

A Blueprint for Building Quality Participation on Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities

Programmer
Version



PREFACE

OVERVIEW

The Blueprint for Building Quality Participation on Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities is adapted from the Canadian Disability Participation Project's Blueprint for Building Quality Participation in Sport for Children, Youth, and Adults with a Disability. The resource is tailored to playground settings for children with disability and provides strategies for building quality participation in these play spaces. The research evidence supporting this Blueprint will be presented in an upcoming scientific paper: Odorico, N., James, M., Millar, C., Sottile, A., Naviq, Z., Leo, J., Latimer, A.E., & Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K.P. (Forthcoming). Investigating strategies to foster quality participation on playgrounds for play programmers and caregivers of children with disabilities.

This Blueprint also used data from:

Shirazipour, C., Luna, B., Ross, T., Leo, J., Buliung, R., Latimer-Cheung, A.E., & Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K.P. (2023). Building inclusion into play: Experiences of children with and without disabilities at inclusive playgrounds.

Brown, D., Ross, T., Leo, J., Buliung, R., Shirazipour, C., Latimer-Cheung, A.E., & Arbour-Nicitopoulos, K.P. (2021). A scoping review of evidence-informed recommendations for designing inclusive playgrounds.

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How do I use this Blueprint?

This Blueprint contains strategies and corresponding examples that can assist you in offering opportunities for quality participation in play for children with disabilities on playgrounds. Remember, not every strategy has to be fulfilled for quality participation to be achieved. Choosing the “right” strategies for your play practice depends on the children whom you will be working with and the different resources (e.g., equipment, staff, etc.) that you have access to.

As you read through this Blueprint, we encourage you to consider the following:

- 1 What does quality participation in play mean to you and the children you work with?
- 2 What are your priorities and goals for your own play practice?
- 3 What strategies might work best to achieve your play priorities and goals?

In creating this Blueprint, we recognize that facilitating quality participation on playgrounds involves two main considerations as a programmer, **selecting a playground** and when you are **on the playground**. Each of our strategies includes examples of how they can be considered when you are choosing which playground to go to and how to implement specific strategies while you are on the playground.

The strategy examples listed are not an extensive list but instead are a starting point to help you imagine how to implement our suggested strategies when selecting playgrounds and when on the playground. Our examples commonly use the words listed in the box below to describe different levels of assistance that you can provide when implementing these strategies:

Practice Tips!

Provide → make available
 Encourage → stimulate development
 Support → give assistance
 Promote → further progression
 Facilitate → making something possible
 Model → use yourself as an example

Tip: We bolded words throughout the Blueprint that are further defined in the glossary!

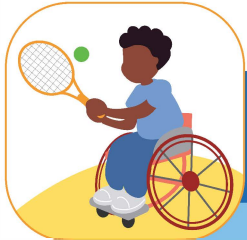
Now you're ready to flip through the pages and start creating quality participation!

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Why Playgrounds?

Playgrounds are a unique space for all children to engage in play. Playground play offers many health benefits for children including improvements in physical, mental, social and emotional development. Examples of these health benefits included:



Physical

- Healthy growth and development
- Improved cardiovascular health
- Decreased risk of obesity and diabetes
- Development and refinement of fine and gross motor skills



Social

- Respect for others
- Opportunities for social interaction
- Collaborative and negotiating skills
- Verbal communication skills
- Non-verbal communication (e.g., facial expressions or gestures)



Mental

- Capacity to learn
- Creativity
- Language comprehension
- Sense of well-being



Emotional

- Independence
- Self-esteem
- Conflict resolution
- Moral understanding
- Emotion regulation

Children with disabilities oftentimes have unequal access and opportunities to engage in playground play. A lack of play experiences can result in fewer opportunities for physical, mental, social, and emotional development and growth.

What Makes a Playground Inclusive?

Inclusive playgrounds provide all children with equitable opportunities to access and meaningfully participate in play. They are designed to ensure the physical structures within the playground, along with the playground's social and surrounding environment meet the needs of all individuals.

Inclusive playgrounds are especially important for families of children with disabilities. They may be a first step towards increasing disability awareness and advocacy for accessible spaces for all abilities within the community.

Design Elements of an Inclusive Playground



1. Entry points - wide, flat, and firm pathways
2. Surfacing and paths - firm base and ramping between structures
3. Features to foster inclusive play - play equipment for all children (e.g., sensory, motor)
4. Staffing/ supervision - inclusive programming is offered
5. Design process - involves all types of users in the planning and building

To see all 13 recommendations for designing inclusive playgrounds, check out this [link](#).

Building for Inclusion

While playgrounds should be spaces where all children are able to meaningfully play, we recognize that many existing playgrounds are not physically or socially accessible and inclusive to children with disabilities. This Blueprint provides strategies to facilitate **quality participation** on all types of playgrounds (learn more about quality participation on page 4).

What is Quality Participation?

