

Examples of Minor Renovation Opportunities for Inclusive Design in Early Childhood Education Spaces

What

Inclusive Design is the design of environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

How

Vestibule: Push button entry doors are ADA compliant if one opens, inclusive design is if both doors open

Lobby:

- Open design and hard surface floors allow ease of circulation
- Front desks designed to accommodate wheelchair users
- Soothing palette and natural light are sensory-friendly

Common areas:

- Zero-depth thresholds are friendly to wheelchairs, strollers, carts
- Lever hardware throughout
- Toileting accessories are automatic and touch-free
- Accessible single-stall and shared bathrooms
- Avoid high-powered air dryers in restrooms (which can be difficult for people on spectrum)
- Staff bathroom low-threshold shower with grab bars
- Sensory-friendly features include swing hook in sensory room, lower ceiling and indirect lighting in library nook

Classrooms:

- Adjustable lighting is sensory-friendly
- Roll-under counters in teacher prep areas and observation rooms
- Palette is sensory-friendly
- Color is used as a cueing system to identify special-use areas
- Automatic touch-free plumbing fixtures work for range of abilities
- Zero-threshold access to outdoor areas
- Movable furniture to support different social needs at different times

Outdoor areas:

- Rubberized play surfaces with wayfinding
- Inclusive raised beds and water table
- Ramped access to tree platform and other play features
- Play areas have pull-up spaces for strollers or wheelchairs

Acoustics:

- Consider background noise such as birdsong or water sounds for quiet and focused time
- Consider distracting noises (mechanical rooms/equipment) and adjust layout to minimize
- Acoustic panels to mitigate noise and manage echo