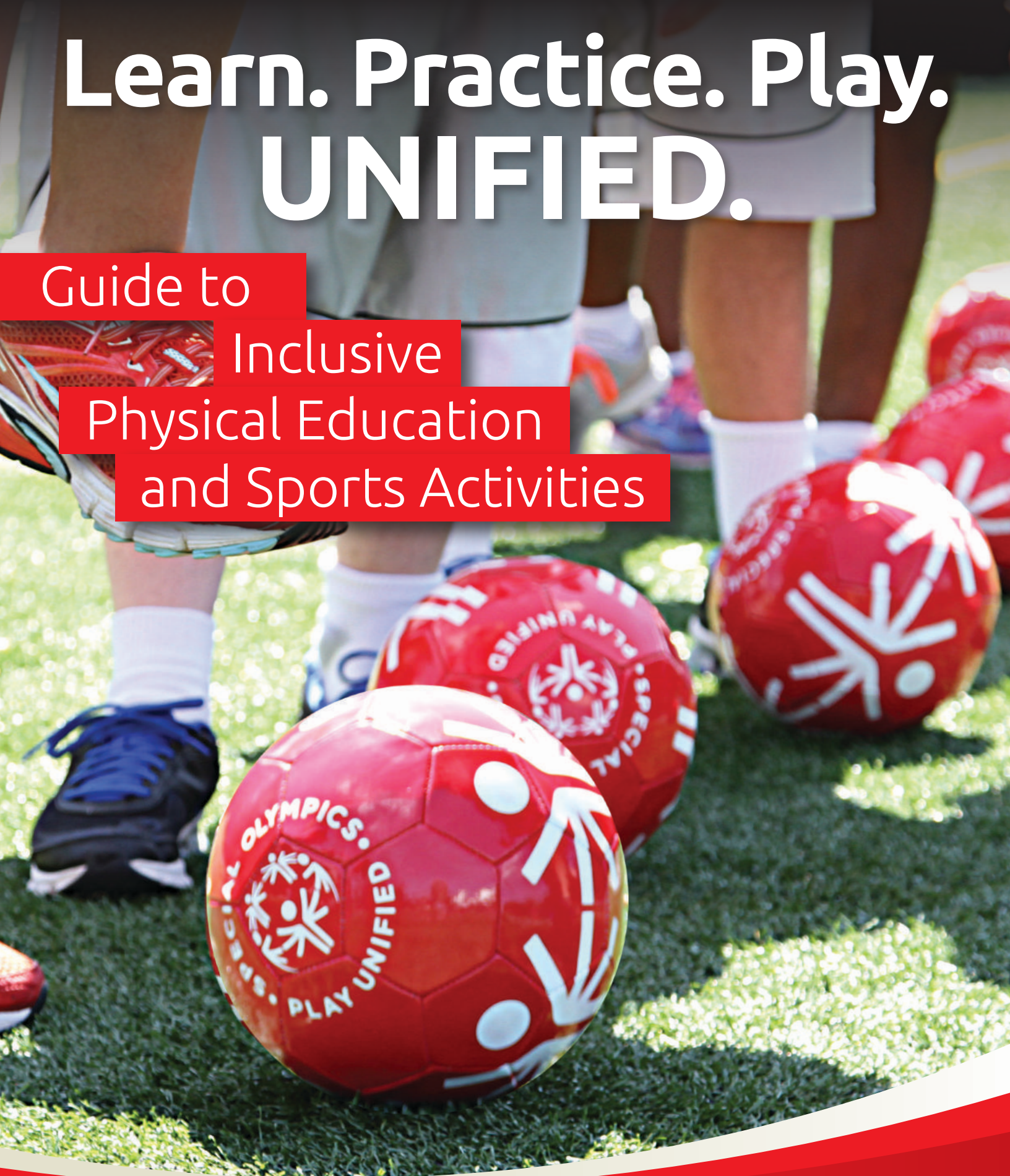


# Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.

## Guide to Inclusive Physical Education and Sports Activities



# LEARN. PRACTICE. PLAY. UNIFIED.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CREDITS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	4
<b>FOREWORD:</b> David C. Hespe, Commissioner of Education, State of New Jersey Department of Education .....	5
<b>LETTER OF ENDORSEMENT:</b> Jackie Malaska, Executive Director, New Jersey Association of Health Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NJAPERD) .....	6
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	7
<b>THE GOAL</b> .....	8
<b>HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE</b> .....	9
<b>PART ONE: LEARN</b> .....	10
<b>I. WHAT IS INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> .....	11
Peer to Peer: Everyone's a Player, Everyone's a Leader .....	11
<b>II. THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> .....	12
Benefits for Students with Disabilities .....	12
Benefits for Students without Disabilities .....	13
<b>III. THE LAWS SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY</b> .....	16
New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education .....	18
<b>IV. INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION: PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS</b> .....	19
<b>V. THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM AND INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> .....	22
<b>VI. BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> .....	26
<b>VII. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> .....	29
Providing Appropriate Modifications for Success .....	29
Peer to Peer Teaching: Peer Partners of Different Abilities Teach and Learn Together .....	31
Identifying Peer Partners .....	32
Promoting Appropriate Learning Behavior .....	34
<b>VIII. SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES</b> .....	36
Communication Is The Key .....	37
Paraeducators in the Physical Education Class .....	42
<b>IX. TEACHER SUPPORTS FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b> .....	43



<b>PART TWO: PRACTICE</b>	44
<b>I. FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENTS</b>	47
<b>MANIPULATIVE SKILLS</b>	49
(Throw, Underhand Roll, Catch, Kick, Bounce/Dribble, Strike with Hands or an Implement)	
<b>BALANCE</b>	64
(Static, Dynamic)	
<b>LOCOMOTOR SKILLS</b>	68
(Walk, Run, Gallop, Hop, Jump, Slide, Skip, Leap)	
<b>II. SPORTS SKILL DEVELOPMENT</b>	86
<b>SOCCER</b>	87
(Dribbling, Shooting, Control & Receiving, Passing, Goalkeeping)	
<b>BASKETBALL</b>	103
(Passing & Catching, Dribbling, Shooting, Rebounding)	
<b>TRACK &amp; FIELD</b>	114
(Running Basics, Starts, Sprinting, Relays, Long Jump, Turbo Jav, Softball Throw, Shot Put)	
<b>PART THREE: PLAY</b>	154
<b>I. SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS® – THREE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION</b>	155
<b>II. SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRAINING AND COMPETITION PROGRAM</b>	159
<b>III. PLAY UNIFIED CLUB VS. SONJ TRAINING AND COMPETITION</b>	160
<b>IV. PLAY UNIFIED IN SCHOOL</b>	161
<b>V. UNIFIED GAME DAY</b>	163
<b>VI. PLAY UNIFIED IN THE COMMUNITY</b>	164
<b>VII. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND UNIFIED SPORTS COACHING</b>	165
<b>PART FOUR: RESOURCES</b>	166
<b>I. WORKS CITED</b>	166
<b>II. LEGISLATION CITED</b>	166
<b>III. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</b>	167
<b>IV. SPECIAL OLYMPICS RESEARCH OVERVIEW</b>	174



## WRITTEN BY:

**Susan Carucio Colacello**, Special Olympics New Jersey

**Theresa Purcell Cone, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Department of Health and Exercise Science, Rowan University

**Andrea Moore**, Special Olympics New Jersey

## Credits and Acknowledgements

We are very grateful to those individuals who provided content, direction and support in creating this resource.

## CONTRIBUTORS:

**Melissa Alexander**, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Exercise Science and Physical Education, Montclair State University

**Ellen Anderson**, PT, MA, GCS, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy, Rutgers School of Health Related Professions and co-creator of Special Olympics Young Athletes™

**Gary Cimaglia**, Special Olympics Delaware

**Diane Glover**, Adapted Physical Education Specialist

**Brian Gould**, West Windsor-Plainsboro High School North

**Christopher Petrone**, West Windsor-Plainsboro School District

**Brett Scully**, Washington Park School

**Katelyn Sheridan**, Special Olympics New Jersey

**John Smith**, FlagHouse Inc.

**Erin Wolverton**, Hamilton West High School

## SPECIAL THANKS TO:

### State of New Jersey Department of Education

**David C. Hespe**, Commissioner of Education

**Peggy McDonald**, Executive Director, Office of Special Education Programs

**Brendan O'Reilly**, Coordinator, Comprehensive Health and Physical Education

**Sandra Peth**, Education Program Development Specialist

### Special Olympics North America

**Andrea L. Cahn**, Senior Director, Unified Strategy for Schools Special Olympics, Inc.

**Brian Quinn**, Manager of Youth Education & Unified Sports® Special Olympics, Inc.

### Special Olympics New Jersey

**Heather Andersen**, President and CEO

**Carmen Bannon**, Chief Program Development Officer

**Kalee Baker, Andrea Bradley, Melanie Guntner, Todd Shellock**

## PHOTOGRAPHY

Frank H. Conlon Photography

Heather O'Connell Photography

Ron Wyatt Photography

TriState Media Productions

And courtesy of

Carol Teeter

Special Olympics New Jersey and  
Special Olympics Delaware volunteers

Washington Township Public Schools

Special Olympics International



## FOREWORD

By

David C. Hespe

Commissioner of Education, State of New Jersey

The Department of Education takes pride in the relationship it has developed with Special Olympics New Jersey (SONJ), the organization that has done such phenomenal work with students with disabilities and their peers over the years, most recently with the development of its Unified Sports model. SONJ has been the driving force behind the inclusive physical education movement in New Jersey and a key partner with the Department and those districts in the forefront of this programming. It is broadly accepted among educators that organized physical activities, including competitive athletics, are important for physical well-being, emotional health, and social development of the general student population. The value of organized physical activities for students with a wide range of physical and developmental disabilities has also been a guiding principle for many practitioners in special education. The benefits are many, including those impacting the general population, but extend to cognitive development, building self-esteem and other factors noted in the pages that follow.

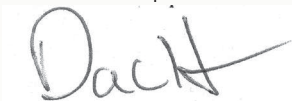
What is perhaps not as well understood, even by many in the field, is the subject of this population – a unified, inclusive approach that brings those with and those without disabilities together on the same playing fields. Individuals without disabilities are not there as coaches or mentors – although those opportunities may present themselves – but as equal participants. The result of this type of activity is beneficial for all participants. While the value of physical activity for all students is recognized by educators, parents and the community, this integrated approach and how it can be implemented is not widely known. SONJ has developed this guide to provide strategies and steps to initiate integrated physical education programs in schools along with examples of successful programs operating in our State.

In response to Governor Chris Christie’s signing into law, the Equity in Sports and Physical Activity Act (P.L. 2014, Chapter 10) in June 2014, SONJ has resolved to support individual school districts throughout the State in developing and implementing sustainable inclusive physical education, sports, and fitness programs. I applaud this initiative by SONJ and by the districts stepping up to take advantage of it.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to those who have collaborated in developing the principles and strategies presented in this publication, including collegiate faculty and other researchers, K-12 teachers, coordinators, students, and parents. Hopefully, this guide will generate interest and enhance the ability of districts to implement their own inclusive physical education programs.

Every student deserves a genuine opportunity to experience and successfully participate as an equal member of a team. I encourage you to use this guide in your schools to develop physical education opportunities that are inclusive and adhere to the vision of the Special Olympics Unified Sports® program, “Play Unified. Live Unified.”

David C. Hespe



Commissioner of Education

State of New Jersey



# NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION FOR HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION AND DANCE

**Affiliated with Society of Health and Physical Educators/America  
and the New Jersey Education Association**

The New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NJAPERD) is pleased to endorse the **Special Olympics New Jersey's Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED. Guide to Inclusive Physical Education and Sports Activities**, as a valuable resource for all physical education professionals. This manual provides educators with the strategies and information needed to ensure success for all students. A quality physical education program addresses the learning styles of every student and ensures that every student is included, accepted and respected. All students have equal opportunities to learn skills, increase their fitness level, and participate in physical activities with others. This resource will contribute to the professional development of educators to help them design meaningful, learning experiences that recognize each student's abilities and help every student set goals that foster a healthy, active lifestyle.

NJAPERD values equality and access for all students, not only in the health and physical education program but in all sports, intramurals, interscholastic sports, and recreational activities. As an organization, our goal is to provide the highest level of professional development to assist educators meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Health and Physical Education and this resource is a welcome addition that will make a difference for all New Jersey's students.

***Jackie Malaska***

Executive Director

New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance



# INTRODUCTION

## *Play Unified. Live Unified.*

The transformative power of sports to change lives is at the core of the Special Olympics Movement. Through the power and joy of sports, environments of acceptance, respect and inclusion are created. Sports and play break down the traditional barriers that keep people apart by opening hearts and minds, and changing behaviors through shared, meaningful acts of sportsmanship, accomplishment, community and friendship.

For many young people, physical education class is the first introduction to sports and physical activity. **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** *Guide to Inclusive Physical Education and Sports Activities* provides inclusive teaching strategies to support educators in ensuring that all students have access

**Special Olympics Unified Sports®** joins people with and without disabilities together as teammates, each one a meaningful and equal part of the same team. It is inspired by the simple principle that training, playing and competing together leads to understanding, acceptance and friendship on and off the playing field.

**Together, Unified players not only strengthen their fitness, improve their sports skills and develop social skills, they challenge existing stereotypes about people with intellectual disabilities, and demonstrate to all that we are more alike than different. In schools, inclusive sports and physical activities level the playing field. They provide opportunity and access for those who would otherwise sit on the sidelines. They create welcoming communities where all students are invited to play and empowered to reach their full potential.**



to a quality physical education experience, and a road map for extending this model to create inclusive sports and recreational activities in the school community.

The real Special Olympics sports experience is one in which people of all abilities lead healthy, vibrant lives, grounded in ongoing sports and physical activity, sound nutrition, and a deeply held conviction to improve, compete, achieve and demonstrate their personal best to themselves and their community. Special Olympics focuses on what athletes CAN do by taking the focus off disability and revealing each individual's unique abilities, opening the door to unimagined potential and possibilities for all.

Special Olympics New Jersey believes that for every student this path to sports and social inclusion begins with a purposeful, meaningful and rewarding Inclusive Physical Education experience. Special Olympics New Jersey is committed to ensuring that every child has equal opportunities to participate safely and successfully in physical education, athletic, co-curricular and recreational activities. We believe that all young people can and should graduate school with the knowledge, fitness, skills and attitudes needed to lead active, healthy, fulfilled lives.



## THE GOAL

The goal for all students in New Jersey's schools is to be afforded equality, access, opportunity, respect and acceptance. Special Olympics New Jersey's **Play Unified School Partnership Program** begins with a school's commitment to ensuring that all students, throughout the course of their development, participate in physical education and activity that promotes learning, achievement and enjoyment.

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED. Guide to Inclusive Physical Education and Sports Activities** draws on Special Olympics' longstanding expertise in sports training and competition, accessible sports coaching, promoting inclusive schools and communities, and advocating for individuals with disabilities to provide educators with the tools to meet this goal. The resource employs Special Olympics Unified Sports® strategies for use in an Inclusive Physical Education program to assist educators in bringing students with and without disabilities together to learn the skills and knowledge needed to participate successfully in sports and fitness programs in their schools and communities. It applies the Unified Sports model of three levels of participation (player development, recreation and competitive) to create inclusive sports and physical activity opportunities across the spectrum of skill level and ability that provide a variety of participation options for all students.

## From PE to the Playing Field

Special Olympics Unified Sports® strategy places a quality Inclusive Physical Education program at the core of a successful inclusive sports program and socially inclusive school culture.

**The goals of this resource are to:**

- **Support educators** in delivering accessible, achievable and, most importantly, fun learning experiences to all students so they are successful in physical education and also seek opportunities to stay active in school and in the community.
- **Enable schools to utilize the strategies** and engage the Unified peers cultivated in the Inclusive Physical Education classes to create a fully inclusive program of co-curricular, and interscholastic social and athletic offerings accessible to all students.

## Every Student Enjoys Physical Education

The primary goal for physical education is to cultivate in students the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation to lead healthy, active lives. It is important to remember that physical education, unlike athletics, is a requirement for all students, and so all are legally entitled to the opportunity to learn and enjoy the benefits of health and physical education based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education. Therefore, schools and physical education teachers are committed to delivering universally designed instruction that provides access and ensures successful outcomes for every student, even though the outcomes may be quite different. For some students, it may be making a college soccer team; for others, gaining the confidence to jump onto the court at recess; for others, understanding the importance of riding a bike or taking a walk every day.



Through the power of sports, people with intellectual disabilities discover new strengths and abilities, skills and success. Our athletes find joy, confidence and fulfillment – on the playing field and in life. They also inspire people in their communities and elsewhere to open their hearts to a wider world of human talents and potential.



# HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** is designed to provide inclusive and adaptive teaching strategies for making early childhood fundamental motor movement, physical education and sports programs accessible to children of all abilities, from Pre-K through high school and beyond, by integrating the variety of sport and education programs that Special Olympics offers into one comprehensive framework. The focus is on providing opportunities for all students to reach their personal best and experience the joy that comes from sport and physical activity.

## Two Volumes

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** reflects Special Olympics' commitment to providing opportunities for participation and inclusion for a lifetime. The resource includes two companion volumes, each with three parts. They are designed to provide a continuum of strategies and activities that support individualized instruction, enabling all students to participate at their own level in order to develop confidence and experience success.

- **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED. Guide to Inclusive Gross Motor Education and Play** focuses on gross motor skill development through structured and unstructured play strategies for Pre-K students.
- **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED. Guide to Inclusive Physical Education and Sports Activities** focuses on fundamental and sports specific skill development, and opportunities to apply those skills to game play in school and the community, for students from elementary through high school and beyond.

## Each book includes three sections:

- **Learn:** Special education information, instructional strategies and best practices for inclusion and differentiated instruction for teaching Inclusive Physical Education.
- **Practice:** Activities and drills with suggested tips for modifications and adaptations, and tools for observing students' ability levels.
- **Play. UNIFIED:** Suggestions for creating co-curricular, interscholastic and community based opportunities for students at all ability levels to apply skills learned in physical education to participation in recreational and competitive game play activities.

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** presents skills in a scaffolding approach that is based upon ongoing observation and assessment to determine students levels of progress and success.



### It includes:

- A framework for defining the characteristics of a high quality Inclusive Physical Education program,
- A practical resource to assist physical education teachers and other educators in meeting the unique needs of their students with different abilities,
- Strategies for collaboration among physical education teachers, special services, general education and other school personnel to understand and meet the needs of each student, and
- Activities and drills with suggested tips, modifications and adaptations, and tools for informal assessment of progress.







# Part One: Learn

"Inclusion is a philosophy that asserts all individuals, regardless of ability, should participate within the same environment with necessary support and individualized attention. Inclusion is more than simply placing individuals together, it's a belief that all individuals belong and are valued."

(Kasser & Lytle, 2005, p. 5).



# WHAT IS INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

## Educational Equity and Access for All Students

A defining characteristic of an excellent physical education program is that it includes students with a diverse range of abilities, needs, interests and learning styles in meaningful learning experiences. The term “Inclusive Physical Education” reflects a program where respect and acceptance of all students, specifically students with disabilities, is an essential component of the classroom environment and teaching strategies.

Inclusion is about creating a classroom in which every student is welcomed, valued, respected and enabled to reach her full potential. In a successful Inclusive Physical Education program, all students are fully engaged in instructional activities, sharing equally and learning together. Although the activities may be modified or adapted, students with disabilities learn the same concepts, skills and content as all other students in the class. The result is educational equity and access for all students!

Inclusive Physical Education requires educators to believe in the concept that success for each student can be different. **The educator must be willing to modify and adapt lessons and activities to ensure that every student learns and achieves success at his own pace and according to his own abilities.** Educators see the abilities of all students as contributing to the whole class. Effective teaching for students with disabilities is basically the same as effective teaching for all students.

## PEER TO PEER: EVERYONE’S A PLAYER, EVERYONE’S A LEADER

Special Olympics believes in the power of sport and in the power of young people to build a more inclusive world. In a high quality Inclusive Physical Education classroom students recognize their abilities to create inclusive communities as they learn to value difference and appreciate each individual’s unique gifts and talents.

Peer to peer teaching is a fundamental strategy for implementing successful Inclusive Physical Education programs, but it is important that it be implemented in a truly inclusive manner and grounded in equality.

**An inclusive peer to peer teaching model provides opportunities for students of all abilities to participate as leaders in some way, reinforcing and confirming the potential of every student to lead and contribute meaningfully.**

**Sharing the same space is not inclusion. Inclusion is about building a community of learners; it is about sharing everything else!**

In an adaptive or general physical education class, peers without disabilities are often asked to “serve” or “help” with multifold benefits for all. In an Inclusive Physical Education class, peer “partners” are not seen as “helpers,” but as classmates and teammates. Students without disabilities can take a leadership role and support students who need assistance with skills as mentors, but in a non-hierarchical environment of equality, where they know that they can learn from those students as well. In turn, students with special needs are provided with opportunities to lead exercises and support their peers in learning and play. Therefore, in an authentically inclusive environment, all students can be peer “partners,” sharing reciprocal roles as mentors and teammates. These peer partners become classmates and friends and model this authentic inclusion throughout the school in other classrooms and programs. They become catalysts and ambassadors for social inclusion, and it all starts in physical education.



**“Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit into the systems and structures which exist in our societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone. Inclusion is about creating a better world for everyone.”**

**Diane Richler, Past President, Inclusion International (“Inclusion”, n.d.)**



# THE BENEFITS OF INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Access to physical education, physical activity and sports programs is essential as students with disabilities grow and develop in their early years and move through their transition years to prepare for independent living. The social experiences, motor skills, fitness, confidence, healthy lifestyle habits and emotional well-being fostered through participation in physical activity, sports and co-curricular programs contribute greatly to independent living and success in the community and workplace.

Students with disabilities often experience difficulty gaining access to the same opportunities to participate in sports and physical activity as their peers. This inequity limits their ability to acquire core developmental skills, knowledge and experiences that contribute to building their personal pathway to a healthy, active lifestyle. A fully inclusive physical education program is the first place to start to create equality. While supporting the needs of students with disabilities, educators also enhance the educational and social experiences for others, ensuring that every student is prepared to participate in and enjoy sport and fitness for life.

## BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- **Improve motor skills.** Through increased opportunities to learn, practice and apply skills, students achieve the essential motor patterns for fitness and sport participation. When provided with meaningful feedback, they learn to make changes in skill and game play performance and gain success. They also gain motor skills to participate in recreational activities in and outside of school.
- **Learn cognitive concepts related to game play.** As students gain experience in game play they learn about what happens after a goal is scored or when to pass a ball to their teammates. They learn what to do when the ball goes out of bounds or that their team's goal switches at halftime, among other rules that apply to participating in a game.
- **Improve health related fitness levels.** Active participation in learning sport skills requires students to be engaged in higher levels of movement and repetition that result in gaining strength, endurance and flexibility. They also gain skills to participate in recreational activities in and outside of school that require a basic level of fitness.
- **Develop communication skills.** Because the students are participating in classes that promote acceptance and understanding, they interact with peers who are active listeners and willing to engage in reciprocal conversation about ideas, interests, experiences and feelings. As students greet each other, they ask about how they are doing or congratulate each other after a great play.
- **Foster a sense of belonging and being valued by others.** Motivation to engage in learning is increased when students believe they belong to a group. The opportunity to participate with same-age peers is recognized and valued. Their peers serve as role models for skill development, game play and positive behaviors, and include them in the greater school community.
- **Build confidence and self-esteem.** When students have opportunities for decision making they gain a feeling that they can contribute to the group or team. As team members, they see their position on the team as important to achieving a shared goal which fosters a sense of self-assuredness and self-identity. This gain in confidence can transfer to other academic and social settings.
- **Make friends and increase positive social interactions.** As students spend time together, they share information about things they like and dislike. They explore common experiences about learning and playing sports, and learn to support each other and have fun together. This opportunity for social inclusion on the playing field extends to interactions off the field like stopping one another in the hallway or cafeteria to talk about the things they've discovered they have in common. Students become connected to the school community and gain a sense of belonging.



