

Let's Play, Courtenay!

Park Playground Design Standards



City of
Courtenay

Project Goals



Let's try different ways to play!

Include a range of fun play opportunities.

- ▶ Provide opportunities for all different types of play:
 - » Active play (climbing, jumping, etc.)
 - » Sensory play (touching different textures, smelling flowers or plants, making music, etc.)
 - » Creative play (building, dancing, crafting, acting/dramatic play, etc.)
 - » Imaginative play (make-believe, pretend play, fantasy, etc.)
 - » Manipulative play (scooping, stacking, using loose parts, etc.)
 - » Social play (talking, sharing, gesturing, team activities, etc.)
 - » Reflective play (observing, thinking, daydreaming, etc.)
 - » Risky play (i.e., integrating opportunities for a range of ages and abilities to conquer fears and take risks)

The City of Courtenay is developing Playground Design Standards — a set of design steps to make the playgrounds in our city's parks more fun, inclusive, and accessible for everyone!

The following Project Goals have been developed through a review of best practices, emerging trends, and discussions with the Project team.

Round 1 of the engagement process will review these Project Goals to confirm if they reflect the values, needs, and interests of the community.



Everyone can play here!

Design universally accessible play areas that are safe and welcoming for all.

- ▶ Design play areas for all people to enjoy regardless of their ethnicity, gender, religion, race, financial status, sexual orientation, ability, or age
- ▶ Foster fun play experiences for all ages – toddlers, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors – and include opportunities for intergenerational play
- ▶ Design play spaces that integrate the key principles of universal design
 - » Consider accessibility for people with a range of abilities including those with mobility challenges, hearing disabilities, vision challenges, and those with autism and other sensory-processing challenges
- ▶ Provide opportunities for a range of sensory experiences, including all seven senses (touch, sight, vision, hearing, smell, proprioception¹, and vestibular²)
- ▶ Integrate opportunities for “intersections” or areas where children of all abilities can interact and play together
- ▶ Provide different zones within the play area for active play vs. quiet play (i.e., opportunities for calming or quiet retreat)
- ▶ Provide areas for social connection and community gathering

1. Proprioception is body awareness and ability to sense its location, action, and movement.

2. Vestibular senses support balance, orientation, reflexes, and movement



Nature is fun!

Build playgrounds with nature in mind, connecting to the environment around us.

- ▶ Celebrate Courtenay and the surrounding region's unique natural character
- ▶ Provide opportunities for nature play experiences (climbing boulders, water play, balancing logs, sensory gardens, planting, sand, loose parts, etc.)
- ▶ Provide comfortable and fun play experiences in all seasons (shade structures, covered areas, etc.)
- ▶ Integrate new planting areas and retain and protect existing trees and mature vegetation where possible
- ▶ Use plants that are native to the region, pollinator-friendly, resilient, and offer play value
- ▶ Encourage connection to nature by integrating sustainable design principles and educational opportunities (permeable surfaces, stormwater management, reclaimed materials, interpretive signage, etc.)



Let's get creative!

Allow for creative play and expressions of arts and culture.

- ▶ Foster recognition of local Indigenous people and culture within play areas (e.g., collaborative design processes, types of spaces, traditional games)
- ▶ Integrate expressions of Indigenous culture through art or narratives that are woven into the design of the play area
- ▶ Provide opportunities for creative play and creative programming (building, painting, dancing, crafts, etc.)
- ▶ Provide opportunities for musical play features
- ▶ Integrate unique public art into the design of the playground and play elements
- ▶ Enhance sense of place and regional identity through the use of artistic signage and banners



Make it flow!

Connect play areas to the park and surrounding neighbourhood.

- ▶ Consider the relationship of the playground to the park context (i.e., adjacent park amenities, natural areas for protection, surrounding neighbourhood uses)
- ▶ Plan pathways to provide safe, highly visible, clear connections throughout the play area and to the surrounding park amenities and neighbourhood
- ▶ Provide different zones within the play area for active vs. quiet play or zones for different ages, and consider the sequence and relationship of spaces to one another
- ▶ Create comfortable outdoor spaces surrounding the play area by including supporting amenities like drinking water, seating, trash cans, shade, planting, storage, and signage
- ▶ Integrate Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles to foster safe play area environments

