

come play.



How do Aussie's play in 2014



overview

Touched by Olivia is a national charity that advocates for inclusion. Through a unique partnership model, Touched by Olivia works with communities, governments and corporations to extend the Livvi's Place National Network of Inclusive Playspaces.

Touched by Olivia provides guidance and supports designers and decision makers to help build more inclusive playspaces. In an effort to share the lived experiences of families, including those with disability, Touched by Olivia asked supporters to complete an open ended, seven question survey.

The survey collected over 400 responses from families across Australia.



As soon as my children arrive at a park they instantly transform in to their favorite characters and play for hours in their own little world. I love to watch them just being themselves.

1. Fresh Air
2. Kids love to play
3. Burn off energy
4. Socialise
5. Exercise for everyone
6. Enjoy outdoors

Why do you go out to play?

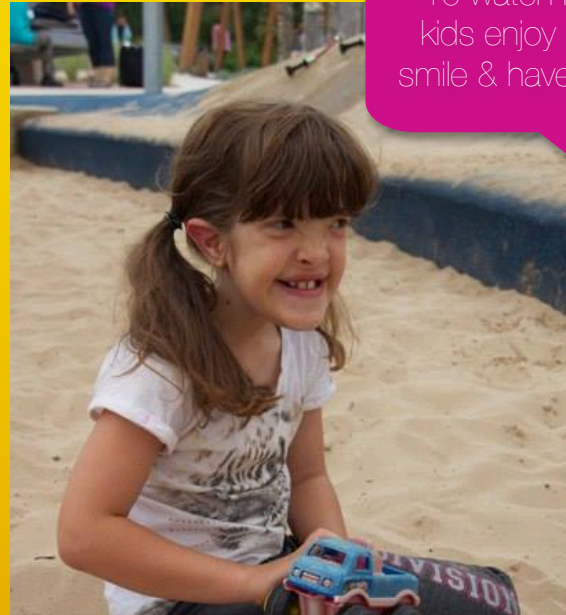
Australian children are sicker and fatter than ever before. Australian Bureau of Statistics found that over 25% of Australian children are overweight. Encouraging children to engage in active play is one of the key solutions to addressing this epidemic.

We asked respondents why they go out to play.

favoured facilities

When you go out to play, what facilities are most important to make your visit fun?

Shade	88.22%
Place to observe your child at close proximity	79.32%
Toilet location and provision of amenities	76.18%
Fence	54.45%
Accessible car parking	54.45%
Seating throughout space	48.43%
Access to nature	40.84%
Ease of getting there	40.58%
Picnic spaces	35.34%
Equipment accessible to people with disabilities	34.03%
BBQ Facilities	17.02%
Bicycle parking	8.12%



To watch my kids enjoy life, smile & have fun!

Needs to be truly accessible. I've been to playgrounds that have a ramp up to a platform but nothing to do once you get there

Additional comments about facilities

Equipment that is good for older and younger kids

Many respondents want equipment that meets the needs of all age groups and lamented that the design of playspaces are often targeted at a certain age groups, eg toddler.

Conversation supported infrastructure such as cafes, bubblers, toilets, access to the location by public transport and sufficient parking

Because we have no backyard



Play equipment that is able to be use by big and small kids

It is always nice when a park has one of those older styled merry go round type rides that you stand on to hold on. This way all the children can join in together and they end up becoming friends and talking. Also basic amenities like toilets and drinking fountains are essential. If you really want to get people there put in a coffee cart for the parents.

disability

We asked participants if any family members have a disability and to share issues they have when visiting parks and playgrounds.

In 2014, 20% of Australians have a disability. Around 50% of the survey respondents spoke of lived experience, from immediate and extended family members with severe physical disability, siblings with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and grandparents with mobility issues. A number of responses were recorded from foster carers, teachers and physiotherapists. A large number of respondents identified as carers of children with ASD, and spoke of their need to have a safe space, sensory issues and graduated challenge. More than 1 in 100 Australian kids are diagnosed with Autism.

The following pages are a sample of some of the survey responses.



lived experience

- 2 children have autism. Our children have problems with safety and need a fenced in area
- 2 children with ASD. Both children have different sensory challenges so finding a park that suits both can be a challenge
- 5yo daughter has Congenital Spinal cord damage & malformed cervical vertebraes. Neck completely fused now. Challenges include not enough things to do for a child in a wheelchair. I end up carrying her on the equipment, which puts strain on my back. But it's worth it when I see the joy our daughter gets out of it.
- A cousin who is a runner, so fenced play zones are important to be able to let her expend her energy, play and climb, whilst keeping her safe as well as the other children, ie. not having to leave them to chase after her.
- Access. Parking. Facilities.
- ASD - noise, lack of understanding
- Asd - will run into traffic Need a fenced off area
- ASD and SPD. None because we have a inclusive play ground available to us it just does not have toilets.
- ASD, challenging social parent behaviours, they do not relate well to kids' differences and play PC / within strict social limits.

