



Daniella Levine Cava, Mayor

Cultural Affairs  
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# SENSORY INCLUSIVE

## Guidelines for Presenting a “Sensory Inclusive” Cultural Event

The following guidelines are intended to provide a general overview of best practices, accommodations, and appropriate modifications to consider when presenting a Sensory Inclusive cultural event, tour, or performance. These guidelines are meant to be discussed as part of an in-depth technical assistance training for cultural organizations wishing to present a Sensory Inclusive cultural event, tour, or performance.

For additional information and to learn more about how your organization can present a Sensory Inclusive cultural event or performance, call the [Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs](http://miamidadearts.org) at (305) 375-4634.

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### Pre-Visit Planning

- Convene focus group meeting(s) / pre-visit / pre-show screening(s): invite constituents to preview the show/event/tour, provide feedback and discuss the appropriate modifications and accommodations to be provided. At a minimum, focus groups should include target audience members and/or their families/caregivers. Other key individuals to include are experts in the field of sensory processing disorders (SPD), sensory processing sensitivities (SPS), environmental sensitivities (ES), post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD), and autism spectrum disorders (ASD), such as educators, practitioners, clinicians, behavioral and occupational therapists, psychologists, etc.



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- Establish an accepting and inclusive environment (training): house/event staff members as well as performers need to be trained on how to interact appropriately with audience members and what to expect from individuals with sensory sensitivities, including possibly disruptive behavior such as individuals making loud noises and moving around.
- Provide a pre-show / pre-visit guide: provide a pre-show / pre-visit visual social narrative or picture schedule guide (such as Going to the Show\* or Going to the Museum\*) or video to patrons in advance, in order to help prepare and orient audiences and visitors before they arrive (see below/resources).
- Prepare a pre-show / pre-visit introduction: plan to begin the show/visit by introducing the characters/performers or key staff (such as docents, group leaders or educators) to the audience/visitors and providing an overview of the program or visit and facility. The pre-show / pre-visit guide can also be utilized during the introductions. Be sure to mention the length of the performance or visit, whether or not there will be an intermission or breaks, and the location of key services such as the quiet room, restrooms, concessions, etc. For performing arts experiences also “set the scene” by providing a summary of the storyline.

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## **Modifications and Accommodations**

- Consider offering discounted or free admission.
- Consider the size of the crowd / limit attendance if possible: this is especially relevant for museums and similar venues where large crowds in close proximity can be overwhelming for individuals with sensory sensitivities. For performing arts experiences, consider using smaller venues or blocking out seating or upper tiers.
- For performing arts venues, allow general admission seating whenever possible.
- Limit the length of the performance/visit: the length of the performance or guided visit should be considered, with no more than 45-60 minutes maximum being the ideal.



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- For performing arts experiences, do not include an intermission unless truly necessary.
- Make appropriate modifications to sound and lighting levels: amplified sound and special effects should be lowered / subdued. Lighting should be bright enough to see around the room without being harsh. Avoid strobe lighting effects.
- Provide noise reducing headsets/earmuffs: noise reducing headsets/earmuffs should be made available prior to the performance/visit and located in the lobby or at the entrance.
- Provide a "Quiet / Cool-Down Room": set up a comfortable room where individuals/families can take a break if needed. Ideally, the quiet room should be staffed by inclusion experts or volunteers who have been trained to work with individuals with sensory sensitivities. The quiet room should include two zones/areas: one with quiet activities such as reading, drawing, or using fidgets; the other zone should be a calm, quiet, sensory-free sanctuary. Healthy allergen-friendly snacks, subdued lighting, beanbag chairs, and play tents are appreciated by children and families.
- Provide remote viewing: Ideally/best practice for performing arts experiences, the quiet room should include remote viewing of the main stage show. If not possible, a live-stream feed in the lobby would be an acceptable alternative.

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## Marketing Materials



Use the Sensory Inclusive access symbol: utilize the Sensory Inclusive disability access symbol in all marketing materials to indicate that the advertised show/event will provide Sensory Inclusive accommodations.

- Embed the hyperlink in the symbol to the Sensory Inclusive web page [www.SensoryInclusive.org](http://www.SensoryInclusive.org) in all electronic communications and listings, wherever the Sensory Inclusive access symbol is used.



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- Include an access statement: together with the Sensory Inclusive access symbol, include detailed, explicit language in all marketing and promotional materials describing the specific accommodations that will be provided, for example:

*(Performance)* This performance will offer accessible accommodations for individuals with sensory sensitivities. The theater will provide an accepting and inclusive environment, modifications to sound and lighting, noise reducing headsets, a professionally-staffed quiet room with remote viewing of the main stage performance, and a special pre-show guide to preparing new audiences for a live performing arts experience.

*(Event/Museum Visit)* This event will offer accessible accommodations for individuals with sensory sensitivities. The museum will provide an accepting and inclusive environment, modifications to sound and lighting, noise reducing headsets, a professionally-staffed quiet room, and a special pre-visit guide to preparing new visitors for a museum experience.

