

fair play

inclusion begins in the playground



inclusion through play



our story

How it began



our story

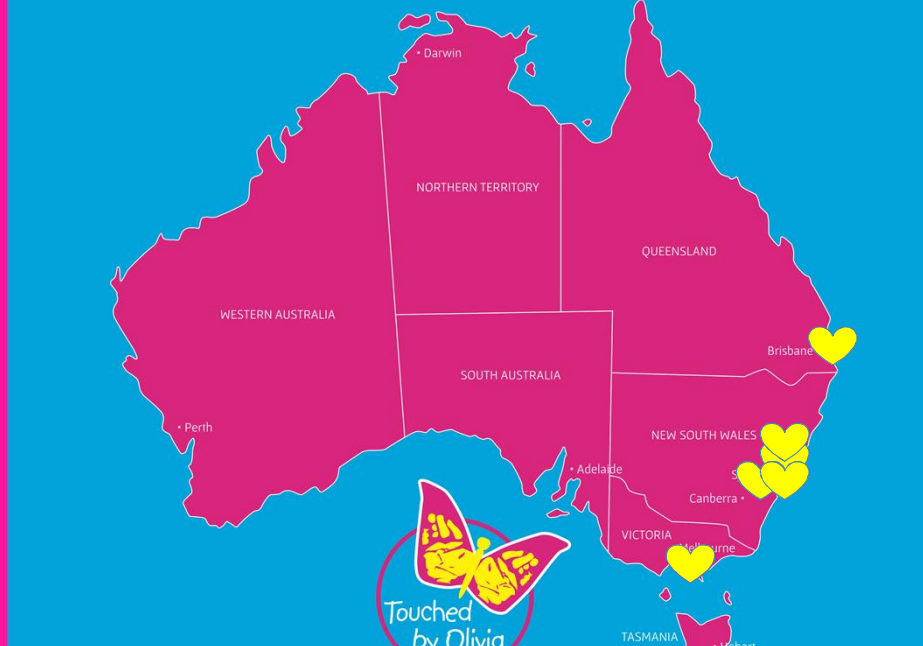



20% of Australians have a disability



 **1 in 100 children have Autism**

LIVI'S PLACE NATIONAL NETWORK OF INCLUSIVE PLAYSACES





An inclusive playspace

- “ 1. Everyone can play
- “ 2. Access to Nature
- “ 3. Total Experience
- “ 4. A connection to community
- “ 5. Play Independence
- “ 6. Friendship



www.inclusiveplayspace.com

#1- BJ's Story

“When our son was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy our world changed but our expectations didn't.”



Julie - www.havewheelchairwilltravel.net

BJ's Story



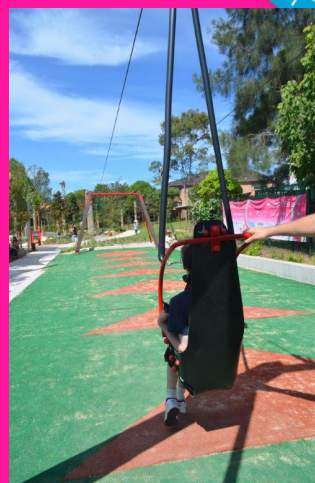
BJ's Story





BJ's Story

“You cannot imagine the grin or the squeal of delight as he whizzed across in the flying fox seat with his sister enjoying the experience on the flying fox on the other side. There is so much to learn from play and from playing side by side with your peers no matter their ability.”



BJ's Story



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#2 - Luke's Story



Sent: Monday, 19 September 2011 8:34 AM

To: john.perkins@touchedbyolivia.com.au

Subject: RE: Illawarra Region Needs Livvi's Place

Dear John,

My wife, Rita, and I have found your work and achievements absolutely inspirational. We would love to contribute in some way, and we would love to see a "Livvi's Place" in our community.

Can you tell me if there is any project underway to develop a Livvi's Place in Wollongong/Illawarra??? If there is, we would love to help in some way. If not, we would like to make it happen.

There are many passionate parents and carers in the Illawarra, that see a need for "Livvi's Place", not just for their special needs kids, but for all kids.

Let me know what we can do.

#2 - Luke's Story



#2 - Luke's Story



#2 - Luke's Story



#3 Sarah's Story





This Park is for Everybody...

It is wonderful that so many different people come to this park to enjoy the marvelous facilities. And it's fenced! (I can't even entertain the idea of taking my child to a park which is not fenced.) Whole families, parties, single parents with children connecting with others: a real sense of community and belonging.