- autism challenges: few activities or pieces of equipment for older children to use
- autism he wants to play on the younger kids play spaces and is not always received well by others
- Autism Sand is an issue Monkey bars are too high No shade No access to clean toilets No nature walk
- Autism We need to be in a fenced playground with toilets very close by
- autism - runs off, little awareness of danger, needs support in social situations
- Autism - their decreased physical abilities such as associated arthritis and bone issues make some equipment difficult, and they struggle to make sensible decisions in relation to the space
- Autism and they struggle if it is too busy or too loud. Also need to know toilets are close to playground and car park.
- autism runaway child
- Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our son needs to play in an enclosed play space as he tends to run off. When he is with his sibling we tend to find playspaces that are fenced in for his safety and our peace of mind. If we take him out on his own we visit other places as he is the only child we are supervising. We also opt for areas with parking close by. As ASD children are prone to meltdowns when it's time to go, then it is important for us that the car isn't too far away if we have to carry him.
- Autism, ID, as he is a runner with no idea of stranger danger he needs constant monitoring even at home
- autism, my son is a runner and without fences he could be out on the road in seconds
- autism, running away
- autism, sensory processing disorder, global delay - difficulties in congested space, problems with visual/spatial processing especially in well lit to super shaded areas. fences need to be like child proof pool fences - high and secure. greenery helps as a distraction, sand is great, climbing/clambering
- autism, will run off if not fenced etc
- Autism. Running off if park is unfenced. Keeping hat on.
- Autism. ADHD. He loves to play in the sand out. Soft landing spaces for rough and tumble play. Open, fenced in areas so the kids can run around without fear of running away.
- autism. sensory issues with the heat from metal slides and problems with chip bark. safety we don't go to parks not fenced.
- Autism...other children are a challenge!!!
- Both boys 8 & 6 have autism. Challenges are others not being autism aware, no fences are a problem
- Both my boys are on the spectrum. Dealing with other children.
- Both our boys have special needs. Darcy has Down syndrome and it has affected him at a severe level. He needs full support when out and needs a secure playground as he has no awareness of road or water safety. We find that the more active older kids at typical parks just knock him over. Our other son Leo has Autism he struggles with crowds and needs smaller spaces to chill out. Both boys love sensory stuff esp music and spinning/swinging. We need seating in amongst the area so we can let them place but still be close.
- Both our kids have been diagnosed with Autism. I think the main thing we look for is fencing especially when I'm taking the kids on my own it is too hard to supervise them and very stressful without a fence
- Daughter has Quad CP, seizure disorder, behavioural problems. We find it difficult to go to a park if there's no wheelchair accessibility, and struggle to find activities for our daughter to do at the park
- Grandma, fatigue and pain Kids- none
- Growth Hormone Deficit means he often can't get onto the equipment designed for his age and the equipment he can access independently is too babyish. Conduct Disorders - he runs away. A fence would slow him down but equipment that engages him would be even better.
- High function autism Fear of heights poor gross motor coordination
- I depend on a wheelchair for mobility, but not often face challenges, as Mum and Dad research we are going first.
- I find it challenging to keep an eye on both kids (who are ASD and runners!) at the same time so try to find parks that have only 1 entry/exit point
- I have 4 children, 2 with Autism. They have troubles coping if there is too many kids playing on the equipment at the same time.
- I have a young child in a wheelchair, he has very limited/ no fine or gross motor skills, challenges that I have is often parking, paths into play area, staying close to the child in the wheelchair but still being able to keep an eye on my other young children,
- Is not recognising your own name, when being called from across a crowded playground, a disability?
- Mobility, Parking close enough for them to walk, seats that they can sit on
- My 3 year old has Autism and tends to run off, so we can only go to fenced playgrounds. Some of these are too small/crowded which he find hard.
- My Aunty does, she is in her 60's & needs round the clock care. She can not go to parks.
- My daughter has ASD. A challenge is often her running off when spaces are open.
- My daughter has autism. She will run off if there's no enclosure.

