



**Inclusive Playground Survey  
Deep Creek Lake Lions Club  
February 29, 2024**

**Executive Summary**

In January 2024, the Deep Creek Lake Lions Club concluded a survey to assess the need for inclusive playground facilities in Garrett County, MD. The Garrett County community, local city officials, and disability community members identified the need for an inclusive playground in Garrett County with specific features and elements and showed their support for the project.

The *Inclusive Playground Survey* obtained input from homeowners, renters, and visitors throughout Garrett County, including those with and without disabilities to understand the community's potential use of an inclusive park and develop recommendations for the structural elements and features needed for an inclusive park. 524 community members responded.

The survey found almost universal support for specialized playground equipment that provides access to users with a wide range of ability levels and identified the park features and equipment types most-requested by the survey participants. The Club will use the data to guide decision-making on the construction of a new playground at the McHenry Community Park, which the Deep Creek Lake Lions Club operates and maintains. The next steps include fundraising, program management, and site allocation.

**Background**

In 2021, a fourth grader, Landon Georg, and his family were seeking a playground with a wheelchair swing. Landon's mother began an inclusive playground campaign, generating \$25,000 from bake sales and other fundraisers. In 2023, needing a partner to build an inclusive playground, the Georg family reached out to the Deep Creek Lake Lions Club for support.

The Deep Creek Lake Lions Club convened a special advisory committee to provide input and recommendations for the inclusive playground project. The Advisory Committee includes members of the disability community (individuals with disabilities, parents and grandparents of children and adults with disabilities, and disability advocates), community members, Garrett County officials, and experts in accessible design.

## Findings

- **Demographics and Usage Patterns:** Most respondents (79%) were full-time residents of Garrett County, while 12% were part-time residents and 8% were visitors. Regarding potential usage of the inclusive playground, 41% of respondents indicated they or someone they knew would utilize it. Of survey respondents, 47% identified as either a person with a disability, or a parent, grandparent, sibling or caregiver of a person with a disability.
- **Challenges and Needs:** Mobility challenges (68%), behavioral/social/emotional challenges (57%), and challenges associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (54%) were identified as primary challenges to inclusivity. Respondents emphasized the importance of features like overall accessibility, ground surfaces, wheelchair-accessible swings, and sensory elements to facilitate inclusive play.
- **Barriers to Accessibility:** Identified barriers included inaccessible locations, pathways, and equipment, as well as a lack of accessible facilities such as bathrooms and drinking fountains. Input from individuals with disabilities in the design process was also highlighted as crucial to identification of barriers.
- **Recommendations for Accessibility:** Respondents emphasized the importance of physical accessibility, safety, universal design, sensory features, and integrated play spaces. Themes such as physical play, imaginative play, and nature play were deemed most important for the playground.
- **Structural Features and Specialized Equipment:** Landscaping, lighting, restrooms, and soft surfacing were ranked highest in importance for structural features. In terms of specialized equipment, inclusive wheelchair swing sets and individual imaginative playscapes were prioritized.
- **Community Support:** A significant portion of respondents (88%) expressed willingness to participate in fundraising efforts or contribute to the park's costs, indicating strong community support for the initiative.

For more information, read the full text of the *Inclusive Playground Survey Report* at <https://deepcreeklions.org/>