- Promote the availability of the pre-show / pre-visit visual social narrative or picture schedule guide (such as Going to the Show\* or Going to the Museum\*) or video in all marketing and promotional materials (i.e. press releases, advertisements, email, websites, social media, etc.).
- Embed the hyperlinks to online versions of the pre-show / pre-visit visual social narrative or picture schedule guide (such as Going to the Show\* or Going to the Museum\*) or video in all electronic communications and listings (see resources).

*\* Organizations wishing to reference or link to Going to the Show or Going to the Museum in their marketing and promotional materials or on their website are kindly asked to include the following text credit as well as the Miami-Dade County logo in all materials:*



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Going to the Show, Going to the Museum and the sensory inclusive access symbol were developed by the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs as part of its "All Kids Included - Accessible Arts Experiences for Kids" (AKI) initiative. AKI is made possible with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners, and in part through grant funding provided by The Children's Trust. The Children's Trust is a dedicated source of revenue established by voter referendum to improve the lives of children and families in Miami-Dade County.

### Download Miami-Dade County logo:

- Color: [https://miamidadearts.org/sites/default/files/files/inline/miami-dade\\_logo\\_color.jpg](https://miamidadearts.org/sites/default/files/files/inline/miami-dade_logo_color.jpg)
- Black and White: [https://miamidadearts.org/sites/default/files/files/inline/miami-dade\\_bw.jpg](https://miamidadearts.org/sites/default/files/files/inline/miami-dade_bw.jpg)

*Note: to view Going to the Show or Going to the Museum online, go to:*

- *Going to the Show* [https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce\\_feba3ed4afbb4dc1b17a107d50e74a55.pdf](https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce_feba3ed4afbb4dc1b17a107d50e74a55.pdf)
  - *Going to the Museum (English – Spanish)* [https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce\\_db9b3dbfcb064f368559dea01dd26fee.pdf](https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce_db9b3dbfcb064f368559dea01dd26fee.pdf)
  - *Going to the Museum (English – Haitian Creole)* [https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce\\_75463ee02f1a40978140cafbe6aae93d.pdf](https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce_75463ee02f1a40978140cafbe6aae93d.pdf)
- Survey your audience, assess and evaluate: solicit feedback from your audience and patrons through surveys and follow-up focus group discussions to evaluate what worked and what could be improved upon. An audience survey is available from the Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs (see resources).



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## Resources: Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs

- Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs Sensory Inclusive Webpage: [www.SensoryInclusive.org](http://www.SensoryInclusive.org).
- Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs ADA/Accessibility Resources for Cultural Organizations: <https://miamidadearts.org/adaaccessibility-resources-links-cultural-organizations>
- Going to the Show guide: [https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce\\_feba3ed4afbb4dc1b17a107d50e74a55.pdf](https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce_feba3ed4afbb4dc1b17a107d50e74a55.pdf)
- Going to the Museum guide (English/Spanish): [https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce\\_db9b3dbfcb064f368559dea01dd26fee.pdf](https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce_db9b3dbfcb064f368559dea01dd26fee.pdf)
- Going to the Museum guide (English/Haitian Creole): [https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce\\_75463ee02f1a40978140cafbe6aae93d.pdf](https://b480f226-38c3-447a-bd41-91604baafdee.filesusr.com/ugd/2811ce_75463ee02f1a40978140cafbe6aae93d.pdf)
- Sensory Inclusive Cultural Event Audience Survey: <https://miamidadearts.org/content/sensory-inclusive-cultural-event-audience-survey>

## Other Resources:

- The Advocacy Network on Disabilities: <https://www.advocacynetwork.org/>
- The Autism Society – Florida/Miami: <https://www.autismfl.com/>
- Center for Independent Living South Florida: <https://www.cilsf.org/>
- The Children’s Trust: <https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/>
- Florida Access Coalition for the Arts: <http://www.flaccess.org/>
- Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System-South (FDLRS-South): <https://www.fdlrssouth.org/>
- Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc.: <https://fndusa.org/>



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- The Kennedy Center Leadership Exchange in Arts and Disability (LEAD) Research & Resources: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/networks-conferences-and-research/research-and-resources/lead-research-and-resources/>
- The Kennedy Center Sensory Friendly Performances: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/visit/accessibility/sensory/>
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools Department of Exceptional Student Education: <https://ese2.dadeschools.net/#!/fullWidth/5649>
- Miami-Dade County Public Schools Department of Exceptional Student Education, Autism Spectrum Disorder: <https://autism.dadeschools.net/#!/rightColumn/840>
- Parent to Parent of Miami: <https://www.ptopmiami.org/>
- Sensory Processing Disorder Foundation: <http://www.spdfoundation.net/about-sensory-processing-disorder.html#looklike>
- University of Miami - Nova Southeastern University Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (UM-NSU CARD): <https://www.card.miami.edu/>
- VSA and Accessibility Department at The Kennedy Center: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education/networks-conferences-and-research/research-and-resources/vsa-research-and-resources/>