**"Play. Unified. betters both the kids with disabilities and kids without disabilities because it gives the kids social interaction skills and teaches us respect. It's an amazing opportunity and I love to do it!"**

**Ashley, Unified Partner  
Hamilton West High School, Hamilton,  
New Jersey**

## **BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT DISABILITIES**

- **Improve fitness and skill levels.** Students without disabilities practice and improve their own skills and fitness levels through the additional skill development, practice and game play opportunities they receive as a peer partner.
- **Increase their understanding of different abilities.** Students learn that everyone has capabilities and that with small modifications everyone can participate. Inclusive practice and game play reveal how teams acknowledge each individual player's strengths and use one another's abilities to be successful.
- **Learn strategies for communication and how to help another student achieve success.** Through ongoing and informal interactions, students develop an appreciation and respect for peers with challenges, such as communication, speech and language, cognition and mobility. They learn to recognize when another student could use some help and feel empowered and comfortable jumping in. Students develop new communication skills and gain experiences that reduce their fears, and encourage interactions outside of physical education.
- **Develop friendships.** Through sharing time together, students get to know more about each other and discover common interests that lead to ongoing friendships in and out of the school environment.
- **Respect and value each individual.** Students without disabilities see all students as leaders, contributors and confident players. They learn to treat all students equally. They respect each other's unique talents and abilities and understand they are each necessary to the success of the group.
- **Gain an understanding that they are all more alike than different.** Through informal social interactions among teammates, students see that young people of all abilities and interests love to learn, be challenged and compete in a variety of activities.
- **Become advocates in their school.** Acceptance and respect is promoted by and for students who speak up about creating a more inclusive school community. They educate others on being open to seeing each person's abilities, assets and contributions, they become leaders in the school and ambassadors for equality, access and opportunity for all students.







## PLAY UNIFIED. LIVE UNIFIED.

Special Olympics implements a collaboration strategy with schools and communities to engage young people with and without intellectual disabilities, bringing them together to become leaders for inclusion. Through a combination of youth leadership, Special Olympics Unified Sports® or inclusive sports, and whole school engagement, the strategy breaks down barriers creating more welcome school environments through social inclusion.

Project UNIFY, a collaboration between Special Olympics and the United States Department of Education was launched in 2008 and has been the genesis of this Play Unified. Live Unified. Movement. This strategic grant program includes schools in 45 states, including New Jersey. Since 2008, the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston has carried out an extensive evaluation of Special Olympics Project UNIFY®. Below are responses from students involved (including Unified Sports activities and Inclusive Physical Education) from the Project UNIFY Year 6 Final Evaluation Report 2013 – 2014.

General response: students have opportunities to develop skills in a wide range of areas, and feel they are impacted on a personal level by their involvement in the program.

The students polled reported:

- 89% - learned about helping others
- 81% - changed their school for the better
- 87% - standing up for something they believed was right
- 81% - afforded the opportunity to develop leadership skills and learned about the challenges of being a leader
- 84% - became better at sharing responsibility

**Three quarters of students (76%) reported that participation in Special Olympics Project UNIFY® had an impact on their plans for the future. In fact, students generally (84%) regarded Project UNIFY as a positive turning point in their lives.**

*(Jacobs, Martin, Albert, Summerill, & Siperstein, n.d.)*



# STUDENT BENEFITS FROM PARTICIPATION IN INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Washington Park School

### Brett Scully, Physical Education Teacher, Special Olympics Play Unified Adviser

- **For Students with Disabilities** – Students with disabilities gain an enormous amount of confidence from Unified play. They are no longer a person with a disability, but rather an athlete who is involved in an activity. Students who participate are more likely to become involved in other activities. Students with behavior issues are also more likely to exhibit fewer behaviors while being involved in a non-restrictive setting. Students gaining this confidence and experience are also considered to be a part of the school community.
- **For Peer Teachers and Partners** – Unified partners gain an understanding of what tolerance is. They are able to identify with students with disabilities and gain knowledge about how to deal with different situations in life. Most partners have no idea what they are getting into until they are involved. The experiences they receive are usually life changing. As children and young adults, they are learning skills to communicate, problem-solve, be resourceful and be empathetic – all parts of life these students will need. If not for programs like this, students may never be exposed to different situations that will eventually lead to their becoming leaders. Many of the students who are involved in these programs are not the students one would typically think of as leaders. Through these programs all students can learn and progress to be leaders.
- **For Our School** – The school community benefits through awareness. Many times students with disabilities are restricted to a certain setting. Having these students involved in various school wide activities allows everyone in the school to realize that there are more students than just the “normal” population. With this realization both teachers and students tend to have more awareness of all people. There is not just awareness of students with disabilities, but also awareness of each and every student. Students realize that everyone is different, everyone has needs and everyone has a contribution to make. This realization has an astounding effect on how students treat each other in everyday situations.







*Team New Jersey Unified Soccer athletes join Senator Steve Sweeney and Special Olympics International leaders as Governor Christie signs the New Jersey Equity in Athletics and Physical Activity Legislation on June 19, 2014.*

## THE LAWS SUPPORTING EDUCATIONAL EQUALITY

### New Jersey Equity in Athletics and Physical Activity

On June 19, 2014, Governor Chris Christie signed into law P.L. 2014, Chapter 10. These statutes require that school districts provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to: participate in physical education programs; participate in classroom activities involving physical activity; and to try out for and, if selected, participate in athletic programs in an integrated manner to the maximum extent appropriate. The only exceptions to the requirement are if there is a health or safety risk to the student or others, or if the student's participation would "fundamentally alter the program" in accordance with the definition of that term in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The stated goal of this law is educational equality and access for students with disabilities. N.J.S.A. 18A:11-35 through 18A:11-3.8, An Act concerning athletic activities of students with disabilities, P.L. 2014, c.10. New Jersey now joins other states as a leader in promoting inclusion and acceptance for students with disabilities through inclusive physical fitness and sports programs. N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5; 18A:35-7; and 18A:35-8. See

also, N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1vi. New Jersey State Legislature, 2014, Reference Bill A3152 ("Chapter 10", n.d.).

### Rosa's Law

Rosa's Law removes the terms "mental retardation" and "mentally retarded" from federal health, education and labor laws and replaces them with people first language "individual with a disability" and "intellectual disability." ("Rosa's Law", 2015.) It is named after Rosa Marcellino, a young girl from Maryland who has Down syndrome and inspired her siblings and parents to fight to eliminate the "R-word". Rosa's Law amends language used in the Higher Education Act of 1965, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Public Health Service Act, the Health Professions Education Partnerships Act of 1998, the National Sickle Cell Anemia Act, Cooley's Anemia, Tay-Sachs, and Genetic Diseases Act, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, and other federal enactments and regulations. Known as S.2781, the bill was signed into law by President Barack Obama on October 5, 2010 ("Civic Impulse", 2015).



In New Jersey, on August 16, 2010, Governor Chris Christie signed a law eliminating references to “mental retardation,” “mentally retarded” and “feeble-minded” in all future state statutes and legislation. The law requires that these terms be replaced by the terms “intellectual disability” or “developmental disability” (“Chapter 50”, 2010).

## Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA)

The IDEA defines “special education” as including instruction on physical education. See 20 U.S.C. §1401(29). The IDEA’s implementing regulations, at 34 C.F.R. §300.108, mandate that physical education services be made available to students with disabilities unless applicable state law does not require such services for students without disabilities in the same grades as individual students with disabilities. IDEA Part B, Secs. 300.108, 300.34, 300.39, (<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>). In New Jersey, students with disabilities, in accordance with the statutes above, must receive 150 minutes (or a proportionate number in weeks with less than five school days) per week of health and physical education instruction, subject to specific modifications or accommodations set forth in each student’s individualized education program (IEP), but in no case may the 150 minutes be waived for a student with a disability (“Frequently Asked Questions”, 2014).

## Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The IDEA mandates that students with disabilities receive instruction, including instruction in physical education, with nondisabled peers (i.e., in the least restrictive

environment (LRE)). Therefore, unless a student cannot be placed in the general education physical education setting with appropriate curricular or instructional modifications, accommodations, or supplementary aids and services, all students with disabilities should be placed in the general education physical education setting in accordance with State and federal law. See N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.2 and 6A:14-4.3, implementing the requirements of IDEA and its implementing regulations (“Sec. 300.114 LRE Requirements”, n.d.).

## Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its implementing regulations also apply to students with disabilities in public school districts, and mandate that non-academic and co-curricular services and activities be provided in a manner as necessary to provide students with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in such services and activities. For athletics and interscholastic sports, school districts must provide reasonable modifications that are necessary to ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in athletic programs. However, school districts may deny participation in an athletic program when the district shows that the modification would represent a material alteration to the athletic program. An example of a modification that would likely represent a material alteration is adding a fifth base in baseball, which would alter the game such that it would be unacceptable even if all competitors were affected equally (“Section 504”, n.d.).





# NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS FOR COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

With the initial adoption of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards on May 1, 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education recognized Comprehensive Health and Physical Education as essential components of the curriculum for all students in New Jersey for the first time since the inception of the Health, Safety, and Physical Education mandate in 1917. “The adoption of the Comprehensive Health Education and Physical Education

Standards reinforces the state’s continued support for health and physical education as an instructional program designed to foster lifetime wellness. Such a commitment to the field cannot be taken lightly. The Core Curriculum Content Standards articulate a vision of exemplary instructional programs that promote the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of every child” (O’Reilly, 2014).

## NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS FOR COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION INTRODUCTION

**Mission:** Knowledge of health and physical education concepts and skills empowers students to assume lifelong responsibility to develop physical, social, and emotional wellness.

**Vision:** A quality comprehensive health and physical education program fosters a population that:

- Maintains physical, social, and emotional health by practicing healthy behaviors and goal setting.
- Engages in a physically active lifestyle.
- Is knowledgeable about health and wellness and how to access health resources.
- Recognizes the influence of media, technology, and culture in making informed health-related decisions as a consumer of health products and services.
- Practices effective cross-cultural communication, problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution skills.
- Is accepting and respectful of individual and cultural differences.
- Advocates for personal, family, community, and global wellness and is knowledgeable about national and international public health and safety issues.

(New Jersey Core Curriculum, 2014)

## STANDARDS THAT APPLY TO INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Two of the Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards are directly related to the goals and outcomes of Special Olympics’ **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** program and sports initiatives. Below, each Standard is further delineated by components that define the Standard’s content.

**Standard 2.5 Motor Skill Development:** All students will utilize safe, efficient, and effective movement to develop and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

**A. Movement Skills and Concepts – Developing competence and confidence in gross and fine motor skills provides a foundation for participation in physical activities.** In this component, students learn locomotor, non-locomotor and manipulative skills, such as running, jumping, skipping, bending, stretching, twisting, kicking, throwing, catching, striking with a bat or racquet among other movement and sport related skills. Learning these skills are basic to all physical activities, and specifically to sports participation.

**B. Strategy** – This component is focused on understanding teamwork, communication, offensive and defense strategies and knowing how they contribute to successful game play.

**C. Sportsmanship, Rules and Safety** – In this component, students learn how to participate in physical activities and sports with integrity, fairness and as an effective team member. They also learn game rules and how to participate safely.

**Standard 2.6 Fitness:** All students will apply health-related and skill-related fitness concepts and skills to develop and maintain a healthy, active lifestyle.

**A. Fitness and Physical Activity** – Here, students learn about the health related fitness components and how to apply them for a healthy active lifestyle.

Physical education teachers align their curriculum to these Standards, specifically those focused on physical education skills and fitness. In this way, the **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** strategies and activities are directly connected to the components of the New Jersey Core Content Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

These Standards can be found at the State of New Jersey Department of Education website, New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards Comprehensive Health and Physical Education, 2014.



## **INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION: PARTNERS FOR STUDENT SUCCESS**

A successful Inclusive Physical Education program supports a range of participation options designed to provide the best learning environment for each student. Students are initially assessed on their motor skills, fitness levels and learning abilities by their Individual Education Program (IEP) team members and their physical education teacher to develop an instructional plan, and determine the least restrictive environment (LRE) that will provide a safe and successful learning experience.

The least restrictive environment is different for each student, based on learning abilities. For some students, the LRE can be participation in the general physical education class without any modifications or additional supports. Physical education may be the subject area where some students excel and, although they may be classified with a disability, they can be highly skilled and participate equally alongside their classmates. However, there are also students who participate in a general physical education class that need some modification in the form of equipment, additional directions, more time to process information and feedback from a peer partner, paraeducator or the teacher.

## **ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A SERVICE NOT A PLACEMENT**

When a student needs one or more modifications to successfully learn in physical education, the term “Adapted Physical Education” (APE) is used to identify his physical education program. APE can be offered in a variety of environments, ranging from an inclusive general physical education setting to participation in a self-contained physical education class.

The adapted physical education program includes the same concepts, skills and content as the general physical education program, however it applies differentiated instruction, teaching strategies, equipment and assessments specially designed to meet the needs of students with different abilities. Adapted physical education is not a placement. It is a service that must be provided to ensure safe and successful participation. Therefore, a child who is eligible for adapted physical education may receive those services in an Inclusive Physical Education class. For additional information visit [www.apens.org](http://www.apens.org).

In New Jersey, adapted physical education is taught by a certified health and physical education teacher. New Jersey does not require a separate certification in adapted physical education to teach students with disabilities.





## THE GOAL OF PARTICIPATION IN QUALITY INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The goal in providing quality Inclusive Physical Education is to ensure all students, with and without disabilities, experience the mutual benefits of inclusive participation. Students should learn in an environment that meets their abilities and needs, and maximizes the essential opportunities for social, motivational and educational interaction with age appropriate peers, all of which Inclusive Physical Education provides. This decision about environment and placement is made by the Child Study Team (CST), and should always be done in consultation with the physical education teacher.

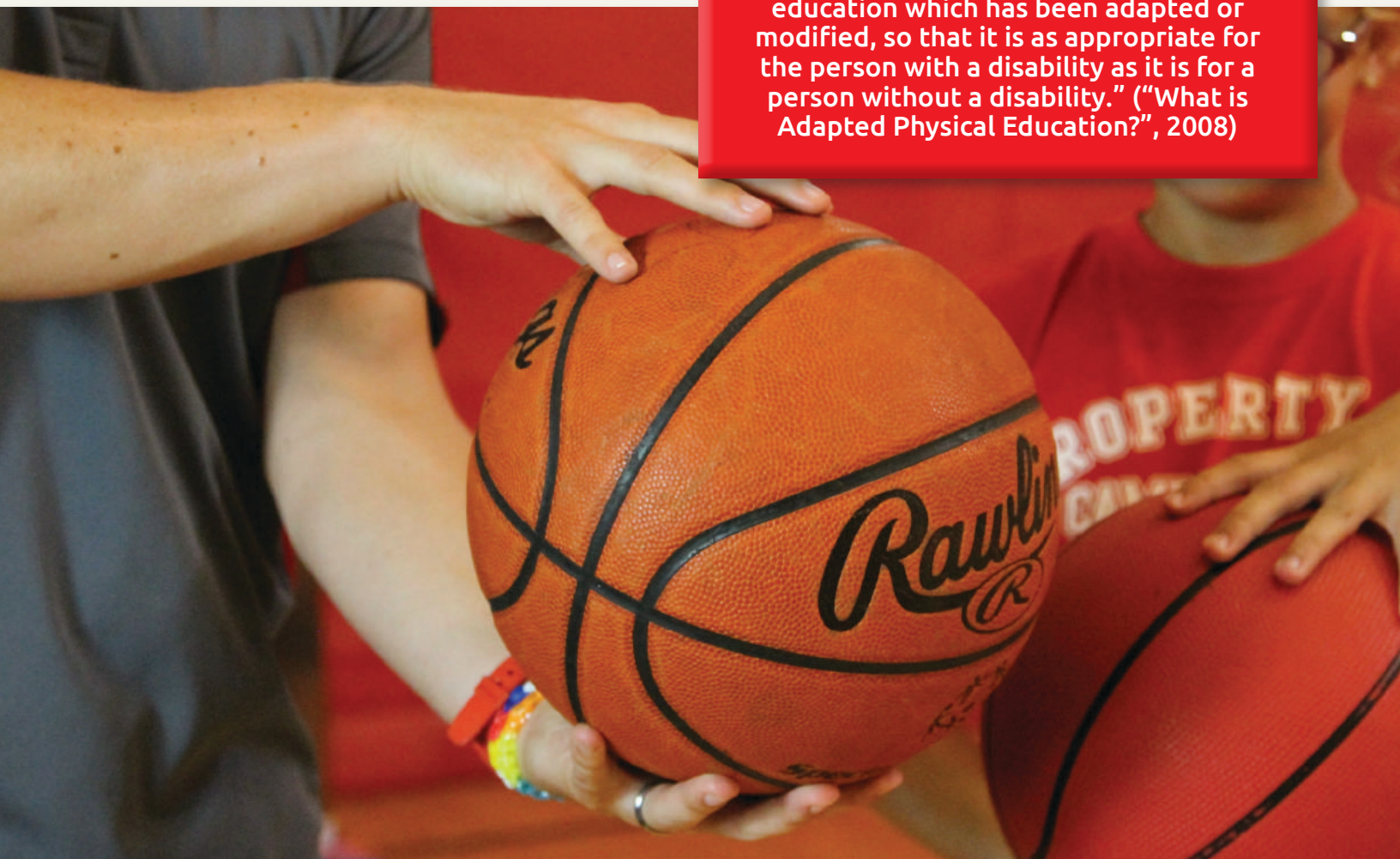
## LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

A quality Inclusive Physical Education program supports a continuum of environments that address each student's specific abilities. This could be self-contained participation, full inclusion and/or participation in a combined environment, with and without supports and modifications. Participation should be viewed as fluid and flexible, where students can move from one environment to another as appropriate.

For example, a student needing adapted physical education may be included in the general physical education class with paraeducator support to help obtain equipment, reinforce directions, assist with transitions and keep the student on task. On another day, this same student may also participate in a small group APE class with more individualized teacher support to focus on specific skill and fitness goals. In this small group, the student benefits from increased individualized instruction. During this session, peer partners may also be invited to join the session as mentors and teammates for the activities.

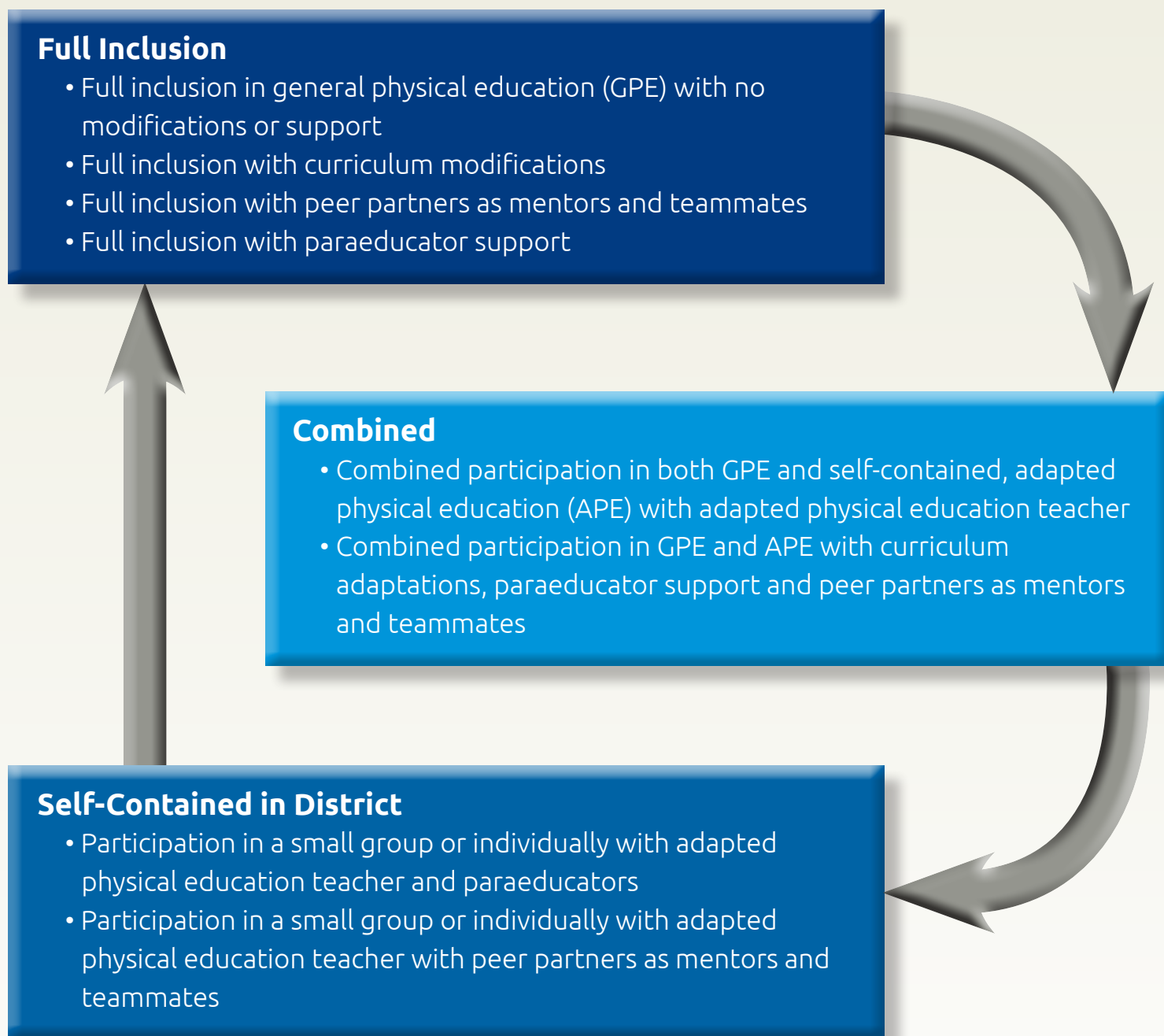
Another option is for a student, or group of students, to participate in a self-contained physical education class. In this class, the paraeducators attend for instructional support and peers may attend as peer partners to provide increased practice and positive feedback. These students participate in a self-contained physical education program because they demonstrate learning needs that require individualized teaching strategies, yet the goal is always to help students, whenever possible, be included in the general physical education program along with age-appropriate typical peers.

**"Adapted Physical Education is physical education which has been adapted or modified, so that it is as appropriate for the person with a disability as it is for a person without a disability." ("What is Adapted Physical Education?", 2008)**





# LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION



**Diagram 1.** In determining the least restrictive environment for participation, options along a continuum of environments, from self-contained to full inclusion, can be combined to address each student's specific abilities and needs. Placement should be viewed as fluid and flexible, where students can move from one environment to another as appropriate.



