

Accessible Playgrounds for Children with Vision Impairment

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Aims/Objectives: What was the purpose what you did? Why is your topic important? What did you want to change? What difference did you want to make?

We wanted to find out if children with vision impairment enjoyed playgrounds in the same way as other children.

This is important as all children should be happy and safe in playgrounds.

We found out that children with vision impairment liked playgrounds but missed out on some things. Also their parents were worried about their child's safety.

We want to make sure that people who design and build playgrounds know about children with vision impairment, to make sure that changes to playgrounds can be made.

Methods/Process: Who was involved? What did you do? (100 words)

We brought together a research team of people who understand vision impairment, education and design.

We read other work that has been done on playgrounds.

We asked parents/carers and professionals to fill out a survey about what it is like to care for a child with vision impairment in a playground.

We visited lots of playgrounds to record if they were accessible for people with vision impairment.

We looked at the information on council websites to see if it was helpful for families planning a playground visit.

We wrote up all of this information for other people to read.

Results: What did you find? What changed? What difference did you make? What did you learn?

We found that children enjoyed swings, climbing and slides the most. We found that children were able to play with other children, but some children found it hard to move around playgrounds by themselves. Some playgrounds had features that children really loved like sand and water, musical instruments and sculptures they could feel.

All parents said they were worried that their child might hurt themselves and some decided not to go back to the playground.

We found lots of playgrounds had fun equipment but some didn't work and some would be hard for children with vision impairment to use.

Conclusion: How could other people use what you found out? What would you recommend other people do based on what you did and what you found out?

People who design playgrounds could use what we found to make playgrounds better for children with vision impairment. This would let the child enjoy more places in the playground and to play safely. We found that playgrounds need lots of space, textured surfaces, a circular pathway, quiet spaces, and should include sound, touch and smell. We found that we need to think carefully about equipment to make sure that children with vision impairment can access it if they want to. Families also need good information online about the playground, to help them decide if they want to visit.

Alignment with the Conference Theme: How does your proposal address the conference theme of 'New Frontiers'? How does your proposal showcase something new we can do to make the world a better place for people with disability? (50 words)

Our proposal is the first time that Australian playgrounds have been studied for children with vision impairment.

We hope that our proposal is used by people who build playgrounds, so they think of children with vision impairment and their families. to make sure they feel included and welcomed.