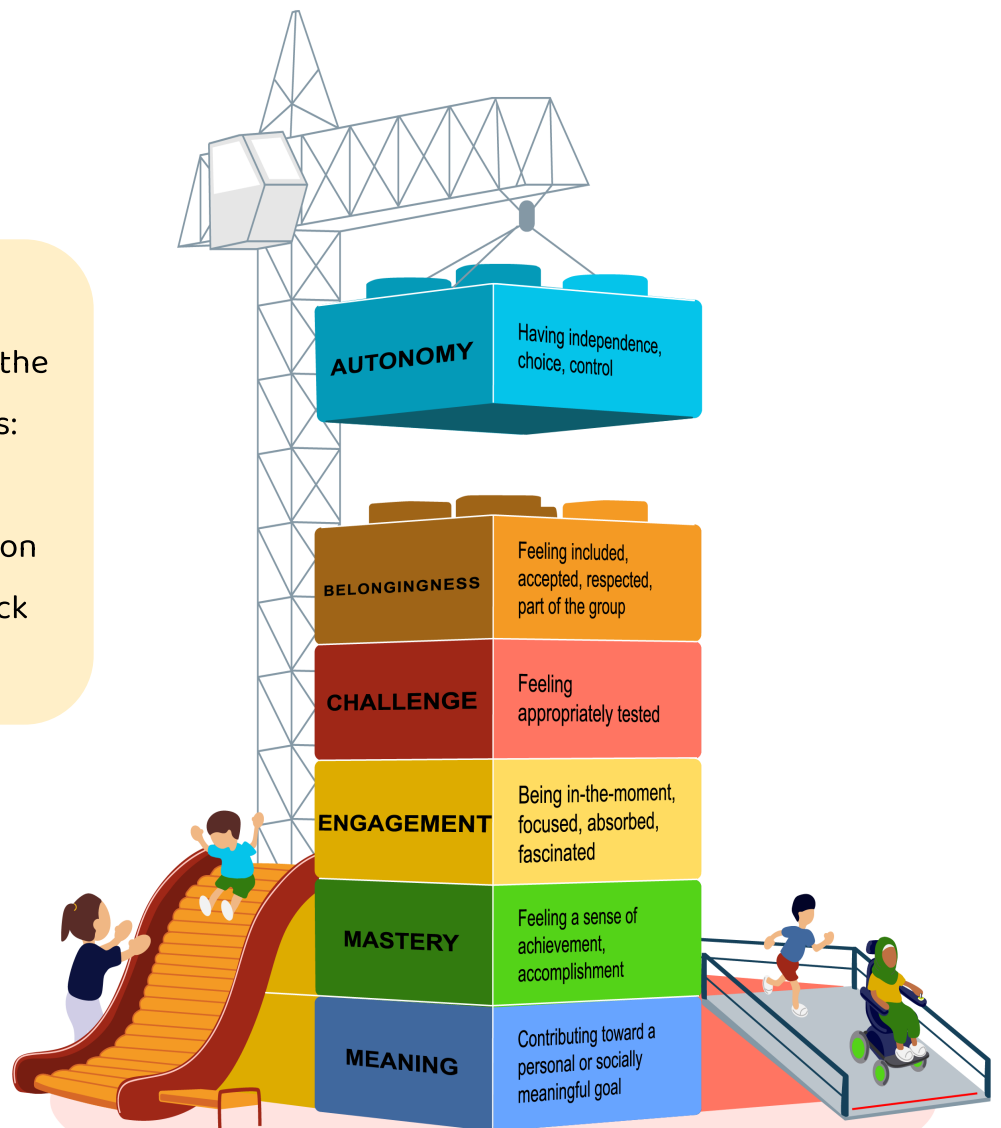
Definition

A child's perception that their participation during play, whether through free play or a planned activity, has been satisfying, enjoyable and resulted in the achievement of meaningful outcomes.

Quality participation is an evidence-based framework that aims to improve the quality of participation in physical activity for persons experiencing disability.

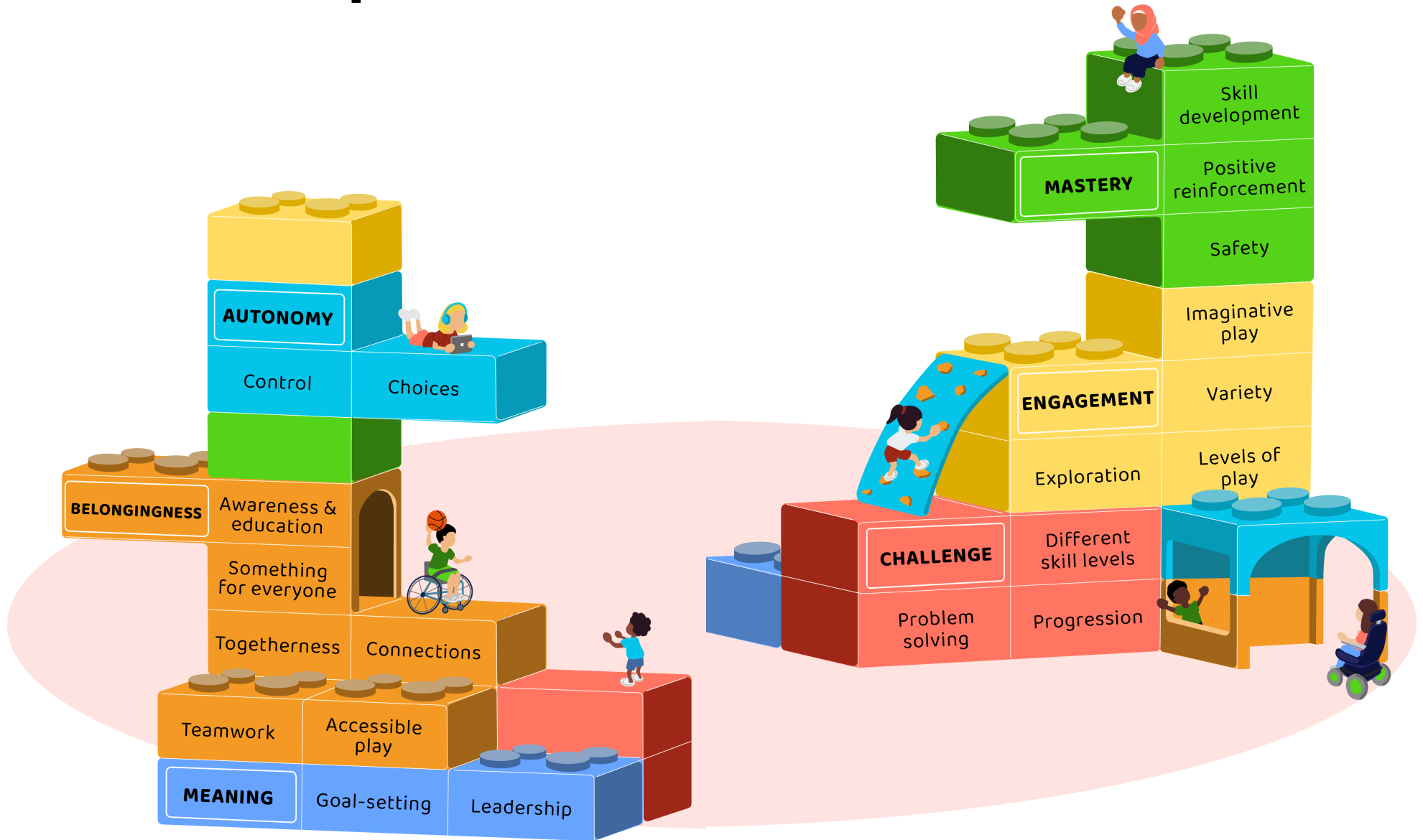
Quality Participation is influenced by one or more of the following six building blocks:

For a more detailed description of Quality Participation, check out this [link](#)!



The strategies explained in this Blueprint can be incorporated into your practice to foster the building blocks and, ultimately, support quality participation in play for all children!

The Strategies to Facilitate Quality Participation on Playgrounds



Autonomy

Having independence, choice, and control

Strategy: Control

Have opportunities for children to feel in control

Selecting a playground

- Choose a playground with pathways and spaces that allow children to move freely on and around the playground.
- Ask children to select which playground they like playing at the most and allow opportunities to try different playgrounds to find which they are most comfortable on.

On the playground

- Ensure pathways and spaces are clear to allow children to move freely on and around the playground.
- Allow children to direct their level of engagement in the play.
- When appropriate, **provide** children with the opportunity to play as unsupported as possible.
- Allow children to be a part of the planning process for the **program**. For example, have children choose a theme or one of the session activities).
- Gauge or ask children which part of an activity they enjoy the most. Based on children's preferred activities, spend more time on activities they enjoy.