# THE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM AND INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Every child who receives special education services will have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP is a legal document describing the educational program and related services required to meet a child's individual needs to make academic progress. The IEP has two general purposes: to set reasonable learning goals for a student and to state the services that the school district will provide to that student. Even though a student's IEP may not contain goals and objectives that pertain to physical education, it will still contain essential information that can direct the teacher in developing and implementing individualized educational programs.

## A student must meet two requirements to have an IEP:

- ***Have one or more of the 14 specific categories of disabilities listed in IDEA.*** They include Autism, Deaf-Blindness, Deafness, Developmental Delay, Emotional Disturbance, Hearing Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury and Visual Impairment, including blindness ("Welcome to the U.S. Department of Education", n.d.).
- ***The disability must adversely affect the child's educational performance and/or ability to learn and benefit from the general education curriculum.***

## THE IEP INCLUDES:

### The IEP Team

IEPs are written by the IEP "team" which can include: Child Study Team members, general education teachers, special education teachers, school psychologists, related service providers, such as physical therapists, occupational therapists or speech therapists, parents/guardians, physical education teachers and arts educators or other elective teachers.

Since physical education is a required part of the educational program by law, physical education teachers should be included on the IEP team. Teachers who participate in writing an IEP statement will be asked to assess a student's strengths and areas of need. These annual and ongoing assessments should be used to determine the student's Present Level(s) of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) for physical education. The PLAAFP should be used to establish the student's needs, and guide the design of the instruction and selection of accommodations and modifications required to provide access and success in learning.

**LEARN. PRACTICE. PLAY. UNIFIED.**

## The IEP Meeting

Each student's IEP team meets a minimum of once per year to discuss the student's present abilities, needs for learning in all areas of development, and to revise and update the IEP to reflect ongoing assessments and the student's changing strengths and needs. The IEP may be periodically reviewed if requested by the administrator, educators, Child Study Team or parent/guardian.

## The Document

### Describing the following components:

- **The student's current educational status** or Present Level(s) of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP). The IEP is based on current and accurate information on the student's strengths and needs, including how the child's disability affects her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children). This may or may not include physical development ("Regulations", n.d.).
- **Assessments** should be both functional and academic. Assessments should be used to determine the student's level of performance, to outline how the student learns and to identify the challenges and conditions that impact his learning. Assessments in physical education can include fitness, motor skills, sports skills, participation behaviors and cognitive assessments. The assessment can be a standardized, norm referenced test, a teacher constructed test and/or anecdotal notes.
- **Annual goals and objectives** for specific areas and how they will be measured and implemented. The physical education teacher selects goals that are related to the physical education curriculum.
- **Where the student will receive the services** can include one or a combination of in-class support, individual or small group, or inclusion within the general physical education setting. Also includes who will deliver the services and the frequency of the services.
- **Modifications, accommodations, and supplementary aids and supports** required to meet the student's needs such as assistive technology, equipment modifications, additional time for testing, behavior management plans, one-on-one support or content modifications.
- **Progress reports** that describe how and when progress will be measured and shared. Designates the goals, progress, frequency of reporting and assessment and other information specific to the student.

## Confidential Information

Although the information in an IEP is helpful, it is also confidential. According to the Unified Federation of Teachers (UFT), "The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) allows schools to disclose personally identifiable information in a student's education records, including the student's IEP, to school personnel with "legitimate educational interests" ("Copies of IEP's", n.d.).

While an IEP contains important instructional information that teachers, related service providers, paraeducators and administrators involved in the student's education need to know, it may also contain sensitive personal information about the student that might not be accessible to all. Teachers and related service providers who have access to IEPs must ensure that the student's IEP remains confidential and is not disclosed to other people. Most schools have strict procedures for reviewing an IEP. Consult your special education team, Child Study Team or administrator about access to a student's IEP.

## EXAMPLE of PLAAFP STATEMENT and GOALS

**Static Balance Test:** Ray, a 6 year old student, was able to balance on his right foot for 3 seconds and his left for 2 seconds. On the test scoring rubric he performed at the Low Balance Ability level which is 0-4 seconds for his age level. Ray needed assistance by holding his hand to help him stand on one foot to begin the test.

**Annual Goal:** By the scheduled annual review, Ray will increase his static balance score by 5 seconds on each foot placing him in the Moderate Balance Ability level which is 5-10 seconds without assistance in the beginning of the test.

## Tips for Using the IEP in the Physical Education Program

- In the beginning of the school year ask the school administrator, special education or Child Study Team for access to the IEPs for the students in your classes.
- Meet with the student's classroom teachers, special education or Child Study Team members, and other educators such as the physical therapist, occupational therapist and adapted physical education teacher, to discuss teaching strategies you can apply in your classes.
- Regularly assess student learning to adjust the instruction plan as needed.

## Collaboration Strategies

- **Talk with your administrator** about the importance of your participation in all phases of the IEP process (assessment, team meetings, goal writing and progress reports.)
- **Attend the IEP team meetings** to offer essential information about the student's fitness and skill development, and advocate for modifications to succeed in the curriculum content.
- **Share outcomes from your student assessments** in the areas of motor skills, sports skills and physical fitness so appropriate IEP goals can be written.
- **Share success stories** to keep the other teachers and school administrators informed on how students with disabilities have been successfully included in the general physical education classes and other school clubs and events.
- **Communicate with teachers** who have your students in their classes and ask about behavior plans, communication strategies and tips on how to maintain focus and improve learning.
- **Collaborate with related service professionals** such as the physical therapist, occupational therapist or other professionals who provide services to the student. Ask about strategies, equipment, adaptations, motivators that can be incorporated into the physical education program. If possible invite these professionals to attend a physical education class to offer suggestions for successful inclusion.

## Collaboration with Others

Inclusion for students with disabilities is most effective when educators collaborate to ensure that each student receives an equal opportunity to be involved in all school programs and events. This requires professionals to communicate with each other about the student's needs for involvement and achievement and how they can work together to help the student be successful and fully accepted.



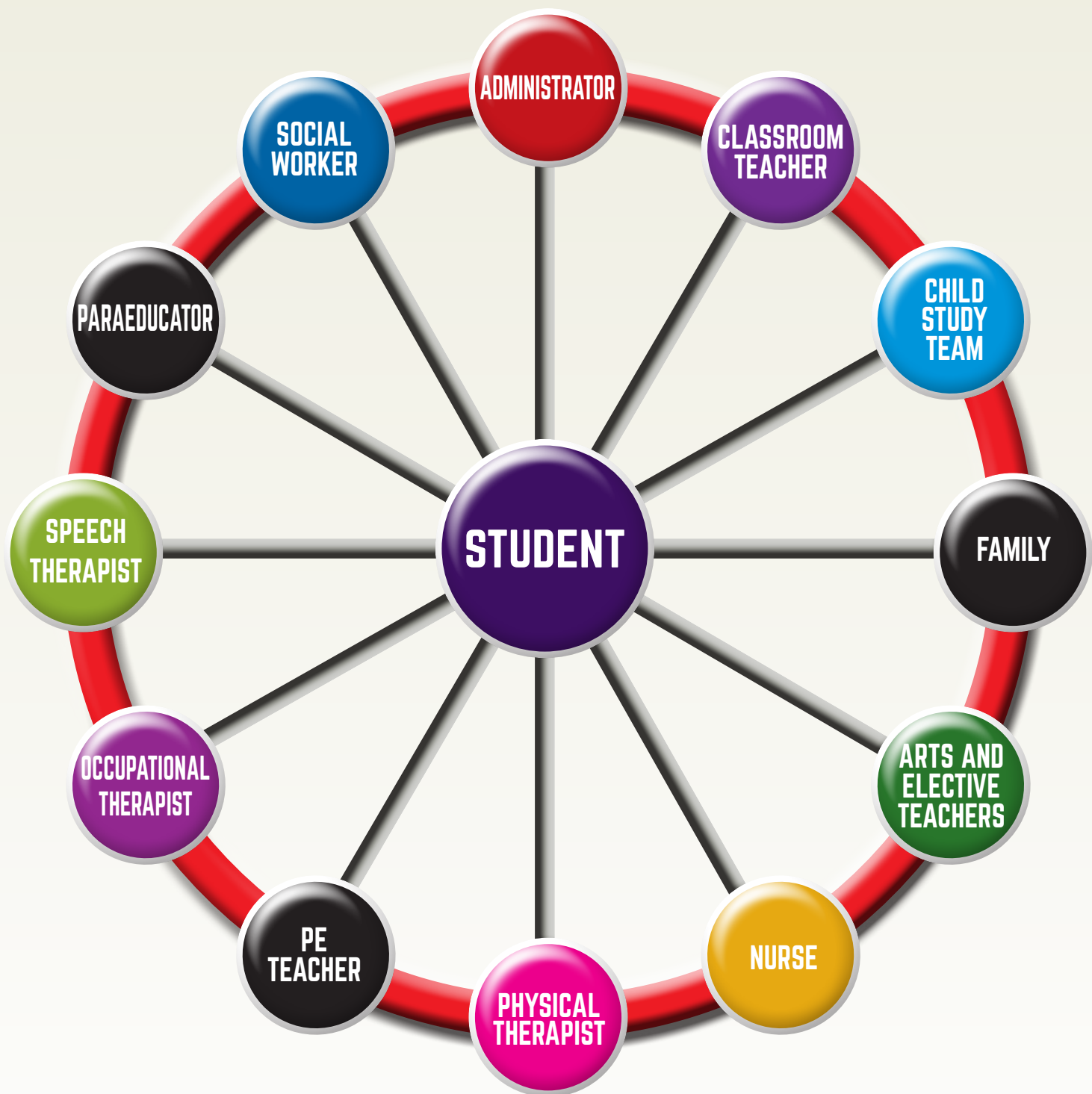


## Know Your Team Members

- **Special education classroom teachers** will be your greatest resource. Ask questions about specific students, their learning styles, their interests, behavior plans and adaptations needed.
- **Child Study Team** members will help with access to IEPs, interpreting goals and required adaptations, getting adaptive and other equipment or modifications you need, and will be your contact with the Special Services Administration.
- **School nurse** will discuss any health issues and limitations that a student might have and possibilities for learning in the physical education class to improve overall health.
- **School social worker/guidance counselor** can offer guidance and strategies on social/emotional, psychological and behavioral issues.
- **Occupational therapist** will help with modifications of equipment, adaptive resources and strategies for teaching and developing gross and fine motor skills.
- **Physical therapist** will help with understanding the physical needs and challenges of students and the selection of adapted equipment, especially for students who require assistance to gain mobility within the physical education setting.
- **Speech therapist** will help you understand the best ways to communicate with students. This might be with one word, small phrases, using a communication book or assistive device, pictures and other techniques.
- **Behavior therapist** will discuss a student's behavior plan. It is very important that you understand how the plan works and who is implementing it. Following the plan is critical to a student's success. If a plan needs to be modified in physical education class, it needs to be discussed and agreed upon first.
- **Administrators** are decision-makers and can be very helpful. Maintain regular communication with all administrators in physical education, special services and your building as needed to ensure they are aware of what you are doing to include students with disabilities. This will enable them to better understand and support you.
- **Parents/guardians** are part of the Child Study Team and know the student best. Whenever possible, communicate with parents/guardians about what their children are doing in class. Send home notes or emails. Encourage practice at home. Parents/guardians can be your best advocates.
- **Other physical education teachers** are an important resource. Set up quarterly meetings to discuss Inclusive Physical Education programs within the school. Discuss what is and isn't working, obstacles and successes. Share ideas on equipment modifications, class organization or support from paraeducators and peers.
- **Your students** are also your teammates. Students with and without disabilities will gladly share what is and isn't working, and have great ideas for making the activities a success for everyone. They have insightful suggestions to modify activities to include all students.
- **Arts/electives/other educators/sports coaches** can offer information from their interactions with the students and observations of the student in an inclusive setting. They may offer a strategy or idea that can help a student to be successfully included in an activity or game.



**Diagram 2.** All staff and administration involved in a student's education program should be considered part of the team to support a PE teacher in delivering a quality Inclusive Physical Education program.







## BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Like all young people, students with disabilities desire the same opportunities to be active, explore their potential, and experience the challenges and rewards of physical activity and competition.

**The goal for high quality Inclusive Physical Education is grounded in Special Olympics Unified Sports® mission to provide meaningful opportunities for people with and without disabilities to play alongside one another, both on and off the playing field.**

In Special Olympics the focus is always on what athletes CAN do. Athletes participate in an inclusive culture that stresses athletic excellence, rewards determination, emphasizes health, and celebrates personal achievement and the power of sport to promote understanding, acceptance and friendship. Athletes are applauded for the courage and bravery they demonstrate in their attempt to reach new goals and break through barriers. Embracing this simple philosophy is the first step to creating a classroom where every student can succeed, be safe and have fun.

**LEARN. PRACTICE. PLAY. UNIFIED.**

## Use the Teaching – Learning Cycle

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** is based on providing a flexible scaffolding of content and skill development that offers opportunities for all students to learn and practice safely, as they progress along a continuum of advancing activities, at their own individual pace and with their own individual goals and outcomes. This involves ongoing assessment to ensure that each student is at the appropriate place on the continuum so he is able to continue to learn and apply skills. A student's learning objectives are individually designed to ensure that instruction is developmentally appropriate and the student achieves success. Students need to master the pre-requisite skills successfully, with consistency and confidence, before adding more challenges and advanced skills.

## Design a Successful Inclusive Learning Experience

As a teacher, your goal is to help each student reach her full potential. To accomplish this goal you must apply a variety of teaching strategies that meet each student's learning style. This necessitates envisioning what your students CAN do, not making assumptions about what they cannot do. Accomplishments may not be the same for every student, but they are equally valued. Goals should be set to enable each student to continuously learn, progress and enjoy the experience.



## Use People First Language

Communicating respectfully about and to your students is the first step in gaining their trust and creating a mutually respectful team. Always put the individual first and the disability behind; for example, “My student with Autism,” as opposed to “She’s an Autistic girl.” Avoid labeling students in any negative way, but do feel free to respectfully ask your students questions about their disability. When in doubt, always ask students if and/or how they prefer to talk about the disability. It is important to understand your students fully and their disabilities. (Athlete-Centered Coaching Guide, n.d.)

## Know Your Students

Understand your students’ abilities, interests, psychosocial strengths and challenges. Students who receive special education services are most often classified by a condition, disability or disorder. Do not make assumptions about what your students can or cannot do based on stereotypes or preconceived notions related to a disability identification. Access their IEPs to learn about their learning needs and strategies for success. Talk to other teachers, service providers, parents and most importantly, your students. Meet with them individually before the physical education program begins. Find out what they like and want to learn, and if they have suggestions for helping them achieve success.

## Meet Your Students Where They Are

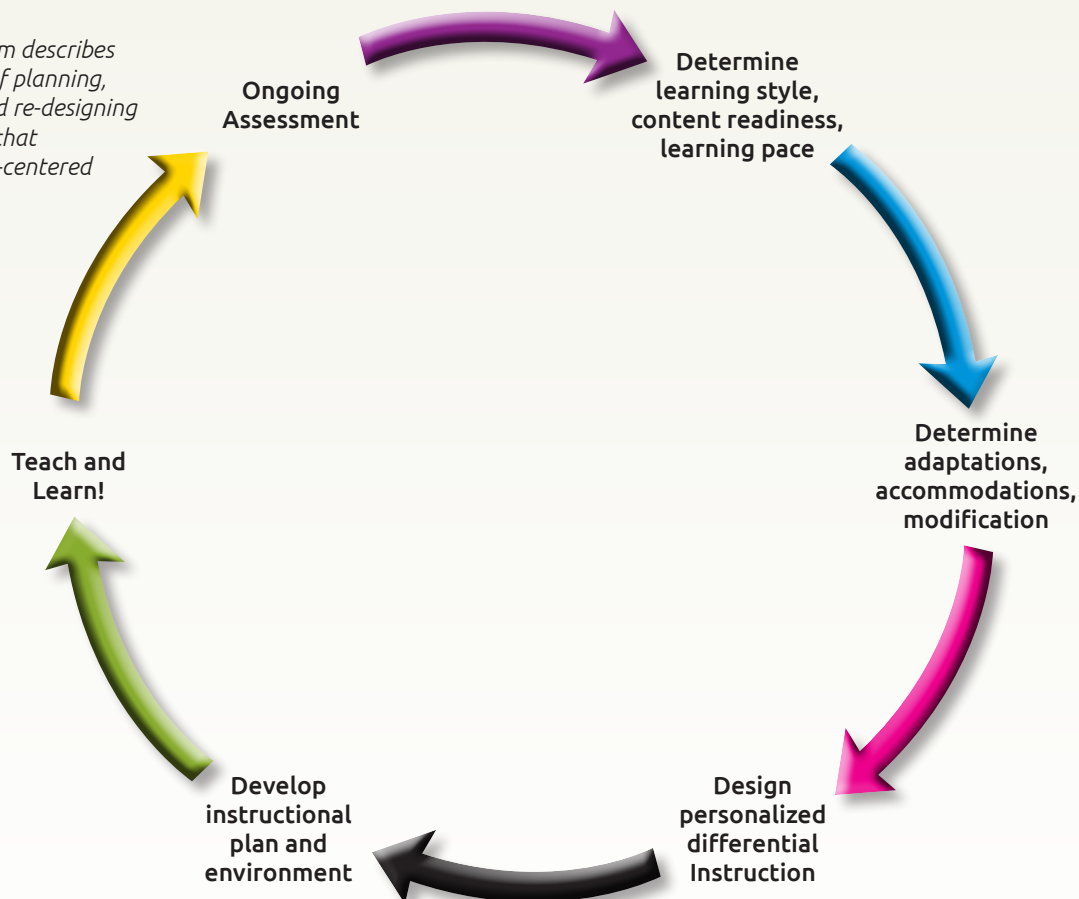
Each student’s instructional plan should start where he is ready to learn. Implementing an inclusive program can require detailed and thoughtful planning to ensure you are providing equal opportunities for all.

- Identify what skills, abilities and knowledge they will need to learn to perform the targeted activity or skill.
- Set achievable goals for student learning, and plan for modifications in equipment, presenting directions, student organization for activities and how content will be taught.
- Conduct ongoing assessments through observation of how students are responding to the lesson, or use more formal assessments of skills and concepts to ensure your students are learning and progressing. Planning modifications are not an afterthought, but included as the lesson is developed.

## Create a Welcoming and Inclusive Learning Environment

An inclusive environment recognizes the value of differences, and that respect, acceptance and teamwork are core class values. Share your belief that all students contribute to the class, and are viewed equally as leaders and team members.

*Diagram 3. The diagram describes the recursive process of planning, teaching, assessing and re-designing the instructional plan that contributes to student-centered learning.*





## Model Acceptance

Students carefully observe how their teacher interacts with students who have disabilities. Employing strategies to include all students in all activities sends a strong message that everyone has an equal right to learn and enjoy physical activity and sports.

## Use a Team Approach

Collaborate with other colleagues, utilize trained peer partners and engage the paraeducators for both guidance and in-class support. Everyone involved brings different ways to help the student achieve success.

## Be Positive, Patient and Provide Time

Depending on their abilities, students may need more time, more reinforcement and more repetition. Keep your expectations high for every student. Be patient. Learning a skill may take longer. Be positive, keep it fun and celebrate every accomplishment!

## Ensure Safety

Safety and security within the space, both physically and emotionally, is essential for everyone. Make sure students know how to use the equipment, are prepared to help each other and to be respectful. Have a plan for all types of emergency situations, and make sure students with disabilities are informed on how to react and have ample opportunities to practice for fire drills, lock downs and evacuations.

**LEARN. PRACTICE. PLAY. UNIFIED.**

## Understanding Your Students' Sensory Sensitivity

Students' sensitivities to sound, smell, light, texture and touch can interfere with their ability to focus, to feel comfortable participating, or to be motivated to try a new skill or game. Know if your students are hypersensitive or hyposensitive to different sounds, textures, colors or a type of equipment.

- Learn about any sensory aversions your students may have and what may trigger inappropriate behaviors so the situation can be altered or avoided.
- Designate a rest/break space in the gym or on the field where a student can go if they need time to relax, rest or take a quiet break from the action.
- Consider the acoustics in the room and if you need to lower music, use visual start and stop signals and provide adaptive equipment, such as headphones and extra time for students to become acclimated to the space, equipment and sounds.





## INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Effective inclusive teaching requires the integration of a variety of instructional strategies selected to address the multiple learning styles of the students in the class. In physical education, this also includes the design of an accessible learning environment.

Listed below are strategies that can be applied to assist students with learning a skill, participating in a team activity or sport and learning game concepts and behaviors. Many of the strategies are as appropriate for students with disabilities as they are for those without disabilities. This is referred to as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principle, which allows for everyone to benefit from the modification.

One strategy is to offer students a choice for the modification. For example, you can offer several variations of a game and let students make choices about their participation level. Or, ask if they want to use a wider bat or use the regular size bat. Some students do not want an equipment modification so they are not viewed as different. In this case perhaps a rule change in the game can be applied for everyone. For more information visit the National Center on Universal Design for Learning at: [www.udlcenter.org](http://www.udlcenter.org).

Modifications in activities must be implemented so they are accepted by the other students and do not limit their advancement or motivation. Acceptance of variations on

a game or activity can be a challenge for students who are high level athletes however, using a variation that includes others demonstrates how everyone can be involved.

## PROVIDING APPROPRIATE MODIFICATIONS FOR SUCCESS

### Space Modifications

Includes fields, courts, classrooms, fitness rooms, playgrounds or other spaces designated for the physical education program.

- **Change the length or width** of field or court for a game or practice.
- **Increase or decrease boundaries** to make activity achievable and gradually increase or decrease to appropriate area.
- **Designate space or a boundary** for positioning for an individual who needs this limitation. For example, designate a square on the volleyball court or a defense zone in soccer.
- **Clarify boundaries** and mark positions clearly. Use different color lines, cones or flags to help clarify court or field space.
- **Change the lighting or temperature** for students who are hypersensitive to the lighting or temperature indoors or outdoors.

### Equipment Modifications

Modifications to equipment are designed to decrease injury and increase success. Balls, Frisbees, balloons, pucks, bats, rackets, paddles, sticks, bases, nets, goals and fitness equipment can all be adjusted to meet the needs of each student.

- **Change the ball size** – Make the ball or sport object (puck, shuttle) larger or smaller.
- **Length or width** – Change the length of the striking implement (bat, stick, racket) to be longer, shorter or wider.
- **Weight** – Offer striking implements or balls that are lighter or heavier.
- **Grip** – Make the grip larger, smaller, softer or molded to fit the student's hand.
- **Composition/texture** – Offer a variety of balls and striking implements that are made of foam, fleece, plastic, rubber, cardboard or other materials.
- **Colors** – Use equipment in many colors for organization, the student's favorite color or for visual contrast in the environment.





- **Height or size** – Lower the height of a net, goal or base, or hang on a diagonal, use larger bases marked with numbers or colors, increase the size of a goal, or change the height to increase accuracy in aiming at a target.
- **Sound, light, pictures, signs or colors** – Use colored pinnies or scarves on a goal, net or base for increased identification, and to emphasize location.
- **Keep equipment organized** and in a consistent location to help a student know where to obtain and return equipment.



### Modification Idea

Volleyball games can be set up utilizing three options: a competitive court with regulation rules, a cooperative court with combined scoring and a practice court where students can continue to develop their skills. Let students choose their own level or have all students rotate to all three courts.

## Game and Skill Development Modifications

Modified games are designed to alter a game's components, such as rules, boundaries, equipment, scoring, number of players, positions or game length to make play developmentally appropriate and accessible. Students who are learning skills have an opportunity to practice applying their skills successfully in a modified game situation.

