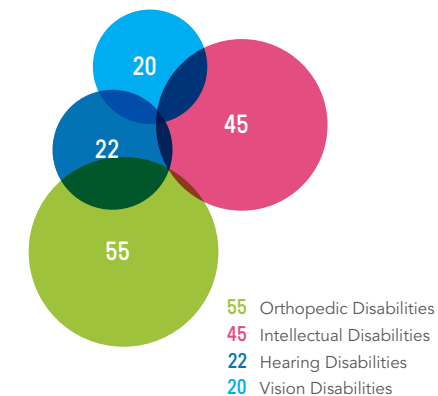
### Who are children with disabilities?



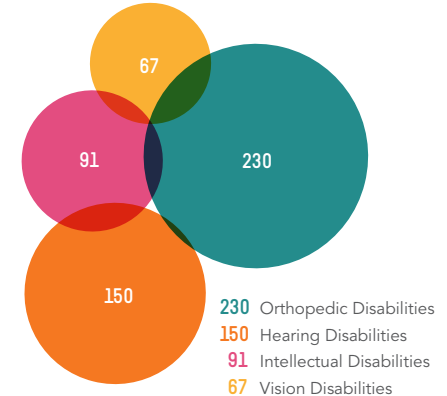
### Child Disability Diagnosis Ages 3-21



### Adult Disability Diagnosis Ages 21-64



### Senior Disability Diagnosis Ages 65+



Sources:  
 1. U.S. Department of Education (2015). Washington D.C.: Dept of Ed. <https://ideadata.org>  
 2. Erickson, W., Lee, C., von Schrader, S. (2016). Disability Statistics from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute (YTI). Retrieved May 09, 2016 from [www.disabilitystatistics.org](http://www.disabilitystatistics.org)

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Designing Research-Based Whole Environments

### 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design®

Best Practices for Creating Meaningful Play Environments for People of All Ages and Abilities



Whole communities start with inclusively designed whole environments which carefully meet the needs of the whole child. The 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design® are uniquely positioned to provide specific guidelines for creating inclusive play environments, and while based on the original 7 Principles of Inclusive Design, created by NC State University's Center for Universal Design, are tailored specifically to address childhood experiences in the outdoor play environment.

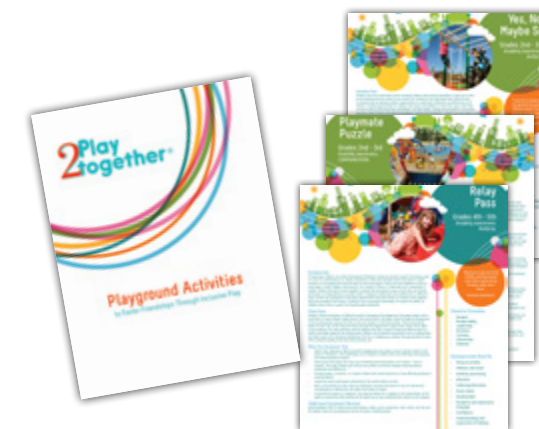
While no two universally designed play environments are alike, we know that children want to "Be" and feel fair, included, smart, independent, safe, active, and comfortable during play. The 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design focus on the usage of individual play activities as well as the context of the overall environmental design. By aligning these design principles and the specific guidelines and considerations, communities can create whole environments that support the active participation of all people, of all ages, and all abilities.

## Playground Activities for Programming Inclusive Play

Thinking strategically about how your inclusive play environment will be programmed can greatly increase the usage of the space and further promote social equity in your community. 2 Play Together® strives to make a positive difference in inclusive play on the playground by creating communities that care through character education. Developed in partnership with experts from the National Lekotek Center, 2 Play Together offers playground activities and tips for educators and programmers to foster social inclusion between children of all abilities outdoors, celebrate similarities and differences, and support character education initiatives.

### Program Highlights:

- Disability Awareness Resources
- Character Education Tips
- Inclusive play activities for PreK-5th Grade
- Inclusion Resources for Educators, Programmers, & Advocates
- Supportive Research



## 7 Principles in Action: Edith Bowen Laboratory School and Research Site, Utah State University



### 1 be Fair

- 1a Opportunities for physical, social-emotional, sensory, cognitive, and communication development are integrated throughout
- 1b Multigenerational play activities such as musical instruments offer developmentally meaningful experiences
- 1c The play space was designed to offer learning opportunities and programs to teach children how they can successfully play together

### 5 be Safe

- 5a Age-appropriate play equipment applies safety standards and addresses potential hazards
- 5b Cozy spots offer areas to seek sensory relief and jump-in points offer places to observe and understand play activities prior to participating
- 5c Seating and supervision areas provide clear visibility of activity areas

### 2 be Included

- 2a Activities offer various types and forms of play such as dramatic play opportunities
- 2b Physical play components such as climbers offer beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of graduated challenge for healthy risk taking
- 2c Provides choices in method of participation of both gross and fine motor activities

### 6 be Active

- 6a Accommodations such as high backs and molded seats help children maintain a neutral body position during movement experiences
- 6b Equitable alternatives are found within play experiences, such as upper body activities
- 6c Balanced play experiences that promote social inclusion through reciprocal interaction encourage cooperation

### 3 be Smart

- 3a Activities that provide behavioral cues and sensory feedback reinforce understanding and expectations
- 3b Intuitive play patterns, such as looping, offer repetitive, active play
- 3c The well-organized play environment intentionally reinforces play and avoids user conflict

### 7 be Comfortable

- 7a Play activities, such as those found on balcony panels, offer comfortable reach and approach for individuals who are seated or standing
- 7b Ramps and decks provide adequate space for multiple users and encourage movement and gathering
- 7c Integrated shade and trees offer a balance of environmental conditions
- 7d Amenities and comfortable proximity to the school enhance the user experience

### 4 be Independent

- 4a Universal signage with tailored messages and visual supports encourage participation and provide directional cues
- 4b Accessible routes of travel and poured-in-place surfacing are used to and within the play environment
- 4c Sensory rich experiences encourage discovery and exploration
- 4d Universal design features such as slide transfers support independence and self-confidence