Also helps fulfill

Engagement



Autonomy

Having independence, choice, and control

Strategy: Choices

Offer choices so that children can choose their level of play

Selecting a playground

- Have children choose which playground they want to play at.
- Choose playgrounds that offer high and low social interaction opportunities (e.g., has main playground and side structures, benches).
- Ensure playgrounds also have open surrounding space to play.

On the playground

- Have children choose their level of play and/or level of assistance that is provided.
- Have children explore the entire playground and then choose where they want to spend the most time playing.
- Choose multiple games that have the same skill. For example, if the skill is balance, two options could be: (1) balance on one leg on the ground OR (2) walk across a balance beam on the play structure.
- Embed flexibility into programming, such as where children have some choice in which activities they complete, the order of activities, and/or the length and timing of breaks.
- Provide children with choices between what types of play structure and spaces they want to use while still maintaining control of the overall goal of the activity/session.
- **Encourage** and **support** entry to play for children playing independently. For example, if a child is used to playing single-person games alongside other children, suggest they play a group game with surrounding children.
- Support and respect each child's involvement choice.
- Create programs that provide opportunity for high and low involvement with other children on and around playgrounds.
- Allow children to choose their level of involvement within games/activities. Explain how children can participate in activities depending on the level of involvement they want.
- Be aware of how comfortable children are with other children. Be sure to allow all children the opportunity to play in different playground spaces. For example, rotate which children are playing in each space so that regardless of involvement level, children can feel comfortable playing in all spaces.
- If children do not want to be involved in the play, then support connection with them in other ways such as through conversations.

Also helps fulfill

Engagement



Belongingness

Feeling part of a group, included, accepted, and/or respected by others

Strategy: Awareness and Education

Integrating awareness of and education on accessibility and inclusion within the playground

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that have signage or instructions to educate individuals on how to use the playground structures and spaces and why the structures and spaces can be helpful in improving play for all children (e.g., signage explaining sensory opportunities in the playground and their purpose).
- Choose playgrounds that have accessible playground features such as braille or sign language for children's use and to raise awareness, through conversations, of the inclusivity of the space.

On the playground

- **Facilitate** conversations that improve awareness for play structures and spaces that is designed for all kids.
- **Encourage** children to play in spaces where all children can access to improve opportunities for children to play together and raise awareness of the inclusivity of those spaces.
- **Model** inclusive language, and how to talk to other children. For example, saying "move" instead of "walk" when instructing children towards a play space.
- Integrate learning into programming. Prompt for questions and exploration of play structures and spaces that children may not be familiar with and explain their importance for allowing all children to play on the playground.
- **Promote** social inclusion in the **program** by supporting and guiding children in how to play with other children of all abilities.
- If the playground does not have signage, consider creating your own resources to educate children on how to use the play structures and spaces.
- Give positive feedback when children demonstrate respectful and inclusive behaviour towards peers.
- Prioritize certain spaces/structures that meet the needs of each child. For example, adapted swings for a child who could benefit from additional trunk support.

Also helps fulfill

- Engagement Meaning



Belongingness

Feeling part of a group, included, accepted, and/or respected by others

Strategy: Togetherness

Encourage children to play together, regardless of abilities

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that have opportunities for all children to play together so that everyone feels a part of the group (consider structure size, accessibility, difficulty, etc.).

On the playground

- Encourage children to play in groups- large or small.
- Support and guide children in their peer-to-peer interactions when needed (e.g., communication, initiating play, entry to play, making friends).
- Remind children to ask all children if they want to play together.
- Encourage making playground friends.
- Create group activities that encourage playing cooperatively together.
- Allow caregivers to participate in activities with children (have a “caregiver day”).
- Create games like icebreakers and team builders that encourage children to learn more about each other.
- If members of a group are disengaged or excluded, encourage them to re-engage with the group and/or encourage the group to re-engage with them.
- Emphasize the importance of teamwork to achieve activity goals.
- Model how children can support and encourage others during play.

Also helps fulfill

Engagement



Belongingness

Feeling part of a group, included, accepted, and/or respected by others

Strategy: Something for Everyone

Have equipment and activities for every child to be engaged

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that have opportunities for all children to engage in meaningful play.

On the playground

- Encourage children to try new things and find play spaces and activities that they enjoy.
- Have a theme or purpose that can be carried out on a playground with all children. Even if children will not be doing the exact same thing; they are all able to achieve the same end goal.
- Plan for options for achieving lesson goals.
- Have flexibility with the planned activities.
- When designing programs or planning individual sessions, consult with caregivers for feedback on how to best support and encourage their child.
- Recognize when children are disengaged and adapt or change to a different activity, when necessary.

Also helps fulfill

Meaning

Strategy: Teamwork

Promote teamwork on and around the playground

On the Playground

- **Promote** working in groups to achieve common goals/problem solve on challenging tasks.
- Create small group challenges on the playground (e.g., activity cards that include different group tasks to complete using the available play structures and spaces).

