

Recreation Programs, Facilities, and Professionals **Family Recommended Best Practices and Key Questions**

Cornelius Committee: A Vision for an Accessible Community ***Comité de Cornelius: Una Visión para una Comunidad Accesible*****

1. Do families who have children with disabilities or adults with disabilities know they are welcome?
 - Help them to know that in the way you provide information on your facilities and promote your programs.
 - Do families know that your facility has special equipment, accommodations, or programs?
 - Do brochures or posters show persons with disabilities in the activities or facilities? It may seem small, but it matters.
2. **Restroom facilities** are important for everyone, but for families with children with disabilities, they are particularly important.
 - There need to be restrooms that are accessible, but also that provide privacy.
 - People with disabilities sometimes need help whether as children or adults and that is difficult in very small restrooms or those without privacy. Diaper disposal can be helpful.
3. **Swimming Pools** can be both extremely helpful but also sometimes challenging.
 - Wheelchair access to the water makes all the difference as does a changing room that can fit a wheelchair.
 - Are there any changing rooms for which families with children with disabilities have priority when they come to the facility and do they have wide enough doors to allow a wheelchair access?
 - Do families know that your facility has special equipment accommodations and programs?
 - Are the time periods for swimming programs long enough for families who need extra time to get children or other family members in and out of the pool to be able to participate?
 - Are there any pool times set aside for those with disabilities? Can groups sponsor such special swims at reasonable prices if they aren't otherwise available?
4. Is **drinking water** readily available and can it be accessed by people in wheelchairs?
 - Children with disabilities often have a special need for regular nutrition and hydration and they need facilities that allow them to access the water whether in a wheelchair or otherwise (such as in accessible water fountains or bottled water with straws on hand).
5. Is **parking** for wheelchair vans available with pads for deploying wheelchairs in areas that are not paved and are those parking spaces clearly marked?
 - This is another way to say that we want to you join with us in our programs. If there are only a minimum spaces or no ability to deploy a wheelchair lift, that sends a message too.

6. Are physical barriers and alternative access areas *clearly marked*?
 - Is there wheelchair access to trails with signs?
 - Are parks accessible, including restrooms, and clearly marked?
 - Are areas like paths and walkways that pose limits to accessibility (like railroad tracks) clearly marked on maps or diagrams?
 - Is it clear to families from signs and entries that children with disabilities can reach and use picnic and play areas and equipment?
 - Is locker room (dressing room) access clearly marked and does it have a door wide enough to allow a wheelchair or walker?
7. Have your programs been *family tested* or have they been consulted in the planning?
 - Nothing says welcome like being asked to help plan programs or facilities.
 - Once constructed the surest way to test accessibility is have families try them out before construction is complete or at least in time to make adjustments.
8. Have owners of *private recreational facilities or play areas* been encouraged to work with your organization and families in building and operating their plays areas, theaters, or other recreational facilities?
9. Are there families with children with disabilities or adults with disabilities on your *advisory or planning committees*?
10. Have your staff members who are involved in developing and operating facilities and programs received any *orientation on different types of disabilities*, including both physical and behavioral aspects that would help them and the families they serve to understand each other better?
 - There are sometimes misunderstandings about physical needs or behavioral challenges than can be prevented with a bit of education and good communications.
11. Are there options for *dedicated events, programs*, or facilities as part of your recreational program or available by facility rental at reasonable prices?
12. Have you identified persons who can provide *advice on programs and facilities planning*?
 - They might includes families, experts such as those who work in physical therapy or adaptive recreation, student interns in these fields, or organizations that serve persons with disabilities.

** © All rights reserved. Cornelius Committee: A Vision for an Accessible Community/Comité de Cornelius: Una Visión para una Comunidad Accesible.