

3. Accessibility for Learning Communities

Discover ways to make school and school life accessible.

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- **Open the UDL Access Crosswalk:** See every resource in this section under the CAST UDL Guidelines Access considerations. Find it in the online collection: bit.ly/AimingForALL-Collection.
- **Accessibility Starting Point Guides:** Six guides that name a few practical places to begin, drawing on this section.

When learning communities design for accessibility across events, spaces, materials, the process of selecting future staff members, and how they design learning experiences, they are designing for belonging.

The resources here cover ten different contexts: accessible physical spaces and activity, physical and health education, arts education, family partnership and advocacy, hiring and interviewing, communication and language, running events, creating learning materials and digital experiences, accessible libraries, and teaching games and interactive media.

A. Accessible Physical Spaces and Activity

[The Physical Classroom Environment: Creating Universal Learning Spaces \(PDF\)](#)

National Council for Special Education (Ireland)

A practical guide to classroom design that considers the needs of all learners, including neurodivergent students. Covers visual stimuli, acoustics, lighting, furniture layout, and transitions between activities. It makes the point, worth repeating, that environmental changes designed for students with identified access needs tend to benefit everyone.

Short link: bit.ly/4sHb3yk

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Classroom Sensory Screening Tool (PDF)

National Council for Special Education (Ireland)

A checklist teachers can use independently to evaluate their classroom and identify improvements. It gives specific guidance, including a recommendation that between 20 and 50 percent of wall space be kept clear, and addresses lighting, acoustics, temperature, wheelchair access, and furniture arrangement. Designed for primary, post-primary, and special school settings.

Short link: bit.ly/4mAFI2

Sensory Spaces in Schools (PDF)

National Council for Special Education (Ireland)

For school leaders thinking beyond the individual classroom, this guide addresses why dedicated sensory spaces matter for students with sensory processing differences, how to design them, and how they fit into a whole-school approach to accessibility.

Short link: bit.ly/3OfUbkm

Discover Inclusive Playgrounds

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability

A practical guide to designing and choosing playgrounds where every child can play alongside their peers. It makes the case for genuinely inclusive design rather than meeting minimum accessibility standards, and covers physical access, the play experiences a space offers, the cost of inclusive equipment and how to fund it, and directories for locating inclusive playgrounds. Useful for school leaders and community partners planning or renovating a shared play space.

Short link: bit.ly/4tDgPSu

B. Physical and Health Education

A Guide to School Physical Activity Programs

National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability

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A comprehensive guide to physical education and activity programmes that include students with disabilities. Covers PE classes, recess, before- and after-school programmes, and peer-to-peer inclusion models. Includes tools for assessing how accessible an existing programme is.

Short link: bit.ly/4tEgmzI

Move United

A national network of community-based adaptive sports organisations, with a library of resources on inclusive physical education and adaptive sport. Includes instructional guides, lesson plans, and a programme locator for finding adaptive sport opportunities. Relevant for PE teachers, school leaders, and families looking to move beyond "modified" PE and toward programmes where disabled students are genuinely part of the team.

Short link: bit.ly/3QMCmde

C. Arts Education

Leadership Network for Accessible Arts Education (LNAAE)

Berklee Institute for Accessible Arts Education

A global network for educators, artists, and administrators working on accessibility in arts education. Regular online sessions cover music, dance, theatre, and visual arts, and recordings are available on the website. A good entry point for arts teachers and school leaders who want to connect with a wider professional community on this work.

Short link: bit.ly/4vl6igD

A Nearly Comprehensive Guide to Creating an Accessible Theater (PDF)

Melanie Malson

An openly licensed guide to making theatre accessible to disabled people, both as performers and as audience members. It works through a wide range of access needs with practical solutions and first-person accounts from the theatre community.

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Short link: bit.ly/4tBYa9J

D. Family Partnership and Advocacy

Stimpunks Foundation

Stimpunks addresses design, access, and accessibility together, treating them as things that schools and workplaces shape through their environment, not problems for individual people to solve. It is led by neurodivergent and disabled people and has published more than 1,400 web pages of plain-language guides and practical tools. The site speaks to two audiences about access in one place.

For teachers and school leaders: The Neurodivergent Design Field Guide, Pattern Library, and Design Recipes offer concrete steps to make classrooms, schools, and workplaces more accessible. Topics include monotropism, burnout caused by demanding environments, co-regulation, and sensory access.

For learners, parents, and caregivers: Why Sheets are downloadable, openly licensed letters that learners, parents, and caregivers can adapt to advocate for accessibility at school. Older learners can use them to speak up for themselves, and adults can use them together with a learner to make the case for a change. Topics include alternatives to ABA, Positive Greetings at the Door, uniform adaptations, and behaviourism. Each sheet gives the words to name a barrier and ask for the change that removes it, and explains the why clearly, one idea per line.

Stimpunks treats learners, families, and educators as partners in the work of accessibility.

Short link: bit.ly/3OwAhRZ

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E. Accessible Hiring and Interviews

Attracting and Recruiting People with Disability to Your Organisation (2024)

Australian Human Rights Commission

This guide is for organisations that want to go beyond compliance and genuinely communicate that disabled people are welcome to apply and will be supported. It covers accessible job descriptions, how to reach candidates with disability, and what reasonable adjustments look like at each stage of recruitment. It was developed with people with disabilities and includes real workplace examples.