Also helps fulfill

Engagement Meaning

Belongingness

Feeling part of a group, included, accepted, and/or respected by others

Strategy: Accessible Play

Provide accessibility to support safe play on the playground

Selecting a playground

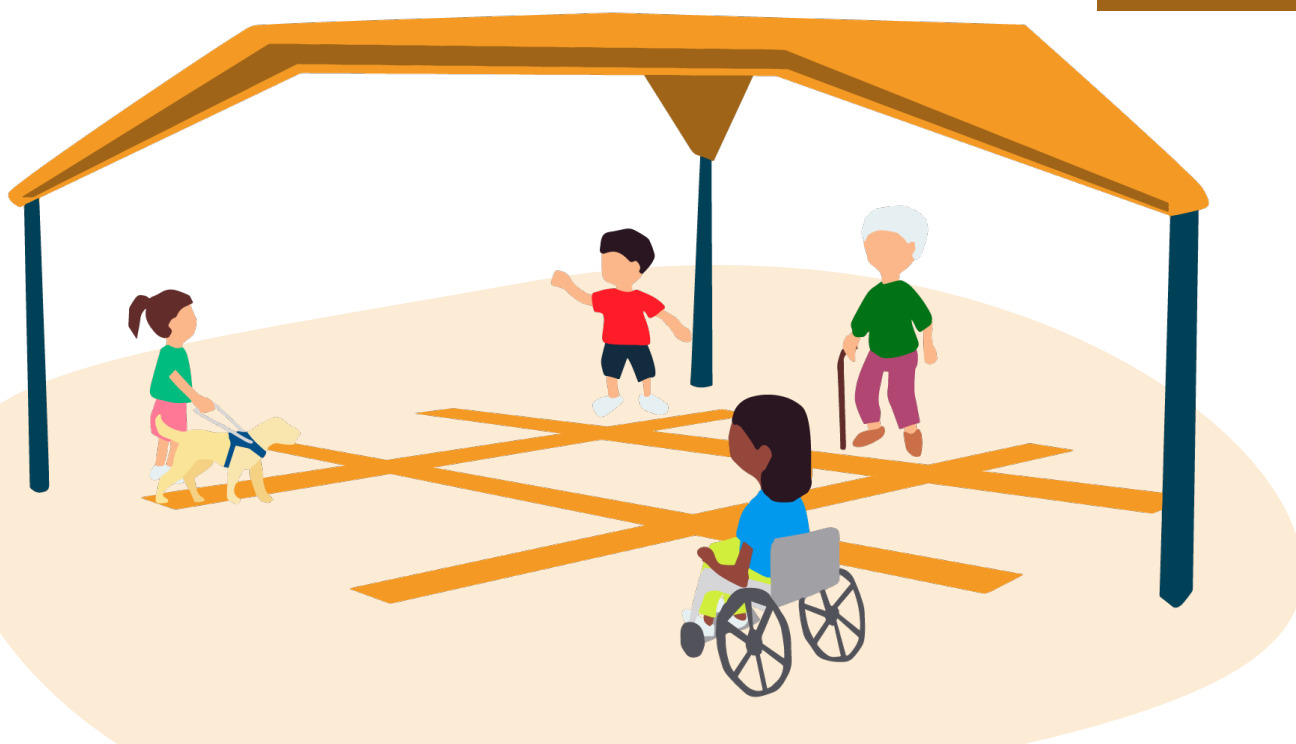
- Choose playgrounds that have multiple means of entering it (e.g., ramp, stairs, etc.).
- Choose playgrounds that have support features such as railings and/or wide walkways to allow support for movement and allow for risky play (e.g., controlled falls).
- Choose playgrounds with a solid surface to allow for easy and safe access to enter the play space.
- Choose playgrounds that have instructions explaining its features so that children understand how to use the equipment . If not available, consider creating your own instructions.

On the playground

- Provide support structures/physical support where needed to allow for safe autonomous play. For example, if a child needs support walking up the stairs, ask if they need a hand to stabilize them or ensure they have their mobility aid.
- When creating programs, utilize structures that allow all children to participate in autonomous play safely. For example, if the group is not all able to use the swings, then focus programming on the other structures that all children can use.
- Explain activities using different communication strategies (verbal, visual, tactile, etc.) to ensure children understand how to safely play on the playground.

Also helps fulfill

Engagement



Belongingness

Feeling part of a group, included, accepted, and/or respected by others

Strategy: Connections

Encourage children to create personal connections with others

Selecting a Playground

- Select playgrounds that have inclusive play elements (e.g., sign language panels, braille) so that children can feel better connected to and comfortable with the playground.

On the Playground

- Create opportunities for children to get to know each other's abilities and interests (e.g., through fun games at the beginning of each session).
- Get to know each child to help pair them with peers of similar abilities, interests, or communication styles.
- Maintain consistent volunteers and staff running the program each session so that children and staff become more familiar with each other and can have more meaningful connections.
- Consult with caregivers on their child's interests, dislikes, needs, etc. (e.g., via registration forms). Be sure to have regular check-ins with caregivers to discuss progress.

Also helps fulfill

- Engagement



Challenge

Feeling appropriately tested

Strategy: Different Skill Levels

Offer a range of activities for different skill levels

Selecting a playground

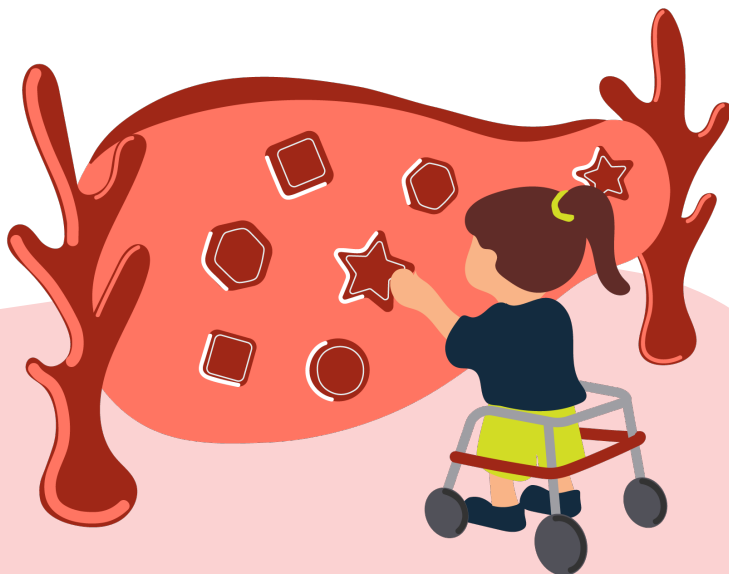
- Choose playgrounds that have a variety of play components in the playground (e.g., different types of swings, climbing structures, slides).
- Choose a playground with play structures and spaces that **provides** children with access to different heights/levels of play (e.g., ground level and higher climbing apparatus).
- Choose playgrounds that offer children a variety of play structures and spaces to practice skill development (e.g., physical, social, cognitive). For example, social skills can be developed by using play structures as an imaginary house.

On the playground

- **Encourage** children to explore and practice a variety of different skills including large motor skills, cognitive skills (e.g., problem solving), and social-emotional skills.
- Encourage children to challenge themselves and engage in **risky play**.
- Support children when they are engaging in risky play or trying a new skill.
- Create activities to be individualized and tailored to each child's capabilities to provide appropriate and individualized levels of challenge for children.
- Build in opportunities within the **program** for children to practice a variety of physical, social, and cognitive skills.
- Incorporate different skill levels within each activity allowing for a seamless progression.
- Create lesson plans to be prepared for children with varied abilities and skill levels.
- Consult children and caregivers on the child's abilities and goals so that activities can be appropriately challenging children.
- Pair children with similar skill levels to challenge each other.

