

All In

Co-Design and Connect

Social
Participation



Social participation starts with an invitation for people living with disability to join in.



**Keep
activities
inclusive**

Followers of Jesus Christ are called to work together as one body that facilitates everyone's gifts and strengths so the church can fulfil God's plan to share God's love to the world.

Children and young people living with disability are an indispensable part of that body. How they are included matters to God and to how God's church will thrive because God says they are indispensable.

As Christians we need to facilitate life-enhancing interactions for people living with disability. This means we must address attitude, communication, access and social participation barriers so that opportunities to live, be, and become are equally available to everyone.

"For the body does not consist of one member but of many... God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I do not need you." Nor can the head say to the feet, "I do not need you." On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable..."
(1 Corinthians 12: 14-22, ESV)

Feeling included

"I know I belong when you miss me, and I miss you."

Ensuring everyone can participate can help people feel included. We can make activities more accessible and inclusive by learning about a person living with disability's needs. Invite people with disability to join in.

Facilitate connection

Families with children and young people living with disability have requested support from their churches with church-based disability awareness initiatives, support groups, advocacy assistance, and respite support.

Churches can provide information to their Local Area Coordinator to pass on to NDIS participants.



Enable participation

“Nothing about me without me!”

Ask the person living with disability what they want and need to support their social participation. Listen to what they say and provide them with opportunities to have an independent and equal voice in what is happening in your church.

Work together

“When we work together many things become possible.”

Plan for the child or young person living with a disability’s needs to remove barriers to participation. Know any specific safety needs and discuss the person living with disability’s readiness and willingness to participate.

Ensure safety measures are in place

Ensure safety measures such as child-safe police checks, first aid, and youth mental health first aid are considered in activity planning.

Transition toward independence

“You can show me how if you see me struggling but ask me first.”

Check in with the person living with disability participating in an activity to gauge whether or not they’re struggling. Offer support on request.

Don’t assume someone living with disability needs or wants help. Always ask first.

Planning leads to success

People living with disability can find it a challenge to accommodate last minute changes. Try to keep changes to a minimum. If the changes are essential, ensure the person living with disability and/or their caregiver is informed early, so they can decide on the most appropriate plan of action to manage the changes. This is particularly important with changes related to transport, access and communication.



Strengths based

"I know what I can do and what I like doing."

People are aware of their strengths and activities they enjoy.

Discover a person living with disability's strengths and ensure activities allow for them to work to their strengths. You can ask a person living with disability what their strengths are, and it is so important to listen. Actioning this can result in positive behaviour, increased self-esteem, and will encourage them to participate in social settings.

An international study found the most common character strengths for people living with disabilities include curiosity, love of learning, honesty, appreciation of beauty and excellence, kindness, and fairness. The character strengths that commonly cause struggle include self-regulation, perseverance, zest, spirituality, and prudence.

Challenging behaviour

If some behaviour is challenging it will help to approach the family about ways to avoid triggers or manage challenges.

It can also be helpful for a team comprising of parents/caregivers, leaders, teachers, occupational therapists and developmental educators to develop an inclusion plan that can support positive behaviour strategies.

This content was developed with young people living with disability, care givers/parents with lived experience, and professionals working with young people living with disability. **Funded by the Australian Government Department of Social Services.**

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