One of the greatest joys of being a child is the ability to play, socialize and interact with other children. This toolkit has all the information and best practices your community needs to design an accessible play space that all children, including those with mobility impairments, can engage in and enjoy. From the development of new spaces to the renovation of existing playgrounds, my hope is that all communities will become fully accessible and inclusive.

- Rick Hansen
# Table of Contents

- **Introduction** .................................................................................................................. 3
- **Inclusion Through Universal Design** ........................................................................... 4
- **Best Practices** ............................................................................................................... 5
- **Frequent Mistakes to Avoid** .......................................................................................... 15
- **Examples of Projects on a Smaller Budget** ................................................................. 17
- **FAQs** ............................................................................................................................... 18
- **References** ..................................................................................................................... 20
Play, and especially play in natural spaces outdoors, is an essential component in child development. The more diverse the natural and physical surroundings, the greater the range of learning and developmental opportunities will be for all children including those with disabilities (Tai, 2006).

Schoolyards and play spaces are an integral part of the school and community environment. Key components of the school day - physical activity, socialization, creative play and learning in nature – take place in the school’s outdoor play spaces. Natural features and equipment both play an important role. A play space is more than a structure — it encompasses the total environment in which play occurs. It is the system, not the objects.

A great play space allows children to manipulate their environment, stimulates social and cognitive play, provides graduated challenge, and creates an opportunity for movement. These experiences can be provided to all children with and without disabilities in a well-designed, accessible and inviting school yard.

Accessible play spaces support the BC Ministry of Education’s Policy of “inclusion of all students into the school community.” A universal design approach to the planning, installation and maintenance of play spaces will provide students of all abilities with an inclusive and accessible environment in which to learn and play.

This toolkit provides concrete tools to support your school district in incorporating accessibility into your outdoor play spaces. It offers an overview of best practices in accessible design and a how-to guide for both the development of new play space projects and the renovation of existing playgrounds. The focus of this resource is accessibility related to mobility impairments. Issues regarding play space design for other disabilities fall outside the scope of this toolkit.

Application of the resources in this toolkit will support your school board’s commitment to BC Ministry of Education Policy 2009 Appendix H: “School boards are responsible for providing facilities that allow equality of access to educational programs for students with special educational needs...The ability of students with special educational needs to access school facilities affects the inclusion of these students in the overall school environment. Planning for those with special needs should ensure that they have access to the school facilities and all aspects of the school program. When new construction or renovations to existing spaces are approved, facilities that will meet the requirements of students with special needs should be included in the planning. It is far less costly to design accessibility features at the outset, ensuring that they or an infrastructure are in place than to retrofit at a later date.”

Through thoughtful design, planning and maintenance, a universally accessible play space can be provided for students, as well as present and future local community members. Choosing the right surfaces, providing accessible routes around the site, and incorporating play opportunities for all children, are straightforward and simple strategies for ensuring universal access.
Accessible play spaces are designed to encourage shared play among children of all abilities. They offer a rich variety of play opportunities to children both with and without disabilities, based on an overall site design that draws children into inclusive play experiences. They also allow parents and caregivers with physical disabilities to safely supervise and play with their children.

Universal design is an approach to design that supports accessibility and inclusion by creating spaces that meet the needs of a diverse range of users. Diversity is built into the design: parts of a space can be used by more than one child at a time, in more than one way, with a variety of different circuits and ways to get up and down, and a variety of different activities.

**Universal design incorporates the following principles:**
- The majority of features and spaces are usable by all people, instead of having separate “accessible features” for people with disabilities. Features like play equipment, planter boxes or benches are of different heights and sizes to meet the needs of more people. Diversity and variety help to make a great play space accessible to everyone.
- Circulating around and using the play space is simple and easy. Accessible surfacing allows wheelchair access to play equipment with minimal effort. The design provides adequate space for all people to access and manoeuvre around play equipment and features regardless of mobility.
- The play space provides opportunities for challenge for all users but minimizes hazards.