Also helps fulfill

Mastery



Challenge

Feeling appropriately tested

Strategy: Progression

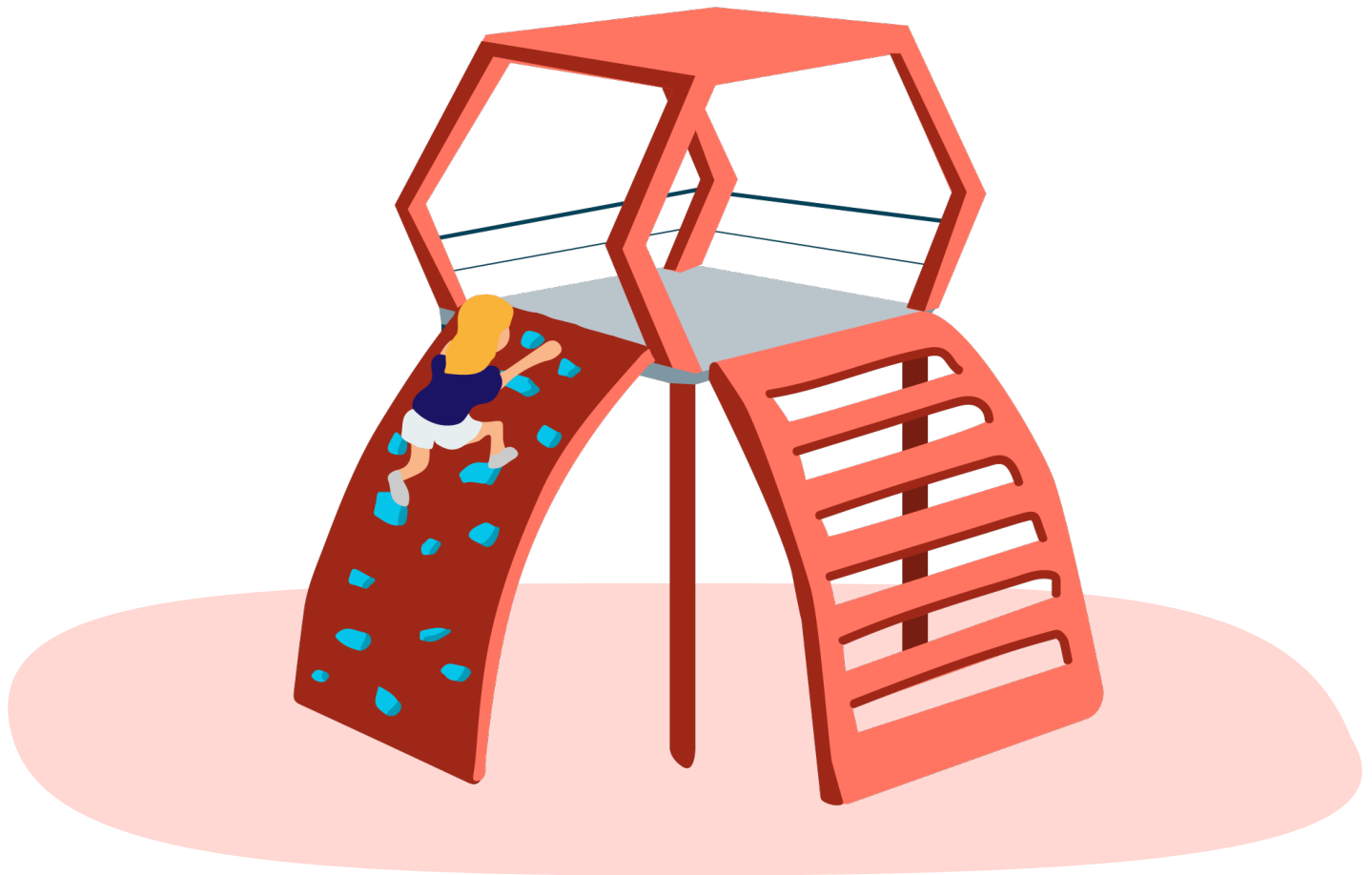
Allow for individual progression

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that offer a variety of opportunities to practice a skill. For example, choose playgrounds that offer different sized climbing structures so that as children progress with their climbing skills, they can move to more challenging spaces on the playground to climb.

On the playground

- Program activities to be inclusive to each child's interests and capabilities and allow for risky play.
- Program activities to be adapted for skill growth so that children are continuously challenged.
- Plan the level of difficulty of activities based on the pace of learning of the children in the group (allows for experiencing success and opportunities to improve).
- Get to know the comfort level of each child so you can help children extend beyond their comfort zone.
- Keep track of individual progression to ensure the level of challenge meets individual growth.



Challenge

Feeling appropriately tested

Strategy: Problem Solving

Include aspects of problem solving on the playground

Selecting a playground

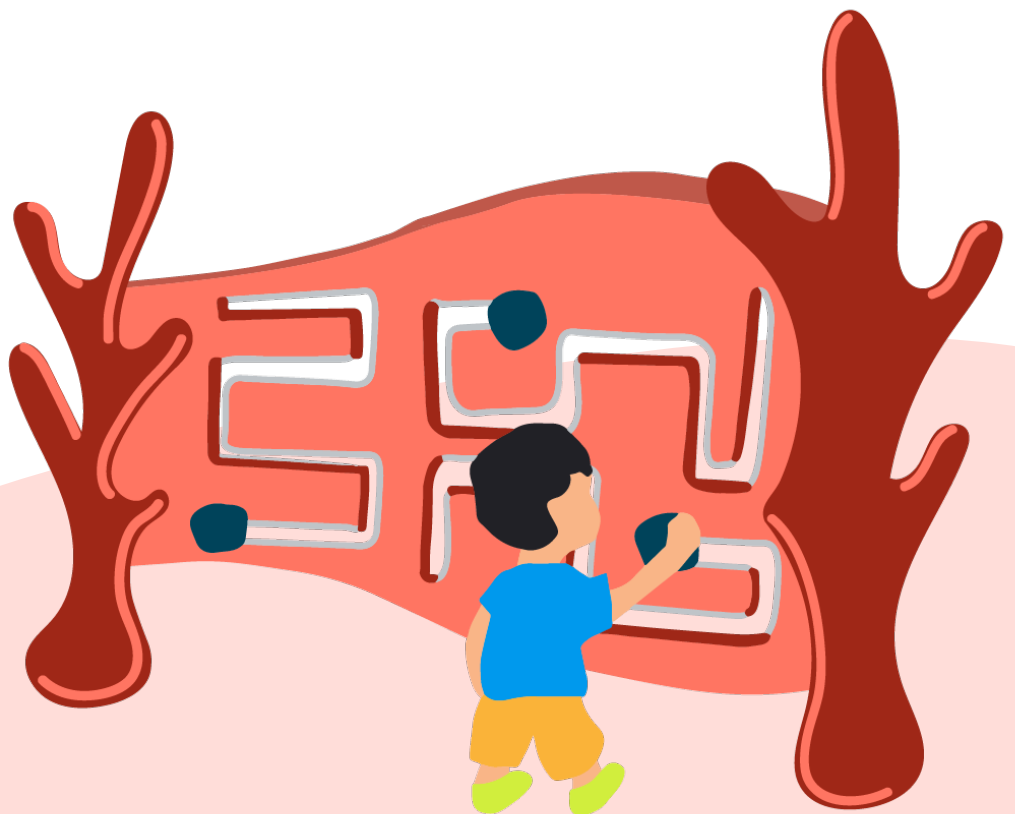
- Choose playground spaces that include play components to support both physical and cognitive aspects of development.

