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## Occupational Injustice and the Right to Play: A Systematic Review of Accessible Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities

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**Authors**

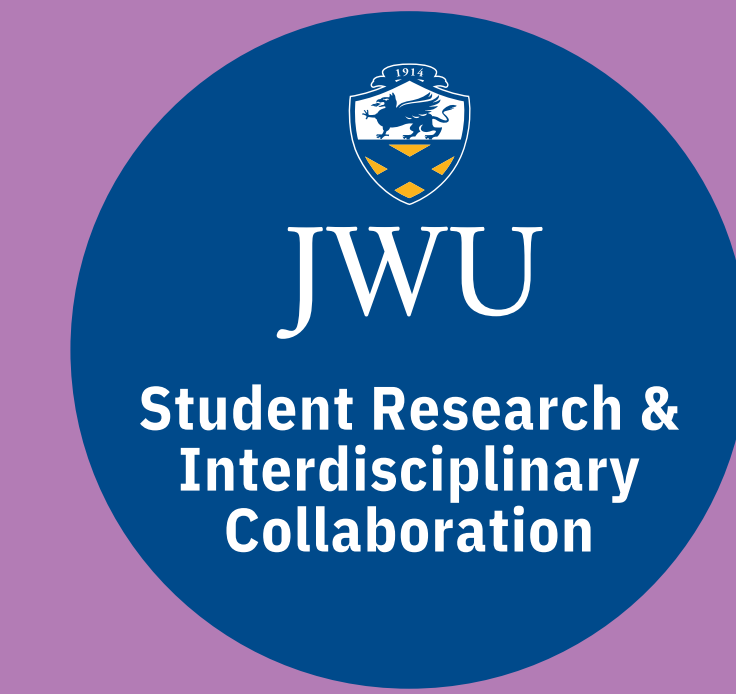
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# Occupational Injustice and the Right to Play: A Systematic Review of Accessible Playgrounds for Children with Disabilities

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## INTRODUCTION

Play is a primary occupation for children as it challenges their mind, stimulates their senses, and tests their muscular strength (Miller et al., 2017). Playgrounds allow children to challenge their abilities, but many are still inaccessible to children with disabilities. In 2010, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) released standards for how facilities can be considered accessible. However, many playgrounds tend to only meet the minimum standards necessary. As a result, children with disabilities continue to face access barriers which may impact development of important childhood milestones (Serman et al., 2020). Currently, limited research exists to understand how accessible playgrounds impact key areas of childhood development.

## OBJECTIVE

Identify and synthesize existing research on the relationship between key areas of development and accessible play settings for children aged 3-12 with disabilities, and provide occupational therapy practitioners (OTPs) with a body of evidence to inform evidence-based interventions and utilize in advocating for occupational justice.

## METHODOLOGY

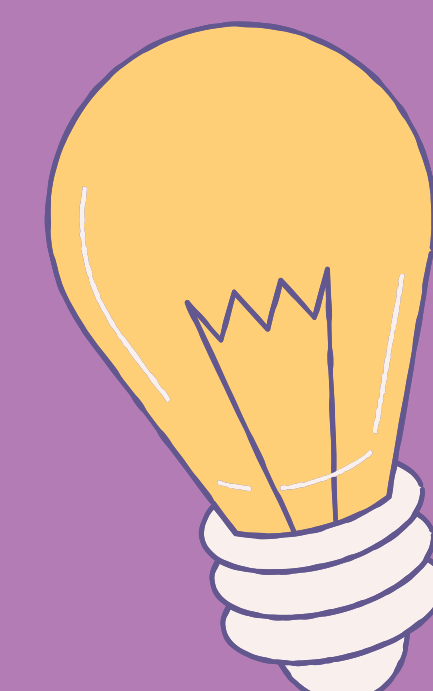
Databases searched on 1/30/21

- Academic Search Complete/EBSCO
- CINAHL/EBSCO
- Education Research Complete/EBSCO
- ERIC
- OTSeeker
- PubMed

Study Selection and Data Collection

- PRISMA Guidelines
- Inclusion Criteria
  - Peer-reviewed
  - Included children with disabilities aged 3-12
  - Took place in an accessible play setting
  - Had outcomes related to areas of childhood development
- Validated tools were used to determine risk of bias and quality of evidence.

