# ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT OF ECD FACILITIES

## Introduction

An accessibility audit is a method to evaluate the level of accessibility and safety and identify existing barriers in different facilities through a check-list based approach. It can be conducted by an external expert (for example, conducted by a local Organization of Persons with Disabilities) or through a self-audit. The checklist provided here focuses on the following areas: physical accessibility, communication, attitudes and inclusive ECD. Children presence in the classroom is not mandatory to use this tool, you can use this tool to select new classrooms to conduct activities or assess current level of accessibility of facilities.

Under each heading, you must consider the following type of difficulties: Vision, Hearing, Mobility, Dexterity, Communication and Learning.

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| Physical access | **Yes/No/Not Applicable** | **Action that needs to be taken to improve access** | PriorityH/M/ L |
| **Reach** |  |  |  |
| Support is provided for children with disabilities to come to the facility (transport costs, dedicated mean of transportation…) |  |  |  |
| The road leading to the facility is accessible to wheelchair users |  |  |  |
| The facility is clearly signposted |  |  |  |
| **Entrance** |  |  |  |
| Entrance is clearly signposted with not only words but visual, audio, and braille information |  |  |  |
| Entrance is wide enough for wheelchair users and if stairs are present, there is a ramp to facilitate access |  |  |  |
| Entrance is free of obstacles |  |  |  |
| Entrance is well lit  |  |  |  |
| **Indoor Environment** |  |  |  |
| People (including wheelchair users and people with assistive devices) can navigate independently and safely around the facilities e.g there is no obstacles and corridors are a minimum of 120cm wide |  |  |  |
| All the rooms/learning space are easily accessible |  |  |  |
| Rooms are well-lit but with blinds/curtains to prevent bright sunlight on children’s faces. |  |  |  |
| The acoustics is suitable  |  |  |  |
| Pictures / braille / audio are present to support navigation withing the facility |  |  |  |
| The height of the table can be adjusted, and tables are suitable for wheelchair users |  |  |  |
| Storage of toys and equipment is organised and labelled with both pictures, text and braille.  |  |  |  |
| Sufficient internal storage for wheelchair and other assistive devices is available. |  |  |  |
| **Internal Stairs (if not skip this section)** |  |  |  |
| Stairs are clearly signposted (pictures / braille / audio) |  |  |  |
| Steps are consistent in size, slip resistant and edge is highlighted |  |  |  |
| A handrail is present and at a suitable high for children |  |  |  |
| An evacuation chair is present |  |  |  |
| A lift can be used as an alternative to the stairs and is suitable for evacuation |  |  |  |
| **Internal Doors** |  |  |  |
| Internal doors are clearly visible |  |  |  |
| The handles are easy to use (not round) and are clear and at suitable height |  |  |  |
| Door opens and closes and lock easily. |  |  |  |
| Doors are a minimum of 80cm wide |  |  |  |
| **Toilets and water points** |  |  |  |
| Toilets and water points are clearly sign-posted with not only (pictures / braille / audio) |  |  |  |
| Toilets and water points are fully accessible to wheelchair users and people with assistive devices. If not on the ground floor, check accessibility of stairs/lift. |  |  |  |
| Toilets’ door opens and closes easily (easy to use lock) |  |  |  |
| Toilets have large, clear floor space (free from obstacles).  |  |  |  |
| Handrails are available in the toilets (child and adult) |  |  |  |
| Accessible nappy changing area is available |  |  |  |
| Toilets guarantee privacy |  |  |  |
| Fittings and fixtures are accessible to all e.g. loo roll, flush, wash bowl, soap dispenser, towels. |  |  |  |

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| Communication Audit | **Yes/No** | **Action that needs to be taken** | PriorityH/M/ L |
| **Outreach** |  |  |  |
| Information is provided/outreach is carried out using a wide range of format to ensure persons with disabilities have access to the information  |  |  |  |
| Targeted message is available for children with disabilities and their caregiver. |  |  |  |
| **In the facility** |  |  |  |
| Equipment is clearly labelled (picture / tactile element) e |  |  |  |
| Materials such as posters, leaflets, etc. in the facility are available in a variety of formats ( braille, pictoral, easy-to-read) |  |  |  |
| Key documents are using large print, available in recorded version |  |  |  |
| Signage uses large print and has tactile element  |  |  |  |
| Displays use large print and have tactile element , right height for children’s eye level. |  |  |  |
| Instructions are short with visual cues (gestures / objects etc.) |  |  |  |
| Language used is simple / descriptive /positive / inclusive |  |  |  |
| A wide range of communication systems are available |  |  |  |
| Extensive use of gesture, alongside speech |  |  |  |
| Range of prompts to warn of change of activity (visual / auditory) |  |  |  |
| Use of visual material in carpet times (e.g. story sacks / puppets) |  |  |  |
| Visual timetable available and used throughout the session |  |  |  |
| Visual sequences used  |  |  |  |
| Range of books supports different needs – e.g. tactile / audio / cloth and board books etc. |  |  |  |
| Photos are used to share (recent) past activities with children and care-givers |  |  |  |
| The facility has clearly defined workshop and play areas, which encourage interaction e.g. low screens, shelving |  |  |  |
| Play areas and tables and seating allow children to play face-to-face, as well as alongside |  |  |  |
| All staff have opportunities to attend training and develop practice in supporting children’s CLLD |  |  |
| Private ‘communication spaces’ for example, dens and cubbies, are available |  |  |  |

