

# ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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## WHAT IS ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

Adapted/Developmental Physical Education is a diverse delivery system that deals with programs specifically designed to meet the unique needs of individuals. Physical Education is defined as the development of physical and motor fitness, fundamental motor skills, and patterns, aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports).

## WHY DO WE NEED ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

Under the guidelines of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the implications for physical education are:

Physical education services, specially designed if necessary, must be made available to EVERY child with a disability receiving a free appropriate public education.

Each child with a disability must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to children without disabilities, unless the child needs specially designed physical education as prescribed in the child's individualized educational program.

## GOALS OF ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The goals for physical education are the same whether the program is adapted for students who have disabilities or is delivered in a standard way for those who are not. These goals can be grouped into two areas:

1. To improve motor skills and develop a higher level of physical fitness, and
2. To increase social and emotional development.

Even if students with disabilities are unable to develop as high a level of physical fitness as students without disabilities, they can improve their fitness through regular participation in activities that are designed to meet their own individual needs and are matched to their level of ability.

Although PE goals are the same for all students, those developed for students who have disabilities must be individualized for them in the same way that rest of their educational goals are. This means that the amount of improvement in physical fitness, motor skills and social and emotional skills expected of them is based on their current level of functioning and rate of change. Growth in social and emotional skills particularly is dependent on the student having the opportunity to learn how to play with other children, to experience success and a sense of accomplishment. For some students with disabilities, the sense of accomplishment and self-worth that comes with being on a winning relay team may be unavailable from any other source, and although these things are not easily measured, their pursuit should not be abandoned. PE activities for students with disabilities, whether conducted in a special class or a regular PE class, should be selected to meet one or more of the following goals:

- ✓ to increase physical fitness
- ✓ to develop abilities in basic motor and sports skills
- ✓ to increase understanding of personal limitations while emphasizing strengths
- ✓ to develop feelings of self-worth
- ✓ to develop knowledge and appreciation of physical activity and games
- ✓ to improve lifetime leisure activities
- ✓ to improve spectator skills through knowledge of rules and strategies
- ✓ to increase opportunities to experience the joy of active interaction with peers

The Adapted Physical Education Specialist collaborates with regular PE teachers, para professionals, case managers, and therapists to ensure that children with different abilities can participate in and access the PE curriculum. Adaptive materials and equipment and a modified curriculum may be used depending on the needs of the student.