## FINDINGS



- 9 articles met inclusion criteria
  - 1 Level III B matched case-control study
  - 4 Level IV cross-sectional studies
  - 3 Level V qualitative studies
  - 1 mixed-methods study with both Level IV and Level V evidence
- Included studies primarily explored areas of childhood development through the lens of access and engagement
- Results were analyzed and divided into categories based on outcomes measures related to:
  - Social Participation
  - Play Participation
  - Motor Skills



References



ADA Playground Checklist

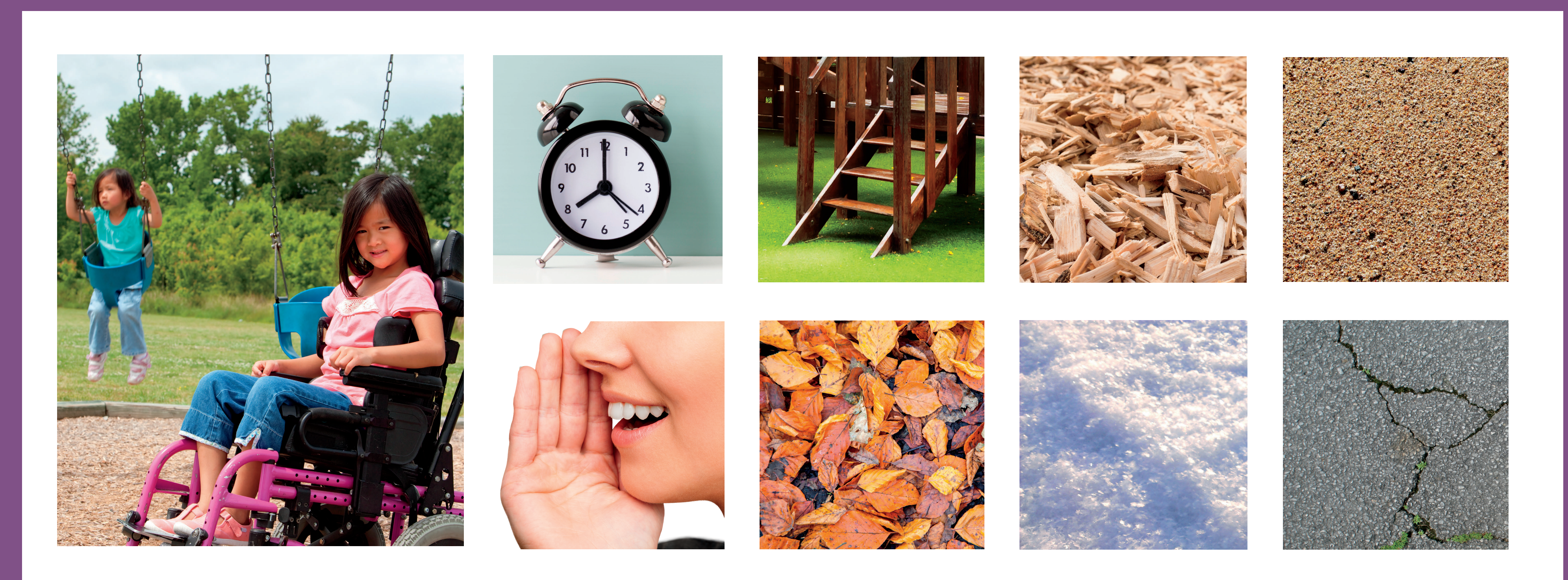


ADA Guidelines

## RESULTS

Social participation, play participation, and motor skill development were **negatively impacted in 8 of 9** studies despite playgrounds being labeled "accessible".

(Stanton-Chapman & Schmidt, 2016, 2017; Wenger et al., 2021; Locke et al., 2016; Ripat & Becker, 2012; Horton, 2016; Jeanes & Magee, 2012; Stephens et al., 2015).



## Common Barriers to Access

## CONCLUSION

Children with disabilities have decreased engagement in activities that provide opportunities for play, social participation, and motor skill development. OTPs should address occupational injustice in the playground setting through developing programs to combat stigma, engaging in policy and playground design, and conducting longitudinal cohort studies. Through addressing play accessibility, OTPs could significantly reduce instances of play inequity. Creating interdisciplinary teams to address accessible playground design locally would allow OTPs the opportunity to make a lasting impact for the children in their community.

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