On the playground

- Bring in **loose parts play** to challenge children by integrating toys into play spaces.
- Include time within the program for children to explore the playground and its components on their own and/or in small groups.
- Encourage children to think creatively when trying to navigate the playground. For example, find multiple routes or use different movement types to get across the playground.
- Create fun activity challenges with children using the play components available on the playground.
- Incorporate **structured games** into playground play.
- Encourage children to create fun games to play together.

Also helps fulfill

Engagement



Engagement

Feeling focused, in-the-moment, and absorbed; experiencing flow

Strategy: Imaginative Play

Include opportunities for **imaginative play** on the playground

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that include play components shaped in recognizable designs that allow for creative and imaginative pursuits (e.g., pirate ships, playhouses).

On the playground

- **Encourage** creativity in how play structures and spaces can be used in different or unconventional ways (e.g., climbing up the slide).
- Bring recognizable, versatile objects to the playground to be used creatively (e.g., pots and pans).
- Structure activities and games such that children have opportunities to be creative, explore, and imaginative.
- Incorporate **loose parts** or musical instruments in **programs** (bring them in if the playground does not have these).
- Create programs that have narratives associated with them (such as jungle, outer space, etc.) so that children can further engage with the playground.
- Encourage engagement by having children move in ways that reflect the program theme. For example, have children jump around the playground like an astronaut or swing on the monkey bars like a monkey.

Also helps fulfill



Engagement

Feeling focused, in-the-moment, and absorbed; experiencing flow

Strategy: Variety

Offer a variety of play opportunities to engage different interests and needs

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that have a balance in the types of play structures (e.g., climbing vs. swings vs. slides vs. open space).
- Ensure there are opportunities for sensory play (e.g., motion structures, bright colours, music) as well as quiet and calm spaces (e.g., a dome shelter).
- Choose playgrounds that have options for children to engage in different activities and types of play.
- Choose playgrounds that have features that cater to different age groups, body sizes, and ability levels.
- Choose playgrounds that include pictures and images that ALL children can relate to. For example, if the playground has images explaining how to use a part of the playground, images should be diverse in representing children of all abilities.

On the playground

- Consider visiting different playgrounds in your area to give children more variety in their play experiences.
- Explain and **model** to children how to engage with all components of the playground, so that they can engage in a variety of play. Visual aids such as posters or diagrams can be used along with verbal explanations, to ensure all children are aware of how to use the playground.
- Create lesson plans that include a variety of different play activities such as organized games (e.g., tag) and free play (e.g., climbing, sliding).
- Bring sensory activities to your program should the playground lack sensory engagement (e.g., musical instruments, sensory toys).
- Have new activities specific to playground play to increase engagement (e.g., the game "Grounders").
- Encourage children to interact with new parts of the playground.
- Get to know each child's interests so you can pair the environment or activity with their interests
- Ask children if they have ideas to make activities more interesting or fun.
- Speak with caregivers to better understand how to engage their child on the playground.

Engagement

Feeling focused, in-the-moment, and absorbed; experiencing flow

Strategy: Levels of Play

Allow for different levels of engagement with others

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that include features that allow for different types of play (e.g., **interactive play**, **solitary play**, **imaginative play**).
- Choose playgrounds that **provide** opportunities for socialization and group play (e.g., structures and spaces that allows for several children to play together).
- Choose spaces where caregivers can participate with their children (e.g., larger platforms, wider entrances).

On the playground

- Allow children to decide how much they want to engage with others and support their preferred level of engagement.
- Teach children how to use play structures and spaces so they can feel more comfortable engaging alongside or with others.
- Ensure program activities allow for different types of play (interactive play, solitary play, imaginative play).
- Include **cooperative games** and games that encourage socialization with peers.
- Provide **parallel play** opportunities for children who might prefer to play on their own, while within the group or beside a friend or peer (e.g., loose parts, skipping, toy trucks).
- Encourage play between children and recognize when children may need support to engage with others.
- If children are reluctant to play with others, have small group play with children that are comfortable playing together.



Engagement

Feeling focused, in-the-moment, and absorbed; experiencing flow

Strategy: Exploration

Allow for exploration on the playground

Selecting a playground

- Choose a playground that has a variety of playground structures/spaces for children to access so that they have options for what they want to do and how they want to play.
- Try different playgrounds in the community to allow children to explore different playground spaces, attempt new skills, and refine skills in a variety of settings.
- Choose playgrounds that **promote** exploration through activities such as scavenger hunts.
- Choose playgrounds that allow children to freely explore the play space (no access barriers). For example, if a child is not able to climb a ladder, select playgrounds that allow children to enter through stairs or ramps, instead of ladders.

On the playground

- Encourage children to try new play structures to increase the variety of their movements.
- Allow children time to explore the playground and decide which activities they enjoy.
- Help to **facilitate** exploration by showing children around the playground and, when applicable, showing children which play structures and spaces are accessible and how to use them.
- Encourage children to explore new spaces on and around the playground. This may take multiple visits depending on the size of the playground and the number of people at the playground.
- Ensure variety in the types of play activities for children to engage with. This variety can involve both **structured** (programmed session) and **unstructured** (free play) **play**.
- Create activities or games that can be played using a range of energy levels, variety of locomotion, and adaptable complexity/challenge.
- Have options for play on different heights and spaces within activities.
- Create programs that allow children to explore the playground in small groups as well as individually.
- Allow children to be creative. For example, if a child wants to attempt a skill in a different way than what is being taught, allow them to try, before gently guiding them back to the task at hand.

Also helps fulfill

Meaning

Mastery

Experiencing achievement, competence; having sense of accomplishment

Strategy: Skill Development

Provide opportunities for skill development and refinement of old skills

Selecting a playground

- Choose playgrounds that **provide** different levels of challenge with respect to play structures and spaces (e.g., climbing structures of different heights) and varying opportunities to develop different types of skills (also keep in mind the ages of your group and ability level).
- Select playgrounds where all children can practice skills (no access barriers) and can work toward skill development on the playground.
- Choose playgrounds that provide enough opportunities for all children in your **program** to have options to play and develop skills.

