

Playground

Accessibility means ensuring that the entire school environment—classrooms, library, playground, restrooms, cafeteria—are designed for every learner. This is a key condition for enabling students with physical, visual, auditory, and intellectual disabilities to navigate and learn independently. Utilizing a whole child approach to plan for students with visual impairment helps to confirm that everyone’s needs are addressed, including those of staff and students. Building teams can use the following components to guide discussions about planning to support environmental access.

- Read each point together and indicate a Yes, No, or Unsure response.
- Take turns sharing observations and ideas.
- Note possible safety and accessibility problems.
- Suggest specific changes or supports that would help.
- Identify any additional components to be addressed.
- Document who will follow up and by when.

Universal Components

Table 1 Universal Points

Points	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Opportunities to get familiar with the playground layout and equipment before the start of the school year are made available.			
2. Communication tools and clear signage provide opportunities for making choices and engaging with others.			
3. Adaptive swing options are available.			
4. Playground boundary lines and play areas are clearly marked and are distinguishable from other areas (e.g., swings within an area with mulch).			
5. Sensory-rich play elements are available (e.g., interactive activities, textured panels).			
6. Playground layout includes optional spaces for shade, rest, and quiet activities.			
7. Play elements are designed for direct wheelchair access for students to participate with and without assistance when appropriate.			
8. Training for staff monitoring the playground includes how to identify that a student may need help and opportunities to practice offering assistance.			

Points	Yes	No	Unsure
9. Training for staff monitoring the playground includes discussion about potential barriers, risks, or safety concerns to be aware of on the playground (e.g. open stairs, climbing wall).			

Targeted Components

Table 2 Targeted Points

1. The student has been evaluated for travel skill needs by a licensed Orientation and Mobility Specialist.			
2. Incorporating tactile elements to help indicate specific playground locations have been discussed.			
3. Staff are aware if the student has sensitivity to outdoor lighting and if they need to use protection (i.e., brimmed hat, sunglasses).			
4. Tactile boundaries around playground areas are in place to help the student stay oriented during recess.			
5. The edges of play structures are clearly marked with high contrast tape or paint so that the students is aware of changes in surface.			
6. The student knows the most efficient and accessible routes to go outside, come inside, and line up.			
7. Feedback from a licensed Orientation and Mobility Specialist has been provided to the school to address protocols for student safety on the playground.			
8. Staff are given an opportunity to ask questions about considerations for working with a student with visual impairment including how to address safety and support independence on the playground.			
9. Staff have been informed of the importance of using descriptive language when communicating information with a student with visual impairment.			
10. Clear points of contact for accessibility concerns have been determined and shared for student self-advocacy.			
11. Additional concerns or feedback that need to be addressed are noted in planning documents being used by the team for follow-up.			