- My son has autism severe. He gets stressed . Runs away.
- My son has autism, and I worry about his ability to play with other kids and wandering off.
- My son has Autism, fencing is very important & easy parking as he has low muscle tone.
- My son has autism. Challenges are keeping him amused when swings are occupied as he mostly enjoys the swings. Too many people can also be overwhelming.
- My son has autism. Now that he is older I can go to unfenced parks although this was a big challenge when he was younger. Now that he is older but still enjoys playgrounds - having equipment suitable for older children
- My son has autism. He has some trouble gauging social situations and although he wants to make new friends finds it very hard.
- My son has dual diagnosis of Down syndrome and Asd, biggest challenge is finding somewhere to change his nappies, he's 8. I normally find a park with close parking and have change him in the car
- My son is 8 and has Cerebral Palsy. He is confined to a wheelchair. We find that he can generally go on a swing, liberty or "baby" swing but not much else.
- My son is autistic and likes to run run and run. He has no sense of danger . My biggest problem is that there is only one park in Ballarat with a fence.
- My son is on medication that allows him to burn easily but is allergic to sunscreen. We only go to parks in cooler weather or early but it would be great to see more shade in parks
- My son needs help with social skills and friendships
- My youngest is autistic and doesn't cope well in crowds
- My youngest son is 6 and has spina bifida and syringomyelia & my eldest son is 8 and has Autism.
- No but I can imagine bark on the ground, skinny tunnels, ridged materials and lots of ladders to be very difficult for children with disabilities
- No but I teach at a special school.
- No but my best friends daughter is in a wheelchair. It is hard to lift her on and off different swings, slides etc. If we do go to a park with a disabled swing for a wheelchair she feels like she can't be with her sisters swinging beside her.
- No but my cousin has cerebral palsy and a close friend has a child with multiple disabilities including developmental delay and autism. When my friend and I try to find places to take the kids it is hard to find somewhere that her daughter will enjoy and also be safe in.
- No physical disabilities, my oldest son has High Functioning Autism/ASD.
- no, but friends son has cerebral palsy and in a wheelchair. access to any activity is hard.
- No, but i have worked with additional needs kids who find getting around difficult. A challenge is always wheelchair access :many parks have good paths now but they still have the odd step or two that the park planners seem to overlook! Very little play equipment is suitable (usually only one swing).
- No, but I work with children who have disabilities. Challenges are wheel chair access - even paths to get children close to equipment. Fencing (children often run off) - very dangerous near traffic
- no, but know friends child with a wheelchair and it breaks her heart when there isn't wheelchair accessible equip.
- no, but we sometimes play with a friend's little boy who has autism. He has a tendency to run away, very quickly- so we have to choose our locations carefully.
- No. I am a physiotherapist who often uses the park as a therapy area for children with disabilities. Some of the difficulties I incur/see include: - no accessible toilet - narrow gates and entrances to play equipment - no suitable play equipment ofr people in w/cs or with physical disabilities - no sensory play equipment
- Not formal family, but close friends. In wheelchairs. Challenges are accessibility and the space doesn't allow for them to move around and play independently (we need to help them).
- not immediate family, but adult member of family is an absconder, so fence would definitely help with him and with younger children too
- One 13 yearly old with CP and ASD One 7 year old wheelie with CP
- One child with autism (niece) she has no understanding of dangers so we need to keep a close eye on her to ensure she does not wander or place herself in danger.
- One of my children has autism. Sometimes have issues with my child wandering off from the playground.
- One with autism and one with Down syndrome. Mobility is not an issue. Absconding is no longer an issue.
- Other than being frail and elderly no, but I love seeing ALL kids being able to join in and have fun, and I love watching ALL kids accept each other and play together
- Our 5yr old daughter has autism, global developmental delay and scoliosis. We need a park to be fenced and preferably no bark on the ground as our daughter can be unsteady on her feet and it can be difficult for her to walk on.
- Our 8 year old is hearing impaired and has cerebral palsy. It's hard to let him develop indepenence due to safety concerns at most parks x
- Our 8 yr. old granddaughter has Pallister Killian Syndrome, a rare chromosomal disorder. She is unable to walk, talk or feed herself, is confined to a wheelchair and requires suitable toilet facilities.

Equipment for everyone. It is quite sad when kids are isolated at the park or can't join in because they can't access a peice of equipment, or its not built for them to use