- Modified games can be competitive, while helping students learn rules, positions and how to react in different game situations.
- Peer partners play alongside students who need additional support as teammates, helping to reinforce rules and offering suggestions for game play.

- Keeping score is an option or both teams can combine scores as a way to teach scoring using cooperation.
- Avoid games that use elimination, humans as targets or where captains pick teams.

**Modified games promote sportsmanship and respect for all players, and are a creative approach to learning how a game change provides inclusion and challenge for students of all abilities.**

## Rule Modifications

Presenting games with modified rules offers students an opportunity to learn and practice game rules presented in smaller bits of information, instead of trying to apply all the rules at one time. Rules such as the number of players on a team, the game time limit, scoring procedures, the size of a goal, field or net height, or the type of equipment can be modified to provide immediate success and achievement. As students become more proficient, regulation rules can be incorporated. Challenge and skill development are always a priority that lead to successful game participation.

## Offer Practice Opportunities

Provide time to practice the skills in what is termed a "closed skill" practice. Here, the student can focus on the skill in a predictable situation. For example, basketball dribbling can be stationary, moving in and out of cones or in a relay type organization. The student can focus on mastering the technique before using the skill in a game situation that can be more unpredictable.

### Making Modifications Work for All Students

Consider the following questions when a modification is used:

- Is the modification safe for all students and is everyone included?
- Does the student with the disability agree to the modification? Some students do not want to be treated differently. Let the students choose if they want the modification.
- Is the game or activity objective maintained? Is a challenge still included? Some modifications can change the game and the initial intent is no longer emphasized.
- Can the modification be minimized or eventually eliminated as students continue to develop skills and game play?

# PEER TO PEER TEACHING: PEER PARTNERS OF DIFFERENT ABILITIES TEACH AND LEARN TOGETHER – AS MENTORS AND TEAMMATES

Students of all abilities can lead and have the power to positively impact their school communities by promoting social inclusion.

The integration of peer teachers is a recognized strategy for increasing teacher effectiveness and providing authentic inclusion experiences. But, it must be implemented in a cooperative, inclusive culture, and with proper preparation and training, to avoid establishing social and performance hierarchies between students with and without disabilities that counter authentic inclusion and even reinforce stereotypes. Students become “peer partners.”

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** approaches physical education as an inclusive experience in alignment with the Special Olympics Unified Sports® Player Development Model, where peers with and without disabilities of differing skill ability come together as teammates for training and competition. Teammates of higher abilities act as mentors



to assist teammates of lower abilities in developing sport-specific skills, and in successfully participating in a cooperative team environment. In this model peer partners, or Unified partners, without disabilities move between two roles; mentor and teammate. In the mentor role the peer partner can be instrumental in helping students practice and master foundational skills, and transition successfully to game play opportunities. As a teammate, students collaborate together to learn skills or play games as equal members of the class.



An inclusive peer partner program provides appropriate opportunities for students of all ability levels to lead and teach. It is structured as a supportive community of learners, not as a service experience where students without disabilities are recruited solely to help the students with disabilities. Here, students are empowered to work with their peers, and together find ways to make the activities work so everyone in the class can participate successfully.

The Inclusive Physical Education class becomes the place where students learn the lessons of inclusion, respect, acceptance and that they are more alike than different. It is where students meet new friends and teammates they may never have met, and continue these friendships on and off the playing field.

Peer partners can be integrated along the continuum of least restrictive environment options. Where in an inclusive, self-contained or combined setting, peer partners are invaluable in their contribution to enabling all students to learn at their own pace while promoting social inclusion throughout the entire school community.





## IDENTIFYING PEER PARTNERS

**A peer partner is a classmate of similar age or slightly older who participates in the dual role of mentor and teammate.**

At the middle or high school level, the peer partners are of similar age, while in Pre-K or elementary they may be older. In this case, the older students act mainly as mentors, but still provide a unified or inclusive team experience.



Many schools have established peer buddies or partners clubs where students without disabilities volunteer to work with the students in the self-contained classes, or are part of a club focused on inclusion, acceptance and diversity. These are the students that have already stepped up to offer help, have a comfort level around students with different abilities or are already leaders for inclusion. These students will make caring peer partners and recruit their friends to be involved.

In a fully inclusive physical education program, all students are teammates and important contributors to the class, although every student may not take on the role of mentor. Make sure students are offered a safe opportunity to share their concerns and challenges as peer partners and can discontinue the role positively if necessary.

### Orientation for Peer Partners

Interacting with peers with disabilities can be a new experience. Students may not know what to expect or do. Providing background, skills and strategies to better understand and communicate will increase their comfort level and help them be successful in supporting their peers. As a teacher, you cannot disclose the student's identified disability to her peers, however you can provide strategies to facilitate skill demonstrations, feedback, providing directions, equipment use and communication. Seek out help from special education, Child Study Team members and administration about what to include in an orientation session.

These roles can be taken on by peer partners with and without disabilities, depending on their interests, abilities and skill level:

- Reinforce directions
- Demonstrate skills
- Help obtain, set up or return equipment
- Provide positive feedback
- Model appropriate classroom and social behaviors
- Help students transition from one activity to the next
- Be a partner for learning skills or a teammate during a game
- Share new ways of communicating and approaching learning
- Come up with ideas for making skills accessible and fun
- Be a friend

### Address the following topics in the orientation:

#### *Disability Awareness:*

Present age-appropriate information on different disabilities and characteristics, with strategies the students can apply to make their partnerships successful. For younger students, the focus may be on a theme such as "We are more alike than different." Middle and high school students can learn more complex information focused on social justice and disability history. You can facilitate a group discussion among all partners to discuss best ways to communicate and learn together.







### **Positive Peer Interactions:**

- Emphasize that all students can learn with some modification.
- Promote using people first language when speaking about a student with a disability. For example, say, “Jenny, who has Autism” instead of “The Autistic girl.”
- Highlight that everyone is treated with respect.
- Stress patience. It may take your peers longer to learn, but they will get it.
- Most importantly, emphasize friendship. Students with disabilities are just like everyone else, they want to be included.

### **Communication:**

Share information on speech, communication and language challenges. Offer simple tips and strategies:

- Always give clear rules and expectations. Provide concise and simple instructions.
- Use appropriate vocabulary, keep instructions short, use cue words to emphasize a sequence of actions or an important element of a skill.
- Use hand gestures and demonstrations to communicate how a skill or game is performed.

**“Peer partners are sometimes more important than you think. Many students with disabilities will mirror what other students do in order to complete a task. Students are sometimes more willing to participate if a peer is with them or even demonstrating for them. Take a step back once in a while and let the students teach their peers. Outcomes are sometimes surprising.”**

**Brett Scully, Physical Education Teacher, Washington Park School, Totowa, NJ**

- You may need to slow down, take your time speaking and give extra time to reply.

### **Teach and Practice Tips for Adapting Activities:**

Share appropriate tips and strategies from **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** in an instructional setting that provides peer partners with the opportunity to practice using the adaptations before they are brought into the class to support their peers.







## PROMOTING APPROPRIATE LEARNING BEHAVIOR

When a student exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, it may be to avoid participation, to seek attention, to communicate or to escape the situation. It may not be intended to be defiant, aggressive, annoying or interruptive. These behaviors may have a justifiable cause or be initiated by an event, the environment or a situation that occurred before or during class. Once the cause is identified, the teacher can use strategies to help the student gain control and participate safely and successfully.

Identifying what situations, sensory preferences and activities initiate behaviors that impede learning is the first step toward helping a student gain control. Is the environment too noisy, is there a long time to wait to take a turn, is listening to multiple directions too confusing or are there sensory aversions?

Maintaining consistency in expectations and appropriate consequences will help the student be a successful learner and player. Sometimes setting unreasonable expectations can overwhelm students and they may not know how to communicate their misunderstanding or frustration.

Some students with behavior challenges may have a behavior modification or behavior management plan that identifies specific behaviors that can occur, triggers that evoke those behaviors and strategies that should be taken to help the student. The paraeducator who works with the student will be familiar with the behaviors and skilled at addressing them. Ask the paraeducator and others on the special education team to adapt and implement a behavior plan to support positive participation in the physical education class.

Encourage all students to model and support appropriate behavior. Help peers understand the causes behind behaviors they might find uncomfortable so that when a behavior does occur, the behavior does not disrupt the class. Provide guidance and strategies on what to do if they become uncomfortable in a situation.

**“Behavior plans are extremely useful. You can use this to your advantage. Use the behavior plan to encourage movement and success. Use charts or other visual cues to achieve the desired action or activity. iPads or iPhones have great apps with timers and awards the student can visually follow. If a student is having trouble with a skill, break the skill down into parts. Ask the student to work for a reward. As they complete each individual skill part they will get a reward. Then, put all the skills together to achieve the desired outcome.”**

**Brett Scully, Physical Education Teacher  
Washington Park School, Totowa, NJ**





# Strategies to Promote Positive Behavior

- **Designate a rest area in the space** for the students to go when they are overwhelmed or need a physical break from the activity.
- **Communicate clear rules for learning.** Use three to five rules posted in the space written in language that defines what students should do to learn and be safe. Add pictures to support the text.
- **Demonstrate what following the rules looks like** to provide a positive example. Connect action to the words. Practice the rules.
- **Communicate a stop signal that is consistent.** Define what stopping means. Use red colored markers, claps or whistles to signify stop consistently.
- **Use a consistent routine** for attendance, warm-ups and assigning partners or groups.
- **Collaborate with students** to establish a signal to use when a break is needed.
- **Use close proximity when giving directions.** Sit or stand close to the student to help maintain focus on the lesson.
- **Use positive feedback** when an appropriate behavior is exhibited. Consider what motivates behavior; extra time in the gym, stickers or other tangible rewards.
- **Clarify and communicate consequences** for inappropriate behavior that are individualized for the student.
- **Plan for transitions** in activities and inform the student when a change is going to occur.
- **Call the student's name first** when you have a question or need to reinforce directions so he will be ready to hear the direction or question.
- **Clarify boundaries** for an activity or game to help with spatial awareness and positions.
- **Provide opportunities for student choice.**
- **React to inappropriate behaviors in a neutral voice,** speak privately to the student and use the phrase "I want you to..." to be direct about the appropriate behavior needed to participate.
- **Know the student's strengths.** Perhaps she leads the warm-up, demonstrates an activity or helps with equipment.

## Avoid

- Students picking teams
- Long waiting lines
- Elimination activities
- Complex directions
- Testing one at a time while peers watch
- Using large group high level competition activities
- Using exercise as punishment

## Motivation and Engagement

Motivation is a key factor in engaging students with different abilities and coaching them through challenging times when they may believe they cannot perform a skill that you believe they can. **Make sure they know you believe they can!** Identify a student's favorite sports teams, animated characters, heroes, games or other interests, and reference them in instructions and drills or as visual incentives to reach a target. Ask them what they would like to work for as a reward. Set small and consistent reward points so they can experience accomplishment along the way and build confidence. (Athlete-Centered Coaching Guide, n.d.).





# SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## Greet Your Students

It is important to greet each student as he or she enters your class. In this way, students are recognized for their individuality. Use the student's name, compliment what she is wearing, her favorite team or activity. When appropriate, use a handshake, high five, fist pound, etc.

## Establish and Follow a Routine

Create a lesson plan with a sequence of activities that students can expect each time they come to your class. Routine provides clear expectations, consistency and comfort for many students. Begin each lesson, practice or game with a greeting or warm-up session, establish a routine to obtain and return equipment, clearly mark practice and play stations and end with group stretch or equipment clean-up. Work with the special education teacher to create transitions from classroom to physical education and back to the classroom.

## Establish Clear Rules and Learning Behaviors

Students should know what is expected of them and the consequences for inappropriate behavior that interferes with their learning and the learning of others. Explain and demonstrate appropriate learning behaviors, such as taking turns, greeting others, sportsmanship, helping one another and being a good listener. Show them where and how to find and return equipment. Role-playing the correct behavior will reinforce expectations. Use "If/Then" language. For example, "If you place the equipment on the rack instead of throwing it, then you can shoot baskets for five extra minutes." **Physical exercise and elimination are not appropriate consequences for not following rules or participating.**

## Set Predetermined Spots

Assign students a designated place for attendance, warm-ups or listening to directions. This strategy helps students become

organized and feel secure about where to stand or sit. Use spot markers, tape marks, lines on the floor, squad formations or circles.

## Setup Small Group Stations Led by Peer Partners

Provide a space for students who need or prefer to work one-on-one. Trained peer partners and paraeducators can assist students as they participate in a small group learning along with everyone in the class.

## Balance Teamwork and Individual Work

Incorporate a variety of team and individual learning experiences into your instructional plan. Although teamwork and collaboration are wonderful by-products of a physical education and sports experience, you may have some students who learn better on their own and are uncomfortable on a team, while others learn better in a team environment.

## Provide Visual Schedule

Display a visual schedule listing the activities that will be conducted during the lesson or practice session. The schedule can be on chart paper for everyone to view or on individual sheets of paper. Include a number sequence, a picture and/or the words for the activity and a place to check off when completed. You may also include the amount of time for each activity. Use a table format to help organize the information. See a sample under Visual Communication Strategies.

## Plan Activity Transitions

Abrupt changes can be confusing. Let students know when there will be a change from one activity to the next. Give consistent cues that indicate transitions and a clear signal when activity has begun or stopped. This can be a vocal call for stop, a bell, buzzer, whistle or other sound. Be sure to check for students with sound sensitivity. Establish a consistent warning signal. For example, a one minute warning call can be used, as well as a ten to one countdown or a yellow card held up for 30 seconds, then a red card for stop. Spend time teaching students that when you give the one minute warning, they can anticipate the whistle blowing to show the activity is ending.

## Incorporate Rest Area and Rest Breaks

Provide a space where students can rest if they become tired or overstimulated by the environment or activity. This space can be on the bleachers, a mat off to the side or a comfortable chair. Students can also take a break by getting a drink or taking a walk in the hall outside of the space with a paraeducator or responsible peer.



# COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

Students with disabilities can have a variety of speech, language and communication challenges, and can often be misread or underestimated. Receptive language can far exceed expressive abilities, meaning they can understand much more than they are able to communicate to you verbally. It is important to communicate often to ensure your students understand and are engaged in the lesson. Learning strategies to communicate effectively with students who have speech, language and communication challenges can be obtained from the speech therapist or Child Study Team.

## VERBAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

These strategies help students with understanding directions, routines and game play. They help to provide students with the tools to successfully communicate their ideas and feelings to others.

### EMPLOY SEVERAL COMMUNICATION METHODS.

When conveying information that includes verbal communication, use gestures, cues (thumbs up, high fives) and pointing to pictures, as well as applications on smart phones and tablets.

### BE CLEAR AND CONCISE.

Use short, simple directions. Divide a long sequence of complex instructions into short chunks of information. Use a step-by-step approach to ensure each part of the direction is clear. For example, "Get a ball and stand on the line." Then add the next direction, "Bounce the ball around the path of cones."

### USE VOCABULARY THAT MEETS THE STUDENT'S COGNITIVE LEVEL OF UNDERSTANDING.

Identify new terms and demonstrate the meaning. Use repetition of terms, flash cards, PECS charts and white boards posted in the gym with key terms to help reinforce memory and ask the student to identify the item or concept.

### USE CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY.

Always use the same words for the same action. Give consistent cues for transitions and starts and stops.

### REPEAT THE DIRECTION.

Students may need the directions repeated several times. Watch the student as you are talking to see if he may have lost attention or is unable to comprehend your directions.

### FOCUS ATTENTION.

Call students' names first to make sure they are looking at the demonstration. When needed, physically prompt your students to look at you. Use phrases to focus attention such as "Watch me," "Look at my feet" or "See how I lift my elbow."

### USE CUE WORDS.

Use single words or short phrases that emphasize essential components of a skill or direction, such as "Hands up" for catching or "Step and throw" to emphasize a sequence of actions.

### CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING.

After a direction is given, ask the students a question to ensure that they understand what you are asking them to do. Use specific phrases such as "How many bowling pins do you need?", "Show me where your position in the game will be", "What goal are you shooting at?", "What will happen first to begin the game?" These specific questions can replace statements such as "Any questions?", "Do you get it?", "Do you understand?" Allow for time to process the questions and for the students to respond.

### LEARN HOW STUDENTS OPERATE THEIR ASSISTIVE COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

Students who are nonverbal may use an assistive device to express information they need to communicate. The devices can be low tech paper charts, augmentative devices, PECS boards or a smartphone or tablet.

## PROVIDE CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK

### POSITIVE FEEDBACK.

Give frequent feedback that is positive, constructive and encouraging. Verbal feedback can be general, such as “Good job,” or more specific, “Nice throw, you followed through across your body.” Use gestures that communicate positive performance such as thumbs up, pat on the back, smile, head nod, clapping, high five or fist pound. Add a picture such as a Smiley Face, “Great Job” sign or other visuals that the student recognizes, such as a favorite sports athlete or cartoon character smiling.

### CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK.

Use the sandwich approach to phrase feedback. Say something positive, then the error correction, followed by something positive. For example, “That was a good beginning, now keep your head up on the landing, I know you can do it.”

### NONVERBAL FEEDBACK.

Use a high five, thumbs up, clapping or smile to indicate success in skill performance or task completion.



### Tips for Successful Communication

If your student is nonverbal or her speech is unclear, you may feel awkward saying you do not understand.

- Ask her to say it again, to slow down.
- Ask her to show you.
- Explain that you do not understand, but you will keep trying.
- Do not pretend you understand or turn away. She will know and it may cause frustration and even anger.

Don't assume your student doesn't understand; he may simply need more time to process and respond.

- Speak slowly
- Use gestures
- Make eye contact
- Provide extra time to reply
- Use cues and short phrases
- Repeat directions several times

## VISUAL SUPPORT STRATEGIES

Seeing it is often better than just saying it. Providing visual aids will go a long way in helping students understand, communicate, focus and follow directions.

Use pictures, charts, graphic organizers and visual aids. Along with verbal directions, it is helpful to support directions with a picture or drawing. Adding words to the picture supports reading and comprehension and helps students who have auditory processing challenges. Create signs with words and pictures to show:

- Skill sequences
- Lists of rules, task or directions
- Identify equipment
- Note a class or practice activity schedule
- Identify start and stop signs
- Drill illustrations
- Tips and reminders

The Board Maker® computer program, clip art or Google Images provide clear visual pictures, or ask the Visual Arts teacher to help with illustrations or drawings. A visual schedule (see soccer example) sets expectations about the order of the activities, the time for each activity and a space for the student to check when the activity is completed. The teacher can return to the visual schedule after each activity to review what was completed and introduce the next activity. Request help from the special education teacher and speech and occupational therapists to create visual aids, graphic organizers and picture systems. Enhance documents such as activity and check sheets, schedules, instruction and evaluations with imagery and photos.





## EXAMPLE

# SOCCER DAY!!!! DRIBBLE, PASS, SHOOT, SCORE

SOCCER SKILLS	ORDER	CHECK WHEN DONE
 <b>WARM-UP</b>	<b>1</b> 10 MIN.	
 <b>DRIBBLING</b>	<b>2</b> 10 MIN.	
 <b>PASSING</b>	<b>3</b> 10 MIN.	
 <b>SHOOTING</b>	<b>4</b> 10 MIN.	
 <b>GAME</b>	<b>5</b> 10 MIN.	



## USE TECHNOLOGY.

iPods, iPads, Kinect for Xbox One games and Wii U programs are a great way to help motivate and improve student learning. They can be used for warm-ups, balance and coordination activities or a range of different movements and sport skill development. Sports video games offer a fun and familiar way to introduce new sports and skills, practice specific movements and offer a break from structure and an option for a rainy day.

## USE COMMUNICATION CUES AND HAND AND FACIAL GESTURES.

Support positive feedback with a high five, thumbs up, clap and a smile. Add a picture of a smiley face, the word "Yes" or "Great job" or a thumbs up. For inappropriate behaviors show a thumbs down or frowning face. Learn and use basic sign language to support verbal communication.

## DEMONSTRATE OFTEN.

Show students how to perform the activity as you explain it. Repeat demonstrations often. Students will need the repetition. Make sure students can see the demonstrator clearly. It may be necessary to stand directly in front of the student (with back to the student) or to the side so he can match the demonstrator's body movements. If you are facing the student, it's best to mirror the action (demonstrator's left hand mirrored by the student's right hand.) Sometimes exaggerating the movement can emphasize the action.

## CLARIFY BOUNDARIES.

Mark positions clearly. Use different color lines, cones or flags to help clarify court or field space. Show students the boundaries. They can walk the perimeter of the space to gain a clear understanding of how the boundary limits the game play or position.

## USE COLORS, SHAPES, MARKERS AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNALS.

Colored tape, poly spots, chalk marks or small cones in various colors can be used to identify specific positions, lanes, start and stop points and boundaries. For example, a red pinnie on the goal for the red team. Different/ brightly colored equipment helps to identify and organize a team's position in the space.

## VIDEO MODELING.

Create a short video on an iPad that demonstrates the skill, game concept or a specific defensive or offensive strategy. The student can view the video repeatedly and take it home to gain an understanding of the skill or concept. Also, videotape students performing skills and show it to them while offering positive corrective feedback. Select videos from YouTube that show skills and game play. Project the video on the wall or screen from a computer to watch and review together.

*Use gesturing to enhance verbal communication.  
Learn and incorporate basic sign language.*





## KINESTHETIC STRATEGIES

These strategies recognize that movement, touching and physically interacting with the equipment is a valuable way to learn.

### KEEP IT MOVING.

Plan activities where students spend minimal time waiting for a turn. When lines have three or fewer students, there is increased focus and more repetitions that lead to skill development. When class sizes are large, use peer partners to help with small groups.

### USE TACTICAL PROMPTS.

When appropriate, use a light touch on a body part to indicate what body part moves. For example, a light touch on the left foot and right hand can help with opposition in an overhand throw.

### OFFER HAND-OVER-HAND ASSISTANCE.

In this strategy the teacher or trained paraeducator helps the student learn the motion of a skill by moving the student's body or body part through the entire range of motion repeatedly until the student can feel how her body should move to perform the skill. This strategy is appropriate only for the teacher or trained paraeducator who understands the student's ability to move a body part, specifically if the student has a limited range of motion.

### ALLOW TIME TO TOUCH AND FEEL EQUIPMENT.

Before an activity or drill be sure students are comfortable with equipment. Allow time to touch different textured equipment.

### ASSIGN CLASS JOBS.

Have students take turns obtaining and putting away equipment, leading warm-ups or being a demonstrator.

### WALK AND TALK.

In addition to talking and pointing out game play boundaries, also have students walk on or through the boundaries.



# PARAEDUCATORS IN THE PHYSICAL EDUCATION CLASS

Paraeducators can be a valuable support in your class. In some schools they are identified as teacher assistants, aides or paraprofessionals. They are assigned to a student (or group of students) for classroom support according to the student's IEP and should also accompany the student to physical education. Ask the special education teacher or Child Study Team which students have paraeducators that should be accompanying them to the physical education class.

**Clarify the expectations for the paraeducator as a support in the physical education class.** Do you want directions reinforced, skills reviewed and/or assistance with hand over hand guidance to move the student through the skill? Do you want them to provide affirmative feedback and support positive behavior? Let them know how their participation will help the students to learn and be accepted.