On the playground

- **Encourage** children to try new activities/skills and provide positive reinforcement while they are trying these activities/skills.
- Support children when they are learning a new skill or trying out a new play structure or space. You may need to guide them or assist them on the structure for the first few times until they are comfortable.
- Structure your programs such that there is room to build on skills and develop new skills.
- Encourage children to cheer on friends/other children when they try a new activity or complete an activity/skill they have been working on.
- Structure your program in a way that all children will be able to participate and work towards individualized goals and skill development. For example, if someone in your program uses a wheelchair, make sure your program takes place on a surface of the playground that is accessible.
- Give one or two options/choices for activities so that children can choose which activity they are most comfortable with or more interested in.
- Ensure your program has activities with higher and lower levels of challenge such that children have opportunities to master skills and build upon those skills.
- Ask caregivers and/or children how to best support their child's skill development.

Also helps fulfill

- ✓ Autonomy
- ✓ Belongingness
- ✓ Challenge
- ✓ Engagment
- ✓ Meaning

Mastery

Experiencing achievement, competence; having sense of accomplishment

Strategy: Positive Reinforcement

Provide positive reinforcement when playing on or around the playground

On the playground

- Encourage and reward all attempts at skills, even if they are unsuccessful.
- Provide motivation to help children try all skills at least once.
- Help instill a sense of self-efficacy and confidence by providing frequent positive feedback to children.
- Help children to challenge themselves and encourage perseverance or determined behaviours.
- Give constructive feedback to help children overcome obstacles. For example, if a child is trying to cross the balance beam, suggest making a change with how their arms are positioned (have arms out to the side) to help them successfully cross the balance beam.
- Use children's preferred type of positive reinforcement. For example, if a child prefers high fives instead of social praise, then provide positive reinforcement by high-fiving the child after they attempted or successfully complete a skill/ activity.



Mastery

Experiencing achievement, competence; having sense of accomplishment

Strategy: Safety

Ensure safe use of play structures and spaces

Selecting a Playground

- Choose playgrounds that have structures that are an appropriate height for play. Height should also be considered in relation to other playground features such as a soft ground and safety bars.
- Choose playgrounds that have wide walkways/open space to ensure room for error, allow freedom to move, and decrease risk of collisions.

On the Playground

- Encourage children to participate in **risky play**.
- Incorporate risky play into lesson plans. For example, encourage exploration of different levels/heights, speeds, and vestibular (swings, spinning) play.
- Be mindful of the size of the playground and limit activities that may increase collisions.
- Suggest playing on different play structures if you do not think the child is safe on the current structure.
- Manage playground space to ensure there is no overcrowding of certain areas.



Meaning

Contributing toward obtaining a personal or socially meaningful goal; feeling a sense of responsibility to others

Strategy: Goal-setting

Promote goal-setting for play while on the playground

Selecting a Playground

- Look for playgrounds that include equipment and space for skill development in different play domains (e.g., motor, sensory, social).

On the Playground

- Support children physically, socially, and emotionally so that they can create and achieve their own playground goals.
- Have purpose for child's play on playgrounds and create formal and informal goals with children (goals can be skill related, social, emotional, etc.).
- Create opportunities for skills to be repeated and practiced, to help children reach their goals.
- Pair children with similar goal types (e.g., social, motor, sensory) to work on progression. Ensure that plans for goal achievement are individualized for each child.
- Assist children in setting individualized and attainable goals. Get to know each child's abilities, interests, strengths to help support them in their play journey.
- Communicate with caregivers about child's individual goals that may be incorporated into sessions.
- Consult with caregivers to better understand the child's challenges to help guide goal setting (e.g., in-take/registration forms and regular check-ins).



Meaning

Contributing toward obtaining a personal or socially meaningful goal; feeling a sense of responsibility to others

Strategy: Leadership

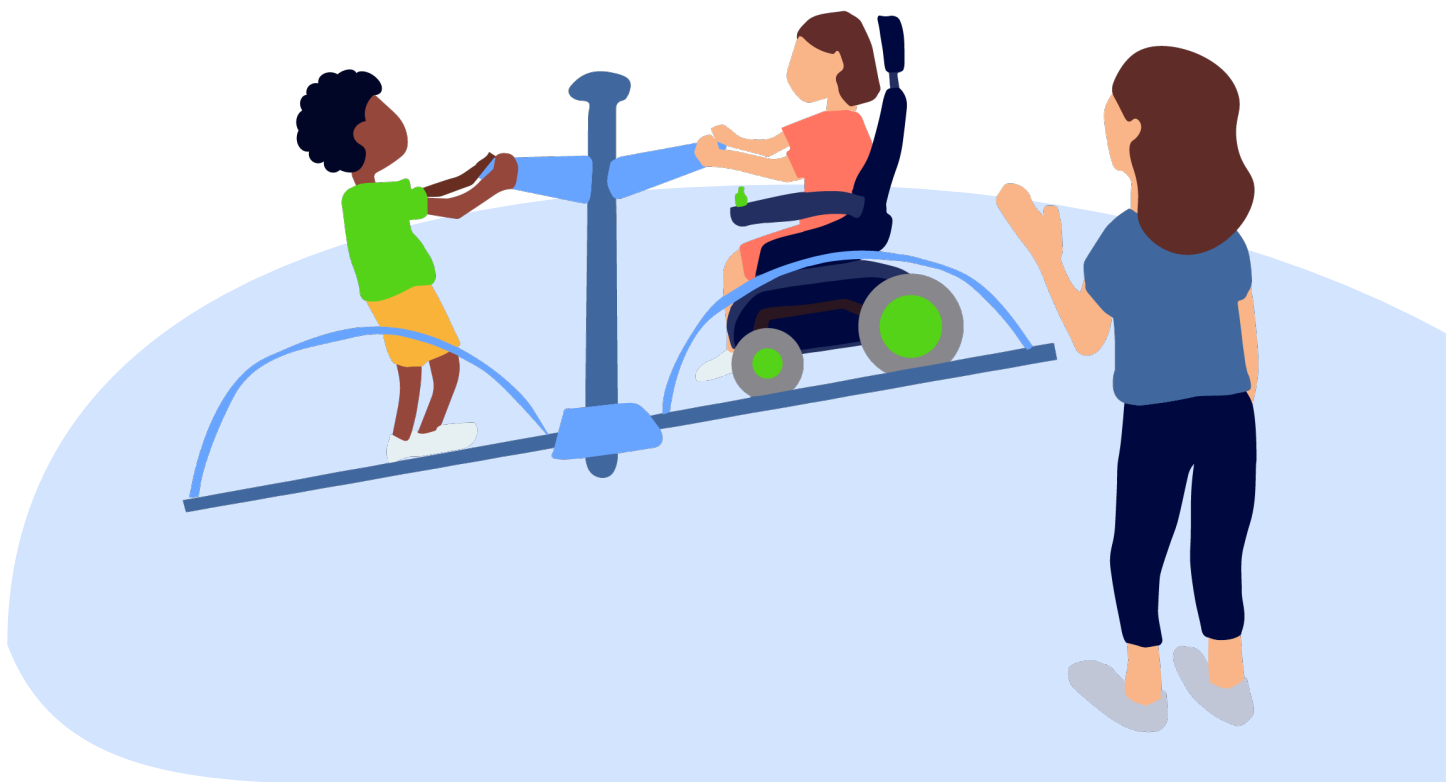
Promote leadership on and around the playground

On the playground

- Plan time for children to take turns leading/co-leading the group/small groups through the playground.
- Build in opportunities for children to take on a variety of roles/responsibilities in sessions. For example, opportunities to lead an activity, teach a skill/activity, set up equipment, lead cheers, teach their buddy new skill/ activity, create a new game.
- **Model** different ways children can help teach one another how to use play structures and spaces in different ways.
- Pair children of different ages to play together to allow for creative ways to use the play structures and spaces.
- **Promote** a buddy/peer mentor system. For example, have children work in small groups with peers of varying skill levels to **facilitate** opportunities for children to teach and learn from each other.