Some helpful resources on universal play spaces are included in the Reference section of this toolkit. Play for All Guidelines (1997) provides a comprehensive guide to designing and maintaining sites accessible to all children. The Canadian Standards Association’s (CSA-Z614-07) contains safety guidelines and an important section on accessible sites and equipment in Annex H (see point 8.0 under Best Practices below). Other standards specifically related to accessibility can be found in the Building Access Handbook 2007: Illustrated Commentary on Access Requirements in the 2006 BC Building Code.
The best practices listed below are key in designing a universally accessible play space. A successful design is one that considers how people arrive at the site, how they move around, where they sit, and the many different ways that the users will play and interact with one another.

While considering the individual elements of an accessible play space, it is valuable to keep in mind the overall principle of designing a space that will engage children with their natural surroundings, provide a rich variety of sensory activities to stimulate the senses, and foster rich and imaginative opportunities for shared play.

1.0 Surfacing Materials

Surfacing is one of the most important components in designing safe and accessible play spaces. Many existing play spaces have been built with non-accessible surfacing materials including pea gravel and sand, excluding many children and caregivers with mobility impairments.

Accessible options include pour in place rubber surfacing, rubber tile, engineered wood fibre, engineered carpet and crushed rubber products. Sand is not an accessible fall surface, but in combination with other surfacing (e.g. pour in place rubber) can provide an important play element for all children. Other materials such as asphalt paths combined with engineered wood fibre can improve access to equipment. Although more expensive, rubber surfacing can be used selectively to maximize access to particular pieces of equipment or entry points. Engineered wood fibre, although less expensive, requires fairly frequent maintenance to ensure that ruts around equipment are minimized and adequate depths are maintained to ensure fall safety.

Engineered wood fibre combined with asphalt provides good access to the play equipment. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIRA STANDFIELD

Pour in place rubber surfacing combined with more affordable engineered wood fibre, provides excellent access to the swing. PHOTO COURTESY OF KIM SANDERSON, CITY OF EDMONTON

Pea gravel is not an accessible surface and should be phased out of all playspaces. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERRY CAVES

Rubber tile provides good universal access. PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE B, PLAYFALL NWR

Engineered carpet provides an accessible alternative in areas with low fall heights. PHOTO COURTESY OF MARATHON ATHLETIC SURFACES INC.
2.0 Parking and Curbs

If provided, parking areas should allocate at least one space for people with disabilities (3.7 m wide, 7.5 m deep including a 1.2 m wide walkway) with a safe, curb-free route to the main walkway. The walkway should connect directly with the play space.

3.0 Walkways

The most important element of a play space is being able to get to it! Walkways connecting to the play space from buildings, sidewalks and adjacent parking lots are important in creating an easy to navigate site. Play happens along walkways and pathways, and attention should be paid to the design of the route including places to sit.

Accessible walkways that allow all people to easily circulate are:

- made of firm surfaces (asphalt, concrete, compacted crushed stone, pavers)
- wide enough: at least 1525 mm
- gently sloped: less than 5%
- well drained (with a 2-3% cross slope)

4.0 Circulation

A site does not need to be level to make it wheelchair accessible. To add interest and stimulation, existing slopes can be utilized and the site excavated to create a shallow depression or add a slight slope to flat terrain. Ensure that slopes are not at a steeper grade than 5% to remain wheelchair accessible.

Ramps to a structure, if required, can be combined with landscaping to blend equipment into the setting more effectively. Variety in surfaces and textures to create zones, edges, and approaches helps to improve circulation for people with sensory impairments. This variety also provides more diverse sensory experiences for all children.
5.0 Borders and Access to Equipment

The best practice for accessible entry into a play space allows for entry points anywhere along a border to a play area. This is provided through flush access with a maximum of ½” drop from the adjacent path onto the play surface. Some school districts are working towards adopting an equipment installation standard to provide universal access. The standard includes excavating 14”-15”, using 3” pea gravel as a base covered with a geotextile and covered with 12” compacted wood fibre. The 6” X 6” timber border does not create a barrier when installed in an excavated site. This standard encourages universal access to all sites within a school system.