**In an inclusive class, the student and the paraeducator are equally part of all activities and should not be working alone on the side or doing an unrelated activity.** Remember, the teacher is responsible for planning, identifying and implementing modifications, and then communicating the modifications to the paraeducator.

## Paraeducators can:

- Model and reinforce skills
- Repeat directions
- Help with obtaining and returning equipment
- Help with assessments
- Advise on and manage inappropriate behaviors
- Help in the locker room or with bathroom needs
- Help the student transition between activities
- Provide feedback to correct or affirm an activity
- Provide support for social interactions with all students in the class

## Orientation for Paraeducators

Paraeducators should be provided with training on the content, goals and overall procedures in the physical education class. Meet with them at the beginning of the school year and let them know they are welcomed in your class and that you will inform them on how they can help the student be successful. Show them how equipment will be used so they can assist the student in learning. Take the time to demonstrate what you would like them to do. For example, demonstrate a specific way to have the student pick up a piece of equipment or grip a racket. Write up an outline of the activities you will be working on for the lesson or unit or provide a task card with essential cues or feedback they can use to help the student.

### Example of Task Card

**Student Name:** John Doe

**Skill:** Jump Rope

**Objective:** Help John attempt to jump over a stationary rope on the floor and practice turning an individual rope over his head.

**Cue Words:** Jump two feet together

**Feedback:** "Great job" and high fives



# TEACHER SUPPORTS FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Providing a quality Inclusive Physical Education program may seem overwhelming. There are many factors outside the control of the educator, including scheduling, class size, budget, staffing, equipment and professional development. Physical education teachers who participate in the Play Unified School Partnership program have communicated to Special Olympics New Jersey that they need more information and resources to effectively teach students with disabilities. These educators want to help students of all abilities be successful learners, and gain experience participating in a variety of physical activities and sports. **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED. Guide to Inclusive Physical Education and Sports Activities** is intended to provide teachers with strategies and resources they need to effectively teach students with disabilities.

## Professional Development

Physical education teachers can increase their knowledge about teaching students with disabilities by doing the following:

- Stay current on education and inclusion practices by participating in workshops, conferences, conventions and webinars at the local, state and national level.
- Review the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) and align the content of your Inclusive physical education curriculum to the Standards at <http://www.apens.org/index.html>
- Bookmark the New Jersey Department of Education website to review the New Jersey Core Content Standards for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education and the New Jersey Model Curriculum in Health and Physical Education at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/chpe/standards.pdf>
- Join and review webinars and other resources at Shape America, <http://www.shapeamerica.org/>
- Visit other schools with Inclusive Physical Education programs and network with other teachers.
- Research websites focused specifically on the disabilities of your students. The websites will offer information on causes, characteristics, teaching strategies, personal stories and other resources.
- Ask an administration to offer a district or school workshop on teaching students with disabilities in physical education.
- Contact the Child Study Team to observe and offer strategies for teaching students with disabilities in physical education or have the district hire a consultant to work with you.

## Planning Time

Planning modifications, completing assessments, reviewing IEPs and consulting with other professionals takes time during the school day. The physical education teacher needs to communicate with school administration and the Child Study Team if more planning time is needed so the schedule can accommodate the responsibilities that are an essential part of teaching students with disabilities.

## Equipment Needs

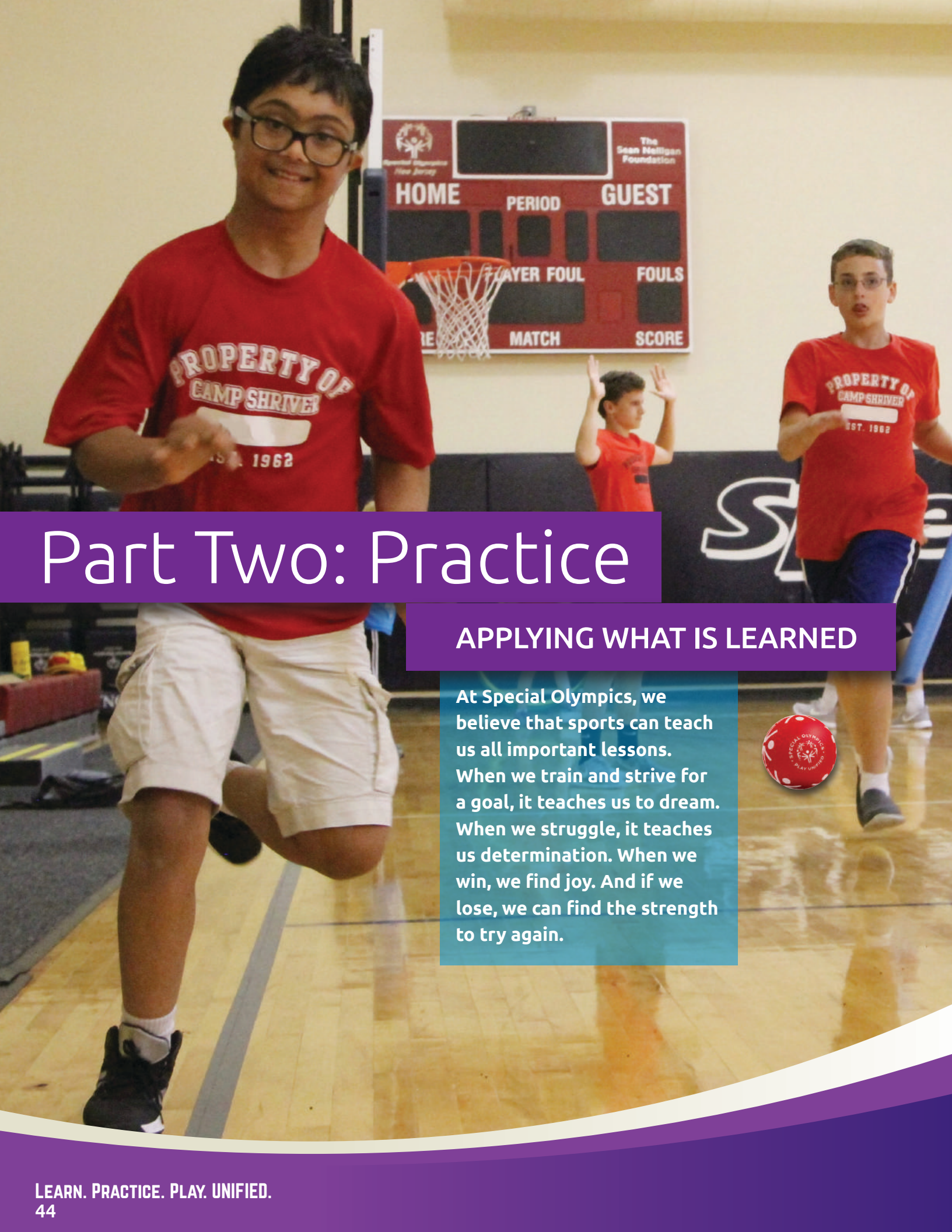
Students with disabilities may need equipment and materials that will help them participate successfully and safely. This can be an additional cost to the physical education budget. One solution is to talk with your administrator about the type of equipment needed to help the student gain success. Administrative support is essential to gain the funding needed. Provide a rationale how the equipment will directly benefit the student and how the equipment can be used by other students as well.

## Class Size

Students are sometimes included in gymnasiums with two – four classes in the same space. Sometimes full classes of students with disabilities are included in a typical class. In either situation, the physical education teacher is challenged to individualize the motor skills, provide feedback, ensure and environment supports and is comfortable for students with special needs, and conduct ongoing assessments for the students with disabilities as needed, within a large class size. Here the support of the paraeducator is essential along with frequent communication with the classroom teacher and Child Study Team. Although the size of the class may not be changed, support for the students must be available if required in their IEP. Use small groups, peer partners, stations for skills and small group games when appropriate.

**GOOD LUCK AND REMEMBER,  
BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS  
STARTS WITH QUALITY INCLUSIVE  
PHYSICAL EDUCATION!**





# Part Two: Practice

## APPLYING WHAT IS LEARNED

At Special Olympics, we believe that sports can teach us all important lessons. When we train and strive for a goal, it teaches us to dream. When we struggle, it teaches us determination. When we win, we find joy. And if we lose, we can find the strength to try again.





# INTRODUCTION

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED: Practice** offers opportunities to apply the background, inclusive teaching strategies and best practices presented in **Learn**, to introduce fundamental movement and specific sports skills for soccer, basketball and track & field, in a fully inclusive physical education program that supports individualized instruction and ensures fun, safety and success for every student.

## WHY PRACTICE?

Oxford Dictionaries defines practice as “**the actual application or use of an idea, belief or method as opposed to theories about such application or use,**” and “**repeated exercise in or performance of an activity or skill so as to acquire or maintain proficiency in it.**”

Therefore, practice provides a time and place for improving skills through repeated application of what is learned. The goal is to become proficient, and even exceptional, at what is “practiced” through discipline and focus, experimentation with new techniques, modifications to form and process, and of course, continued practice.

Through practice, students gain confidence, inspiration and a sense of accomplishment when the learning is accessible and fun, and the teaching is encouraging and paced appropriately to ensure that prerequisite skills are successfully mastered before moving ahead to the next level.

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED: Practice** is built on a differentiated learning approach. Students progress along a continuum of skill advancement that is based on developmental ability, not on an age or curriculum timeline. Progression benchmarks, adaptive tips and coaching charts are provided to assist physical education teachers in determining if, and when, a student is ready to move on to the next level.

**Practice** transitions students from Fundamental Movements to Sports Skills Development in a flexible format, preparing them to **Play** sports for recreation and competition, and to enjoy fitness for life. The format offers a variety of approaches to each skill so that every student experiences ongoing success and improvement through continued learning, from kindergarten through high school, in school and in the community.





## EACH SKILL AREA INCLUDES:

**Description.** Identifies the essential skill components that will be developed.

**Activities.** Contains select activities designed to be accessible and provide a range of ability levels to help students develop the skill. Each activity includes the equipment needed, a description of how to conduct the activity, and a variation as another idea to add to the activity.

**Suggested Skill Progression.** Suggested performance benchmarks at a Basic, Proficient and Advanced level.

- Basic level describes components of the skill that may be emerging or missing as the student develops the skill.
- Proficient level describes the essential skill components that are present to perform the skill successfully.
- Advanced level describes more complex components that may be present in a student who has a higher skill level and can perform the skill in a variety of situations.

**Teaching Tips for Success.** Provides strategies and suggestions for adaptations and modifications for helping students participate in the activity and develop the skill.

## USE THE TEACHING-LEARNING CYCLE: EVERYONE SUCCEEDS, EVERY ACCOMPLISHMENT IS CELEBRATED

When teaching is inclusive, success is measured individually and according to ability. Accomplishments are equally rewarding for the student who stays at the same level and makes continuous progress, as for the student who advances from basic skills to proficiency with ease. Continuous assessment allows for setting achievable goals so that all students can experience accomplishment at the level of their ability. In an Inclusive Physical Education program, every accomplishment is celebrated!





# PRACTICE:

## Fundamental Movements

Fundamental Movements introduces movements that are essential to learning how the body moves and are also foundational to most sport skills. In this section, students experience activities that will help develop these fundamental skills while also interacting with others and having fun learning. The activities are appropriate for elementary age students who are in an inclusive, adapted or combine physical education class.

### STUDENTS DEVELOP FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

**Manipulative Skills** – These are skills that move an object or ball by projecting it into space or absorbing the force as in catching. Many physical activities use manipulative skills and they are basic to many sports.

- Throw – Overhand and Underhand
- Underhand Roll
- Catch
- Kick
- Bounce/Dribble
- Strike with hands or an implement

**Balance** – Balance is the foundation for all motor skills and is needed for success in learning sport skills.

- Static – balance in a stationary position.
- Dynamic – balance while moving.

**Locomotor Skills** – These are skills where the body travels from one place to another in the space. They are basic to participating in all physical activities and many are basic to participation in sports.

- Walk
- Run
- Gallop
- Hop
- Jump – Vertical and Horizontal
- Slide
- Skip
- Leap





**COGNITIVE SKILLS** – These are skills that are used to process information. They represent knowledge, understanding, evaluating, analyzing and remembering.

- Follow directions
- Identify names of equipment
- Understand concept of a team
- Understand activity vocabulary such as team, boundary, goal, score, players, positions or target
- Communicate ideas and knowledge about the activity
- Understand and follow safety and activity rules
- Understand and follows start and stop signals
- Stay focused on activity
- Solve movement problems
- Set goals for improvement
- Remember a sequence of actions or directions
- Apply corrective feedback
- Demonstrate knowledge by explaining or showing a skill or idea
- Make choices
- Apply knowledge of a skill and uses it in an activity

**SOCIAL SKILLS** – These are skills students use to communicate and interact with others, participate in an activity with others and to communicate their ideas, needs, feelings and preferences.

- Take turn/wait patiently for a turn
- Ask for help
- Share equipment and space
- Cooperate with a partner, group or team
- Use equipment appropriately
- Demonstrate persistence
- Try new activities
- Listen to positive and constructive feedback
- Respect others feelings, ideas and abilities
- Accept consequences for behavior choices
- Demonstrate fairness and honesty
- Listen to the ideas of others
- Take responsibility for actions
- Take leadership as well as follow
- Encourage and help others





# MANIPULATIVE SKILLS

These are fundamental skills used in most sports and physical activities. In this section the following manipulative skills are included:

- **Throw – Overhand and Underhand**
- **Underhand Roll**
- **Catch**
- **Kick**
- **Bounce/Dribble**
- **Strike with hands or an implement**



# THROW

Throwing is the act of propelling a ball or other object forward. It is a fundamental skill used in daily living and for many sports, including baseball, softball, tennis and field events such as shot put and javelin. Throwing and catching go hand in hand since often practicing one requires doing the other.

## OVERHAND THROW

**Description:** The overhand throw involves coordination of the whole body to throw a ball or object. For a successful throw, the student also uses eye-hand coordination, strength and balance. The goal of the overhand throw is to project a ball or object forward, across the space and toward a target.

## Activities

### Activity: Over the Line

**Equipment:** One ball and one poly spot for each student. A rope tied across the space or between two volleyball standards on a diagonal, with one end high and one end lower. The diagonal rope allows students to choose a height to throw over so they can achieve success.

**Description:** Students stand on their poly spots, which are placed 5-10 feet away from the diagonal rope where they choose a height for their throws. On the teacher's signal, the students throw their balls over the rope. They pick up their poly spots, go under the rope, retrieve their balls and repeat their throw from the other side of the rope. Students continue to practice throwing from each side of the rope and they can change the height for their throws.

**Variation:** Students can start close to the rope and on each throw move their poly spots back by one foot to challenge the power of their throws over the rope.

### Activity: Wall Targets

**Equipment:** One ball, one poly spot and one wall target for each student or each pair of students. The wall targets can be different sizes of paper taped to the wall, a hoop taped to the wall or laminated pictures of letters, numbers, cartoon characters or shapes.

**Description:** Students place their poly spot at a distance they choose from the target. They practice the correct technique for the overhand throw while aiming at the wall target. Students can choose to adjust the distance for their throws. If students are in pairs, they alternate turns.

**Variation:** Students can choose to throw at different targets in the space. The targets can be placed at different heights on the wall.



## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Opposition is not used in the throw and the elbow and hand are held close to the body
- The ball or object is projected downward instead of forward
- The throwing hand is not established and the student switches frequently

### Proficient

- The non-throwing side of the body faces the intended target and the ball or object is held in the throwing hand first outstretched (the T position) then with the elbow at a 90 degree angle, hand near the ear
- The hips and shoulder rotate while the non-throwing side foot steps forward
- Weight is transferred from the back foot to the stepping foot to initiate throwing action
- The follow through release occurs with the throwing arm moving diagonally across the body
- Focuses on the intended target

### Advanced

- Throws accurate, hitting close to or on the target
- Throwing action is consistently correct and ball or object is thrown with force
- Ball or object can be thrown for near and far distance



## Activity: Knock It Off

**Equipment:** One ball or short 2 foot foam noodle and one poly spot for each student or pair of students. Twelve to fifteen cones of different sizes, chairs or cardboard boxes as supports for objects placed on top to knock off. Objects to knock off the cones, chairs or boxes can be a ball, bowling pin, Frisbee, small box, a balloon taped to the support, a stack of beanbags or any other light weight object that can be used as a target.

**Description:** Students place their poly spot at the preferred distance from the stand with the knock off items. They take turns using an overhand throw to knock off as many items as they can. Peer partners can take turns putting the items back on the stand.

**Variation:** The teacher can set a time limit for students to see how many objects they can knock off using the overhand throw from a designated distance. Students can throw in teams or from different distances and locations.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Focus on correct technique before accuracy.
- Practice the technique without a ball or object.
- Students can start facing the target with the front of their body to practice the elbow up and step forward before adding the preparation and follow through parts of the throw.
- Use poly spots to show where the foot steps forward on the throw.
- Use cues, such as "Elbow Up," "Step and Throw" and "Eyes on target."
- Emphasize the "Preparation T" shape, the action "Elbow in L" shape and "Follow through X" shape.
- Use a tactile prompt, a light touch on the student's throwing hand and opposite foot to emphasize opposition.
- Use a variety of ball sizes, textures, weights and colors to fit the student's grip.





## UNDERHAND THROW

**Description:** The underhand throw is used to project a ball or object a short distance for a sport like bocce or a farther distance such as a softball pitch. The student uses opposition, balance and eye-hand coordination.

### Activities

#### Activity: Hit the Spot

**Equipment:** Twelve to fifteen poly spots or paper plates, two to three beanbags for each student, one long rope to form a large circle or use a painted circle that may already be in the space.

**Description:** Poly spots or paper plates are arranged randomly inside the circle. Students stand outside the circle and throw their beanbags using the underhand throw and aim for a poly spot or paper plate. For a challenge, students stand at varied distances from the circle or change their place around the circle.

**Variation:** Numbers or letters can be marked on the poly spots or paper plates and students can add up the points for their throws or use the letters to spell a word.

#### Activity: Bucket, Box or Bag Toss

**Equipment:** Twelve to sixteen small plastic buckets, small cardboard boxes, paper bags or use a combination of all three items. One beanbag or foam ball for each student, and one poly spot or tape mark for each bucket, box or bag. Arrange the items around the perimeter of the space with a poly spot or tape mark to designate where the students stand to throw the ball or beanbag.

**Description:** Students stand on the poly spot or tape mark and use an underhand throw to throw their ball or beanbag into a bucket, box or bag. They can only move to another bucket, box or bag when they have successfully thrown the ball or beanbag into the bucket, box or bag.

**Variation:** Buckets, boxes or bags can be marked with letters or numbers. Students can see if they can throw to specific letters to spell their names, or if numbers are used they can add up the numbers for a total score.

#### Activity: Hoop Target Throw

**Equipment:** Four balls or beanbags and two hoops for each pair of students.

**Description:** Students place their hoops 10-20 feet apart flat on the floor. Each student stands by his hoop. First, one student throws his ball or beanbag towards his partner's hoop. Each student has two tries with the two balls or beanbags. Then, they switch roles and the partner throws his balls or beanbags into his partner's hoop. Students get a point if their beanbag or ball lands in the hoop. Students then switch sides as they retrieve their balls or beanbags and repeat, taking turns to throw the balls or beanbags into the opposing hoop.

**Variation:** Students can add another hoop to provide two targets or add another beanbag or ball.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Remind students to step with the opposite foot and aim at the target with the throwing hand.
- Use a variety of balls and objects with different weights, textures, sizes and colors so students can easily grip their ball.
- Have students point to the target before they throw to reinforce aim.
- Students can start close to the target and as accuracy and technique improve they can move farther away from the target.





## Skill Progression

### Basic

- The throwing hand is not established and the student switches frequently
- Opposition is not consistently used in the throw
- The release is upward instead of forward toward a target
- Uses two hands to throw ball

### Proficient

- Opposition is used consistently. Steps forward with foot opposite throwing arm, knees bend as ball is released
- Starts with arm behind body and swings smoothly downward and forward to release ball or object
- Follows through in the direction of the target
- Body faces direction of the throw, shoulders face target
- Focuses on the target and accuracy is near or on target

### Advanced

- Underhand throwing technique is consistent and throwing motion is a smooth action
- Accuracy is close to or on the target consistently
- Underhand throw is successful to targets at varying distances and heights



# UNDERHAND ROLL

**Description:** The underhand roll uses opposition to roll a ball on the ground or floor toward a partner or a target. This skill is used in bowling, bocce or for a kickball pitch.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Use demonstration and emphasize a low knee bend on the release.
- Provide a low hurdle or tunnel to define space and direction, and to emphasize the roll.
- Student can practice underhand roll technique without a ball to practice opposition and a low release.
- Use visual aids.

## Activities

### Activity: Roll and Bowl

**Equipment:** Two to three plastic bowling pins or empty one liter soda bottles, one ball and one poly spot for each student. The ball should be easy to grip with one hand.

**Description:** Students set up the bowling pins or bottles against a wall. The pins or bottles can be side-by-side, one in front of the other or spaced apart. Students place the poly spots at a distance of their choosing and practice rolling the ball at the target. When the targets are knocked over, students reset the targets and take another roll. Each time the pins or bottles are set up, the students can choose a different arrangement.

**Variation:** Add more bowling pins or bottles to make different arrangements. One idea is for two pins or bottles to be spaced apart halfway between the poly spot and the pins or bottles used as targets. The student rolls the ball so it goes between the spaced pins or bottles and then toward the target.

### Activity: Partner Cooperative Rolling

**Equipment:** Two cones and one foam noodle. Cones and the noodle can be any size available. The foam noodle is placed across the top of the cones to form a bridge. One ball for each student, any size.

**Description:** Students stand about 3-5 feet back on each side of the bridge. The goal is for students to roll the ball under the bridge to reach their partner. Students continue to roll the ball back and forth to see how many times they can roll without hitting the bridge.

**Variation:** Each student has a ball and the partners simultaneously roll their two balls under the bridge without the balls hitting or hitting the bridge.

### Activity: Team Rolling Fun

**Equipment:** Four balls of various sizes for each group of five to six students. One poly spot for each student.

**Description:** Students are organized into groups of five to six and form a large circle. They each stand on a poly spot. One student starts with the ball, calls the name of a group member and rolls the ball to that student. Then, this student calls another student's name and rolls the ball to her. This continues until everyone has had an opportunity to roll the ball. Next, a second ball is added, so two balls are rolled, then a third and a fourth. The goal is to keep all four balls rolling and not let them go out of the circle.

**Variation:** The circle can be enlarged to use more space and to increase the force of the roll. Students can also establish a repeatable rolling pattern so the ball is rolled to the same person each time.





## Skill Progression

### Basic

- A back swing is not used and palm does not face the target
- Opposition is not consistent for each roll
- Ball bounces or ball is released up like an underhand throw

### Proficient

- Front of the body faces the target, opposition is consistently used and knees bend on the step and release
- Rolling arm swings backward and then forward with palm of rolling hand facing the target
- Focuses on the target
- Ball rolls along the ground or floor smoothly
- Releases low to the ground or floor and moves toward the target

### Advanced

- Opposition is used consistently on every roll
- Ball stays low to the floor or ground and aim is accurate
- Underhand roll can occur at different distances with a force adjustment for distance
- Ball rolls in a straight pathway toward target



# CATCH

**Description:** When students catch a ball, they visually track it as it approaches their hands using eye-hand coordination, balance and strength. The force of receiving a ball is absorbed by a slight bend in the hands and arms.

