

Backyard Advantages

Backyard activity play has lots of advantages:

- Kids can play independently.
- It helps develop community-friendly neighborhoods
- Outdoor activities are healthy and encourage a variety of sensory experiences
- Backyards are controlled, safe places to play.

Backyard Fun

Every backyard, big or small, is a playground filled with all kinds of exciting things to see and do.

The recipe is simple:

START with a helping of careful thought

ADD a little planning

MIX in lots of creativity and

PRESTO!



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Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability -
Alberta Initiative

www.sport.ab.ca/diversity

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for
everyone

Come Outside and Play!

Backyard Basics

Scout out your backyard and look for great features such as:

- small, grassy inclines for sliding down
- trees for houses, for shade, and nature areas
- hard surfaces for hopscotch, skipping and bouncing balls
- create spaces for sandboxes, swings and hammocks
- build a playhouse or nature hut
- develop a water reserve
- grow a garden

Match activities to your child's interests and abilities and encourage their independence.

- build a slide into a grassy incline to promote crawling and creeping
- use a raised sandbox or raised hard surface for playing with toys
- build a bird-watching lookout or gardening area
- design an obstacle course of tires and other recyclables

Recyclable Equipment

Everything old is new again! Below is a quick list of perfect recyclable objects that were found just rummaging around the house. Make sure the objects you choose to recycle are safe, sturdy and strong.

BEFORE AFTER

baby seat swing
toboggan slide or sandbox dividers
welded bike frames .. climbing equipment
legless ping pong table .. hard game surface
ladder hung horizontally .. monkey bars

Building Blocks

Which of the following suggestions would fit into your backyard? Use your imagination and visit your local hardware store to make your own home-made versions.

Large Play

- Slides - use wheelchair ramps as slides (ensure they are not used for doorway access); build a slide into a grassy mound
- Swings - build your own with tires or a hammock, use d-rings to attach old car seats to a swing set; add bells and whistles
- Sandboxes - build a raised sandbox for children who use wheelchairs or walkers
- Playhouses - raise them above ground or at ground level for trouble-free access; use tents, parachutes or picnic shelter awnings to meet your child's needs
- Climbing Activities - monkey bars, tree houses, slide ladders and swing sets are all options; build stairs with handrails
- Wooden Crates - use for climbing up and over or as hiding places or shelters
- Ladders - a strong ladder hung horizontally up high is useful

Small Play

- Riding Toys - children in wheelchairs can pull wagons and toys; back supports and adapted pedals are available to assist with balance difficulties
- Scooter Boards - kids can sit, kneel or lie down and use their hands to push; decorate with noisemakers

Building Blocks

Small Play (continued)

- Pedal-less Tricycles - children use their feet to help push
- Wheelbarrows - another innovative way to travel
- Balls, Bats and Racquets - use cardboard boxes as nets and lightweight equipment such as sponge or foam balls; use velcro to assist gripping
- Croquet or Lawn Bowling - play while sitting on the ground or in a wheelchair; use brightly colored targets

Creative Play

- Water Play - use backyard hoses or sprinklers
- Chalk Art - use sidewalk chalk or colored sand to draw boundaries for games; paint permanent play areas for hopscotch and target games
- Bird Watching - set up feeders to encourage nature activities; build a bird house close to a window for year-round viewing
- Gardening - raised flower beds or vegetable gardens make access for children in wheelchairs
- Kite Flying - children can make their own and fly it too
- Bubble Play - no spill containers are available at toy stores

Bumps, Bruises & Band-Aids

- when recycling objects for backyard use, check for cleanliness, nails, splinters and sharp edges
- check the sandbox for foreign objects
- kids need soft landings - place swings, slides and monkey bars on sandy or grassy areas