



# Universal Design

**The design of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability, or other factors**

## What is Universal design?

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focuses on improving and optimizing the design of instructional goals, methods, and materials that can be customized and adjusted to meet individual needs.

## How do we address Universal Design?

**Partner with the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)**, creator of UDL guidelines, and other similar organizations.

**Use UDL principles** to ensure that project-based communications are accessible.

**Create a staff training on DEIB-related topics** that discusses how to apply UDL principles.

**Use the resources from CAST's National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning to provide technical assistance** to Family Voices staff and create training materials that are accessible and align with UDL principles.

**Use a rubric for plain language** in materials. Download the Plain Language checklist adapted by Family Voices in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

**Create an inbox or survey for families** to give feedback on resources and communications.

At the **Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University**, a group of architects, product designers, engineers, and environmental design researchers established principles of universal design to provide guidance in the design of environments, communications, and products. (Connell et. al., 1997). **The principles are:**



#### **Equitable Use**

The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities



#### **Flexibility in Use**

The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.



#### **Simple and Intuitive Use**

Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.



#### **Perceptible Information**

The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.



#### **Tolerance for Error**

The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.



#### **Size and Space for Approach and Use**

Appropriate size and space are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the user's body size, posture, or mobility.



#### **Low Physical Effort**

The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

## More resources on Universal Design



Find more resources about **Universal Design for Learning** from [The Center for Universal Design in Education at University of Washington](#).



Take a deep dive into the **principles of Universal Design** from [The Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University](#).



Use **Plain Language guidelines** to develop print and online materials and make them more accessible. Learn more from the [CDC's resources](#).



Learn more about **Universal Design for Learning** from this video by the [Center for Applied Special Technology \(CAST\)](#).



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