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Top tips: Developing a disability aware setting

Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for children, families and staff with disabilities involves thoughtful planning and a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity.

Here are some top tips to ensure your nursery is inclusive:

1. **Assess your setting:** Regularly evaluate the physical accessibility of your nursery. For example, look at your front door access and attempt to enter the nursery as if you were in a wheelchair. Check the ease of accessing gates, doorbells, and the reception area
2. **Pathways and flooring:** Keep pathways free of obstacles to ensure easy navigation
3. **Inclusive communication:** Use clear, large print to assist those with visual impairments or learning difficulties. Provide information in various formats, such as large print or audio recordings
4. **Provide staff training:** Train staff to understand appropriate ways to support and interact with children and family members with disabilities
5. **Inclusive practices:** Ensure all activities are inclusive and can be modified to accommodate children with a range of needs
6. **Sensory-friendly environment:** Use soft, adjustable lighting to create a comfortable atmosphere. Reduce background noise to help children with sensory processing issues. Provide designated quiet spaces where children can retreat and relax if they feel overwhelmed
7. **Continuous improvement:** Conduct regular accessibility audits to identify and address any barriers.



For staff members:

1. **Adaptive equipment:** Provide adaptive equipment and technology as needed, such as a smartphone to measure insulin for those with diabetes
- Written material:** Use clear, readable fonts like Arial, Verdana, or Comic Sans in a comfortable size to read. Format with ample white space, bullet points, and headings to enhance readability and support staff, including those with dyslexia
2. **Customised work plans:** Work with staff to create a plan that accommodates their specific needs and strengths and be willing to make reasonable adjustments to meet individual needs

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3. **Regular check-ins:** Schedule regular check-ins to provide support, address concerns, and make any necessary adjustments to work plans.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- Online course: [SEND Awareness](#)
- Citation factsheet: [Disability in the nursery workplace](#)
- Blog: [How nurseries can support children with cerebral palsy](#)
- Blog: [Inclusive play in early years](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna