

Universal Access and ADA Accommodation Guide

Exhibits are public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). While fully accessible exhibits are not required by the American Academy of Pediatrics, exhibitors at the National Conference and Exhibition are encouraged to consider implementing measures to ensure that attendees who have disabilities can access all demonstrations, information, and services offered at a booth. This guide offers recommendations for creating an accessible exhibit for all attendees and creating opportunities for positive interactions with potential clients.

Prepare for positive interactions with conference attendees with disabilities by taking a “person first” approach. Approach interactions with same casual, positive, and patient attitude you would use for an attendee without a disability. Do not ignore attendees or patronize them by assuming which accommodations they will need. Do not be afraid to ask if attendees need assistance and respect their wishes if help is declined.

Service

- Speak directly to an attendee, not to an aide or interpreter thereby leaving the attendee out of the conversation. Make direct eye contact and provide facial feedback.
- Do not assume people who are deaf know ASL or can read lips. When interacting with a person who uses ASL, do not make up signs. Try alternative methods of communication such as written text on a pad.
- To get the attention of an individual who is deaf, a tap on the shoulder is acceptable. Never throw or kick things toward an individual.
- Keep pads and paper within reach should they be needed for communication. Also consider keeping a hand or sheet magnifier nearby for text that is not in large print.
- Respect a person’s private space. Mobility aides, including wheelchairs, are extensions of personal space and should not be moved or touched without permission.
- Do not play with or pet guide dogs or working animals. They are “on duty” and should not be distracted for the safety of their owners.
- If asked to guide someone who is blind, offer an elbow and let the person follow. Be sure to announce turns, steps, or obstacles while approaching. Announce when a person joins or leave a group conversation, so the attendee is aware of who is involved.

Exhibit Design and Set Up

- When possible, design walk through areas with 36" wide aisles and a minimum clearance of 32" at any point to allow wheelchairs to pass safely. Clearly mark hazardous areas from all sides.
- Bring or rent chairs so exhibitors may speak to people who use wheelchairs at eye level. Chairs are also beneficial for people who cannot stand for long periods of time. When not in use, chairs should be pushed under tables or moved out of the way. Chairs should not be used as storage areas for booth materials or personal belongings.
- Booth carpeting should be low-pile and firm. Carpeting should lay flat with edges that are flush and well secured.
- Electrical cords and computer cables should be hidden or secured to the floor. If cords run beneath booth carpeting, they should not create a trip hazard. The floor should be dry and free of any debris and boxes.
- Signage should be in contrasting colors with text at least 3" tall. Signs should not be blocked by demonstrations or furniture. If signage will hang from the ceiling, a minimum clearance no less than 80" from the floor is suggested.

Audio Visual and Information Dissemination

- Provide information in varied formats including visual media, text, and audio so all attendees can learn about the benefits of products, services, and organizations.
- When possible, add closed captioning to informational videos played in the booth.
- Consider demonstrating websites with adaptive technology for those who have low vision or are blind.
- Mount monitors or televisions on a sturdy, adjustable arm. Mounts that allow the display to tilt will create a better view for seated attendees.
- Make computer interfaces accessible by including working stations at different heights and utilizing wireless devices.
- If handouts are not available in an accessible format for those who have low vision or are blind, be sure to describe information or offer to send them information in an accessible format post-conference.