



Inclusive and Accessible Event Planning Guide

Practical Tools for Creating Equitable Events for All Abilities

Prepared by

Joslynn Bigelow, M.Ed., BCBA

President, United Adaptive Soccer Association

In Collaboration with

United Adaptive Soccer Association

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Best Practices for Planning Inclusive and Accessible Events

This resource, produced in collaboration with the **United Adaptive Soccer Association**, is designed to guide organizations, event planners, and community members in creating events that are not only enjoyable and engaging, but also equitable and welcoming to everyone. All entities providing programming play a role in fostering a community that values inclusion and accessibility for all abilities.

Accessible event planning is more than just meeting legal requirements. It's about embracing the spirit of inclusion, removing barriers, and ensuring that all participants, spectators, and volunteers can fully engage in the experience.

This document offers practical tools and strategies to:

- **Plan Ahead:** Develop events with inclusive practices in mind from the start.
- **Address Challenges:** Approach accessibility transparently and effectively.
- **Respond in Real Time:** Address barriers with immediate problem-solving.
- **Follow Up:** Gather feedback and make iterative improvements for future events.

Transparent communication is essential when accessibility is limited. This resource emphasizes the importance of clearly conveying accessibility features and limitations, providing actionable advice to prioritize inclusivity from start to finish. By adopting these practices, you help shape a sporting landscape that reflects the diverse and dynamic communities we serve.

This guide is a **living resource**, designed to evolve as new information, research, and community feedback become available. Not every recommendation in this document will apply to every event. Use this guide to determine what is needed for your specific event and adapt as necessary. We encourage users to share their insights, experiences, and suggestions to help us refine and expand the tools and strategies provided.

To contribute feedback or propose updates, please email info@unitedadaptivesoccer.com. Your input is invaluable in ensuring this resource remains relevant, practical, and impactful.

Creating accessible and inclusive sports clinics or events involves careful planning and attention to the needs of all participants. The following guide provides comprehensive steps to ensure your events are welcoming, accommodating, and fully accessible to everyone involved.

By integrating these principles, you contribute to building a truly inclusive sporting community that prioritizes belonging, equity, and respect for all.

1. Pre-Assessment and Compliance

- **Pre-Assessment:** Survey attendees beforehand to anticipate accessibility needs and plan accommodations accordingly.
[Reference: CDC](#)
 - **ADA and State Requirements:** Regularly review the Americans with Disabilities Act and local regulations to ensure the event complies with legal requirements.
[Reference: ADA National Network](#)
 - **Accessible Basics:** Confirm that essential facilities such as websites, parking, restrooms, and pathways meet accessibility standards.
[Reference: 10Times Blog](#)
 - **Accommodation Requests:** Assign dedicated staff to handle accommodation requests and ensure effective communication with relevant personnel.
[Reference: ADA National Network](#)
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2. Venue Accessibility

- **Indoor and Outdoor Options:** Select venues that accommodate various weather conditions and provide shaded areas for outdoor events.
[Reference: Know the ADA](#)
- **Physical Access:** Ensure ramps, elevators, and pathways are accessible. Pathways should be firm, slip-resistant, and wide enough for mobility devices.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)
- **Restrooms and Changing Areas:** Provide accessible restrooms, including portable options if necessary, and family-friendly or all-user changing areas.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)
- **Seating Arrangements:** Ensure accessible seating is available for athletes, spectators, and family members.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)
- **Location Proximity:** For on-site events, ensure that housing, dining, and restroom facilities are close to the field or event space.
[Reference: Accessibility Checker](#)
- **Lodging Arrangements:** Ensure rooms are accessible to users such as roll-in showers, visual alert systems, step stool for those short of stature, etc.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)

3. Transportation and Parking

- **Accessible Shuttles:** Provide transportation options that accommodate individuals with disabilities, ensuring all participants can travel to and from the venue comfortably.
[Reference: ADA National Network](#)
 - **Reserved Parking:** Designate accessible parking spaces close to event entrances, adhering to ADA standards.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)
 - **Clear Directions:** Offer explicit instructions for accessible pathways and entrances to assist attendees in navigating the venue.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)
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4. Communication and Marketing

- **Inclusive Marketing:** Explicitly invite target demographics when communicating with the public (e.g. add “disability” to non-discrimination clauses, disability-specific language)
[Reference: All In](#)
- **Accessible Advertising:** Clearly promote accessibility features in your materials and provide an access statement for accommodations. Ensure advertising itself is accessible with interpretation, closed captions, etc.
[Reference: WordStream](#)
- **Inclusive Signage:** Use clear, high-contrast signs (e.g., black text on a white background) for directions, accessible paths, and key areas.
[Reference: Accessi](#)
- **Accessible Formats:** Distribute event materials in large print, braille, or digital formats compatible with screen readers.
[Reference: W3C](#)
- **Representation:** Include diverse imagery in your marketing that reflects people of all abilities participating, officiating, or coaching. If an event is being shared via news channels/press be sure they are also using inclusive language.
[Reference: All In](#)