Other options, if it is not possible to provide flush access, include curb cuts, dropped concrete curbs, and ramps over wood borders made from asphalt, concrete or plastic.

Using grading, berms (small mounds) and boardwalks to provide access to raised equipment eliminates the need for additional ramps, and is a more cost effective manner of providing universal access to raised areas.

The practice of providing ramps directly to equipment platforms without providing accessible ground surfacing should be avoided as some children and caregivers are then excluded from being able to circulate freely around the play space.

6.0 Clearances

For universal access, knee clearance (680 mm high) helps to provide wheelchair access under tables, counters and drinking fountains. Reach heights for seated or small users should generally be within the range of 380 mm- 1200 mm above the ground. Items such as gate latches and dispensers should be installed within this range. Clear ground space 760 mm X 1200 mm provides unobstructed room to accommodate a wheelchair user in front of a play component or amenity.
7.0 Amenities (seating, shade, site furnishings)

Benches and seating areas are important components of a play area. They offer important social spaces for students, caregivers and teachers. Here are some important considerations to ensure that they are accessible:

- Benches and seating areas that are integrated into a site should provide a comfortable back support and arm rests for easy movement in and out of the bench.
- Seating areas should be located on firm stable surfaces (asphalt, concrete, compacted crushed rock, pavers).
- A space 760 mm wide by 1200 mm deep beside benches should be provided to allow for wheelchair users to sit beside or transfer to a bench.
- Drinking fountains, trash cans, and other amenities are easiest for all people to use when located on firm, level surfacing.
- Bike racks and accessible washrooms are other amenities that are important if the play space is also shared with the local community.

8.0 Manufactured Equipment

Equipment choices should be selected based on the following key principles:

- Focus on providing rich, unique and imaginative play opportunities with opportunities for both active and quiet play. Prioritize features that stimulate open-ended, social and creative play rather than elements that offer limited play opportunities, such as static play panels.
- Include a rich variety of interesting ground-level play features to enhance the accessibility for children with mobility impairments.
- When you design access routes to elevated areas of the play space (through ramps and transfer stations), ensure that you are providing access to high-interest, fun areas of the play space. Too often, ramps lead to a platform where there is not much to do for a child using a wheelchair or mobility aid who arrives there.

**What is Annex H?**

Annex H, an addition to the CSA standard, establishes minimum accessibility requirements for newly constructed play spaces as well as retrofits. Emphasis is placed on ensuring that all children are able to access a diversity of components provided in a play space. Annex H provides guidelines for manufactured play equipment in terms of when ramps to structures are required, and what mix of ground level and elevated play features is needed to provide accessible play. The document also includes guidelines addressing site circulation, and general access requirements. Although provided as a guideline, Annex H is written in mandatory language to facilitate its use as a technical specification.

**General Access Guidelines - Annex H**


- Separate play areas according to age (18 months – 5 years and 5 - 12 years) to ensure compatible activities and challenge levels. Distinct areas create safer and more welcoming environments for younger children.
- Provide a variety of play experiences and ensure that at least one of each type provided is accessible to all children. Example: sliding, swinging, climbing, sand play.
- Provide accessible surfacing that meets CAN/CSA-Z614 Section 10
- Ensure that paths and ramps provide adequate room for all users
  * Paths: 1500 mm wide, with a maximum 1:16 slope preferred
  * Ramps: A minimum width of 914 mm (36”) is required on ramps. Maximum slope 1:12
  * A 1500 mm X 1500 mm space is required where 360° manoeuvrability by wheelchairs is required. 2100 mm X 2100 mm is preferred for power wheelchairs.
- For places where transferring from a wheelchair is required (to equipment platform, seat wall, crawl tube etc.), the height to transfer between the ground and the feature is 280mm-460 mm. The transfer platform or step should be at least 610 mm wide by 355 mm deep. Consideration should be given to minimize the distance between the transfer system and any elevated play components. Clear space used for parking mobility devices is required adjacent to the transfer platform (1200 mm X 610 mm).

