

# PROGRAMMING AND MAKER SPACE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS WITH DISABILITIES

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*Tips and tools for creating programs for children  
and teens with disabilities, and increasing  
accessibility in ALL programs*

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## OUTREACH

- Nothing About Us, Without Us!
- Consult or partner with community organizations whenever possible
- LISTEN!
- Good service involves providing what the community needs and wants, not what you think they should have
- Ongoing communication is key
- Ask specific questions about the needs of the group
- Be clear about the types of programs and services you can and cannot provide



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## PLANNING

- RESEARCH!
  - Find a balance between too easy and too difficult. Too easy is boring and patronizing; too hard is frustrating and unfair.
  - Make the activity as widely accessible as possible. Everyone should be able to participate in the same basic activity
  - Build choice into the activity. This encourages creativity and allows participants to self-select the things that work best for them
  - Are the materials appropriate? Consider colour contrast, material texture, level of dexterity needed, etc.
  - Think through how you will explain the activity. Be as specific as possible and use both visual and verbal instructions
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# DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

- Don't assume that someone needs help or underestimate them
- If someone does need help, ASK how you can assist. People with disabilities know their accessibility needs so follow their lead
- Always ask before you touch someone
  - "Is it OK if I re-position your left hand?"
- Avoid outdated terminology, such as "handicapped" or "wheelchair bound"
- Talk to the person first before addressing their support worker, if they have one
- Do not shout, over-enunciate, or talk down to someone

# PROGRAM TIPS

- Use name tags. It's helpful to be able to address participants by name, especially people with vision loss
- BE SPECIFIC:
  - "I'm over here" VS. "I'm approaching on your left side"
  - "Hold it like this" VS. "Hold the embroidery piece in your left hand with the metal piece at the top"
- Build in extra time in case things take longer than expected
- Make sure the physical space for the program is accessible
  - Can someone using a wheelchair sit at the tables? Will people in the back of the room be able to hear? Are there obstacles that will be difficult to navigate around? Is there an accessible washroom nearby?

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# RESOURCES

- IBBY Collection for Young People with Disabilities: [www.tpl.ca/ibby](http://www.tpl.ca/ibby)
  - An international collection of multi-format, multi-lingual books for and about children and teens with disabilities. Housed at the Toronto Public Library
- Paths to Literacy: [www.pathstoliteracy.org](http://www.pathstoliteracy.org)
  - Literacy activities and resources for children with vision loss, who are deafblind, or have multiple disabilities
- Ontario Library Association- Accessibility Resources: [www.accessola.org/web/OLAWEB/Issues\\_Advocacy/Accessible\\_Resources.aspx](http://www.accessola.org/web/OLAWEB/Issues_Advocacy/Accessible_Resources.aspx)
- CoachArt- Coach Corner: [www.coachart.org/coachcorner](http://www.coachart.org/coachcorner)
  - An organization that provides arts and athletic programming for kids with disabilities. Some aspects of the site are specific to their service but there are lots of broadly applicable tips too.
- TD Summer Reading Club- Plan for Accessibility: [www.tdsummerreadingclub.ca/staff/plan-for-accessibility](http://www.tdsummerreadingclub.ca/staff/plan-for-accessibility)
- Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art- Art Lessons for Children with Disabilities: [www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6IPIUKCQg1G65O66WmLfijBor1-gx0he](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL6IPIUKCQg1G65O66WmLfijBor1-gx0he)