5. Staff and Volunteer Training

- **Disability Awareness Training:** Educate all staff on disability etiquette and respectful communication, such as gaining attention and effective communication techniques.
[Reference: United Spinal Association](#)
 - **Adaptive Coaching Resources:** Equip coaches with tools to modify drills, rules, or roles to support athletes with disabilities.
[Reference: Coach Canada](#)
 - **Emergency Preparedness Training:** Train designated responders to handle accessibility-related emergencies.
[Reference: Ask JAN](#)
 - **Interpreter Coordination:** Ensure interpreters are familiar with the event's content and that participants can clearly see them; allowing them in areas that permit maximum visibility for those who benefit from interpretation.
[Reference: United Spinal Association](#)
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6. Equipment and Activity Design

- **Wide Range of Equipment:** Provide adaptive equipment such as tactile markers, sports wheelchairs, and modified balls to accommodate various needs.
[Reference: Get Fit Safely](#)
- **Adaptable Activities:** Design drills and games that cater to a spectrum of abilities and preferences. Incorporate quiet spaces for sensory breaks and lively areas for social interaction.
[Reference: CDC](#)
- **Experience Enhancers:** Utilize audio descriptions, captions, printed announcements, and visual aids to enhance understanding.
[Reference: Kennedy Center](#)
- **Multi-Modal Participation:** Offer non-physical participation options for individuals with movement challenges, such as strategic roles, visual feedback stations, or alternative game positions.
[Reference: Adapted Sports](#)

7. Inclusive Participation and Activities

- **Combined Sports Formats:** Encourage camaraderie by integrating athletes with and without disabilities on the same teams.
[Reference: Autism Speaks](#)
 - **Sensory-Friendly Spaces:** Create quiet areas for participants with sensory sensitivities.
[Reference: Autism Speaks](#)
 - **Inclusive Leagues:** Clearly indicate if leagues or events welcome players of all abilities and ensure programming accommodates diverse needs.
[Reference: NCHPAD](#)
 - **Differentiated Participation:** Provide opportunities for non-verbal inquiries, visual engagement, or alternative movement-based participation.
[Reference: DCMP](#)
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8. Logistics and On-Site Support

- **Check-In Accessibility:** Streamline the check-in process with assistance available for individuals with disabilities.
[Reference: ADA National Network](#)
- **Navigation Aids:** Ensure clear signage and wayfinding resources are available throughout the venue.
[Reference: U.S. Access Board](#)
- **Hydration and Rest Stops:** Provide easily accessible water stations and shaded or quiet rest areas for attendees.
[Reference: Autism Speaks](#)
- **Meeting Support:** Include interpreters, closed captions, and multiple communication channels (e.g., Q&A cards, chats) for discussions.
[Reference: DCMP](#)

9. Technology and Accessibility

- **Pre-Test Equipment:** Ensure all technology (e.g., microphones, video screens, captions) functions properly before the event.
[Reference: WAI](#)
 - **Multi-Platform Engagement:** Share live captions, transcripts, and meeting materials across platforms to accommodate diverse needs. Allow for phone calls, video calls, and/or text-in options when possible.
[Reference: WAI](#)
 - **Accessible Visuals:** Use visuals compatible with screen readers and include alt-text for images. All video calls should include captioning when possible.
[Reference: WebAIM](#)
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10. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

- **Surveys:** Utilize pre- and post-event surveys to gather input on accessibility and inclusivity.
[Reference: CDC](#)
- **Feedback Channels:** Create opportunities for real-time feedback, ensuring voices are heard without interruption.
[Reference: ADA National Network](#)
- **Iterative Enhancements:** Implement feedback for continual improvements.
[Reference: CDC](#)

11. Promoting Community and Inclusion

- **Celebrate Diversity:** Use inclusive language and avoid "inspirational" or exploitative terms.
[Reference: ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov/)
 - **Build Connections:** Offer team-building and peer-support activities to foster a sense of community among participants.
[Reference: NCHPAD](https://www.nchpad.org/)
 - **Inclusive Participation:** Ensure participation from all by reflect on historical exclusion and actively design activities that invite and celebrate diverse participation.
[Reference: United Spinal Association](https://www.unitedspinal.org/)
 - **Representation:** Feature players, coaches, and officials with disabilities in marketing and programming to foster visibility and belonging.
[Reference: CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/)
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12. Additional Best Practices

- **Guardian Communication:** Encourage families to share needs before sessions to tailor support. Balance guardian involvement with participant independence. Set boundaries and build trust to enhance experiences.
[Reference: CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/)
- **Avoid Assumptions:** Do not share personal information about participants' disabilities without their explicit consent.
[Reference: United Spinal Association](https://www.unitedspinal.org/)
- **Inclusive Language:** Avoid slang, colloquialisms, or exclusive phrasing; ensure materials are available in multiple languages if necessary.
[Reference: ADA National Network](https://www.ada.gov/national-network/)
- **Flexible Participation:** Allow differentiated and paced participation, such as providing additional time for physical transitions or responses.
[Reference: Coach Canada](https://coachcanada.ca/)
- **Dietary Considerations:** Plan meals to accommodate diverse dietary needs, including allergy-safe and adaptive options. Survey participants beforehand and provide well-rounded meal choices for all.
[Reference: CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/)

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