1500 mm allows for two wheelchairs to pass or change direction. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE U.S. ACCESS BOARD

Route may narrow to 910 mm for a distance of 1500 mm. Permits flexibility to work around existing features (trees, equipment). IMAGE COURTESY OF THE U.S. ACCESS BOARD

Details of transfer platform. IMAGE COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN STANDARDS ASSOCIATION
• Knee clearance for children’s wheelchairs under play tables and counters
  * 610 mm high, 760 mm wide, 430 mm deep

• The maximum height of the rim of the surface should not exceed 787 mm
  Forward or side reach ranges for children using wheelchairs
  * 500-910 mm for 3-4 year olds
  * 460 to 1015 mm for 5-8 year olds
  * 405 to 1120 mm for 9-12 year olds

The challenge in providing a dynamic and interesting play space is to manage hazards through common sense and established standards, while providing unique experiences allowing all children to take risks, explore and manipulate their own environment. Annex H guidelines provide basic standards for providing safe and accessible sites and equipment, helping designers and suppliers meet baseline needs. Play space providers are strongly encouraged to incorporate these guidelines while creating innovative and appealing sites using natural features and materials. General access guidelines can be applied to any design helping to create accessible and interesting play spaces for all.

**Direction to provide to a playground supplier when purchasing equipment**

• Provide age range and number of children using site
• Provide a Design Program (goals and objectives for the play space). Discuss the elements you envision such as social and gathering spaces, a focus on creative play, a variety of play choices, and an inclusive environment that fosters shared play. The equipment allow for children with disabilities to be part of the centre of the action.
• Provide your budget for the equipment, keeping in mind costs for landscaping and natural features.
• Emphasize the need to follow CSA/Annex H accessibility standards to ensure universal access.
• Emphasize that equipment should fit into the site plan, not vice versa. If possible, work with a designer to create a basic site plan first, and then establish what equipment is needed
• Ensure the equipment is accessible to parents and caregivers with disabilities.

What questions should I ask a playground equipment supplier once I receive a proposed design?

• How does the equipment accommodate various interests and abilities?
• Is there an information table provided specifying the number and type of ground level play components to confirm the design meets accessibility requirements?
• What age group is this equipment suitable for?
• What are the required safety zones and no-encroachment zones?
Examples of Best Practices for Manufactured Play Equipment

Equipment suppliers offer a wide variety of equipment that is accessible to all children with and without disabilities. Specialized equipment may also be available, but a universal approach offers more opportunity for interaction and fun for all kids.

- **Social and emotional development** - includes features that can be shared by all children encouraging social interaction and inclusion.
  - Work, sand and play tables - promote quiet cooperative activities alone or in groups
  - Play counter, play hut/fort - encourages imaginative play with other children
  - Roller slide - encourages social interaction
  - Saucer swing - promotes integration and co-operative interaction
  - Spinning nets - promotes integration and co-operative interaction
  - Crawl tunnel – encourages socialization

Social play at counters. PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER TAMMETTA, HIGHWIRE

This sand table provides a great opportunity for all children regardless of ability to play together. PHOTO COURTESY OF LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES INC.

Saucer swing encourages social play. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIRA STANDFIELD
- **Perceptual Motor Development** - includes activities that promote gross and fine motor co-ordination. Activities should include children who may have difficulty perceiving shapes, form, depth or movement. The equipment listed below helps to improve coordination and balance as well as gross motor skills.
  - Saucer Swing
  - Spring Teeter totter
  - Spring rides or platform
  - Spinner (bowl or net)
  - Slides

Spring platforms promote coordination and balance. PHOTO COURTESY OF LANDSCAPE STRUCTURES INC.

