



Museum Inclusion Framework

WORKING DEFINITION OF INCLUSION

Inclusion is the process and practice of improving the terms for individuals and groups to participate in educational, economic, social, political, and cultural life. Providing individuals and groups at a disadvantage the access, opportunity and resources needed to participate fully to have a standard of living that is considered a norm for the society, community, or institution in which they are contacting. Inclusion continues to evolve within our local and global community and is not a destination.

PURPOSE OF RUBRIC

These three inclusion ranges developed from Shelley Moore's framework of The Evolution of Inclusion that understands the phenomena of exclusion, segregation, integration, and inclusion as coexisting on a timeline (Moore, 2018). Moore describes this progression as movement towards a society in which people with and without disabilities share equitable access to resources and are meaningfully included together in community spaces.

This study reinterprets Moore's terminology as separate autism-friendly, integrated autism-friendly, and organization-wide respectively. As Moore promotes supporting individuals in being more than physically integrated but also meaningfully included, this study recognizes the unique strengths and challenges of museum spaces. As a result, this study analyzed museum offerings not on a progression or ranked scale, but instead as components of a cumulative experience that is dynamic and adaptive to each visitor's unique needs and abilities. Analysis determined range of inclusion based on website details about the target audiences, descriptions of goals, and logistics of offerings. Due to some offerings appealing to multiple audience groups, a single offering could represent multiple ranges of inclusion or inclusion types.

HOW TO USE THIS RUBRIC

This inclusion model is meant as a resource and reference tool for understanding and incorporating a variety of inclusive practices. The framework that this model presents seeks to encourage flexibility, intentional responsiveness, and community building with museum audiences respectful of their needs and abilities. Read through the descriptions of each inclusion range. Consider the explicit and implicit inclusion ranges associated with your organization's general admission and program accommodations, what language is used to convey those who are your target audience for each accommodation, and whether these choices align with the intended outcomes of each accommodation. Use the table below to structure organizational conversations about inclusive planning and facilitation that fosters a more inclusive museum experience for all visitors. Follow the colored guiding questions between each range category to lead clarifying discussions about dynamic and adaptive museum responses to each visitor's unique abilities and needs. The colors of each inclusion range and associated 'questions to consider' aim to facilitate better alignment between specific audience needs and museum practices. Refer to examples from the National Inventory as tangible, real-life cases in which museums embody singular or combinations of the inclusion ranges. You are also encouraged to navigate the National Inventory to find more relevant examples for your work and connect with other museum professionals working towards building inclusion within their spaces. Notice how certain examples demonstrate multiple inclusion ranges and adaptive strategies.

Separate Autism-Friendly

Inclusion Range Description

General admission or program accommodations that are specifically designed for visitors with ASD and/or sensory processing needs. Language exclusively targets individuals and families with autism spectrum disorders or sensory processing needs. Language is not inclusive of other/compounding disabilities or visitors without ASD who may benefit from the same offerings.

Inclusion Range Purpose

Aims to reduce feelings of self-consciousness and isolation while building community.

Adaptive Strategies & Questions to Foster Inclusion

Audience Inclusive Language	Ex: Play Your Way program; Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose; San Jose, CA
	Target Audience: For children ages 2-15 years on the autism spectrum.
	Website Description: An evening event for relaxing and enjoying activities that encourage hands-on learning, where staff is prepared to ensure a successful experience, and families can connect with others while learning about local resources.
	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors by targeting only people with autism or sensory processing needs? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with or without ASD or special needs can benefit from this accommodation or its components simultaneously or together?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there benefits to making this accommodation available to all visitors during regular operating hours? What inclusive language can best describe the target audience of this accommodation?</i>

Visitor Guide	Ex: My Visit to the Children's Museum of Atlanta social story; Children's Museum of Atlanta; Atlanta, GA
	Target Audience: Families with children on the autism spectrum or children with sensory processing disorders
	Website Description: The Museum's social guide, My Visit to the Children's Museum of Atlanta, takes you and your children step by step through a museum visit, our learning zones, and program opportunities. Social story is available online on the museum's website.
	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors by targeting only people with autism or sensory processing needs? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with or without ASD or special needs can benefit from this accommodation or its components?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there benefits to making this accommodation available to all visitors during regular operating hours? What inclusive language can best describe the target audience of this accommodation?</i>
Physical Access	Ex: Sensory-Friendly Hours; Science Center of Iowa & Blank IMAX Dome Theater; Des Moines, IA
	Target Audience: Families with children with on the autism spectrum or other sensory processing needs.
	Website Description: On the first Saturday of the month from 8:30-10:00 am, October through May, the museum provides a quieter, less crowded experience for families with children on the autism spectrum.
	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors by targeting only people with autism or sensory processing needs? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with or without ASD or special needs can benefit from this accommodation or its components?</i>