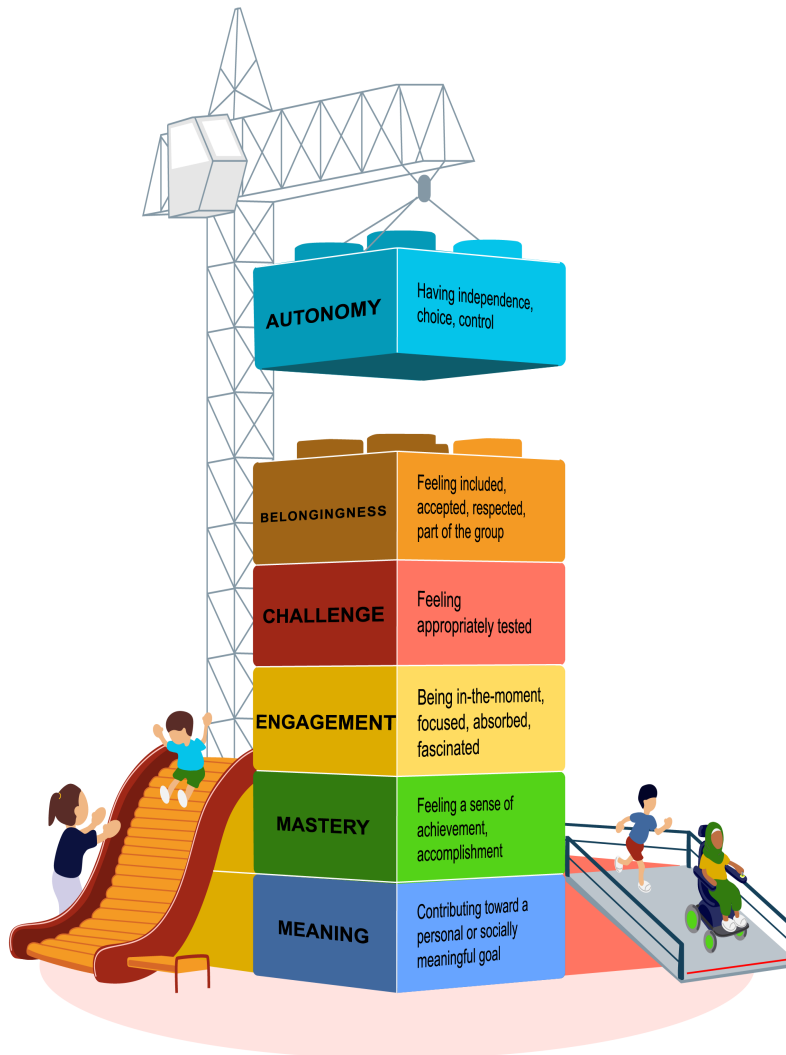
Also helps fulfill

Engagement



SWOT Analysis

BUILD A PLAN TO ENHANCE PROGRAM QUALITY



Strengths: Which building blocks are your program's strength areas? How well do these strengths align with your program priorities?

Weaknesses: Which building blocks align with your program priorities but are not strength areas in your program currently?

Opportunities: Identify up to three building blocks your program could focus on to improve children's quality participation. Identify strategies your program could incorporate to support these building blocks. Jot down some notes about how these strategies can be implemented into your program. Consider if there are any upcoming opportunities for implementing these strategies such as a training camp, funding opportunities, etc.

Threats: Identify any barriers or threats that might get in the way of you being able to implement your strategies to target these building blocks.

Glossary

Cooperative games: A form of play in which children work with one another in order to achieve a common objective.

Encourage: To stimulate development by giving verbal and/or non-verbal cues to a child so that they will do or continue to do an activity.

Facilitate: To make it possible or easier for children to engage in play activities.

Imaginative Play: A form of play that uses imagination to assign roles to inanimate objects or people, symbolizing objects, actions, or ideas (eg., a covered play space becomes an imaginary house).

Interactive play: A form of play where two or more children are playing in an activity-oriented way and mutually acknowledging the other(s). The children's actions are complementary with those of another/others, and/or the children are engaged in conversation about a common activity.

Loose Parts Play: A form of play that involves materials that can be used in many ways (eg., moved, taken apart, etc.), allowing children to experiment through play. There are no directions provided and materials can be used alone or combined with others, such as sticks or blocks.

Model: To use yourself as an example of how you want children to behave, engage, etc. in an activity or with an environment or person.

Parallel play: Instances where a child plays independently beside, but not with, another child. The child does not try to influence others in play.

Program: A type of activity that is structured and instructor-led. For example, a play-based program may involve structured play time during a camp, out of school care, or play-based recreation programs for children.

Promote: To further the progression of a child in an activity/with an environment through verbal and non-verbal cues.

Glossary

Provide: To make yourself or resources available so that children can engage in play.

Quality Participation: Achieved when children with a disability view their involvement as satisfying and enjoyable, and experience outcomes that they consider important (i.e., feelings of autonomy, belongingness, challenge, engagement, mastery, and/or meaning).

Risky Play: A form of play that encourages a child's natural movement, where they are able to learn from new experiences as they navigate through uncertainty, unpredictability, and risk-taking. The "risks" in risky play can involve physical, social, and emotional dimensions (eg., using a new play structure or coping with losing a game).

Solitary Play: Instances where a child plays alone or independently, makes no reference to others and makes no effort to include other children in their play.

Structured Play: Structured play is when rules, guidelines, or an external authority figure incorporate organization that directs the purpose and outcome of play (eg., games such as tag and grounders or sport-related activities).

Support: To give children physical, verbal, emotional, or other forms of assistance as needed so that they can be successful in play.

Unstructured Play: Unstructured play is when there is no imposed outcome or purpose, and children may follow their own interests and ideas (eg., exploring places or imaginative games).

