



It is important to develop routines that take into account a child's medical and developmental needs, medication schedules and therapy appointments, but it is equally important to make sure the child enjoys a fun and engaging childhood. A critical component of such a childhood is the child having the opportunity to engage with and have exposure to hobbies and activities that they enjoy.

Participating in fun activities (especially with others) encourages social interaction, language development, the development of fine and gross motor skills, and cognitive/emotional development.

Recreational Activities for Children with HIE

Parents sometimes have concerns about accessibility and the availability of certain activities in their community. One of the ways to check whether certain recreational opportunities are available in your area is to check with the local school district or recreational authority (Parks and Recreation Authority). Individuals cities sometimes print pamphlets of community activity schedules and distribute them via mail to residents as well; often, community activity offerings will have adaptive sports and recreation opportunities, including (but not limited to) adaptive competitive sports, art, theater and drama, painting, film, sculpture, photography, swimming, trail walking, and museum outings.

Creative Hobbies



Creative hobbies with defined goals (such as sports or arts projects) can provide individuals with disabilities with the opportunity to self-actualize and feel accomplished at the completion of a task. They also foster creative expression, self-esteem, and, in group settings, encourage inclusive environments where children can feel that they belong. This is especially true in settings where art therapy is practiced, as these programs are led by trained professionals, helping participants express themselves, resolve potential conflict, and increase communication. These programs also have the added benefit of being adaptable, often with available accommodations for physical limitations. Adaptive drama programs foster language development and empowerment in the context of performance, while adaptive dance programs help individuals build strength, flexibility and range of motion.

There are multiple national organizations devoted to the development of recreational activities for individuals with disabilities, including the Kennedy Center's [VSA: The International Association on Arts and Disability](#), the [National Endowment for the Arts's Office for Accessibility](#), and the [National Arts and Disability Center](#) (NADC). Those seeking recreational opportunities within their own communities can find them with their local (city, township, village or state) recreation department. If you live in Michigan, here's an [activities guide for Michigan children with Cerebral Palsy](#). Some parents may be interested in using [meetup.com](#) to find groups and families of children with similar disabilities to make



plans for adaptive family recreation together.

What sorts of activities are available for individuals with disabilities?

Because each person's abilities are unique, some activities may be more suitable for them than others. However, many activities can be modified to make them more accessible. The following is a sample list of activities available for individuals with disabilities, though it is by no means comprehensive.



| | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| Arts and Crafts | Doll-making | Quilting |
| Aquarium and Museum Visits | Drawing, Sketching and Painting | RC Cars, Trucks and Planes |
| Arcade, Board and Card Games | Film and Photography | Reading |
| Beading | Gardening | Restoration |
| Birdwatching | Geocaching | Scrapbooking |
| Calligraphy | Ham Radio | Sequin Art |
| Candle and Soap-making | Hunting and Fishing | Singing |
| Ceramics/Pottery | Karaoke | Snowshoeing (adaptive) |
| Chess | Legos | Sports (adaptive) ; STRIDE |
| Coloring | Model Airplanes and Kits | Storytelling and Creative Writing |
| Collecting | Museum Outings | Therapeutic Horseback Riding |
| Comic Books | Musical and Theater Performance | Tinkering |
| Construction and Woodworking | Papier-mache | Travel |
| Cooking | Photography | Volunteering |
| Diving (adaptive) | Puzzles | Woodworking |

For individuals specifically interested in traveling, there are several excellent websites and resources devoted to the topic of accessible travel, including [Have Wheelchair, Will Travel](#), [Disability Travel](#), the [Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality](#) (SATH), [Flying Wheels Travel](#), and [Travel with the Magic](#).