



The essence of sport is fair opportunity on an equal playing field. All sporting events should be set up so that everyone can participate as much as possible and attendees' diverse needs are accommodated. This requires early planning and considered thought as there are many details to examine when planning an event where disabled people will be attending.

This guide outlines key points to consider and will provide best-practice principles, strategies to support different participant needs, and checklists to ensure your event provides reasonable accommodation for disabled people.

Accessibility to events is a must today. With over a billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experiencing some form of disability, making events more accessible and inclusive is non-negotiable. As event planners, coordinators, and decision-makers, always keep accessibility in mind. Learning how to make your event more accessible starts with your communication and message. Don't hesitate to use best practice examples to guide you in your effort to normalise diversity and inclusivity in all events and occasions.

Key Points

Aim

To increase and eventually ensure that pupils/students with a disability have total access to the events environment, information, and full participation in the event.

Important Considerations

- Be sure to know what physical accommodations attendees may need in order to fully participate – do not make assumptions.
- Before an event, provide attendees with opportunities to share information about their specific needs.
- Be respectful and kind – show all participants that they are valued and that their views are equally important.
- Design the event to be accessible to those attending.

Event Checklist

We have provided a list of considerations for your event. Points to keep in mind and double-check in the build-up to creating an accessible and inclusive tournament for everyone.

Before the Event

1. Make sure the venue is well-lit.

Consider those who will be affected by strobe lights and dim lights, which can cause problems for those with vision impairments, epilepsy, and those on the spectrum. Provide clear signage pointing directions and identifying locations. Check if projection screens are visible from all seats.

2. Test your venue's accessibility.

Is there nearby parking or public transit? Is elevator/ramp access provided? Are bathrooms gender-neutral and easy to locate? Are there enough electrical outlets for those who need to use laptops and adaptive devices? If a speaker is the one who has a disability, consider doing a dry run of the event so that the appropriate access is available.

3. Make information about accessibility clear in your communications

Adding a simple line like *"Our restaurant is wheelchair accessible"* lets the PWD community know this important piece of information. For example, this document has the line written in black text on a light background, making it readable and ultimately saving the reader the effort to call or send an inquiry.

As a planner or coordinator, you may also communicate the same message in other ways, like displaying a PWD sticker on your front door. You can also bear in mind colour accessibility when crafting your social media content to accommodate those with visual limitations. This helps persons who are blind to access information through *screen reader* applications that read text on their colour device's screen out loud.

Icons also help signal available resources and circumstances of your event and locations. Remember to use widely recognised signs for different communities to understand. Use empowering symbols to communicate that the event is open and accessible for PWDs and persons who are blind. Leave room for questions as well. Don't be afraid to ask the community what they need and receive suggestions directly from them.

4. Address the needs of your guests or attendees.

Your guests or attendees may need help during the event to aid them in settling in and enjoying the event. Special requests may vary for each person and might be a bit tricky to anticipate. Elect to ask them ahead of time and open your communication lines for these concerns or inform them of what's available through your invites and announcements to manage expectations. For example, adding a short line like *"Sign language interpretation available"* immediately informs the Deaf and hard of hearing that they can easily participate and engage in the event.

When it comes to catering, consider people's religious or personal dietary restrictions ahead of time. Include vegan, nut-free, gluten-free, and dairy-free options in your menu, and clearly indicate allergens. For a self-service buffet, provide an option for a server to bring food directly to the table of PWD's.

During the Event

1. Open accessible communication lines

It would be beneficial to put the event director's contact details with tournament information, and a note to inform the attendees that they may get in contact if they encounter any problems. This can help both parties to feel secure that all needs will be accommodated for, or at least acknowledged with the purpose of helping them.

2. Double-check seating options, floor plan or layout

Make available some priority seating options for those who need it. Pathways should be free from obstructions, with wide doorways and aisles to accommodate wheelchairs, scooters, canes, and service animals.

3. Make sure slides and presentations are accessible

Check if fonts are large enough to be read up to the last row of seats, images are of high quality, and messaging is clear. For example, having a background and text with highly contrasting colours will make the text clear to read, but also help those with low vision, color blindness, and other visual impairments.

After the Event

1. Consider your event merchandise and other goodies

For T-shirts, offer neutral colours and styles in both large and small sizes. Make sure items don't take up too much baggage space for those flying in.

2. Get feedback

Reach out to your guests and ask if they were comfortable and able to fully participate. Ask if there is anything else they need. Be prepared to take down notes of their overall experience and learn from their feedback so you can incorporate them in your future events.