	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there benefits to making this accommodation available to all visitors during regular operating hours? What inclusive language can best describe the target audience of this accommdation?</i></p>
<p>Social Access</p>	<p>Ex: ASD Mornings program; San Diego Natural History Museum (The Nat); San Diego, CA</p>
	<p>Target Audience: Adults and children on the autism spectrum and their families, friends, and caregivers.</p>
	<p>Website Description: A program for the Autism Spectrum Disorder community where the Museum opens early for adults and children on the autism spectrum. Visitors are encouraged to explore, play, and discover in an environment that is comfortable for them.</p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors by targeting only people with autism or sensory processing needs? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with or without ASD or special needs can benefit from this accommodation or its components?</i></p>
<p>Professional Development</p>	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there benefits to making this accommodation available to all visitors during regular operating hours? What inclusive language can best describe the target audience of this accommdation?</i></p>
	<p>Ex: Sensory Friendly Sundays program; Bakken Museum; Minneapolis, MN</p>
	<p>Target Audience: People with Autism Spectrum Disorders and sensory processing differences.</p> <p>Website Descriptions: Beginning on Sunday, March 10, The Bakken Museum will offer Sensory Friendly Sundays from 10:30am to 12pm on the second Sunday of every month. Events will include modified programming for diverse sensory needs and specialized staff training.</p>

	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors by targeting only people with autism or sensory processing needs? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with or without ASD or special needs can benefit from this accommodation or its components?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there benefits to making this accommodation available to all visitors during regular operating hours? What inclusive language can best describe the target audience of this accommdation?</i>

Integrated Autism-Friendly

Inclusion Range Description

General admission or program accommodations for individuals with ASD are available during typical operating hours and especially invite participants with disabilities and/or special needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorders to take advantage of the offering, but individuals without special needs are also welcome. Interaction between visitors of differing abilities and needs might be expected to happen in these shared spaces.

Inclusion Range Purpose

Aims to empower visitors with ASD to navigate museum experiences by familiarizing them with regular operations.

Adaptive Strategies & Questions to Foster Inclusion

Audience Inclusive Language	Ex: Multi-Sensory/Snoezelen Room; Miami Children’s Museum; Miami, FL
	Target Audience: All visitors, but especially children with autism, sensory processing disorders, global developmental delays and other special needs and their families.
	Website Description: With incredible visuals presented in areduced and comfortable lighting setting, this room is a relaxing space that can help reduce agitation and anxiety, but also engage and delight the user, stimulate reactions, and encourage communication.

	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors with or without ASD by offering this accommodation to their communities simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audiences?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to spaces or times for people with ASD to exclusively participate with this accommodation?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there relevant benefits to specifying the abilities and/or needs of target audiences for this accommodation? Are there instances when visitors of all abilities and backgrounds could benefit from this accommodation?</i></p>
<p>Visitor Guide</p>	<p>Ex: Collection of Resources; Adventure Science Center; Nashville, TN</p>
	<p>Target Audience: Our Guest Experience & Accessibility team worked with both TRIAD and a student intern from Belmont University's School of Occupational Therapy to create a collection of resources for people who have developmental disabilities, autism spectrum disorders or other sensory concerns.</p>
	<p>Website Description: On the museum website there are links to download materials related to a Sensory Map; Social Stories for general, field trip, and planetarium visits; Trip Planning Schedules; and First-Then, Token, and Choice Boards.</p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors with or without ASD by offering this accommodation to their communities simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audiences?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to spaces or times for people with ASD to exclusively participate with this accommodation?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there relevant benefits to specifying the abilities and/or needs of target audiences for this accommodation? Are there instances when visitors of all abilities and backgrounds could benefit from this accommodation?</i></p>

Physical Access	Ex: Aides; Pacific Science Center; Seattle, WA
	Target Audience: Visitors with disabilities in the care of a personal attendant
	Website Description: Aides accompanying a guest with a disability receive complimentary admission to all Pacific Science Center exhibits and events, including IMAX and laser shows.
	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors with or without ASD by offering this accommodation to their communities simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audiences?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to spaces or times for people with ASD to exclusively participate with this accommodation?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there relevant benefits to specifying the abilities and/or needs of target audiences for this accommodation? Are there instances when visitors of all abilities and backgrounds could benefit from this accommodation?</i>
Social Access	Ex: Play Your Way program; Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine; Portland ME
	Target Audience: Families affected by autism, Down syndrome, Sensory Processing disorder, PTSD or other challenges.
	Website Description: Visitors can play in exhibits during a quiet time and meet other families from the community. Noise-reducing headphones will also be available and Museum & Theatre Educators will be available to support families. Only a limited number of visitors will be admitted to ensure a calm and welcoming play environment.