## Activities

### Activity: Scarf Toss

**Equipment:** One lightweight scarf for each student (juggling scarves or lightweight material in squares).

**Description:** The teacher directs the student to perform the following sequence of tosses and catches:

1. Use throwing hand to toss the scarf high into the air and catch it as if floats down.
2. Toss and catch the scarf with non-throwing hand.
3. Toss with one hand and catch with the other hand.
4. Toss the scarf and let it float down almost to the floor and catch it before it lands on the floor.
5. Toss the scarf up and out in front of the body and move under it to catch it.
6. Toss the scarf up as high as possible and jump up to grab it.

**Variation:** Ask students to create a new way to toss and catch the scarf. They can toss the scarf, spin around and catch or try to toss and catch two scarves.

### Activity: Partner Roll, Throw, Catch

**Equipment:** Three different size balls for each set of partners. These can be tennis balls, foam balls (small or large), beach balls (small or large), playground balls or sports balls, such as a soccer ball, basketball or volleyball.

**Description:** Partners start 5-8 feet apart facing each other. One partner selects one of the three balls and uses an underhand roll to his partner. The partner catches the rolled ball and uses an underhand throw to give the ball back to his partner, who catches the thrown ball. Then the roll, catch, throw, catch pattern is repeated four to six times. Next, the second partner chooses a different ball and starts with a roll to the first partner repeating the same sequence of roll, catch, throw, catch. Partners alternate choosing a ball and starting the pattern.

**Variation:** Students can change the tempo of the rolls and throws, add an overhand throw and increase the distance between the partners.

### Activity: Catching Surprise

**Equipment:** A box filled with different objects that can be caught such as beanbags, foam Frisbees, stuffed animals, foam shapes, balls of different textures, sizes and colors, small foam rings, balls made of crunched up newspaper with tape to hold them together, rubber chickens, fish or other animals or balloons. Fill one box with five to eight different objects for each group of four to six students.

**Description:** Students are organized into groups of four to six. They stand in a single file line. One student stands 5-8 feet away facing the line and is the underhand or overhand thrower. The box is next to the thrower. The thrower picks an object from the box, throws it to the first student in the line, who catches the object and throws it back to the thrower and then goes to the end of the line. The thrower catches the object and places the object back in the box. Next, the thrower selects another object and throws it to the second student in line, who catches the object, throws it back to the thrower, and goes to the end of the line. This activity continues until the thrower has thrown to all students in the line. Then, one of the students switches to be the new thrower. The thrower surprises the catcher by selecting different objects out of the box. Each student takes a turn as a thrower.

**Variation:** The thrower can change the distance and height of the throw. The thrower can also project the object with a roll or bounce instead of an underhand or overhand throw.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a suspended ball attached to a basketball hoop or held by the teacher and swing the ball lightly towards the student to catch.
- Use a light weight foam ball and toss to student using an arched pathway.
- Use verbal cues, "Hands up" or "Eyes on the ball."
- Roll a ball to a student so she has time to track the ball into her hands.
- Have student practice an underhand self toss and catch with a foam ball.
- Let the ball bounce before the catch for more time to track the ball.



## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Ball is trapped with hands and arms against the chest
- Student loses focus of the ball and misses the catch

### Proficient

- Reaches with hands and arms towards ball and absorbs ball force with a slight arm bend
- Ball is caught by hands only
- Eyes track ball into the hands
- Fingers point up for a ball coming from a high level
- Fingers point down for a ball coming from a low level

### Advanced

- Moves toward a ball to catch when needed
- Catches a ball from different heights and distances



# KICK

**Description:** The kick is performed with different parts of the foot, primarily with the toe and instep (laces). Eye-foot coordination, balance and strength are used to complete kicking a stationary ball, or a ball rolling toward or away from the student. The kick skill also includes controlled dribbling.

## Activities

### Activity: Goal Kick

**Equipment:** Two plastic bowling pins or empty one liter soda bottles, two poly spots and one ball (size can vary) for each student or pair of students.

**Description:** The pins or bottles are set up like a goal. Students can choose the goal size. One poly spot is placed 10-15 feet from the goal and a second poly spot is placed 5 feet from the goal. The student stands on the first poly spot and lightly rolls the ball towards the second poly spot, then runs to kick the ball into the goal before the ball reaches the second poly spot. Partners alternate turns.

**Variation:** One partner can roll the ball for the other partner as a challenge to run and kick the ball into the goal.

### Activity: Ready, Set, Everyone Kick

**Equipment:** One playground size (8.5 inches) ball, one poly spot and one beanbag for each student.

**Description:** Students line up in one even straight line across the space. They place their balls on the beanbags to keep them from rolling. Students then take a number of steps backward, based on their age; six year old students take six steps backward, ten year old students take ten steps backward. On the teacher's command, "Ready, Set, Kick" all students, at the same time, run and kick the ball as hard as they can. Then on a second command, "Retrieve your ball" students retrieve their balls, place them back on the beanbags and wait for the teacher to signal for the kick. The second command is not given until everyone has made contact with the ball and kicked it forward. Kicks can be repeated as many times as the teacher designates.

**Variation:** The teacher can signal for the kick and, starting at one end of the line, one student runs and kicks. They continue this until everyone in the line has had turn to kick. Then, a second command is given for students to retrieve their balls.

### Activity: Cone Touch Dribble

**Equipment:** Fifteen to twenty cones placed at random in the space. One ball for each student. Ball sizes can vary from tennis ball size to playground ball size.

**Description:** All students begin with a ball at their feet at one end of the space. On the teacher's signal "Go," students dribble their ball keeping it controlled and close to them as they move through the cones without touching a cone with their ball. They receive ten points if they can dribble without their ball touching a cone. On a second turn, students start with ten points and each time their ball touches a cone they lose one point.

**Variation:** Students switch ball types with another student and try the activity again. Another way this activity can be performed is for students to try to have their ball touch as many cones as possible, gaining one point for each touch.



### Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a stationary ball before advancing to a moving ball and place a poly spot to mark where the non-kicking foot is placed.
- Student can walk up to kick the ball before running.
- Use a hanging suspended ball (soccer trainer) to practice making contact.
- Use a foam ball instead of playground ball or soccer ball.
- Practice kicking motion without a ball.
- Mark the ball to show the spot to make contact.



## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Takes eye off the ball and misses making contact
- Stands to kick a stationary ball
- Uses light energy and ball rolls only a few inches

### Proficient

- Uses a rapid continuous walking or running approach to the ball
- Non-kicking foot is placed next to the ball or slightly behind
- Uses back swing on kicking leg before contact
- Makes contact with the toe or instep consistently on a stationary or moving ball
- Maintains eye contact with the ball
- Uses a straight leg follow through
- Maintains balance consistently on each kick
- Can use small controlled kicks (soccer dribbles) to move the ball

### Advanced

- Directs kick toward a space or target with consistent accuracy
- Ball is kicked with force for distance
- Ball can be kicked forward and lifted up in the air
- Ball is kicked with inside and outside of the foot in addition to toe and instep
- Student can kick a stationary ball or a ball moving toward or away from him
- Student can use small controlled kicks (soccer dribbles) to move the ball, and combine with a larger kick





# BOUNCE/DRIBBLE

**Description:** The ball bounce, also called a dribble, requires eye-hand coordination, strength and balance to control the ball. The student consecutively pushes the ball with one or two hands at waist level with control. The bounce can be in a stationary position or traveling in the space.



## Activities

### Activity: Bouncing Tricks

**Equipment:** One playground ball (8.5 inches) for each student.

**Description:** Present some of the following bouncing challenges and then let students create their own ball bouncing tricks:

1. Bounce with one hand while walking in a circle. Switch hands and go the other way.
2. Bounce while kneeling down, sitting down and lying down. Can you continue to bounce as you get back up on your feet?
3. Bounce while walking backward in a straight, curvy or zig zag pathway.
4. Bounce with one finger, two fingers, your elbow and the back of your hand.
5. Bounce using this pattern: Right - Right, Left - Left, Right - Left, Right - Left.
6. Create you own bouncing ball trick. Practice for control and then teach your trick to another classmate.

**Variation:** Student can add a second ball and bounce two balls for a trick, or collaborate with a partner to create a partner ball trick.

### Activity: Hoop Bounce

**Equipment:** One hoop and one playground ball (8.5 inches) for each student.

**Description:** Students perform the following bouncing challenges as directed by the teacher:

1. Stand inside your hoop and bounce the ball. How many you can do?
2. Stand inside your hoop and bounce the ball outside your hoop. Can you bounce the ball all the way around the outside of the hoop?
3. Stand outside of your hoop and bounce the ball inside your hoop. Can you slide sideways around the outside of the hoop while bouncing the ball inside the hoop?
4. Stand outside of the hoop and alternate bounces, one inside the hoop and the next outside the hoop while you walk around the outside of the hoop.
5. Walk around the space bouncing the ball between the other hoops without touching a hoop. Can you try this running? Sliding sideways? Galloping? Skipping?
6. Walk around the space bouncing the ball and when you arrive at another hoop, do three bounces inside the hoop and move to another hoop. Can you try this running? Sliding sideways? Galloping? Skipping?

**Variation:** Add skill combinations to challenge students such as, stand inside the hoop, do a self toss and catch and two bounces. Try tossing the ball higher each time and adding bounces while staying inside the hoop.

### Activity: 1-10 and 10-1 Bouncing Challenge

**Equipment:** One playground ball (8.5 inches) basketball or other foam ball that bounce for each student.

**Description:** Students are organized into partners or groups of three. They stand facing each other all stationary. The first student bounces the ball one time, the second student bounces the ball two times, the next three times, next four times. Once they reach ten bounces, students reverse the order and subtract one bounce on each turn.

**Variation:** Partners or the groups of three can simultaneously do the one to ten bounces and the ten to one bounces.



## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Bounces and catches with two hands
- Slaps ball with palm instead of pushing with fingertip pads
- Bounces one or two times, loses control and ball rolls away
- Ball is bounced too lightly and does not reach waist level

### Proficient

- Contacts the ball with one hand, bounce is at waist level
- Pushes with fingertip pads consistently
- Bounces with right and left hand
- Bounces in a stationary position without losing control
- Bounces a ball with control while walking forward
- Ball contacts floor in front of and slightly outside of the foot on the same side as the hand that is bouncing the ball

### Advanced

- Bounces with control while walking, running, sliding, galloping and skipping
- Bounces the ball switching from the right to left hand
- Bounces the ball low and fast with control
- Bounces objects using different pathways
- Bounce passes to a partner with accuracy

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Have student practice bouncing a ball on a mini trampoline.
- Hold the ball and have student press his finger tip pads on the ball to feel the pushing action of the bounce.
- Use a hoop, tape mark or poly spot as a floor target for the bounce.
- Use verbal cues, "Push with fingers" and "Eye on the ball."



# STRIKE WITH HANDS OR AN IMPLEMENT

**Description:** Striking involves eye-hand coordination, agility, balance and strength. The skill can be performed with the hands, as in volleyball or handball, or with an implement such as a racket, paddle, bat, golf club or hockey stick.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a balloon or lightweight beach ball for hand or implement striking because it will move slower to allow more time for visual tracking.
- Place a ball on a tee or cone or use a suspended ball for batting before hitting from a pitched ball.
- Use larger balls in a variety of colors to increase focus and contact success.
- Check for correct hand placement on the implement.
- Practice striking with light and strong force for both hand and implement striking.
- Practice the striking movement with hands or an implement without a ball.

## Activities

### Activity: Make a Goal

**Equipment:** Two cones, two poly spots and one of the following: golf club, paddle or hockey stick for each student or pair of students. A ball, such as a tennis ball, plastic hockey puck, small Frisbee used as a puck, foam ball of any size or ping pong ball. All the implements need to be the appropriate length and weight for the student's age and ability. Using implements made of foam can increase safety and success. Remember to set safe distances when using implements to avoid other students being in the way of those striking with the implement.

**Description:** Students set up goals using the cones. They decide to make a small goal 1-3 feet wide, or a larger goal 4-8 feet wide. One poly spot is placed 3-4 feet from the goal and the second poly spot is placed 6-8 feet from the goal. The ball is placed on the poly spot farthest from the goal. Students use light strikes to move the ball toward the goal (like dribbling in hockey) and when they reach the poly spot closest to the goal they use a strong strike to hit the ball into the goal. When completing the activity with a partner, the partner stays near the farthest poly spot and takes a turn after the first partner has completed the goal.

### Activity: Paddle/Racket Strikes, Ups and Downs

**Equipment:** One racket, or paddle, one ball or balloon and one poly spot for each student.

**Description:** Students learn the correct grip for the racket or paddle. They begin striking a tennis ball, foam ball (that bounces) or balloon (note students who have latex allergies) down to the floor and try to stay near their poly spot. Students continue to strike the ball or balloon as they walk around the space between the other poly spots and return to their poly spot. Next, students strike the ball lightly up with the paddle or racket. This is more challenging for students to control. Offer balloons to students to increase success.

**Variation:** Add cones or other objects, randomly placed in the space at different widths for students to walk around as they perform the down or up strikes with the paddle or racket. You can also have students step over or under objects or walk backward as an additional challenge.



### Activity: Over and Under the Net

**Equipment:** One volleyball net tied on a diagonal with one end higher than the other, but with a space under the lowest end. One large foam ball or lightweight volleyball for each pair of students.

**Description:** Students are organized into pairs. Students are on opposite sides of the net facing their partner. One partner sends the ball over or under the net by striking it with one or two hands. Then, the partner strikes the ball back either over or under the net or she can catch the ball before striking it back to her partner. Students call, "Over" or "Under" before they strike the ball so their partners can anticipate a high or low ball.

**Variation:** Assign students to one side of the net. One side begins to strike the ball on the teacher's call, "Over" or "Under." Students retrieve any ball and wait for the teacher's next call. All students perform the over or under strike on the teacher's command.



## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Loses focus on the ball and contact with the hand or implement is not consistently made
- Hand position on the racket, paddle, hockey stick, bat or golf club is not correct and impacts the ability to successfully hit a ball
- Not able to move in the space to meet the ball with hands or the implement

### Proficient

- Correct hand position on the implement is consistent
- Consistently focuses on the ball as it meets the hands or implement
- Weight is transferred from the back foot to the front foot during the strike with an implement and with the hand in handball and in the volleyball serve

### Advanced

- The strike can be aimed at a space or another player with success
- Appropriate force is applied for long and short distances
- Follows through after the strike with an implement
- Side body orientation is used for striking with a bat, paddle, golf club, racket or hockey stick
- Swing for striking is smooth and implement makes contact consistently





# BALANCE

**Description:** Balance is the foundation for all motor skills and is needed for success in learning sport skills. A soccer player needs good balance to make a strong and targeted kick, as does a track athlete jumping for distance. Throughout the day, good balance influences a student's performance in many school and life skills, such as getting on and off the bus or sitting in a chair.

This section focuses on two different types of balance; static and dynamic. Both static and dynamic balance are used in all locomotor and manipulative skills. Static balance is maintaining a balance in stationary position, while dynamic balance is maintaining balance while moving. Balance and body strength are integrated as students perform all motor skills.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate the activity while providing verbal directions.
- Allow students to use stationary objects for support, such as a chair, the wall or the teacher's hand.
- Use a visual target as the focus to stabilize balance. The target can be a color spot on the wall, a picture held by the teacher or a stuffed animal.
- Allow students to hold their arms out to the side to assist with stabilizing their balance.
- Use verbal cues, such as "Head up," "Look at the target" and "Stay tall."



# STATIC BALANCE

## Activities

### Activity: Can You?

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** Ask student to perform a variety of movements that require static balance. Can you:

1. Stand with feet together with hands on hips, shoulders or your head?
2. Stand with feet together with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side?
3. Stand on toes (balls of the feet and toes) with hands on hips, shoulders or on your head?
4. Stand on toes (balls of the feet and toes) with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side?
5. Stand with one foot in front of the other (heel of front foot touching the toe of the back foot) with hands on hips, shoulders or on your head? Try this again with the other foot in front.
6. Stand with one foot in front of the other (heel of front foot touching the toe of the back foot) with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side? Try this with the other foot in front.
7. Stand on the right foot and then on the left foot with hands on hips, shoulder or head?
8. Stand on the right foot and then on the left foot with arms straight out to the side, straight up or one arm up and one arm out to the side?

**Variation:** Try all of the above balances looking to the right and left, looking up and down and with eyes closed.

### Activity: Number Balance

**Equipment:** 8.5 inches x 7 inches index cards each with a number from one to six.

**Description:** Show the students a card with a number and ask them to do a static balance using that number of body parts. For example, when the number four is shown, the students can balance on two hands and two feet and stay still for a count of four.

**Variation:** Students can be in pairs and together they balance on the number of body parts. For example, if the number four is called, one student can use three parts and one student can use one part.

### Activity: Balance Twister

**Equipment:** Use a Twister game or poly spots with four different colors (red, blue, yellow, green). Arrange the poly spots in lines within a 5 feet x 5 feet square.

**Description:** Call out a hand or foot and a color, and the students place that body part on that color. For example, "Right hand red," then add another body part and color, "Left foot green." Continue to call out color and body parts as students practice static balance positions.

**Variation:** Use the students' favorite colors instead of those suggested. Have students call out the hand, foot and color.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Walks up or down stairs one step at a time while holding a hand or a railing
- Walks forward on a line that is straight or curvy and steps off to the side two or three times
- Walks forward or stands on a low height balance beam with support
- Balances standing on one foot for one to three seconds

### Proficient

- Walks up or down stairs one step at a time without support
- Walks forward on a line without stepping off to the side
- Walks forward and sideways on a low height balance beam without support
- Balances standing on the right foot and the left foot for four to seven seconds

### Advanced

- Walks up or down stairs using alternating steps without support
- Walks forward, sideways and backward on a line without stepping off
- Walks forward, sideways and backward on a low height balance beam without support
- Balances standing on the right foot and the left foot for eight to ten seconds



# DYNAMIC BALANCE

## Activities

### Activity: Freeze Dance

**Equipment:** Music and player with speakers.

**Description:** When the music starts, students use a locomotor movement to travel around the space (teacher or students can make the suggestion). When the music stops, the teacher or the students call out a balance position that is held for a count of three, four or five. For example, balance on two hands and one foot for four counts, or balance on one foot for three counts.

**Variation:** Hold up a card with a number, a card with words of body parts or pictures of body parts instead of calling out the number.

### Activity: Walk the Line Beanbag Pick Up

**Equipment:** Lines on the floor (use existing lines or make lines with tape or chalk). Beanbags placed at random on the lines. Hoops or buckets placed at random near the lines.

**Description:** Students walk on the lines and pick up a beanbag and balance the beanbag on their head, shoulder, elbow, wrist or palm and continue to walk to a bucket or hoop and drop the beanbag in the hoop or bucket. Continue until all the beanbags are in a bucket or hoop.

**Variation:** Students can toss the beanbag into a bucket or step over the bucket then drop the beanbag in.

### Activity: Rocking it Out

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** Students stand with feet shoulder width apart. They begin to shift their weight to the right foot and slightly lift the left foot up. Then they shift their weight to the left foot and slightly lift the right foot up. They continue to shift their weight from right to left lifting their foot up higher each time. Use this phrase to add a challenge, "Rock, Rock, Rock and Stop." For an additional challenge, students can walk forward or backward in the space and when the teacher calls, "Rock it Out" perform the rock, rock, rock and stop pattern.

**Variation:** Change the sideways rocking direction to forward and backward. Use only one or two rocks and then stop.



## Teaching Tips for Success

- Keep the moving speed slow so student can balance and stop without falling down. As they become more successful you can increase the speed and ask them to hold the still balances longer.
- Make the width of the lines wider if the student continues to step off, or place the beanbags on a cone for an easier reach.
- Use positive feedback and cue words to motivate students to try their best. Use phrases, such as, "Great job staying up on your feet when you stopped." In this way you acknowledge that the student did well, but the phrase also tells them what they did well, so they know what action to repeat for continued success.









## LOCOMOTOR SKILLS

These are fundamental skills used when a student travels from one place to another. They apply to all sport skills, such as running and dribbling a ball in basketball, leaping over hurdles, walking in a race or jumping for distance. Locomotor skills included in this section are:

- Walk
- Run
- Gallop
- Hop
- Jump – Vertical and Horizontal
- Slide
- Skip
- Leap



# WALK

**Description:** In the walk, the heel touches first, followed by the ball of the foot and the toes. Arms move in opposition to the foot. When walking backward, the toes touch first.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Walks forward alternating weight from one foot to the other

### Proficient

- Walks forward and backward with arms moving in opposition

### Advanced

- Walks changing speed and direction

## Activity: Imagine This, Let's Pretend...

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** The teacher calls out an image that requires students to walk using different qualities:

1. Pretend you are a giant walking through the woods. Take big high steps.
2. Pretend you are a tiny ant walking on the sidewalk. Take tiny low steps.
3. Imagine you are walking in a bowl of peanut butter. Go slow.
4. Imagine you are a robot walking down the street. Move slowly one foot at a time.
5. Pretend you are a walking bowl of wiggly Jello. Walk and wiggle.
6. Imagine you are walking up to a sleeping tiger. Take slow soft steps.
7. Imagine you are walking on a narrow curb and you don't want to fall off. Place one foot in front of the other.
8. Pretend you are a wind-up machine that can only walk forward or backward in a circle.
9. Pretend you are walking on a high tightrope. Take it slow and stop to balance.

**Variation:** Students can suggest a character or use a favorite children's picture storybook for ideas.

## Activities

### Activity: Race Walk

**Equipment:** Cones to mark a pathway, ropes placed on the floor in different shapes, painted floor lines or chalk drawn on sidewalk or blacktop.

**Description:** Students walk as fast as they can through a line of cones moving to the right or left of each cone. Students can also walk on the painted lines on the floor on long ropes placed in straight, curved or zig zag pathways, or on chalk lines drawn on the sidewalk or blacktop.

**Variation:** The teacher or student can signal "Go" and "Stop" while students race walk along the lines.

### Activity: Walking Tag

**Equipment:** Beanbag or stuffed animal.

**Description:** Two or three students are designated as taggers. On the "Ready, Set, Start" signal the other students begin to walk within the identified boundaries, while the students who are the taggers use a beanbag or stuffed animal to tag a walking student. When a student is tagged he becomes the tagger. The beanbag or stuffed animal is held in the hand of the tagger so students know who is a tagger.

**Variation:** Use more taggers with a large group. Change the size of the steps to only large walking steps or only small walking steps.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Remind students to look where they are going when moving forward and to look behind, by turning their heads, when walking backward.
- To increase speed, swing the arms faster to support faster walking.



# RUN

**Description:** When students run there is a brief time when both feet are off the ground as the body is moving forward. The arms move in opposition to the legs with the elbows bent. The non-supporting leg is bent approximately 90 degrees. The running stride is longer than a walking step.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Observe to make sure student's arms are not crossing the body midline.
- Practice running in place at different speeds and emphasize the 90 degree elbow bend.
- Use visual targets, pictures, flags or signs to remind students to look up as they run.
- Use cue words to reinforce correct technique such as, "Swing elbows" "Head up" "Look up" "Big steps" and "Run tall."
- Practice the "Take your Mark, Set, Go" phrase as students start each activity to practice how this phrase is used to start the race.

## Activities

### Activity: Cone Tag Run

**Equipment:** Ten to twenty cones of different heights or all the same height randomly placed in the space. Each cone has a letter, number or picture of a sport taped to it.

**Description:** On the "Go" signal, the teacher calls out several letters, numbers or types of pictures and the students run and touch the top of the cone and then run back to their starting place. Repeat this activity many times to work on speed, technique, agility and following directions.