Short link: bit.ly/3OtJ6fu

Accessible Recruitment

Make Things Accessible

This guide covers the full hiring process from an accessibility perspective: writing job adverts, shortlisting candidates, running interviews, and onboarding new staff. It addresses both sides of the process, removing barriers for candidates with disabilities and ensuring disabled people can also serve as interviewers and panel members. A five-minute summary at the top is useful if time is short.

Short link: bit.ly/3QgiFdH

F. Communication and Language

Disability-Inclusive Communications Guidelines (PDF)

United Nations

This guide addresses two things. The first is language: how to refer to and represent disabled people accurately and respectfully, and how to use language that centres the person rather than the condition. The second is format: how to make documents, emails, social media posts, and

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multimedia content accessible. It includes checklists and an Easy Read version of the guidelines themselves.

Short link: bit.ly/48niUd8

Accessible Social Media

A reference guide to making social media content accessible, covering image descriptions, video captions, accessible use of hashtags and emojis, and colour contrast. It addresses the specific accessibility features of major platforms, making it practical for whoever manages a school's social media presence.

Short link: bit.ly/4vn4DqC

Plain Language and Easy Read

Center on Disability

Clear writing is an accessibility issue. This resource hub covers plain language (clear, direct writing at a sixth to eighth grade reading level) and Easy Read (one idea per line, simple words, supporting images). Includes a self-paced online course and tools applicable to letters to families, policy documents, newsletters, and websites.

Short link: bit.ly/4t6vrtU

G. Events and Gatherings

Making Events Accessible

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative

A detailed checklist for planning accessible meetings, training sessions, conferences, and presentations, whether in person, online, or hybrid. It covers venue selection, technology, captioning, sign language interpretation, accessible materials, and gathering information about participants' access needs in advance. Useful for professional development days, parent evenings, and community events.

Short link: bit.ly/4sYcdGF

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Conference Accessibility: Zero Project Guide and Glossary

Zero Project

A set of practical planning tools from an international disability inclusion initiative. It helps organisers think through accessibility across physical, digital, and communication dimensions. A useful companion to the W3C checklist above, particularly for events spanning multiple sessions or venues.

Short link: bit.ly/41peOxs

H. Learning Materials and Digital Experiences

Making Audio and Video Media Accessible

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative

As more teachers create video content, this guide becomes increasingly relevant. It covers captions, audio descriptions, transcripts, and sign language interpretation: what each one is, when it's needed, and how to create or commission it. It focuses on building accessibility in from the start rather than retrofitting existing content.

Short link: bit.ly/4c2BZDL

Teacher's Guide: How to Make Learning Materials Accessible

Accessible Digital Learning Portal

Step-by-step instructions for making everyday learning materials accessible, including Word documents, PowerPoint presentations, PDFs, and video content. Written for teachers without assuming any technical knowledge.

Short link: bit.ly/4cBhtu4

WCAG: What Educators Need to Know

Montgomery County Intermediate Unit

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are the international standards that school websites, learning management systems, and ed tech platforms are expected to meet. This **The Aiming for ALL Collection, by Beth Stark, M.S.Ed., CPACC. © Beth Stark. Licensed under [CC BY-NC 4.0](#).**

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series of articles explains what those standards mean in practice, written for teachers and school leaders rather than web developers.

Short link: bit.ly/4sv5mUj

Best Practices for Creating Accessible Maps

Perkins School for the Blind

Maps are a common learning tool that can exclude students who are blind or have low vision. This guide shows how to build digital maps that students can explore independently, using Google My Maps and a browser tool called SAS Graphics Accelerator. Relevant for any subject that uses spatial information.

Short link: bit.ly/4t2Tr17

Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction

DO-IT, University of Washington

A detailed, field-tested checklist for applying Universal Design of Instruction (UDI) across every aspect of teaching: class climate, physical environments, delivery methods, information resources and technology, feedback, and assessment. It draws together UD, UDL, and WCAG principles in one place and is practical enough to use directly when planning a course or reviewing existing practice. Developed and tested across more than twenty postsecondary institutions.

Short link: bit.ly/4cel14a

I. Accessible Libraries

IFLA Guidelines for Making Libraries Accessible for People with Disabilities

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)

An internationally focused guide covering physical access, online accessibility, collections, assistive technology, programming, and services for specific groups including children, people

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with dyslexia, people who are deaf or hard of hearing, and people with cognitive disabilities. A useful framework for school leaders overseeing library development.

Short link: bit.ly/48BhcF2

Children and Teens with Disabilities

American Library Association

A toolkit for library professionals creating accessible environments for young people with disabilities. Covers legal rights, educational accommodations, and the many ways children and teens with disabilities engage with library services. Useful for making the case that the school library should be a genuinely inclusive space.

Short link: bit.ly/4cAcNEP

J. Gaming and Interactive Media

Accessibility Reference Guides

Can I Play That?

A library of guides covering game accessibility across specific disability areas: blind and low vision, deaf and hard of hearing, motor, and cognitive accessibility. Written by disabled players and reviewers. Useful for educators teaching game design and for teachers who want to evaluate whether a game is accessible to all students before using it in the classroom.

Short link: bit.ly/4vhAZDv

Video Game Accessibility YouTube Playlist

Game Maker's Toolkit

A YouTube series from Game Maker's Toolkit on designing games for disabled players. Four videos focus on players who are Deaf or hard of hearing, players with motor disabilities, players with cognitive disabilities, and players who are colourblind or have low vision. Others look at how accessible each year's biggest games were and what makes the Assist Mode in Celeste special. Useful for teachers new to the topic and for learners interested in game design.

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