Universal Design for Play Guidelines

1. THE TOY IS APPEALING *Perceptible Information*	*The design appeals to children's sensory (sound, vision, touch) abilities & preferences .* The design communicates necessary information effectively, regardless of the user's sensory abilities.	Use **multiple modes** (visual, sound and texture) to **highlight access** and **differentiate** responses.	
2. HOW TO PLAY WITH THE TOY IS CLEAR *Simple and Intuitive Use*	*A simple design makes a toy's use easy to understand* regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.	Non-complex**, intuitive designs** are best; e.g. **well defined access areas** with **consistent responses**. Controls should be obvious and accessible.	
3. THE TOY IS EASY TO USE *Equitable Use* *Low Physical Effort*	*All children can use equivalent ways for playing with the toy. Physical effort is minimized.* The design is useful and marketable to children with diverse abilities. The design can be used efficiently and comfortably with a minimum of fatigue.	All children should **use the same/equivalent means of access** when playing with the toy. The **access and output** features of the toy should **appeal to a variety of interests** and needs of all children. Physical effort should be minimized with light to moderate force for operation. A variety of motions can be used to access toys (e.g. bat, press, drop, bang).	
4. THE TOY IS ADJUSTABLE *Flexible Use* *Size and Space for Approach and*	*A variety of actions can be used to play with the toy. It can be used in different positions; the toy can adjust to the child* The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. Appropriate size and space is provided for	Include features for **adaptable range of users**. Output is **varied** e.g. light + sound, vibration + sound, etc. or **output** can be **adjustable**; e.g. volume + light control. Toy can be used in a variety of positions (sitting, standing, playing on the floor or on a supporting surface). Toys	

Use	approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user's body size, posture, or mobility.	with flat bottoms are most stable. Buttons, levers, etc. are positioned appropriately for reach.	
5. THE TOY PROMOTES DEVELOPMENT	*The toy holds a child's interest and encourages exploration and discovery. It is fun!*	The toy encourages **imagination** and **social play**. It promotes **discovering** new ways to play (i.e. cause/effect, building, pretending) and **stimulates** physical or mental activity.	
6. THE TOY CAN BE PLAYED WITH IN DIFFERENT WAYS	*The toy appeals to children at varying developmental levels and abilities. It encourages use for more than one purpose*	Toy appeals to individuals at **varying age + developmental levels.** It is appropriate for several ages. The toy promotes use in more than one way (e.g. bug jar can be a shape bucket, a "pool" for dolls, a "purse" or "tool box".	

The practice of design involves more than consideration of disability. Other considerations include economic, engineering, cultural, gender and environmental concerns. Designers must works to integrate features that meet the needs of as many users as possible.

Adapted from: NC State University, The Center for Universal Designed, an Initiative of the College of Design (1997)

Mistrett & Ruffino, 2006