

Assessment of Fletcher's Croft Children's Play Area following complaint that it is not disabled friendly

1. Double slides and platforms (fig 1)

The platform to the large slide is accessed at the far end by using small slats strategically placed (fig 2). This requires a good degree of co-ordination, which would be difficult for some children. Once up there is a fixed walkway to "swinging steps" (attached to each other with chains (fig 5a & 5b) that are challenging for children less than 6 years. The ropes to hold on to are very wide at the top and a 6 year old that I watched had both arms fully straight to hold on. There is a lot of movement between each footplate. One Mother volunteered that she always stayed under the walkway when her able bodied 5 year old was on it because she had once been left hanging onto one rope when her feet slipped off the footplates. She also commented that it wasn't easy for her to support her daughter with her arms above her head due to the height of the walkway.

Access to the slide from the near end is by an adjacent climbing wall (fig 3) that requires good co-ordination by children over 5 years. Once up onto the platform the slide is immediately available on the left.

The third way up to the slide and swinging steps is by rope ladder (fig 4), which is fine for well co-ordinated children but difficult or impossible for those less able. They then have to negotiate the swinging platform steps to get to the slide.

This apparatus needs to be made safer

Possible Solutions:

- Consider the possibility of replacing the climbing wall with easy steps to enable direct access to the slide
- Remove a few links between the steps to limit the amount of movement in the swinging platform
- Consider the possibility of the swinging platform ropes being closer together at the top for better grip

2. Small tractor slide (fig 6)

The small tractor slide has two round bars to get up onto platform (fig 7) – this could be challenging for some children. There is a slope at the front end from ground level, which is somewhat steep but could be used to get to the platform at the top of the slide.

This equipment would benefit from being made more accessible

Possible Solution:

- Replace the round bars with wider slats

3. The seesaw (fig 10) is a round structure and appears hard to get going if children's feet don't touch the ground. It seems to be balanced horizontally when not in use. With a child either end of it – a third child was helping to push the seesaw down on one side.

This does not appear to work as well as the older style seesaw

4. The sit on duck and dog (below) are both on a spiral spring and younger children can be placed and held on the seat if necessary. They don't appear to move very much.

Not an exciting piece of equipment

5. The swings all look fine.

6. The roundabout (fig 8) requires children to be able to get into the circle from underneath in order to sit on the outer rim facing inwards and to move the roundabout by turning the central plate. It should only be accessed when not moving.

This would be difficult for children with movement problems to access and use.

7. The red car dashboard (fig 9) has one moveable feature (simulating gear change), which might appeal to very young children but has nothing else to offer in the way of interaction.

This offers a very limited interactive experience



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