



INVESTIGATING AND EVALUATING IDEAS

PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Photographs: Spring ride, Spring ride – see-saw, Swings, Swing seat, Climbing equipment 1, Climbing equipment 2, Roundabout, Grass protection mats, Loose fill surfacing, Wet fill surfacing, Wheelchair roundabout, Infant car seat, Wheelchair ramp



Video: Children's playground

Photocopiable pages: Word cards: playgrounds (CD-ROM only), Investigating play equipment, Evaluating play equipment, Comparing two swings



PAGES 55-57

Make sure that the children are able to explore and evaluate large play equipment through a visit to a local play area. Follow this up using photographs taken during the visit and the photographs from the CD-ROM to stimulate discussion. During these activities the need for changes to the equipment, so that all children can play, will become apparent. Looking at the materials used and how the equipment has been constructed will help to develop the children's understanding of how the structures are able to stand upright and be strong enough to climb on. It is through these activities that the children will be able to identify the criteria needed for their ideas, when designing for everyone. They will use these criteria to generate and develop their ideas.

Discussing the photographs

- ▶ Show the photographs 'Spring ride', 'Spring ride– see-saw' 'Swings' and 'Swing seat' and discuss which are for toddlers and which are for older children: how do they know? (The spring ride and swing seat have bars and/or high sides to stop toddlers falling off.) Show the photographs of the two climbing frames and discuss the different users, as above. (One is for older children, and requires balancing skills, while the other is for younger children as it has higher sides.)
- ▶ Look again at the photographs above, and the 'Roundabout'. Discuss the materials the equipment is made from and how the different rides move. Encourage the children to consider how movement is influenced by the intended user (something that spins very fast would be for an older child, compared with the spring ride, which moves very gently).
- ▶ Use the photographs to discuss the structure of the equipment and how it is made stable and stronger. Point out the features of the swings – the framework is an A-frame and the A-frame base is buried in the ground to secure it so that it will not move when children use the swings. (This will be the same for many of the pieces of playground equipment.)
- ▶ Discuss safety features on the ground, using the photographs of different surfacing, 'Grass protection mats', 'Loose fill surfacing' and 'Wet fill surfacing'. Explore why these surfaces are there in place and how they would feel.
- ▶ Show the wheelchair roundabout and discuss how this is different to the other roundabout (there is a large area in the centre of the roundabout for a wheelchair; there is not much space in the centre of the roundabout in the other photograph as metal bars are in the way).
- ▶ Use the photographs 'Infant car seat' and 'Wheelchair ramp' to discuss their purpose and whether they could be used to adapt different types of play equipment to allow all children to use it.
- ▶ Look again at the swings and spring ride photographs: can the children think of any ways to adapt these for wheelchair users?

Discussing the video

- ▶ Show the video 'Children's playground' and discuss why the children are able to use some but not all of the equipment (sometimes the children are too big or too small).
- ▶ Ask the children whether a wheelchair user would be able to use any of this equipment: do they think this fair?