Spinning equipment also offers social opportunity for older children. PHOTO COURTESY OF HILDE RICHTER SPIELGERATE

An accessible swing seat is often a favorite play feature with children of all abilities. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIRA STANDFIELD

This spring teeter totter helps to enhance balance, coordination and social play. PHOTO COURTESY OF PETER TAMMETTA, HIGHWIRE

Double springers provide an inclusive play experience. PHOTO COURTESY OF PLAYWORLD SYSTEMS®
• **Physical Development** - includes activities that promote strength and coordination.
  - Chinning bars, inclined ladders – improve upper body strength and coordination
  - Parallel bars – improve strength, coordination and balance
  - Nets – improve upper and lower extremity strength
  - Slides – improve upper and lower extremity strength
  - Bridges – improve balance and coordination
  - Basketball hoops – improve strength and hand eye coordination

• **Sensory Development** - includes features incorporating texture, manipulative devices, contrasting colours and sound to enhance auditory, tactile and sensory awareness. Sensory features also encourage artistic and aesthetic development.
  - Sound panel or music panel – stimulates auditory awareness
  - Sand and water play – stimulates tactile awareness

9.0 **Landscape Elements**

Natural elements offer some of the most interesting and meaningful play experiences for all children, instilling a sense of autonomy, curiosity and discovery. The elements listed below can be configured with universal design principles in mind, creating a sensory-rich and stimulating environment for children of all abilities. Many schools have incorporated low cost, low maintenance materials to create more natural spaces. The following elements can be incorporated into a school site, providing a more enriching outdoor environment.

- Pathways and boardwalks (supporting exploration, providing better access)
- Garden space providing opportunities for children to create food or create a native plant garden. Raised planter boxes can provide universal access
- Performance spaces (stage) for free play or school programs
- Painted games area (oversize chess board, chalkboard, mazes, 4-square, ball games, hopscotch)
- Landforms/topography (exploration of movement)
- Seating and gathering spaces, for informal play or outdoor classroom
- Games tables and work spaces
- Trees and plants for shade, exploration and creating habitat for butterflies and other wildlife
- Boulders and logs for climbing, discovery, seating and social play
- Sand and water and other loose components for manipulation and discovery
- Rain garden to demonstrate where stormwater goes
- Public Art pieces including murals or sculptures for play and discovery
- Arbor or trellis for shade and visual interest
4. **FREQUENT MISTAKES TO AVOID**

**Design Problems**

- Ramps are built to equipment but access is not provided to ground features and site circulation.
- Ramps are built to platforms with little or no play value.
- Specialized equipment that segregates children with disabilities is selected, an approach which is both isolating to children with disabilities and more expensive to maintain (platform swings, for example). This type of equipment, however, may be useful at specialized facilities/centres specifically for children with disabilities.
- Inaccessible surfacing, including pea gravel and sand, is in place.
- Play features are limited to manufactured equipment without natural features.

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Example of ramp to equipment, but no accessible circulation on ground. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIRA STANDFIELD

Inaccessible safety surface – pea gravel. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHERRY CAVES

No natural features limits play. PHOTO COURTESY OF SHIRA STANDFIELD

Specialized equipment isolating children with disabilities. PHOTO COURTESY OF ROYAL BOROUGH OF KINGSTON UPON THAMES
**Installation Problems**

- Play equipment is inaccessible to users with mobility impairments due to raised borders without curb cuts.
- No connections are provided from play features to pathways within or connecting to the play space. A single access point (ramp or curb cut) to a play area often forces users to circle around the entire area to the entry point. Several access points (or a barrier free border) are preferred to provide direct and easy access for all to the play area.
- Top of fall surfacing is too far below entry access point, creating a drop down into the play space, a barrier for wheelchair users.
- Awkward access points to ramps have been installed with sharp turns and/or steep grades to structures.
- Access points are blocked due to plantings or site furniture.
- Inattention to precise grading creates awkward transitions and sometimes the need for adding steps, creating a barrier for some users.
- Barriers are created at concrete pad edges when site amenities are installed (tables, trash cans, benches).
- Poor drainage installation can create wet areas in play zones, and slip hazards across pathways.