**Variation:** Ask a student to call out a sequence of numbers, letters or pictures that runners need to locate, touch and return to the starting line.

### Activity: Sports Freeze Tag

**Equipment:** Pinnies to identify the taggers, short foam noodle or a foam ball for each tagger to hold and use to tag the runners.

**Description:** Designate the boundaries of the game. Select two to four taggers, depending on the size of the group, and give each tagger a pinnie and a short foam noodle or foam ball. The taggers use the noodle or ball to touch a runner as the tag. When a runner is tagged, the runner freezes in a sport action pose. To become untagged another runner faces the tagged runner and high fives the tagged runner. Then the runner is unfrozen and continues in the game.

**Variation:** The runner who is unfreezing the tagged runner can replicate the sport action shape as a way to unfreeze the tagged runner. At this time no one can be tagged.

### Activity: Red Light, Green Light

**Equipment:** Red sign with "Stop" printed on it, Green sign with "Go" printed on it.

**Directions:** Students start on one side of the space. When the green sign is held up and the call is "Go" they begin to run and when the red sign is held up and the call is "Stop" they stop. Continue with this procedure until students have reached the other side of the space.

**Variation:** Instead of a green or red sign, use a picture of a rabbit to indicate running fast and a picture of a turtle to indicate running slow.

### Activity: Agility Hoop Run

**Equipment:** Cones, hoops.

**Directions:** Students are organized in pairs and line up at one end of the space. At the other end of the space is a cone. Each student holds a hoop. On the "Take Your Mark, Set, Go" signal, the first partner runs to the cone and places the hoop over the cone and runs back to high five their partner. Then, the second partner runs and places the hoop over the cone and high fives their partner. Then, the first partner runs to the cone and retrieves the hoop, high fives their partner and the partner runs to retrieve the second hoop. This activity can be repeated several times to build speed and endurance.

**Variation:** Use a relay baton to touch the cone and pass the baton to the partner. Repeat several times.





## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Runs using short strides, body does not have a slight forward lean
- Runs flatfooted instead of the toe and ball of the foot hitting the ground first
- Runs without arm opposition
- Runs in a shuffle motion and does not lift feet off the ground

### Proficient

- Runs with longer strides and feet are briefly off the ground
- Uses arms in opposition, but elbows are not always at a 90 degree angle
- Runs using a variety of different pathways, such as straight, circular or combined pathways
- Runs using different speeds

### Advanced

- Runs with arms in opposition and elbows at 90 degrees consistently, movements are smooth and continuous
- Runs with a fast speed, head up and focused on where he is going
- Runs with non-support leg bent at a 90 degree angle consistently
- Runs using a change of direction, speed and pathway



# GALLOP

**Description:** The gallop is a basic skill where the “lead” foot leads, followed by a trailing foot. The lead foot steps forward with a bent knee and pushes off into the air and landing on the trailing foot. There is a brief period where both feet are off the ground. The right or left foot can be the lead foot.

## Activities

### Activity: Galloping Horses

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** On the signal to “Go” the students gallop with their right foot leading around the perimeter of the space until the teacher calls “Switch.” Then students gallop with the left foot leading until “Switch” is called again.

**Variation:** Teacher designates a specific number of right foot gallops, such as ten or twelve and then left foot gallops, such as eight or sixteen. Students can count out loud as they gallop.

### Activity: Circle Gallop Dance

**Equipment:** Music, CD or iPod player. Use any music that is popular and fits a gallop rhythm.

**Description:** Play music after students learn the dance sequence. Students begin the dance standing in a large circle. The teacher calls out the cues for the following dance sequence:

**Part A.** Turn to your right, right foot leading forward for sixteen gallops.

**Part B.** Turn to your left, left foot leading forward for sixteen gallops.

**Part C.** Face the center and right foot gallop forward four times. Now left foot gallop backward four times.

Repeat Part A and B.

**Repeat** Part C with the left foot leading into the circle and the right foot leading backward out of the circle.

Repeat Part A and B.

**Variation:** Add arm movements to the gallops, or for Part C call a category for students to gallop in and out, such as all girls go in and out, all boys go in and out, everyone wearing red go in and out, everyone who has a dog or other categories.

### Activity: Follow the Gallop Leader

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** Students are organized into partners or small groups of three or four. One student is the leader and gallops around the space. They can choose the pathway as well as their arm shape or movements, and the others follow the leader. For example, the leader gallops with the right foot and stretches her arms out the side. The partner or group members perform the same foot gallop and the same arm movements or shapes. After thirty seconds to a minute, the leader is switched.

**Variation:** The leader can add a Freeze into the gallop, where everyone stops in a frozen shape for a count of five.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Tell students to pretend that one foot is the leader and the other foot is trying to catch up or tag the lead foot.
- Use cue words such as “Big steps” or “Push up with feet”.
- The teacher and the student hold hands and gallop together to help the student feel the rhythm. This can also be done with a peer partner.





## Skill Progression

### Basic

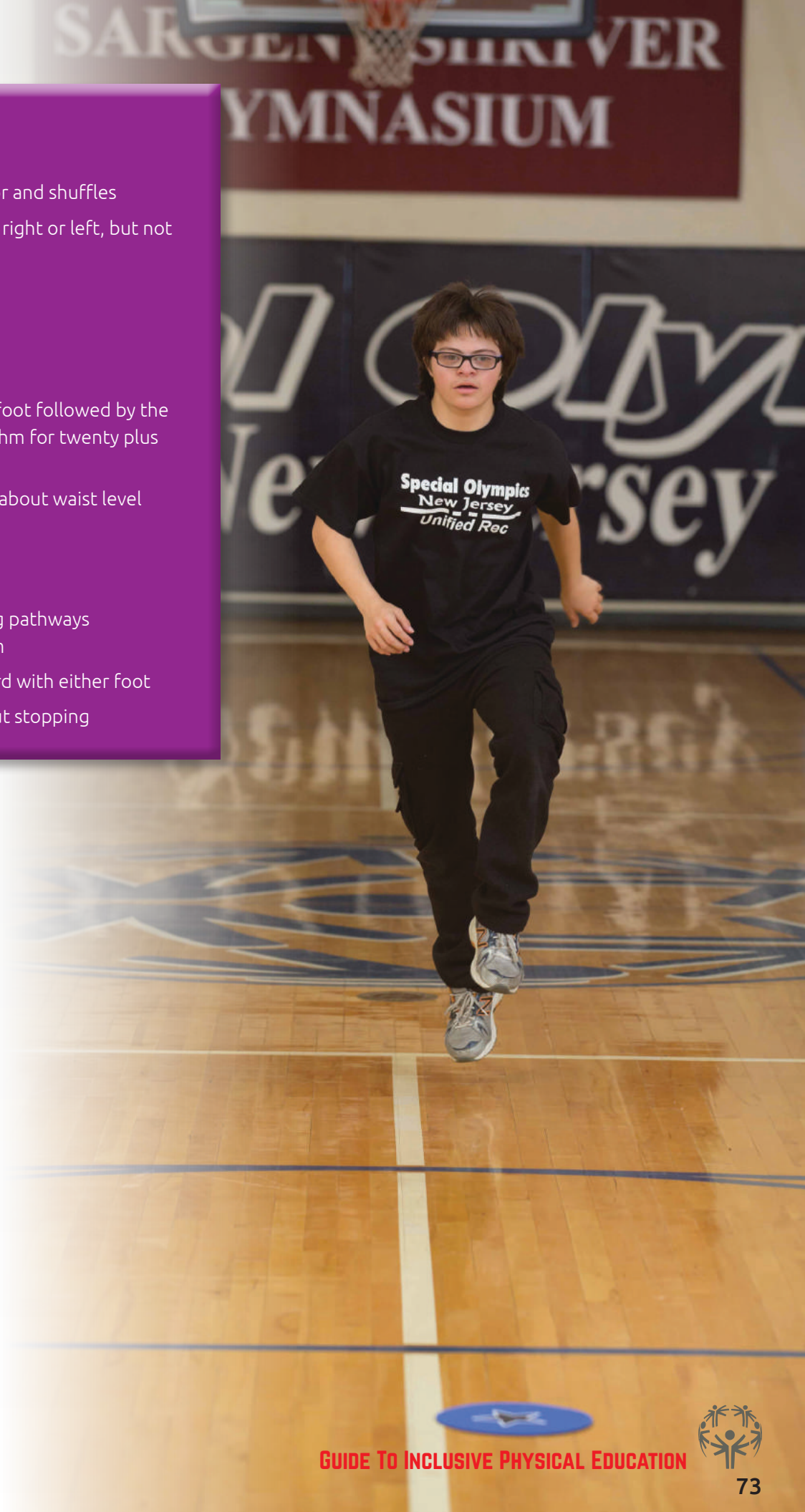
- Does not lift feet off the floor and shuffles
- Can only lead with either the right or left, but not both
- Rhythm is jerky, not smooth
- Arms hang at the sides

### Proficient

- Steps forward with the lead foot followed by the trailing foot in a smooth rhythm for twenty plus feet
- Arms are bent at the elbows about waist level
- Right or left foot can lead

### Advanced

- Gallops in the space changing pathways maintaining a smooth rhythm
- Gallops forward and backward with either foot
- Gallops changing feet without stopping



# HOP

**Description:** The hop is on one foot. The takeoff and landing are on the same foot. The non-support leg is bent at the knee. The hop requires balance and strength to maintain an upright position.

## Activities

### Activity: Hoop Hop

**Equipment:** One hoop for each student or pair of students.

**Description:** The students use hopping to complete the following:

1. How far around the outside of the hoop can you hop? Try right foot, then left.
2. Show me how you can hop in and out of the hoop. How fast can you go?
3. Can you hop while turning inside the hoop?
4. Find a way to hold the hoop in your hand and bounce it while you hop.
5. Hop to another classmate's hoop on one foot and back to your hoop on the other foot.
6. Spin the hoop on end and as it gets low to the floor hop in and out.

**Variation:** Use different size hoops if available or use ropes on the floor in a circle shape.

### Activity: How Many Hops?

**Equipment:** Beanbags.

**Description:** Students lightly toss the beanbag in front of them on the floor. They estimate how many hops they will use to reach the beanbag. Then, hop to see if they can meet their estimate. On each toss they can make the distance shorter or longer. An estimate or guess is made for each toss followed by the hops. Students can choose right or left foot or alternate.

**Variation:** Students can collaborate as partners to take turns tossing the beanbags, guessing and then together hopping to meet the guess.

### Activity: Hop Pathways

**Equipment:** Poly spot markers or beanbags.

**Description:** Students make a floor pathway with the poly spots or beanbags that is curved, straight or a combination of both. Next, they hop on the pathway, one hop on each poly spot. If they are using beanbags they hop over the beanbags on the path. They can designate one rest stop along the pathway.

**Variation:** Students can collaborate with a partner or group of three and combine their pathways to make one big pathway.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- The student cannot lift up off the ground or hops up on one foot, but lands on two feet
- Hops only one or two times on dominant foot and cannot hop on the other foot
- Non-support leg is straight and arms are down at sides of body

### Proficient

- Takes off and lands on the same foot and the hop can be repeated for 10-20 feet
- Can hop on the right foot and the left foot for 10-20 feet
- Elbows are flexed and swing forward to produce force

### Advanced

- Hops for a distance of 20 or more feet on each foot with arms bent to produce force
- Hops forward, backward and sideways
- Changes the height and length of the hop to hop higher and farther
- Easily changes the hopping foot







### Teaching Tips for Success

- Use cues such as "Hop, same foot up and down" and "Swing arms for more force."
- Hold students hands or have them hold on to a chair for support to practice.
- Have the students spell the word, HOP and hop while they say each letter.





# JUMP

**Description:** The jump is a two-foot takeoff and a two-foot landing. It can be used for height as in the vertical jump or for distance as in the horizontal jump. The student swings her arms to help propel her upward or forward.



# VERTICAL JUMP

## Activities

### Activity: Wall or Ball Jump

**Equipment:** Wall, chalk to mark wall or ball suspended from a basketball hoop.

**Description:** The students stand near the wall, reach up and mark the wall with the chalk. Then students jump and use the chalk to mark the extended reach of the jump. Measure the height from the first chalk mark to the second. Or, suspend the ball about 1 to 2 inches above the student's reach and as he jumps he hits the ball with his hand. Raise the ball height 1 inch on each jump.

**Variation:** Use Post It notes or tape to stick to the wall instead of chalk. Student hold a small stick or paddle to hit the ball on the jump.

### Activity: Bounce and Catch

**Equipment:** One – 8.5 inches playground ball for each students or pair of students.

**Description:** Students bounce the ball hard into the floor and then as the ball falls, they jump into the air and grab the ball. This is similar to a basketball rebound.

**Variation:** Use a different size ball or have a partner bounce the ball.

### Activity: Jump the Spinning Beanbag

**Equipment:** Beanbag tied to a 6-8 foot rope.

**Description:** The teacher or a student swings the rope with the attached beanbag in a circle so the beanbag circles on the floor. The jumping student watches the beanbag circle and as the beanbag comes close, the jumping student jumps high over the moving beanbag.

**Variation:** Spin the beanbag at a slow and fast speed or use different size beanbags or a pillow attached to a rope.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a demonstration and emphasize the two-foot takeoff and landing.
- Use the cue, "Bend, Extend, Bend."
- Remind students to keep their heads up and reach with finger tips.
- Have the students practice jumping on a mini trampoline.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- The two-foot takeoff and landing is not consistent
- Arms do not swing to propel the body upward
- Student loses balance on landing and takes extra steps

### Proficient

- Consistently takes off and lands on both feet with deep knee flexion
- Arms swing backward, forward and reach up to propel body upward
- Uses a strong push with legs and full body extension between takeoff and landing

### Advanced

- Strong takeoff and landing with two feet and full body extension is consistent on each jump
- Jump height increases with each jump
- Can add a turn between the takeoff and landing



# HORIZONTAL JUMP

## Activities

### Activity: Frogs in the Pond

**Equipment:** Poly spots spread out at random in the space with different distances for jumping. Music, CD or iPod.

**Description:** Students start on a lily pad in the pond (a poly spot). When the music is on, students jump from one lily pad to another to see if they can jump across the pond. Emphasize using the two-foot takeoff and landing. When the music stops the frogs (the students) stop.

**Variation:** Students can jump over the lily pads instead of on the lily pad. Students can count how many lily pads they jump on before the music stops.

### Activity: Jump the Brook

**Equipment:** Two long ropes, 8-12 feet. One rope is in a straight line and the other is at a 45-degree angle to form a "V" shape with a narrow and wide end. Or use tape to form the "V" shape. Add pictures of fish, turtles or alligators taped to the floor.

**Description:** Have students face the straight line rope and using a horizontal jump, jump over the brook to the opposite side. Students can choose different widths for each jump.

**Variation:** Create several brooks around the space with different wide or narrow angles. Students can jog or walk around the space and jump over the brook.

### Activity: Jump the Snake

**Equipment:** One Long jump rope, 8-10 feet for every three to four students.

**Description:** Two students sit on the floor holding opposite ends of the rope. They begin to slowly wiggle the rope to represent a wiggling snake on the floor. The other students in the group take turns jumping over the snake. The rope holders switch places with the jumpers. Remind students to use a two-foot takeoff and landing.

**Variation:** The rope holders can change the tempo and make the snake move faster or slower, smaller or bigger. The rope always stays on the floor.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- The two-foot takeoff and landing is not simultaneous
- Minimal flexion in both knees on takeoff and landing and no arm swing
- Low energy is used and the jump distance is a couple inches

### Proficient

- Consistently takes off and lands on both feet with knee flexion
- Arms swing backward and forward to propel body forward
- Lands in a balanced position without extra steps

### Advanced

- Full extension of body after takeoff, lands with strong knee bend
- Increases distance with each jump
- Arm swings are always coordinated with the jump for full power





### Teaching Tips for Success

- Provide a demonstration and emphasize the knee bend and arm swing on the takeoff and landing.
- Remind students to look out for the landing spot.
- Have students practice jumping using a mini trampoline while holding both of the teacher's hands.
- Have students practice swinging the arms without the jump then add the jump with the arm swings.



# SLIDE

**Description:** The slide is like a gallop performed sideways to the right or left. There is a lead foot and a trailing foot as in the gallop.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Provide a clear demonstration emphasizing the sideways direction.
- Ask student to “Push up higher” to gain height in the slide.
- Add arms out to the side to emphasize sideways directions.
- Keep head up looking forward to the sliding side. Use a visual target to keep focus up.

## Activities

### Activity: Slide and Follow

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** Students start in a random formation, facing the teacher. The teacher uses only hand signals to show which directions to slide. When the teacher points to the right, students slide right and then to the left and when the teacher points to the left. The students look up at the teacher for the hand signals and to know when to change direction. Add in a stop signal.

**Variation:** The teacher can slide facing the students and use the hand signals. A pattern can be established to slide eight to the right and eight to the left and then seven to the right and seven to the left and then six to the right and six to the left subtracting one slide each time until zero is reached.

### Activity: Slide Around the Clock

**Equipment:** Cards with the numbers one to twelve set up in a large circle in the space like a clock.

**Description:** Students start by a clock number. The teacher calls out how many slides to the right or left and then asks a student what number they are near. For example, the teacher calls, “Everyone slide three times to the right, Sue, what number are you near?” “Okay now everyone slide five slides to the left, Arnold what number are you near?”

**Variation:** A student can stand in the center of the clock and call out the number of slides to the right or left.

## Activity: Partner Mirror Slide

**Equipment:** None

**Description:** Assign students a partner. Students stand facing each other and one partner is designated as the leader. The leader points with her arm to the right or left and slides in that direction and the partner slides, at the same time, as if she were looking in a mirror. The leader can change directions when she wants to and the partner follows. Then the leader and follower switch roles.

**Variation:** The follower starts behind the leader and follows as if she were a shadow. In this way both students are facing the same direction.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Student has difficulty maintaining a consistent sideways direction
- Both feet do not leave the floor, size of slide is small
- Rhythm is not smooth and constant

### Proficient

- Body is sideways with the right or left with shoulder leading or arms are out to the side
- Both feet leave the floor
- Lead foot takes a big step and is followed by the trailing foot in a smooth rhythm

### Advanced

- Equal strength and rhythm in slides to the right and left
- While sliding in one direction, can turn and slide in the opposite direction
- Can change speed and size of the slide step





# SKIP

**Description:** A skip is a combination of a step and then a hop on the same foot. The skip alternates sides. Arms move in opposition to the skip foot.

## Activities

### Activity: Skipping Cone Touch

**Equipment:** Ten to twelve cones of different sizes randomly placed in the space.

**Description:** Students start on one side of the space and skip across the space while touching the top of each cone they pass. Ask them to count how many cones they touched as they skipped across the space.

**Variation:** Students can skip in a circle around each cone they touch as they skip across the space.

### Activity: Lions and Mice (Skipping Big and Small)

**Equipment:** Two different sounds. Use a whistle, a bell, a drum, hand clap or voice to call change.

**Description:** The students skip around the perimeter of the space and listen for the sound that signals to skip high with big strong skips as a lion skipping and listen for the sound that corresponds to a mouse skipping using small light skips. The teacher identifies the corresponding sound for the students so they know what sound goes with which type of skip.

**Variation:** Instead of skipping around the perimeter the students skip in their own pathway and as they pass another student they high five each other.

### Activity: Skipping Scavenger Hunt

**Equipment:** Ten to twelve cards taped to cones or the wall, describing an exercise or a picture of someone doing an exercise, or a stick figure posed in different shapes. A pencil or marker is attached to the wall or cones near each card. One paper for each student listing the exercises, pictures or stick figure shapes.

**Description:** Students skip around the space locating the exercises, pictures or stick figure shapes listed on their paper. When they find a card, they perform the shape or exercise, mark it off on their paper and skip to find another exercise or picture. They continue until they have found all the exercises or shapes on their paper and marked them off.

**Variation:** Students cannot use the individual paper and the teacher can designate a time, such as two minutes to find and perform as many exercises or pictures as they can in two minutes.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Combining the step and hop on the same foot is difficult
- Step hop does not alternate in a smooth rhythm
- Arms do not swing in opposition to the skip foot

### Proficient

- Step hop pattern alternates feet with smooth and continuous rhythm
- Arms swing in opposition to the skipping foot
- Skip can change speed and height

### Advanced

- Student can maintain the skip with the arm swing consistently around the space
- Student can skip using different arm movements, such as alternating touching hips and shoulders or arms swing out to the side and swing crossing at chest level
- Student can skip backward, sideways and around obstacles





### Teaching Tips for Success

- Use verbal cues to support movement patterns, say "Step hop, step hop."
- The teacher holds the students hand and skips alongside or skips in front of the student to demonstrate the skip so the student can follow.
- Use poly spots to mark a pathway for the student to step and hop on the right foot and step and hop on the left foot.





# LEAP

**Description:** A leap takes off on one foot and lands on the other foot. Both feet are in the air in between the takeoff and landing. The arms swing in opposition to the landing foot. For example, if a student takes off by stepping on her right foot, then the left foot swings forward to be the landing foot.

## Activities

### Activity: Leaping for Fitness and Fun

**Equipment:** Spread out in the space, either in lines or in a random formation are: ten to twelve small hurdles, eight to ten beanbags, five to six small stuffed animals, six to eight individual jump ropes, six to eight small cones, six to eight hoops and/or ten to twelve small fleece balls. Music can be used to accompany the activity as a start and stop signal.

**Description:** On the start signal the students run and leap over as many different objects as they can. As they leap they can call out which foot is landing, right or left, or call out the name of the object they are leaping over. On the stop signal they point to all the objects they leaped over.

**Variation:** The teacher can designate a time, such as two minutes and as the students run and leap they count how many objects they were able to leap over in the two minutes.

### Activity: Leaping Beanbag Relay

**Equipment:** One object to leap over, such as a cone or small hurdle and one beanbag for each group of four students.

**Description:** Students are organized into groups of four. Two students start on one side of the space and the other two students start across the space, opposite from the first two students. In the middle of the space is an object to leap over. One student starts with a beanbag in his hand. On the signal to "Go" the student runs, leaps over the object and when he reaches the other side he hands the beanbag to another student. This student then runs, leaps over the object while carrying the beanbag and hands it to the student in the opposite line. This back and forth relay type activity continues with each student taking a turn. The teacher can designate how many times the group repeats the relay run and leap.

**Variation:** Add two objects or more for the students to leap over.

## Activity: Leap and Reach

**Equipment:** A ball is suspended on a rope from a basketball hoop or multiple balls are suspended from a rope stretched across two volleyball poles. A whiffle ball, foam ball or fleece ball can be tied with rope and attached to the hoop or rope stretched between the volleyball nets. The balls are high enough so student can leap, reach up with their hand and touch the balls.

**Description:** Students start a few feet away from the suspended ball. They run, leap and reach up with one hand to see if they can touch the ball as they leap.

**Variation:** Balls can be placed at various heights.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Student takes off and lands on the same foot while moving forward
- Student takes off on one foot and lands on the other, but does not elevate off the floor
- Arms do not swing in opposition to the landing foot

### Proficient

- Clear take off on one foot and landing on the other foot with elevation
- Arms swing in opposition to the landing foot to produce balance and power
- Leap can be performed with either the right foot or left foot as the takeoff foot

### Advanced

- Multiple leaps alternating right and left can be performed across the space
- Student can push up for height on each leap
- Student can transfer a forward leap to a sideways leap
- Student can combine a couple running steps with a leap





### Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate how the takeoff is on one foot with the landing on the other foot. Demonstrate in front or on the side of the student so she can match the foot for takeoff and landing.
- Add an object, such as a beanbag, stuffed animal or small cone as a target to leap over. The student can add a couple running steps and leap over the object.





