

# **INCLUSION RATING TOOL**

## **A SELF-STUDY FOR SYNAGOGUES**

**TO FOCUS ON ISSUES OF AWARENESS AND INCLUSION OF  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL ASPECTS OF JEWISH COMMUNITY LIFE**

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*In collaboration with the Special Needs Professional Committee of Greater Boston*



## **DIRECTIONS FOR SELF STUDY**

The Inclusion Rating Tool (IRT) is intended to be a vehicle to “open the door” to discussions about what inclusion means for your Synagogue. It is a starting point as you assess where you are today in regards to inclusion and where you want to be in the future, and is designed for internal use by a team of lay and professional staff.

There are seven columns on two pages included in this tool: Parking Lot/Entrance, Non-Worship Areas, Worship Area Communication/Publicity; Formal Education, Support/Resources, Awareness/Training. Please review all sections before you begin the self study.

1. Read down each column and then check all of the items that apply to your Congregation today.
2. Please take the time to tour your facility through the eyes of inclusion.
3. Enjoy the opportunity to “welcome everyone...with joy.” (*Pirke Avot 1:15*)

## ACCESSIBILITY

Effort is made to make all physical areas of the synagogue and all program and worship materials accessible to individuals with disabilities

Parking Lot/Entrance	Non-Worship Areas (bathrooms, hallways, classrooms)	Worship Area
<input type="checkbox"/> Parking lot maintains appropriate reserved spaces that are clearly marked with the Handicap Access symbol  <input type="checkbox"/> Short and long-term parking allow for easily accessible spaces for those in need, including senior adults without an access symbol  <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways to and from the parking area are clearly marked, well-lit and free from any obstructions day and night  <input type="checkbox"/> Outside signage indicates exactly where to enter the building easily for those with mobility limitations  <input type="checkbox"/> Entrance to the building accommodates a wheelchair, and a ramp is available if needed  <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance provided for all events when the door does not open easily  <input type="checkbox"/> Mezuzzahs are placed low so they are accessible  <input type="checkbox"/> All Signage is clear for those with or without visual challenges	<input type="checkbox"/> Doorways and hallways are free from obstructions and swing open automatically or without conflict to those with physical challenges  <input type="checkbox"/> Restrooms are complete with accessible toilets, sinks, mirrors, towel dispensers and doorways  <input type="checkbox"/> At least one water fountain on each floor is easily useable from a wheelchair  <input type="checkbox"/> Water fountains and fire extinguishers are recessed at the appropriate height so as not to create obstacles  <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom seating is designed so all can have access to a desk or table  <input type="checkbox"/> Elevators, lifts or ramps provide accessibility to all areas of the building  <input type="checkbox"/> Unscented candles, soaps, detergents, cleaning supplies, air fresheners etc. are consistently provided	<input type="checkbox"/> Priority seating is reserved for people with physical challenges and seating is arranged to allow extra space for those in wheelchairs  <input type="checkbox"/> Sign language interpreter is provided when needed  <input type="checkbox"/> Individuals who are hard of hearing are welcomed and encouraged to sit in the front  <input type="checkbox"/> Torah is accessible or made accessible to someone with physical challenges  <input type="checkbox"/> The bimah, including the podium and microphone is accessible to someone with physical challenges  <input type="checkbox"/> Large print prayer books are readily available to those who need them  <input type="checkbox"/> Tallitot and kippot are easily accessible to people with physical challenges  <input type="checkbox"/> Synagogue provides assistive listening devices as needed  <input type="checkbox"/> There is adequate lighting on speaker's face to facilitate speech/lip reading

## **SYNAGOGUE LIFE: ATTITUDES, PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

To intentionally create a culture of inclusion for people with disabilities in all aspects of synagogue life requires a welcoming environment, specific policies and inclusive practices

Communication/ Publicity	Formal Education	Support/Resources	Awareness/Training
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Synagogue's mission and/or description of Temple life includes a statement about inclusion of people with disabilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Membership application asks confidential questions regarding special needs and accommodations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Education &amp; Religious School application and publicity state that all types of learners are welcomed</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Program publicity includes a statement regarding inclusiveness and available accommodations</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Synagogue announcements include information regarding community programs for people with disabilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Language used in sermons, signage and communication includes statements about inclusion of people with differences and disabilities</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Program and Religious School have clear and effective Special Needs Policies</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Special Needs Policy is distributed to all families and process is in place to monitor effectiveness of policy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Program and Religious School offer inclusive classes for children with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Jewish Educational Action Plan [JEAP] is developed and monitored for children who need accommodations or special instruction</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Synagogue provides accommodations to students with special needs for Shabbat, B'nai Mitzvot or holiday services</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Program and Religious School curriculums includes teaching tolerance and acceptance of differences</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> A list of available community resources for congregants and community members is maintained</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Resources that provide information on various disabilities are available in Temple Library</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Transportation to services and programs is provided to people in need of a ride</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Support group(s) are provided for the congregation based on needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> There is a committee on inclusion that serves as a resource and/or liaison regarding synagogue practices and policies</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff and key lay leaders are aware of congregants with special needs</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ushers are trained regarding appropriate ways to greet and meet the needs of people with disabilities</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Staff and Lay leaders are trained annually on inclusive behavior</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Participation in the annual Disability Awareness Month (Iyar) sponsored by the Jewish Community Special Needs Professional Committee</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> A disability awareness program or awareness training is offered to the congregation</p>