- Our oldest daughter has multiple physical and intellectual disabilities, her sister does not. Biggest challenge is getting her into the play space. High edges to keep tanned bark in place make it impossible to get her in the the bark is impossible to wheel her over. We are lucky to find a single play element that she can enjoy and very rarely we find a play element that both of our children can enjoy together.
- Our son has autism (low functioning). Some aspects of the park are sensory overload. He is also a runner!
- Our son has Autism. Challenges were him running off. He likes to swing all the time. Other children get impatient waiting for their turn.
- Our son is autistic and developmentally delayed. He really loves the chase of running away when he's had enough. Going to a fenced park is a must for us
- Severe Autism- repetitive use of swing equipment, not enough shade on equipment used, water source for drinking and cleaning. Shade
- Son has autism We can only go to high fenced parks as he often elopes We need close parking as he has trouble transitioning from one place to the next so I often have to carry him (whilst he's screaming), push the baby in the pram and encourage my 2 year old to not let go of the pram
- Son has severe autism and ID. FINDING QUIET areas for swing and short strolls Without b..... Bikes! No equipment for jumping ie trampoline, jumping pillow etc
- Son is ASD/ADHD/SPD we need an enclosed space that allows stimulated exploration
- Son with autism sensitive to noise and crowds
- Students with physical disabilities face huge physical access problems even getting in to equipment.
- The child that we host through interchange has Autism and an Intellectual disability. He runs away and needs a secure environment with a childproof gate, ie high latch. He is also dual incontinent so it is important to have toilets close at hand, preferably unisex disabled toilets so either myself or my husband can take him (as he is too old to be taken into female toilets!). Sometimes he needs a bit of timeout away from others so a secluded space or open grassed space is good for him.
- they are all weird
- Toileting facilities including ability to change older children (12 & 13) in nappies.
- Two children with autism. Hard to watch both of them if there is no fence. Nearby toilet is a must! Unfenced water features (lakes) are an issue. Big all abilities playgrounds can get very busy and too noisy for us!
- Two of my children, one aspergers one global developmentally delayed, father diabetes and two hips replaced he walks with a walking stick
- Vision - no depth perception - so fireman's pole, heigh things, ladders, platforms are difficult for me to be close to assist as needed.
- We have friends that have combined 3 autistic children. the sensory play areas are great for them. Also having quiet spaces is important for them to withdraw to if necessary
- We host a girl with EB (Epidermabelosa). It's a skin condition so shade and accessibility is important.
- well jasper has asd but I don't consider that a disability but the challenges we face are a secure and environmentally nurturing play space
- Yes - aspergers. I mainly need to be able to observe Will to make sure he is Ok. Also need a fence. There are no fenced play areas in our town.
- Yes (mum). Chronic pain from autoimmune arthritis. The biggest issue at the park is boring equipment that *must* have an adult to remain fun. Kids like a challenge and they like a bit of risk.
- yes autism/add passive, severe anxiety and seizures. Heat, crowds, too many "Babies", toileting independence
- Yes both children, 6 yr old with asd(social skills lacking and daredevil) miss 4 coeliac disease, non stop go go go
- Yes both my kids are on the Autism spectrum and run away. I have found one playing by a body of water and the other one in a cafe trying to get an ice cream with no money. I need secure fencing to keep them safe.
- Yes but he is not old enough that we have come across any challenges yet, but being legally blind with little vision, colours & textures & sound will be good for him as he gets more mobile
- Yes I have 2 sons with autism. When they were younger it was a nightmare taking them to a park without fences. I could not relax at all - as they would get on a path and follow it. If I ran after them they would run too. I could never go without other adults as both of my kids could go off in opposite directions.
- Yes my 6 year old son. Vision impairment and cerebral palsy so having a quiet park without too many others is preferable and a fence
- Yes my boy has classic autism is non verbal and GDD
- Yes my girl has Asperger syndrome, challenges are socially and if she isn't having a good time we soon have to turn around and go home.
- Yes my sons have ASD we try to find a park that has fencing & gates so they can't get out
- yes our son is autistic and I suffer an illness which tires me quickly . Watching your child like a hawk due to conflicts with others or lack of fencing . Struggles with alot of climbing equipment and chains etc low motor skill Distance in walking to area's Toilets are in issue if child is order but still needs assistance
- Yes son, Autism. stares from other children
- Yes we have children that Run and need to keep a close eye on them

My son has dual diagnosis of Down syndrome and Asd, biggest challenge is finding somewhere to change his nappies, he's 8. I normally find a park with close parking and have change him in the car.

Make sure the bicycle path is wide enough for a wheelchair.

Think like a child. Think outside the square. Go and watch some kids play (with and without disabilities). Ask kids what they want or love at their playground

Making play spaces accessible to all people, with or without a handicap, is important. Firstly so that handicapped children can feel included and enjoy the facilities too. But also to encourage able bodied children to play with & include handicapped children, to show that deep down we're all just kids who want to play!



inclusive playspace principles

In 2011, Touched by Olivia worked with Australia's best designers, disability and children's advocates to develop six simple principles to develop an inclusive playspace.

For more information or to download a detailed copy of the guidelines, visit www.inclusiveplayspace.com

1. Everyone can play
2. A connection to community
3. Access to Nature
4. Total Experience
5. Play Independence – I can do it myself!
6. Friendship – Social participation