You may not know that many children who come here are living with disabilities. This park was designed with special needs of all kinds in mind. Some disabilities are not visible at first impression; intellectual, sensory or other neurological disorders do not require a wheelchair or walking aids. A child may not have prompts to assist with hearing or glasses to assist with seeing. It may not be obvious that a child has a disability until we see how they behave or respond (or don't) towards other children or even to their own name.

It is beneficial and even important for socially impaired children to witness how typically developing children play, even if they don't participate; it brings a sense of belonging and eventually after many occasions of witnessing purposeful play children with neurological and/or intellectual disabilities can learn to also play purposefully. Typically developing children can also benefit from playing with or near children with disabilities, as it teaches them empathy and to appreciate their own skills, whatever they may be not to take for granted, for example the fact that they can actually use a scooter or have a conversation with a friend, or even play make believe pirates with Mom and/or Dad.

My son is four and has autism. He has also severe developmental delays, mostly mental and emotional. He cannot talk, and rarely plays with the equipment here, at least not the way a typically developing child would. He does, however, love to come here. It is the highlight of his week because he attends special programs during the week which try to control his erratic behaviours, teach him to communicate via alternative means, teach him to sit in a group or sit at a desk, tasks he finds extremely challenging, frustrating and restrictive, often making him anxious to the point of vomiting. When he comes to this park he is allowed to be free to play, however play looks for him. Sometimes this means standing under a tree tossing leaves in the air and watching how they fall. This brings him immeasurable joy. He is told all week he cannot throw objects. Repeatedly, over and over his teachers, therapists and myself are on his case. When he does this he finds it so exciting he wants to share it with others but I encourage him to 'play' far away from other people as possible. Another way he plays is to run around the park in circles admiring his hand or an object or a leaf. It is wonderful to see him happy for a change. His emotional and intellectual age is that of a 10 to 12 month old and has not yet learned to be defensive or naughty. He does, however have feelings and many many thoughts which overwhelm him easily. Often these feelings or thoughts come to him 20 minutes or even hours later as he has long processing delays. So he may never respond at the time, but takes it all in. Most nights he doesn't sleep, dealing with the days anxieties for hours at a time during frequent night wakings, lasting one to three hours. I feel as alienated as he does at times as other parents avoid me as well as my son, being sleep deprived as I am from consulting him and making sure he doesn't trash the house during the night, my emotions run deep.

I am disgusted when my son who is minding his own business playing by himself, is approached by another child, younger or older, and is charmed or even kicked and/or hit repeatedly for the way he is playing. The parents often just watch without any remark. It breaks his heart as well as mine. We live in such a diverse society and we teach our children to accept other people of different cultures, religions, socioeconomic backgrounds... what about various disabilities? Please prepare your child before coming to a park which accommodates special needs and tell them that not all kids are the same. They don't have to play with or talk to kids with disabilities, but if they do, then why on earth would you not teach your child that this behaviour is unacceptable. Just as I teach my intellectually handicapped son not to engage in play near where he might affect other people! I don't come here with my son to relax. I come here to teach him how to be around other people. It's hard work, I would rather be at home, but it is my son's right to access the community and learn to live within it, especially as that is what will be expected of him as he grows. It's a long and treasure and thankless journey... but I am brought to new levels of grief when a child half my son's age comes halfway across the park just to give my son an earful and a beating.

To the sweet children (and their parents who raised them) who have actually attempted to talk to play with or share your food or party bag with my son, I am overwhelmed with sincere thanks, so few of you as there are: it gives me great hope for the future world my son will live in. I am only sorry he was not capable of finding a way of responding or engaging with you himself... I can tell you he appreciated it in his own unique way.

Thank you. Enjoy your day.





GRANDAD



“My name is Gabrielle Perkins and I am going to tell you about Touched by Olivia.

It's a story about a little girl dies 8 months after she was born from a disease lymphangioma.

She was my sister. And if she was still alive there would be five siblings in my family.”



“I have three brothers. One is called Isaac ones called will and ones called Henry.

They remind me of the stuff that Olivia would do with me. She would play games.”



“Touched by Olivia is a charity for people with disabilities. We make playgrounds so people with disabilities can still play games.

I think that Touched by Olivia should make playgrounds all around the world so we can show people that we want people with disabilities to live a proper life.

If my sister was still alive she would have had a disability she would have to go hospital a lot.”



what next?



**INFORM
INSPIRE
INCLUDE**



touchedbyolivia.com.au



