

ADA – Play Types

The USDOJ/Access Board requires that 50% of the elevated play events are on an accessible route of travel (ramps, transfer stations, reach ranges, etc).

Based on the number of elevated play events...in a designated play area...and further designated by ages 2-5 and 5-12...a certain number of “play types” must be provided that are ground accessible.

While some manufacturer/owners try to determine what equipment “does”...we adhere to the Kompan/BigToys approach that what matters is what a child “does” during play. The “Play Types” correspond to the requirements listed in the ADA Design Guide, Table 15.6.2.2

Play types define the experiences that support physical, social, cognitive, and emotional growth. Play areas should provide of play types for children of all abilities to experience. However...one must keep in mind...that every child may not be ABLE to fully utilize a particular item...based not only on ability...but also on interest.

While a child may not fully engage themselves...it is the responsibility of the manufacturer/designer/owner to create a barrier free route of travel so the child can get to the unit...around the unit...then, based on ability/interest....engage themselves to their maximum ability.

PLAY TYPES

Children seek the same basic play experiences. They are focused on developing their skills, challenging themselves, and exploring their world. They are also focused on playing together, communication, and taking turns. KOMPAN/BigToys identifies the basic play types as:

- * Rocking
- * Sliding
- * Swinging
- * Gathering
- * Pretending
- * Experimenting
- * Spinning
- * Balancing
- * Climbing/Crawling
- * Training

Play areas should incorporate a broad variety of play experiences to ensure a developmentally appropriate and balanced play experience for all children.

ROCKING

Rocking is a horizontal movement that could be backward or forward, sideways, or even circular in nature. The pivot point is below the child's center of gravity and the movement involves the whole body.

This movement stimulates vestibular development because the individual's head moves from an upright position to sideways, moving the fluids of the inner ear. Body muscles are stimulated in the act of propelling the play equipment rhythmically while trying to maintain balance and stay in motion.

SLIDING

Sliding is a rapid descent; generally as a vertical movement that utilizes the force of gravity.

This movement stimulates the vestibular sense with its sudden change of position, and stimulates muscles by encouraging the development of maintaining body balance at high speeds.

SWINGING

Swinging is a rhythmic movement, typically with the pivot point above the person's center of gravity.

As with rocking, the vestibular sense is developed as the individual's head moves from an upright position to a sideways position, moving the fluids of the inner ear. Muscles are developed to maintain balance and movement, and the eye has to continually change focus, resulting in visual stimulation.

GATHERING

Gathering is an act of meeting for socialization. It can be a "between activities" place for observing, telling, talking, planning, showing off, and cooperating with others.

The developmental benefits of gathering include social interaction, and being brought together with one's peers for relationship building.

PRETENDING

The act of stimulating imagination to create settings that allow the individual to "be what I want to be".

Pretending is a way of creating identity and playing out inner conflicts through role-play. Role-play may include categories such as fantasy and hero, family and playing house, or functional role-play such as firefighter, mechanic, baker, sailor, shopkeeper, and the like.

EXPERIMENTING

Experimenting is the process of constructing, discovering, and/or manipulating different materials or objects.

Experimenting stimulates a variety of senses that encourage learning through process and results. For example, constructing with, and discovering such materials as sand and water stimulates creative competency. Experimenting can also include cognitive learning processes including development of fine motor skills.

SPINNING

Spinning is rapid turning movement.

Muscle tone and balance are developed as the individual maintains their position against the natural forces being applied to them.

BALANCING

Balancing is the act of trying to keep the body's center of gravity directly over the base.

Developmentally, balancing requires concentration through experiments with gravity, rhythm, and body movement. Balance is the basis for all other movement, and combines the coordination of sight and body.

CLIMBING AND CRAWLING

Climbing and crawling is the process of using the arms and/or legs to move. The movement can be forward, upward, downward, backward, or a combination, creating a cross movement.

Cross movement is very important for the development of connections between the right and left halves of the brain. Climbing and crawling encourage large muscle development and coordination while keeping the body in balance.

TRAINING

Training is the act of consciously practicing a skill or particular movement in order to improve and develop the body. It is the process of competing with others or yourself to improve or progress your abilities.

Training stimulates focused muscle development and coordination. The repetition allows the individual to "master" a particular activity and develops the ability to compete or be competitive.

* This document is an edited version of the Kompan Wrap that we provide as a complimentary tool for the [Guide to ADA Accessibility for Play Areas](#). For further information, please contact us at info@jplarue.com or www.jplarue.com.