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| Attitudes Audit | **Yes/No** | **Action that needs to be taken** | PriorityH/M/ L |
| Commitment to training: all staff access training regularly, including training in diversity and inclusion |  |  |  |
| All policies are inclusive, reviewed regularly and freely available for all: Admissions, Equality and Inclusion, Social and Emotional Development (or behaviour management) |  |  |  |
| No ‘blanket’ policies that discriminate against some children |  |  |  |
| Settling-in procedures are flexible for individual children and families – e.g. pre-entry requests to FIRST for children with disabilities and those with complex needs |  |  |  |
| All practice is consistent with policy. This process is regularly monitored and reviewed |  |  |  |
| Inclusive language is used (and body language is positive)See communication tip sheet |  |  |  |
| Displays and notice-boards for children and parents demonstrate inclusive values and a positive welcome to the setting |  |  |  |
| Pre-entry visits to collect and include information from all other professionals working with a child |  |  |  |
| Transitions to another setting are planned for each child and in collaboration with next setting |  |  |  |
| Where children attend more than one setting, communication between the settings is robust |  |  |  |
| Job descriptions to include nappy changing / appropriate medical procedures (with training) |  |  |  |
| Staff have appropriately high expectations of all children |  |  |  |
| Support needed for different experiences is considered, without compromising independence |  |  |  |
| **All** practitioners take responsibility for supporting children who may experience barriers to participation |  |  |  |
| All children have a named Keyworker who takes a key role in supporting both children and their families |  |  |  |
| Staff are confident in challenging any discriminatory behaviour from children or adults |  |  |  |
| Staff actively promote anti-discriminatory behaviour e.g. through planned experiences such as use of persona dolls |  |  |  |
| All children are regularly consulted about their preferences, support needs, prior learning or experiences. This information is used to inform planning and decision making to meet the child’s needs |  |  |  |
| The setting is welcoming of, and flexible in meeting the needs of parents and staff members who may themselves be vulnerable to exclusion. |  |  |  |

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| Routines and Experiences Audit | **Yes/No** | **Action that needs to be taken** | PriorityH/M/ L |
| Flexible routines are provided  |  |  |  |
| Visual / auditory prompts for change of activity (including prompts to pre-warn of change) |   |  |  |
| Routines and experiences that take account of the developmental stages of the children  |  |  |  |
| Appropriate Planning for every child based on the child’s developmental stage and interests |  |  |  |
| Choice is planned for |  |  |  |
| Staff look for underlying cause of behaviours |  |  |  |
| Trips and special events are inclusive |  |  |  |
| Quiet areas and areas for physical play are available indoors and out  |  |  |  |
| Accessible resources / storage (different heights) |  |  |  |
| Sand / water trays at different heights |  |  |  |
| Range of sensory equipment / experiences |  |  |  |
| There are sufficient materials and equipment to avoid waiting, frustration and conflicts |  |  |  |
| Toys / games include various sensory features |  |  |  |
| Variety of wheeled toys |  |  |  |
| Creative area equipment includes range of sizes / thicknesses |  |  |  |
| Range of scissors available |  |  |  |
| Musical instruments presented in different ways  |  |  |  |
| Range of resources for throwing / catching  |  |  |  |
| Activities that promote collaboration, as well as individual achievement, are planned for, for example, joint wall displays, turn-taking activities, floor puzzles, see-saw, parachute |  |  |  |
| The setting has a quiet feelings and emotions area that children can choose to go to  |  |  |  |
| A range of resources to support feelings and emotions is available e.g. feelings basket etc. |  |  |  |
| Natural materials feature strongly in the setting alongside man-made toys and equipment |  |  |  |

**Making activities inclusive**

The list below is not exhaustive but is intended to provide a starting point for developing inclusive experiences in early years and childcare settings. It is important that wherever possible, experiences offered indoors are mirrored in the outdoor environment. This supports us in meeting the individual learning styles and preferences of all children.

Please also refer to the leaflet ‘Inclusive Environments’.