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<p>Professional Development</p>	<p>Ex: Tours for Neurodiverse Visitors; Philadelphia Museum of Art; Philadelphia, PA</p>
	<p>Target Audience: Visitors and groups with disabilities.</p>
	<p>Website Description: Specially trained museum guides lead a variety of tours to help individuals and groups with disabilities get the most from their visit. We can adapt tours to meet your needs and interests, and provide touchable and visual materials to bring artwork to life.</p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors with or without ASD by offering this accommodation to their communities simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audiences?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to spaces or times for people with ASD to exclusively participate with this accommodation?</i></p>
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Organization-Wide

Inclusion Range Description

General admission and program accommodations are embedded into the work culture, curatorial design, and visitor experiences of the museum. All visitors (with or without disabilities) are actively encouraged to participate and utilize accommodations as needed during their visit. Language describing the offering's target audience refers to "all" or "any visitor" or does not specify any characteristics or level of ability.

Inclusion Range Purpose

Aims to communicate that all visitors are welcome to utilize any/all accommodations such that they experience the museum with confidence and comfort.

Adaptive Strategies & Questions to Foster Inclusion

Audience Inclusive Language	Ex: Re-entrance Policy; Arizona Museum of Natural History; Phoenix, AZ
	Target Audience: All visitors
	Website Description: If visitors want or need to leave the museum and return, they are allowed to enter again on the same day. Visitors must keep their dated admission receipt and present the receipt at the front desk on the same day as purchased admission.
	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors of all abilities and backgrounds by offering this accommodation to everyone simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience? Are there ample museum supplies for this accommodation to support its availability to all visitors?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to adjusting this accommodation to better suit the needs of the ASD community specifically?</i>

	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there relevant benefits to adjusting this accommodation to better suit the needs of the ASD community while also being available to visitors without ASD? Are there instances when visitors with or without ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components together during regular operating hours?</i></p>
<p>Visitor Guide</p>	<p>Ex: Social narrative and sensory notes; Museum of Science and Industry; Chicago, IL</p>
	<p>Target Audience: Individuals who will have a more comfortable time knowing in advance what will happen and what is expected.</p>
	<p>Website Description: The museum created social narrative pages for MSI exhibits, spaces and moments, with a blank description area where visitors can add their own messages. The sensory notes describe the various loud noises, sights, and bright lights of various museum areas. There are also descriptions of quieter exhibits, times, and eating areas of the museum.</p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors of all abilities and backgrounds by offering this accommodation to everyone simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience? Are there ample museum supplies for this accommodation to support its availability to all visitors?</i></p>
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Physical Access	Ex: Accessibility Aides; Maryland Science Center; Baltimore, MD
	Target Audience: Guests who desire aids during their museum experience.
	Website Description: Guests may borrow weighted lap covers (for those who need some extra comfort in dark or loud places), large and small squishy balls (for helping the anxious calm and focus), and noise reducing ear muffs (for those who are sound sensitive).
	Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors of all abilities and backgrounds by offering this accommodation to everyone simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience? Are there ample museum supplies for this accommodation to support its availability to all visitors?</i>
	Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to adjusting this accommodation to better suit the needs of the ASD community specifically?</i>
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Social Access	Ex: Sensational Playgroups program; Wonderscope; Kansas City, MO
	Target Audience: Children and families
	Website Description: Wonderscope, in partnership with the University of Kansas Medical Center occupational therapy (OT) program, offers sensory playgroups. Research shows that inclusive sensory-based activities provide children and families the opportunity to better understand their individual sensory preferences and how they influence their interactions with other and the world around them.

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<p>Professional Development</p>	<p>Ex: Training; Children's Museum of Denver; Denver, CO</p>
	<p>Target Audience: Every family</p>
	<p>Website Description: Staff received ongoing training to make sure every family has the best visit possible and daily educational programs are designed for inclusion.</p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>What benefits do you afford visitors of all abilities and backgrounds by offering this accommodation to everyone simultaneously? Does current museum language respectfully and accurately describe the target audience? Are there ample museum supplies for this accommodation to support its availability to all visitors?</i></p>
	<p>Question(s) to consider: <i>Are there instances when visitors with ASD can benefit from this accommodation or its components separately from visitors without ASD? Are there relevant benefits to adjusting this accommodation to better suit the needs of the ASD community specifically?</i></p>
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