



Case Study:

Virginia Grainger
Preschool

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From Grant Application to Grand Opening:

How Buell Recreation Brought Inclusive Play to Okanogan School District



Client Profile:

Client:

Okanogan School District — Virginia Grainger Preschool

Location:

Okanogan, Washington

Project Scope:

Play structure, poured-in-place surfacing, fencing, installation

Project Timeline:

Approximately two years from first contact to installation



The Starting Point

When Okanogan School District's maintenance supervisor reached out to Buell Recreation, the Virginia Grainger Preschool's outdoor space was a mix of concrete and bare ground. The fencing had reached the end of its useful life, and the district had a vision: a fully ADA-accessible play space, built from the ground up, designed specifically for preschool-aged children.

The catch? They didn't have the money yet.





Helping Them Get Funded

The district was preparing to apply for a grant and needed designs and realistic budget figures they could present to funders. That's where Buell came in.

Rachel Gora, Business Development Manager, got to work. She provided design renderings and pricing estimates that the district could use to support its grant application. The colorful, detailed visuals showed funders exactly what the space could become.

The district received the grant.



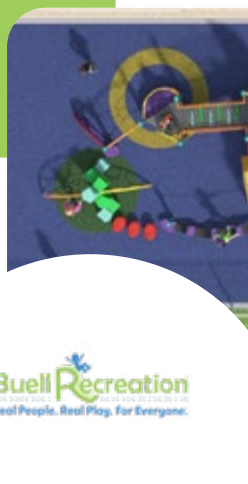
Winning the Work

Receiving grant funding didn't mean the project was automatically Buell's to execute. Per the award requirements, the district was required to issue a formal RFP and open the project to competitive bidding. Buell submitted and was awarded the contract.

The grant came with a specific condition: a defined minimum amount of the total budget had to be allocated to fall protection surfacing. Buell took the opportunity to clearly document the full scope of site preparation and poured-in-place work, line item by line item, so the district could demonstrate compliance with confidence.

"My favorite projects are the ones that start with nothing but a vision—we create the design, they have no funding, and then years later it all comes full circle. The funding comes through, and we finally get to bring that vision to life."

Rachel Gora, Business Development Manager, Buell Recreation





Designing for a Tight Site

The Virginia Grainger site came with a few constraints: mixed surfaces, classroom doors opening directly onto the play area and a fixed fencing footprint. Everything had to work for two- to five-year-olds.

The team's answer was to get creative with every inch. A custom Burke Nucleus® structure anchored the space, with Eko® Climbers functionally linked to it to create a connected climbing system. Fence-mounted play panels added interactive play value around the entire perimeter, turning what would have been a plain fence into part of the play experience. On the surfacing side, concrete was saw-cut to allow poured-in-place fall protection to run seamlessly across the full use zone, and the uneven sub-base was leveled to match.



The Result

The finished play space is vibrant, inclusive and built to serve the whole preschool community. The vivid color palette does double duty: it gives the space the cheerful energy preschoolers love and helps young children intuitively find their way to each play element.

“Through grant funding and our partnership with Buell Recreation, we created a playground built with inclusivity and ADA accessibility at its core. Every child now has the opportunity to play, explore, and grow in a space designed just for them.”

Klancy, Director of Finance, Okanogan School District





What This Project Demonstrates

Grant-funded projects take time. The path from first design to final installation at Virginia Grainger took approximately two years. That timeline is not unusual when grant funding is involved. Applications, award cycles, procurement requirements and compliance documentation all add up. What made the difference here was that Buell Recreation was in it from the beginning and stayed engaged through every stage.

Real People. Real Play. For Everyone.



Interested in bringing a playspace like this to your school or district? Contact Buell Recreation to start a conversation.

