



MAKE PLAYGROUNDS MORE INCLUSIVE FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS

Support new inclusive playgrounds and upgrade existing playgrounds with more accessible ground surface materials

DID YOU KNOW?

- Engaging in play is an important contributor to child health and development, providing children with opportunities to develop social, cognitive, and physical skills. Unfortunately, traditional playgrounds often include physical barriers that limit and marginalize the play experience for children with disabilities. (Source: [National Institute of Health](#))
- Playgrounds that are intentionally designed to be inclusive and include play equipment developed and positioned for use by both children with and without disabilities can increase community usage and support equitable play experiences. (Source: [National Institute of Health](#))
- Wood chips and engineered wood fiber products that meet U.S. Access Board standards ([ASTM F 1951-99](#)) are commonly used on playgrounds. However, even when these materials are installed and maintained properly, they can still make the playground difficult or unusable for children and adults with disabilities. (Source: [National Center on Accessibility](#))
- A government study found an alarming number of school playgrounds that limit opportunities for individuals with disabilities due to unstable ground surfaces and other barriers, even playgrounds that fulfill the minimum Access Board accessibility standard. (Source: [U.S. Government Accountability Office](#))

CURE SMA POSITION

To ensure children with SMA and other disabilities have equal access to playgrounds and recreational areas, Cure SMA urges cities and states to:

- Prioritize community development block grant resources and other funding to build fully accessible and inclusive playgrounds and recreational areas that can be used and accessed by children and adults with and without disabilities
- Require that playgrounds and recreational areas use resilient solid surface material instead of loose and unstable wood fibers for paths, routes, and play areas around all playground equipment.

WHY STATES AND CITIES SHOULD ACT

Children with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) and their caregivers who use mobility devices often face barriers on playgrounds and play areas. A [study](#) found that children with disabilities have less chance to play, socialize, and develop motor skills because many playgrounds aren't accessible. Often, playgrounds don't have equipment that works for all kids, including those with disabilities. Additionally, surfaces like wood chips, which might meet [ADA standards](#), are very [difficult](#) for wheelchair users and others with mobility devices to navigate. "At school, I can't play on the playground with my friends because there's woodchips, and woodchips are not accessible. I want the playground to be accessible

so I can roll on it easily so that I can play with my friends," said a **school-aged boy with SMA** who uses a wheelchair. Cure SMA envisions a world where all individuals with SMA have equal access to all parts of life and everyday living, including recreation.



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[Cure SMA](#) is a national organization that advocates for individuals with spinal muscular atrophy, a progressive neurodegenerative disease that robs people of physical strength, taking away their ability to walk, swallow, and breathe.