**Maintenance Problems**

- Fall surfacing is not maintained to adequate height to work with access points.
- Ruts are not smoothed out in play surfacing, creating inaccessible areas.
There are many ways of enhancing accessibility at a play space on a lower budget when major installations or renovations are not being planned. The following list provides examples of projects generally budgeted at under $15,000 that will make a real difference for children and caregivers with a disability:

- Replace inaccessible surfacing (pea gravel, sand) in an existing play space with accessible surfacing (wood fibre, rubber tile etc.).
- Provide a curb cut/ramp into a play box.
- Add an accessible seating area to an existing play space including tables, child sized seats, shade.
- Add pathways and improve pedestrian circulation to and within the play space.
- Add an accessible sand play/and or small water play area.
- Purchase and install a few small inexpensive pieces of accessible play equipment.
- Add some painted games to an asphalt area
- Add some planting to the play space
Is an inclusive play space more expensive?

A well designed play space does not need to be expensive. Often, equipment is the most expensive part of a play area, and not well used in many cases. Some surfacing options including pour in place rubber can be more expensive than non-accessible materials (sand and pea gravel). However, when used selectively in combination with other materials, accessible surfacing provides access to the play space for all users. Striking a balance among surfacing, landscaping and equipment is crucial in creating an engaging, accessible and affordable play space. If an accessible standard for installing playground equipment is adopted by school boards, all new sites provide universal access to the equipment without the need for expensive add-on ramps and curb cuts.

Do children with disabilities require specialized play equipment?

An accessible and inclusive play space is designed to create varied and interesting play opportunities for children of all abilities. It fosters shared play by providing universal access to fun and appealing areas at the heart of the play space. An inclusive play space does not require that every piece of equipment be accessible to every child. When you select manufactured pieces, however, try to choose a variety of features that are usable by children of all abilities.

Inclusive play spaces do not focus on separate stand-alone features designed for the exclusive use of children with disabilities. Keep top of mind access to the social experience of play for all children.

How can school district staff provide help to school groups wanting to upgrade sites, with limited staff time and resources?

A number of resources are available to provide school groups with assistance. Let’s Play has created a second toolkit to accompany this one which provides specific resources for school-based groups interested in enhancing accessibility at their play space. The series of steps outlined below indicate critical points where input from the school district can facilitate the successful completion of the project, whether the process is lead by a PAC member, play space designer, educator or other stakeholder.

Planning

1. Play space committee/organizers begin planning process: evaluation of existing site, discussion of preliminary vision
2. District representative meets with organizers to review opportunities, challenges, constraints.
   - Discuss review process with organizers and provide name of contact person at School District to be notified of project progress
   - Inform the organizers of school, school district and union policies, standards, safety issues regarding volunteer labour, maintenance concerns and any long term issues (school expansion, closures etc.). The organizers should be encouraged by the District to incorporate universal design principles into the new play space. The organizers should be informed what construction costs they are responsible for and what costs may be covered by the District (e.g. demolition, fall surfacing) if applicable.
   - Supply the organizers with any existing site plans, utility information, and school district design standards.
Design
1. Organizers begin design process, potentially with designer. Work may include consultation process with students and staff to develop design program and then a concept plan.
2. District representative reviews the site plan and proposed equipment and ensures that the material is circulated to the appropriate staff for comment and feedback
   • Provide information to organizers if any specific permits or permission are required
   • Review written specifications and directions provided (either from designer or equipment supplier) to installers and contractors to ensure compliance with school board policies
   • Discuss maintenance plan with organizers to ensure long term viability of the play space

Implementation
1. PAC, school staff or designer coordinates build (either with volunteers or contractor)
2. District representative may need to coordinate a playground safety inspector to review the constructed site
   • Ensure that ongoing maintenance issues are resolved
   • Consult www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/files/PlayspacePolicyTemplate.pdf for more information on construction procedures for equipment installation

