

CHERRY HILL SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

Opportunity is defined as a set of circumstances that makes it possible to do something. For Cherry Hill School in New Lenox, IL, they defined opportunity as a new playground for the school and community where children of all abilities could play, develop and have fun together in a safe and comfortable environment.

The story begins when Cherry Hill School changed its primary focus to students with varying abilities. Many of the school's new student population used wheelchairs or walkers and were unable to comfortably use the playground. Further, there wasn't an inclusive playspace within the community that they could use. The team at Cherry Hill School, led by Principal Emily Schissler, saw this as the perfect opportunity to bring play to all children, enhance their learning and help to get them moving physically. The Cherry Hill school team understands the importance of play and the role it has in development of everything from physical to emotional to cognitive skills.

"Play outside helps develop motor skills and helps to get them moving so they are more focused in the classroom," said Robert Groos, Business Manager – Cherry Hill School. "Having a playground that brings all children together is important for all of their development," he added.

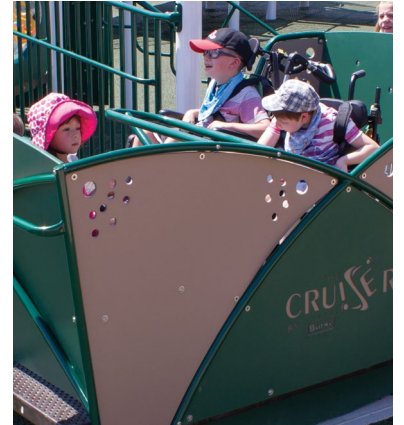
Working with Burke and Play Illinois, Burke's local Representative, Emily and her team selected playground equipment and surfacing that allowed all children to not only have equal access to the playspace but have full and equal participation in play. In addition to accommodating children with varying physical abilities, many play events such as spinning and swinging were incorporated into the design to create positive play experiences for autistic students.

After products were chosen and designs completed, the focus turned to purchasing the playground in the simplest way possible and guaranteeing that the vision developed by the team at Cherry Hill School and Play Illinois wasn't compromised by having to send this project to bid and incur the added cost and paperwork. Cherry Hill already used TCPN for other purchasing, so it was the natural choice to help them simplify their purchase process and still meet all legal bidding requirements.

"By using TCPN to purchase our playground, we were able to avoid having to send this project to bid, having to find comparables and not being able to select exactly what we want and need," said Groos. "Using TCPN is extremely easy and saves a considerable amount of time in the purchasing process. When it comes time to design and purchase another playground, we will use exactly the same model," he added.

Now the playground is in full use and the children and staff couldn't be happier.

"This has been my favorite project," said Groos. "It has been well received by everyone – the staff, the Board and, most importantly, the children."



"PLAY IS THE EXULTATION OF THE POSSIBLE."
-MARTIN BUBER