## The Environment (indoor and outdoor)

* Workshop / zoned areas providing a wide range of resources and experiences across the six areas of learning
* Always provide new resources and experiences in addition to familiar ones
* Areas for quiet and solitude as well as opportunities for more boisterous play
* Resources at different heights, including on the floor
* Sand and water trays that can be used on the ground as well as on a stand
* Adjustable height tables
* Arrange furniture to there is plenty of space to move around
* Symbols and pictures on doors to indicate equipment or activities
* Close cupboard doors and keep passage ways clear of clutter
* Model and encourage children to tidy resources throughout the session
* Consider ways of adjusting light within the environment. (The space should be well lit but avoid bright light and glare).
* Improve acoustics using soft furnishings
* Ensure experiences are multi-sensory:

**Sound** – wind chimes, plants and feeders to encourage birds, grasses and other plants that rustle, fountain or running water, musical instruments, treasure baskets, sound wall/fence, sensory bottles

**Touch** – different surfaces to walk/ride on, plants with furry leaves, pinecones, non-poisonous berries, variety of fabrics, toys and resources made from a range of materials (not just plastic!), treasure baskets, feely bags/boxes, range of materials for tactile play (e.g. sand, rice, bark chips, ‘gloop’, shaving foam, soap flakes

**Smell** – pots with herbs, scented flowers and leaves, sensory bottles / socks, playdoh with various aromas, scented toys, cooking experiences

**Taste** – kitchen garden with fruit, vegetables and herbs, cooking experiences, opportunity to try new foods including at snack/meal times,

**Sight** – flowers planted for good contrast, shiny mobiles (e.g. CDs), light and shadow boxes, colour paddles, bubble tubes, blowing bubbles, ribbons, coloured cellophane, magnifying glasses, torches, sensory bottles, mirrors

**Proprioception** – a range of resources that help children familiarise with their body position, balance and movement in different spaces

e.g. pulling/pushing carts outside, space hoppers, trampoline, ‘wobble’ board, balance beams, seesaw, giant cones, monkey bars, swings, see-saw.

## Resources

## Toys and large activity equipment

* Ensure a range of toys are accessible and stable for use such as anchoring to table or builders’ tray
* Replace small knobs on inset boards and puzzles with larger knobs or plastic golf tees
* Make games which reflect children’s experiences, eg transport matching games can include wheelchairs
* Make matching games using textures, shapes or smells instead of pictures
* Make simple sound lotto games

## Make feely-bag games

* Wheeled toys such as:
* Trundle toys with and without pedals
* Push-along toys
* Carts that can be towed
* Hand propelled vehicles
* Vehicles with support seats, lap belts
* Car with a roof
* Vehicles for two or more children
* Fixed equipment (where appropriate) such as
* Range of support seats for swings
* Ramp or shallow steps to equipment
* Wide slides
* Hand-rails
* White / fluorescent strips on the edge of platforms and steps, corners (horizontal and vertical surfaces)

## Creative

* Have a range of paintbrushes and rollers etc., including:
* Range of sizes
* Different handle lengths and thickness
* Adding foam to handles to widen grip
* Mix sand, glue and other materials into paint to add texture
* Mix corn flour and water
* Give each colour of paint a different smell, using food essences and perfumes
* Use large pieces of paper to encourage children to paint together
* Provide different surfaces to paint on – easel, table, wall, floor
* Encourage children to mark make outside walls and paving with water, chalks or mud
* Have a range of sizes and thickness of mark making implements including chalks, pastels, crayons, pens, pencils
* Have a range of scissors including spring loaded, left and right handed, over hand scissors

## Music

* Look for instruments which vibrate such as guitar
* Hang instruments up so that they can be hit with one hand
* Attach a cord to a hanging instrument and the child’s foot so that they make a sound when they move
* Use action songs including gesture and sign as appropriate

## Books and stories

* Keep group size small for story times small (informal stories with one or more children / group story time with key worker)
* Use visual props (puppets / story sacks)
* Use stories which involve children in doing actions, giving responses etc
* Use taped stories and sounds
* Use~~,~~ facial expression and gestures and signing where appropriate
* Have a range of books (fiction and non-fiction, board and cloth books, tactile books, dual language books, books with positive and non-stereotypical images of gender, ethnicity, culture and disability)

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## Communication

* Use gesture and signs as appropriate to support verbal communication
* Use body language, gesturesand facial expressions to facilitate communication
* Approach a child, get down to their level and gain their attention (verbally and/or gentle touch) before speaking
* Adapt language to match level of understanding
* Keep instructions short
* Model inclusive language
* Use a range of prompts to warn of change of routine
* Provide running commentary
* Use positive language
* Use visual cues (props, picture cues etc.)

## Games

* Adapt the rules to include everyone (football sitting on the floor, hitting ball with hands, shorter and more frequent turns)
* Involve children in adapting a game
* Use a range of large and small bats
* Use a range of resources for rolling, throwing, catching and kicking (balls with lights, bells inside, different sizes, different weights, hard and soft, beanbags, balloons
* Look for co-operative games eg parachute
* Allow children time to observe if they wish as well as to join in without having to wait too long