



Lauren Knight is the founder of Pelican Playgrounds, a family-owned recreation construction company based in New Orleans, Louisiana. Growing up with a father who owned a playground sales organization and a mother who was an early elementary school teacher—and an advocate for inclusive classrooms and co-teaching—Lauren was immersed in the world of playground design and inclusive education from an early age. Before founding Pelican Playgrounds, she worked as a one-on-one camp counselor for children with disabilities. This experience paved the way for her initial career as a special education teacher specializing in autism, ADHD, trauma, and other challenges. These formative experiences laid the foundation for her passion for designing play spaces that prioritize inclusivity, regardless of budget, and for building a team at Pelican Playgrounds that shares her mission.

Website: <https://pelicanplaygrounds.com/>

The Role of Sales Organizations in Advancing Inclusive Playgrounds

Lauren Knight

Abstract

Sales organizations play a critical role in advancing inclusive playground design by bridging the gap between innovative concepts and real-world implementation. As accessibility and universal design standards evolve, companies like Pelican Playgrounds are leading the way in ensuring that play spaces go beyond compliance to foster true inclusivity. By integrating adaptive play structures, promoting multi-generational engagement, and advocating for equitable access in underserved communities, sales organizations shape playgrounds that serve diverse needs.

This article explores the growing influence of sales organizations in advocating for climate-responsive play spaces, sourcing sustainable materials, and driving industry-wide conversations on inclusivity. It also highlights the increasing leadership of women in playground design and sales, emphasizing the value of diverse perspectives in creating human-centered play environments. As playgrounds transform into dynamic community hubs, sales organizations remain key players in ensuring these spaces are welcoming, engaging, and accessible to all.

Keywords:

Inclusive Playgrounds, Playground Sales

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving world, playground design has transcended traditional play areas to become vibrant, inclusive community hubs. Advances in accessibility and universal design are not only meeting established standards like the ADA. Still, they are also redefining what it means to create spaces where children, families, and community members of all abilities can play together. Below, we explore how innovative sales organizations and forward-thinking designers are leading the charge—from integrating adaptive play structures and multi-generational features to championing sustainability and equity in underserved communities. Through these transformative approaches, we are witnessing a paradigm shift in how playgrounds foster connection, inclusivity, and resilience for generations to come.

Driving ADA Accessibility and Universal Design



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Sales organizations act as advocates for accessibility by ensuring that playground equipment and layouts meet or exceed standards set by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and universal design principles. Through my own company, I work closely with manufacturers to integrate ramps, sensory-rich experiences, and adaptive play structures that

accommodate children of all abilities. Over the past decade, design priorities have shifted from merely meeting compliance standards to creating spaces that actively engage children with varying

physical, sensory, and cognitive needs. The goal is no longer just accessibility but fostering true inclusivity where all children can play together seamlessly.

Addressing Multi-Generational Play

Modern playgrounds are no longer just for children; they are designed as community hubs that accommodate people of all ages. Over the last decade, the way adults parent and interact with their children has changed significantly. There is a greater emphasis on shared experiences, active participation, and intentional play between parents, caregivers, and children. Many parents are looking for opportunities to bond with their



EXAMPLE OF MULTIGENERATIONAL PLAYGROUND WITH EQUIPMENT BY PLAYWORLD FROM PELICAN PLAYGROUNDS

kids in meaningful ways rather than simply supervising from a distance.

At Pelican Playgrounds, we advocate for multi-generational play equipment that allows parents, caregivers, and even seniors to participate in play actively. Features such as shaded seating areas, exercise stations, and accessible pathways create environments where families can engage together, fostering stronger intergenerational connections. As parenting styles shift toward more engaged and experience-driven interactions, designing for intergenerational play has become increasingly important in promoting family bonding, social development, and lifelong healthy activity.

Climate-Responsive Play Spaces

With climate change affecting urban and suburban landscapes, sales organizations like mine have championed the development of play spaces that prioritize weather resilience and environmental sustainability. Over the past decade, design priorities have increasingly emphasized long-term durability and climate adaptability. From promoting heat-resistant surfacing and shaded structures to ensuring proper drainage systems for flood-prone areas, we advocate for playgrounds that provide comfort and safety year-round. By aligning with manufacturers that use sustainable materials, we contribute to the long-term environmental viability of these spaces, ensuring that future generations can continue to enjoy them.

Promoting Play Space Equity

As someone who has worked closely with children of all abilities, I



CHILDREN PLAYING ON THE INCLUSIVE UNITY DOME BY PLAYWORLD.

am acutely aware of the disparities in playground access. At Pelican Playgrounds, we work with municipalities, schools, and nonprofits to bring inclusive play to underserved communities. Over the past decade, there has been a growing recognition of the need for equitable distribution of high-quality play spaces, ensuring that no child is left

behind due to economic or geographical limitations. We help identify funding opportunities, advocate for grant programs, and guide stakeholders in selecting cost-effective yet high-quality inclusive solutions. Our goal is to ensure that all children,

regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to safe and enriching play environments.

The Evolving Role of Women in Design

The past decade has also witnessed a notable shift in the role of women in design, particularly in the inclusive playground sector. More women are now leading design firms, sales organizations, and advocacy initiatives, shaping the future of play with a focus on empathy, user experience, and holistic community engagement. As a woman who has built a business centered around inclusivity, I have seen firsthand the importance of diverse perspectives in playground design. My team and I prioritize working with women designers and industry leaders who bring fresh, thoughtful approaches to the field. The rise of women in leadership positions has led to more human-centered designs that prioritize emotional, social, and cognitive inclusivity alongside physical accessibility.

Conclusion

Sales organizations are not merely intermediaries; they are key drivers of innovation in inclusive playground design. My journey—from a childhood immersed in the industry to teaching special education and now running Pelican Playgrounds—has given me a deep understanding of the impact that well-designed play spaces can have on children and communities. Over the past decade, design priorities have evolved to place a stronger emphasis on true inclusivity, intergenerational engagement, environmental sustainability, and equity in access. By advocating for accessibility, fostering multi-generational play, addressing climate considerations, and championing equity, sales organizations like mine help shape play environments that serve all members of a

community. As the field continues to evolve, our role in pushing for design excellence and inclusivity will remain indispensable.