How do we maintain an upgraded play space at the school?
Maintenance needs to be considered in the master plan and design details including planting, grading and materials. In terms of any special maintenance requirements in the design not normally undertaken by the district, many schools have successfully coordinated “special” maintenance by having a PAC subcommittee organize volunteers. A maintenance manual for the new play space helps to outline specific tasks and a volunteer can ensure that maintenance tasks are assigned. Volunteers can then select a specific task and agree to volunteer for one year. The manual helps to ensure that “special” maintenance tasks are completed in perpetuity, so that as PAC members change, the special features in the play space are still maintained. Examples of volunteer tasks include weeding planter boxes, cleaning out bird boxes, etc. Routine maintenance such as grass cutting, and safety surface renewal would be maintained by the school district.

What are other School Districts Doing?
There are numerous examples of other jurisdictions that have undertaken initiatives to upgrade school grounds and play spaces. Partnerships with educational institutes, municipalities and funding agencies have enabled schools to enhance and naturalize play spaces and encourage experiential learning. BC schools have an opportunity to undertake a similar approach while at the same time being on the leading edge promoting universal design and access for all on school grounds.

Learning Landscapes (Denver) www.learninglandscapes.org
Learning Landscapes is a program at the University of Colorado Denver that develops partnerships to support the design and construction of neglected public elementary schoolyards into attractive and safe multi-use parks. Since 1998, the program has linked Denver Public Schools, private foundations and the City, upgrading 48 schools. While the main objective of this process is to reconnect communities with their public schools, a learning landscape playground and park also creates innovative avenues for participatory learning, increases recreational opportunities, and provides much needed green spaces in otherwise heavily urbanized neighbourhoods.
**Toronto School District**
The Toronto District School Board has hired a number of landscape architects to act as facilitators in the development of master plans for schools, including natural outdoor classrooms. This process followed the removal of play equipment from many schools due to a failure to meet CSA standards and the need to replace interactive play and educational elements.

**Boston Schoolyard Initiative** [www.schoolyards.org](http://www.schoolyards.org)
The Boston Schoolyard Initiative (BSI) public/private partnership was launched by the City of Boston in 1995. The Initiative has improved 70 schoolyards across the city. Local foundations have underwritten organizing and planning grants which allow schools to hire part time organizers who conduct outreach, facilitate meetings, and bring resources and expertise to schoolyard groups. Schoolyard Friends groups and the School Department have developed a “Shared Maintenance Protocol” that assigns responsibility for a variety of tasks. The City is responsible for “baseline” maintenance and Schoolyard Friends Groups are expected to organize spring/fall clean-up events, engage in planting activities, re-paint lined games and report vandalism. In addition to local custodians, the Boston School Department has assembled a Boston Schoolyard Initiative Maintenance Crew whose sole focus is on school grounds.

### References

- A guide to the ADA access guidelines for Play Areas [www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm](http://www.access-board.gov/play/guide/intro.htm)
- Annex H, “Accessibility to Children’s Play spaces and Equipment” and additional information on design, construction and maintenance policies: [http://www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/index.html](http://www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/index.html)
- BC Landscape Architects [www.bcsla.org](http://www.bcsla.org) has an online list of designers with skills in play space design
- Examples of Natural Play from [freeplaynetwork.com](http://freeplaynetwork.com) and [www.Playlink.org](http://www.Playlink.org)
- Kaboom.org (examples, online workshops, fundraising etc.)
- Play and Natural Learning Spaces Design, Construction and Maintenance Policy Template [www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/files/PlayspacePolicyTemplate.pdf](http://www.allabilitieswelcome.ca/Playspaces/files/PlayspacePolicyTemplate.pdf)
- Play for All Guidelines, 1997, Moore, Goltsman and Iacofano, Mig Communications, Berkeley, CA