

# Libraries As Inclusive Spaces

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This list is meant to help make your library more accessible and welcoming for all.

## Accessibility

1. Have automatic or easy-to-open doors in high traffic areas
2. Keep your lowered accessible counter clear at all times. Do not store items on it.
3. Mark corners, steps, and edges with high visibility contrasting colored material
4. Keep hallways clear of clutter
5. Have signage with high background and foreground contrast for readability. Avoid red and green contrasting colors.
6. Consider how persons with disabilities will be evacuated from your facility in an emergency, and include that procedure in your emergency evacuation plan. Make sure employees know the procedure.
7. Determine if your library has a telecommunications relay service (TRS) for people who are deaf to make phone calls. Train staff to not hang up when they hear “this is a Relay Service” and mistake it for a telemarketing call.
8. Reduce decibel levels of restroom hand dryers to make the noise less jarring for autistic people

## Sensory Recalibration Rooms

1. Focus on the sensory experience. Helps to reset the mind after sensory overload
2. Not just for autistic people but for all to improve mental health and well-being
3. Have a room use policy to set clear expectations
4. Provide some of the following:
  - Variety of comfortable furnishings. Tactile fabrics and surfaces
  - Active seating where users can rock or sway
  - Things to fidget with and distract an anxious mind, such as fidget toys, stress balls, puzzles, or coloring pages
  - Whiteboard tables or mobile whiteboards for drawing or doodling
  - Noise-canceling headphones
  - Soft, calming colors

## Biophilic Design

1. Connect humans to the natural environment to reduce stress, improve cognitive function, creativity, and well-being
2. Natural lighting and green plants. Consider incorporating water features
3. Natural paintings and the use of biomorphic patterns

Sources: *Equal Access: Universal Design of Libraries* by Sheryl Burgstahler, UW DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology). <https://www.washington.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-libraries>

