

CREATION OF AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR SPECIAL NEEDS VISITORS AT THE PRIMORSKY AQUARIUM

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In contemporary society there exists a problem of sociocultural and educational constraints. They result from historically established views and low tolerance for special needs people. In this context various institutions face a serious challenge related to the ways of creating an inclusive environment for such visitors.

By ‘inclusion’ we mean the process of involving special needs individuals in active community life through creating an environment adapted for them and providing them with supportive services.

The Primorsky Aquarium is one of the largest cultural and social facilities in the Russian Far East and has rich and diverse attraction resources, using which one can resolve the stated challenge. Due to this advantage, in October 2019 we could launch the ‘Aquarium for Everyone’ project aimed at special needs visitors. Its goal is to create inclusive conditions for such guests in the course of recreational and awareness raising activities delivered at the Primorsky Aquarium.

The project comprises work in two distinct areas: education and enrichment, with project activities being carried out in groups (themed programs for organized groups of special needs children and programs tailored for visually impaired people of all ages) and individually (programs of educational and enrichment activities for special needs children).

Preliminary analysis of the effectiveness of the ‘Aquarium for Everyone’ project leads us to the conclusion that our work with special needs visitors is proving successful, which offers possibilities for further development of this project at the Primorsky Aquarium.