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Greetings:

On behalf of the Ector County Independent School District, I want to thank you for the opportunity to apply for a grant to assist Carver Early Education Center in acquiring funds for a playground for children with disabilities. It is our belief that this playground will provide valuable early intervention for our children. We are requesting \$80,000 to assist us in offering critical developmental opportunities for our students.

Need for the Project

Carver Early Childhood Center has a need to address equity and access to exercise that promotes physical development for children aged 3-5 living with disabilities. For several reasons, these students have limited access to the playground at Carver Early Education Center in the Ector County ISD. The playground needs better surfacing for wheelchair, walker and gait trainer access to help students develop important muscular tone and cardiovascular endurance. Accessible equipment is needed so that all children can use the equipment, with greater independence and greater interaction with peers. If funded, a musical component will be offered so that children can develop reading and math skills through music and sound, while engaging in side by side play with others.

Design and Upgrading of the Playground

Currently, the playground at Carver Early Childhood Center offers swings as the only equipment to students living with physical disabilities. There is a sidewalk track intended for exercise by students who use assistive devices. Unfortunately, this sidewalk gathers gravel from the inside of the playground, making it hard for assistive devices, such as walkers and wheelchairs to move and navigate the track. Thus, there is a need for an upgrade to the surface of that portion of the playground so that the track is more friendly to walkers, wheelchairs and Gait Trainers. Representatives from *Exerplay* in Lubbock, TX, who are used for building ECISD playgrounds, recommend a surface called "Rubber-Poured-In-Place Safety Playground Surfacing." This type of product would not only prevent pea gravel from hindering movement of assistive devices, it would provide optimal safety for all students in the case of a fall or accident. It can be used safely for jumping rope and other running and jumping activities.

The plan is to add playground equipment that has musical and exercise features that are inclusive of all children, including those living with physical disabilities. We hope to see all children playing side by side in a safe and supportive environment that enhances physical fitness and wellness. Pursuant to these goals, we plan to add “Warble Chimes & Interactive Panel,” as accessible musical equipment for all students. Music therapists from the ECISD Special Education Department particularly suggested this piece of equipment. Several drum features that offer accessible play would be added as well. These include the “Kettle Drum,” the “Goblet Drum” and the “Tongue Drum Junior.” These pieces of equipment can be used for development of music, literacy and math skills. Additionally, a “roller table” would be added to enable exercising of core muscle groups as well as arms, legs, gross and fine motor skills. It is important for both the surface and equipment to be upgraded to ensure independent access to the playground. Currently, children living with physical disabilities sometimes have to be carried to the playground to use the ADA accessible swings that have been installed for their enjoyment. Children need to be able to move with greater freedom to benefit from exercising arms, legs and core muscles through the independent access of the playground, use of the sidewalk track and swings.

Desired Outcomes

1. Students living with physical disabilities will have equal opportunity and access to playground equipment that is inclusive of their needs, enabling them to participate in outdoor activities with the student body at large.
2. The playground at Carver Early Education Center will be adapted to include improved rubberized surfacing and inclusive equipment, enabling all students, including those with disabilities to participate in reality, imaginary, side by side and independent play through inclusive equipment, while developing muscles and cardiovascular systems.

Planning & Implementation

The playground has been designed with input from the principal, staff, special education department in collaboration with ECISD District Operations and playground experts at Exerplay of Lubbock, TX. It is expected that if funded, the playground can be in operation during the 2022-23 school year. Drawings and designs are available upon request. Funders are currently being pursued for the project.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Lara, Ed.D.
Grant Writer

Budget for Accessible Playground at Carver Early Childhood Center

Item	Amount
Warble Chimes & Interactive Panel	\$ 18,000.00
Kettle Drum Junior	\$ 1,600.00
Goblet Drum Junior	\$ 1,600.00
Tongue Drum Junior	\$ 3,000.00
Roller Table	\$ 13,000.00
Subtotal of Equipment	\$ 37,200.00
Installation	\$ 18,600.00
Freight	\$ 4,000.00
Surfacing	\$ 75,000.00
Total	\$ 134,800.00

Requests Planned:

Betenbough Homes	\$50,000
M.S. Doss Foundation	\$80,000
Superior Health Plan	\$ 5,000