# PRACTICE:

## Sports Skills Development

**Practice:** Sports Skills Development is built on a differentiated learning approach. Students progress along a continuum of skill advancement that is based on their developmental ability. The soccer, basketball and track & field activities here are based on this progression continuum. Ability levels are assessed regularly to gauge the effectiveness of activities and pace for further skill development and game play.

**Practice** presents a selection of skills and drills that can be used at the basic, proficient and advanced level for each sport.

### EACH SKILL AREA INCLUDES:

A **Description** which identifies the essential skill components.

**Activities.** Select activities section several activities designed to be accessible and provide a range of ability levels to help students develop the skill. Each activity includes the equipment needed, a description of how students are organized and how to conduct the activity and a variation as another idea to add to the activity.

**Suggested Skill Progressions** at a Basic, Proficient and Advanced level. These skill progression levels can be used when observing a student performing the skill to see their level of ability and their ability to be successful at the current or next level.

- Basic level describes components of the skill that may be emerging or missing as the student develops the skill.
- Proficient level describes the essential skill components that are present to perform the skill successfully.
- Advanced level describes more complex components that may be present in a student who has a higher skill level and can perform the skill in a variety of situations.

**Teaching Tips for Success** which provide strategies and suggestions for adaptations and modifications for helping students participate in the activity and develop the skill.





# SOCCER

Soccer is a widely accessible and affordable sport that offers a variety of benefits for students of all abilities. Playing soccer can be as simple as two people having a ball and an area to kick it around in. As one of the most versatile sports, soccer is popular on the playground, in the backyard and in the community as both a recreational and competitive sport. Playing soccer not only encourages fitness and sport participation, but also advances cognition and creates enjoyable opportunities for social interaction and developing friendships.

All of the soccer skills and drills in this guide can be implemented with basic sports equipment; soccer balls, soccer goals, pinnies, as well as cones/markers/poly spots. Additional equipment may be necessary in order to adapt some activities.

These soccer activities help promote and develop the following sport and team play skills:

## MOTOR SKILLS

- Strength and Flexibility
- Balance and Agility
- Body and spatial awareness
- Aerobic fitness
- Timing
- Total body coordination
- Visual tracking
- Eye-foot coordination

## COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Expressive and receptive language
- Listening, following directions and cues
- Following game rules
- Responding to starts and stops
- Identifying shooting and defending goals
- Understanding offensive and defensive play
- Sport specific terminology

## SOCIAL SKILLS

- Peer interaction: making positive comments, cheering for teammates
- Teamwork, taking turns
- Communication with teammates
- Sportsmanship
- Focus on activity and team members



# DRIBBLING

Dribbling is the skill of walking, jogging or running while keeping the ball close to your feet. The objective is to move the ball and player into open spaces, creating passing options for the player with the ball or allowing other players to move into open spaces while the ball is being protected. Keep in mind that the term “dribbling” may be confusing to some of your students and should be explained through language and demonstration. Always be sure that your students understand the vocabulary you are using before you begin the drills. Dribbling is a key component in soccer, therefore every player must have a basic understanding and ability.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Dribbles up the field while walking
- Dribbles forward, using the toe

### Proficient

- Dribbles up field while jogging, using the insides of both feet
- Uses the sole of the foot to change ball direction

### Advanced

- Dribbles up the field while running
- Uses the inside of the foot to quickly change direction and beats opponent
- Uses the outside of the foot to shield the ball from opponents and evades tackles

## DRIBBLING ACTIVITIES

### Ball/Toe Touch Warm Up

#### *Comfort and familiarity with movement*

**Description:** Students stand along a line or in a circle. Demonstrate the different ways of making contact with ball; inside, outside and laces or mid-foot. Practice with a stationary ball.

## Dribbling Basics

### *Ball control and touch*

**Description:** Students dribble the ball back and forth down a straight line. Instruct them to use “Light touches,” tapping the ball forward with each step. Encourage students to keep the ball as close to their feet as possible using the inside, outside and laces (top of the foot or mid-foot), while maintaining control.

**Variation:** Use cones or poly spots as start and stop points.

## Dribble in the Square

### *Awareness and ball control in a confined space*

**Description:** Use cones or floor tape to designate a large square play area. Students dribble the ball inside the square, maneuvering around one another. Encourage students to use both feet and change direction while looking up.

**Variation:** Use verbal cue, “Light touches” with outside, inside and laces to reinforce proper technique.

## Cone Weave Drill

### *Agility and ability to dribble with change of direction*

**Description:** Space out cones in a straight line. Students weave slowly through the cones without a ball, then with a ball when ready. Have them gradually increase their speed to jogging, then to running through cones while maintaining a controlled dribble.

## Red Light/Green Light

### *Instruction following and dribbling control*

**Description:** Students stand along a straight line. Use auditory and/or visual cues to signal “Green light!” Students start dribbling forward. Students should dribble with the ball close to their body. Use another auditory and/or visual cue to signal, “Red light!” Students immediately stop with the ball. Students who do not stop, must go back to the start line.





### Teaching Tips for Success

- Use field lines or other markers to help students learn to dribble straight and under control.
- Use a light touch for control and keep the ball close, about 1-2 feet from body.
- Use balls in a variety of colors and sizes.
- Place tape on inside and outside of foot where it should make contact with ball.
- Emphasize looking at the ball and looking out on the field.
- Walking or jogging next to students while they're dribbling can help them understand proper pacing as they develop dribbling mechanics.
- Verbal cues can include "Light touches," "Head up" and "Look forward."
- Use volleyball floater ball.





## Sharks and Minnows

### *Dribbling past defenders and tackling*

**Description:** Position the students in a 20 x 25 feet, area. Designate two students as “sharks” and the remaining ones as “minnows.” Minnows dribble balls around the square, protecting their dribble from the sharks. Sharks try to gain possession and knock the minnows’ balls out of the square. If this happens, the minnow retrieves her ball and starts dribbling again. After a two-minute game, pick two new sharks. Play several rounds so all players have the chance to be a shark.

## NASCAR

### *Following instructions and dribbling at different speeds*

**Description:** Students start with a ball inside a designated area. Call out, “Ladies and gentleman, start your engines!” Students should tap the top of the soccer ball with the bottom of their foot ten times. Then call for:

- “First gear!” Students start dribbling the ball at a walk.
- “Second gear!” Students start dribbling at a fast walking pace.
- “Third gear!” Students start to jog while dribbling.
- “Fourth gear!” Students start dribbling as fast as they can while keeping control of the ball.

If two players “crash” into one another or their soccer balls touch, they must stop and high five to restart their engines and return to the game.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Adjust size and distance of the playing area based on students’ abilities and size of the group.
- Encourage students to experiment with the ball to help develop ball control.
- Practice changing direction. Walk, run, stop and restart all while dribbling.
- Once comfortable dribbling, encourage students to keep their heads up to view the field and players around them.
- Use peer partners to reinforce skills with students who need extra help.





# DRIBBLING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student cannot control ball when running*

## What To Do

*Have student walk and dribble until he is comfortable, then slowly increasing speed to a light jog, then a run*

*Walk or jog next to student to establish pace*

*Practice in a smaller area defined by tape or markers*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student loses ball when moving to right and/or left*

## What To Do

*Have student practice slowly dribbling around cones; increase speed as student develops better touch*

*Practice Ball Touch Warm Up drill*

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Ball frequently gets away from student*

## What To Do

*Slow down; relate pace to ability*

*Practice "light touches," using inside and outside of foot*

*Demonstrate looking up to see field and where the ball is going*



# SHOOTING

In soccer, the aim of the game is simple, score goals! Shooting is the skill of striking a ball, stationary or in motion, with your foot toward a target. To score goals, students need to develop both good shooting techniques and the confidence to take shots whenever they have a suitable opportunity.

## SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

### Stationary Shooting

#### *Shooting technique and accuracy*

**Description:** Demonstrate proper shooting form. Next, have students practice first without a ball. Once they show good technique, spread out several balls in a straight line 10-15 yards from the goal and line students up behind balls. The first student behind each ball walks up to the ball and shoots it at the goal. After shooting the first ball, have the students jog to back of the line. Replace the balls at the start line for the next group of students to shoot.

**Variation:** Increase difficulty by having the students jog or run to the ball, then shoot it.

### Shooting a Moving Ball

#### *Striking a moving ball, shooting technique, accuracy*

**Description:** Place students in groups of five to eight, lined up facing the goal. Assign one student as ball roller. He slowly rolls the ball in front of the other students, who shoot the moving ball at the goal. Start by having students walk to shoot the ball, then jog, then run. Make sure proper form is used.

**Variation:** Advance drill by rolling the ball from behind the students and behind the goal. Increase the difficulty by increasing the speed of the rolling ball, adding a small bounce, increasing the distance from the target or decreasing the size of the goal.

### Shooters and Shaggers

#### *Shot accuracy, power and loose ball recovery*

**Description:** Organize the students into teams of two. Each player rotates between the roles of shooting and retrieving balls for his partner. The ball retriever is called a "shagger." Organize an arc of about four or five cones, approximately 10 yards from the goal. The shooter from each team takes a shot from the first cone. The shagger retrieves that ball and passes it back to the shooter, who then moves on to the next cone to shoot. Once all the students have taken a shot from each cone, the shooter and shagger switch positions.

## One vs. One to Goal

### *Dribbling, shooting, defensive positioning and tackling*

**Description:** Create an appropriately sized playing field with goals on opposite ends of the field. Divide students into teams of three. Number the students "1" "2" and "3," or assign different colors. Student No. 1 from each team starts on the field, student No. 2 in goal and student No. 3 behind the goal as a shagger. The students on the field will play one vs. one for about a minute. Roll in spare balls if a ball goes out of play. Rotate the players so everyone has a chance to play at each position.

**Variation:** Different types of One-on-One games will be beneficial for students with advanced soccer skills.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Use larger ball or soccer trainer.
- Use peer partners to work with students needing extra help.
- When shooting, have students approach the ball slightly from the side instead of straight on.
- Encourage students to keep their head down and look at the ball when shooting.
- Keep in mind shooting accuracy is more important than power.
- Adjust distance from goal to encourage accuracy.
- Use poly spots as visual cue for when to kick ball.



## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Kicks in the general direction of the goal, but without consistency or power
- Kicks a stationary ball while stopped or walking
- Keeps eye on the ball only

### Proficient

- Shoots with reasonable accuracy
- Shoots with the top of the foot to generate power
- Controls a moving ball before shooting
- Approaches the ball from the side, not straight on
- Kicks the ball with some confidence

### Advanced

- Shoots consistently and accurately
- Shoots a rolling ball midstride
- Shoots under defensive pressure
- Shoots with the instep of the foot and follows through
- Demonstrates confidence and consistency





# SHOOTING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Backspin on ball when the shot goes high or wide*

## What To Do

Encourage student to strike the middle of the ball

Practice stationery shooting

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student has no power or accuracy when shooting*

## What To Do

Demonstrate and practice planting non-kicking foot next to ball

Make sure knee of kicking leg is in a V shape over the ball and then kick through the ball

Practice shooting form without a ball

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student consistently misses making contact with the ball*

## What To Do

Practice with a stationary ball

Use soccer trainer ball with color cues

Combine a dribble with a shot to maintain contact with the ball

Reinforce "keep eye on the ball"





# CONTROL & RECEIVING

Control and receiving skills allow players to get and keep the ball so they can dribble, pass and shoot. Strong control and receiving skills enable students to develop good shooting techniques and the confidence to take shots. The body, excluding hands and arms, should be used like a cushion to collect or stop the ball so students can then take control of it. To be successful soccer players, students must learn how to control and receive a ball that is heading in their direction.

## CONTROL & RECEIVING ACTIVITIES

### Receiving with the Feet

#### *Trapping and controlling a pass*

**Description:** Demonstrate proper form for receiving a pass. Group students in pairs. Have one roll the ball toward the other. The student receiving the ball should stop the ball with proper form, and then dribble the ball back to the thrower. They continue taking turns as the roller and receiver.

**Variation:** Increase the speed with which the ball is rolled.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Novice players will usually react to a ball by kicking it rather than trying to control it.
- Use verbal cues, "Trap," "Control" and "Stop then tap."
- Demonstrate using the inside of the foot to bring a ground ball under control; body weight should be on the supporting leg with the receiving foot raised slightly off the ground.
- Have students practice raising their foot higher than the ball, then bringing it down in front of the ball to stop it.
- Students can exaggerate movements to get the feel of the correct technique.
- Break movement down and practice the individual elements first, and then combine to practice the whole technique.

### Receiving a Bouncing Ball

#### *Trapping and controlling from a bounce*

**Description:** Align the students facing a partner. Demonstrate proper receiving of a bouncing ball. Have one student slightly bounce the ball to the other just below the knee. The other student or "receiver" collects, receives and controls the ball using his feet. Change positions.

**Variation:** Increase difficulty by increasing the distance and/or the height of the bounce.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Attempts to control ball by only using the foot to trap it, but without consistency or accuracy
- Waits for ball to come close, does not move to ball

### Proficient

- Controls and stops a rolling ball with the inside of the foot
- Judges the ball speed both on the ground and in the air, and traps with the body

### Advanced

- Chooses the correct technique and body surface to control the ball
- Dribbles, passes or shoots after receiving and controlling the ball

### Receiving with Chest and Thigh

#### *Aerial trapping and ball control*

**Description:** Demonstrate the proper technique for receiving a ball from the air. Align the students facing a partner, designate one the thrower and one the receiver. "Throwers" gently lob a ball in the air above the waist. "Receivers" alternate using their chest or thigh to stop the ball. As it falls to the ground, they should trap and collect the ball with their feet and dribble back to the "thrower."

**Variation:** Increase difficulty by increasing the distance, speed and height from which the balls are lobbed.



# CONTROL & RECEIVING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Ball bounces away from student after receiving it*

## What To Do

Encourage the student to let the ball come and just as it is received, pull foot back slightly to "cushion" it

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Ball goes under student's foot*

## What To Do

Watch ball all the way to foot

Pair students for rolling and trapping drill

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Ball path has been misread and student misses the pass*

## What To Do

Encourage the student to keep his eye on the ball at all times

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is unsure when choosing controlling body surface*

## What To Do

Have student shout which body surface she will use; pass the ball accordingly until player gets feel for best choice and technique





# PASSING

Soccer is a team game. Playing as a team requires that each student be able to pass the ball well. Through passing, a team can quickly counterattack from defense, maintain possession in midfield and set up opportunities to score. Once the technique is learned, the key to good passing is repetition. Practicing these drills also fosters teamwork and friendships.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Passes the ball in the general direction of the target, mostly with the head down, but lacks accuracy
- Passes the ball in the general direction of target, but has difficulty controlling power (uses too much power or too little)
- Passes the ball with the toes, but not the inside, outside or instep of the foot (upper surface of the arched middle portion of the foot in front of the ankle joint)

### Proficient

- Passes accurately to a teammate who is standing still
- Looks up from time to time to locate teammates
- Passes the ball with the instep of the foot
- Makes eye contact with the receiver while passing
- Begins showing confidence while passing

### Advanced

- Accurately passes to teammates who are stationary or moving
- Dribbles and passes with the head up
- Adjusts passing speed/power appropriately
- Passes with confidence



# PASSING ACTIVITIES

## Partner Pass

### *Passing technique and control*

**Description:** Demonstrate proper passing technique. Group students into pairs. Beginning at a close distance, have pairs stand directly across from one another, passing and receiving the ball with proper form. Increase difficulty by increasing the passing distance between the pairs. This is also a great warm-up drill for students at more advanced skill levels.

## Passing to a Moving Teammate

### *Passing accuracy and speed judgment*

**Description:** Pair students and have them face their partners. Demonstrate the moving pass, showing how the ball must be passed slightly in front of the moving teammate to create an accurate pass. Have students pass to their partners while walking back and forth between two cones. The partners receive and control the pass and then pass it back. After ten passes, have the students rotate positions.

**Variation:** Increase difficulty by having receiver jog or run back and forth on the line instead of walking.

## Soccer Bowling

### *Passing accuracy and power*

**Description:** Place five to ten cones in an area, spaced a few feet apart. Group students into teams of three to four. Have teams pass balls from outside the area toward cones, attempting to knock them down. A student in the middle can retrieve balls for the team. Keep time to see how long it takes to knock down all the cones, encouraging students to beat their previous time.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Remind students to always keep their eyes on the ball and check their aim before striking.
- Break down skills into steps, having students practice making eye contact before they pass.
- Help students gain a feeling for how much power they need to deliver the pass and the correct pace by practicing passing to targets at various distances.
- For students having difficulty, concentrate on passing first with the inside of their feet and gradually introduce using the outside.
- Practice kicking to a line or marker placed a few inches in front of marked stationary target.

## Turning Cone

### *Passing while dribbling*

**Description:** Divide students into teams of two or three. Align each team behind its own starting line or cone. Place the “turning cone” about six to fifteen steps away from the start. On the “Go” command, have the students dribble the ball out and around turning cone. Dribblers should then pass the ball back to the waiting teammate. To determine a winner, the teams can race against each other or the clock, or get points for each completed pass.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- For students still having trouble passing while moving, have them practice passing at a stationary target while jogging/running.
- It may be helpful to return to control and receiving drills if students are having trouble making contact and passing with accuracy.
- Stress the idea of working with teammates; encourage students to talk to one another and work together as passer and receiver.

## Guard the Castle

### *Teamwork, passing and defensive positioning*

**Description:** Divide players into teams of four. One player on each team wears a pinnie and becomes “defender of the castle.” Place a ball on top of a cone in the middle of the playing area. This is the “castle.” The three other players pass the ball around to each other, attempting to knock the ball off the cone with a pass. Encourage students to pass to the other two teammates before trying to knock down the castle. Rotate students so each has a chance to be a defender and an attacker.



# PASSING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Ball goes in the air when student passes*

## What To Do

Show student correct place to contact ball (needs to make contact higher)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student stumbles after kick*

## What To Do

Show student correct place to contact ball (needs to make contact lower)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Ball goes to side of teammate*

## What To Do

Correct student's stance so non-kicking foot is next to ball and student is facing target

Practice kicking to a line or marker placed a few inches in front of marked stationary target



# GOALKEEPING

Goalkeeping is the skill of protecting your goal from opponents. Goalkeeper is the only position in soccer where a player is allowed to pick up and throw the ball. A sound, confident goalkeeper does more than simply stop shots. He is a source of confidence for the entire team. The goalkeeper should be an advanced student who wants to play in goal and has the strength of character to be successful. Encourage everyone who wants to try goalkeeping. You cannot predict who will excel until they actually play the position. Also, it will give all players respect for how tough the position is, and the keeper's teammates will be less likely to blame him when goals are scored!

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Gets behind line of the ball
- Scoops low balls with legs straight and together
- Gets both hands to the ball and brings it securely to the body

### Proficient

- Maintains concentration when ball is away from goal
- Goes down on one knee to scoop low balls
- Secures high ball with both hands

### Advanced

- Distributes ball using appropriate technique
- Lowers body center of gravity before diving
- Dives on side of body, not flat on stomach

## GOALKEEPING ACTIVITIES

### Receiving Low Balls

#### *Goalie handling and throwing*

**Description:** Demonstrate proper technique for receiving low balls, with hands forming an “M” with little fingers almost touching. Have the goalie stand in goal while a partner rolls a ball toward her. Show the goalie how to position her body behind the ball and use proper form and have her scoop up the ball with both hands. Have the goalie use an overhead throw to return the ball back to her partner. Increase roll speed and eventually kick the ball at the goal from different angles to increase difficulty.

### Receiving High Balls

#### *Goalie handling and catching*

**Description:** Demonstrate proper technique for receiving aerial balls, with goalie's hands forming a “W” with thumbs almost touching. Have the goalie stand in goal while a partner throws the ball toward him. Show the goalie how to position his body behind ball and use proper form. Then, have him collect the ball from the air with both hands. Have the goalie use an overhead throw to return the ball back to his partner. Increase the speed of the throw and eventually kick the ball at the goal from different angles to increase difficulty.

### Goalie Fundamentals

#### *Reflexes, handling and catching*

**Description:** Set up a triangle using large cones or flags, spaced 4 yards apart per side. Place a goalkeeper on each side of the triangle. Stand in the middle with several balls and go around the group working on basic goalkeeping fundamentals. Have the goalkeepers throw balls back to you once they have stopped it. Repeat the drill, but throw balls randomly to keep students thinking and mentally alert.

**Variation:** Have students take turns in the middle throwing balls at “Goalies.”

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Goalkeepers need different skills from other players; speed off the mark, courage to dive on the ball and ability to throw and catch accurately.
- Goalkeeping can involve a lot of standing and waiting; coaches and partners can help new goalies maintain concentration when the ball is away from goal.
- Teach and encourage diving on the side of the body, not flat on the stomach; it's safer and increases the barrier in front of the ball.
- Demonstrate and practice “M” and “W” hand positions without ball and with stationary ball.







# GOALKEEPING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student distributes ball from too far back in the goal box*

## What To Do

Instruct student to move up to just inside the box before distributing the ball. Use marker or tape to mark the spot(s) student should move to

Have student count off three to five steps forward before distributing the ball

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student stands on goal line*

## What To Do

Encourage student to stand on goal line and then take one big step forward

Use markers to give visual cues for proper positioning

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Throwing ball out when not in right position*

## What To Do

Make sure when passing that the goalkeeper is in the middle of the goal area

Encourage goalie to "Pause and look" before she throws







# BASKETBALL

Basketball offers fun and fitness as both an individual and team activity. With a ball and hoop, basketball can be played in a driveway or on a playground, by one or many players. As a sport, its reliance on teamwork makes it a great group activity. Like soccer, basketball not only encourages fitness and sport participation, but also advances cognition and creates opportunities for social interaction and developing friendships.

This section will introduce students to the basic skills necessary to play basketball. It's important to note that basketball can be a fast-paced and physically demanding sport. Some students may feel most comfortable remaining at skill development, rather than participating in game play. Offer modified game play opportunities and be sure to give students the flexibility and time to progress at their own pace.

These basketball skills and drills can be implemented in an area with basketball hoops or an area without hoops that has a flat, open surface where students can practice dribbling, catching and passing skills. They require basic sports equipment: basketballs, pinnies and cones, markers and poly spots.

The basketball activities in this section help promote and develop the following sport and team play skills:

## MOTOR SKILLS

- Strength & endurance
- Jumping
- Body and spatial awareness
- Timing
- Visual tracking
- Hand-eye coordination

## COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Expressive and receptive language
- Direction following
- Defensive vs. offensive play
- Game rules
- Quick decision-making

## SOCIAL SKILLS

- Peer interaction
- Sportsmanship
- Teamwork, taking turns

# PASSING & CATCHING

Passing and catching allow teammates to move the basketball around the court, with the final objective of putting a teammate in a good position to take a shot on basket. These skills combined are two of the most essential components of basketball. Since students need partners in order to work on passing and catching, teamwork is a critical part of mastering these skills.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Passes the ball using two hands from stationary position
- Uses a bounce pass with minimal distance and accuracy
- Uses a chest pass with minimal distance and accuracy
- Closes eyes or turns away when catching ball

### Proficient

- Makes a two-handed pass to an intended target
- Makes a bounce pass to an intended target
- Catches a pass while stationary with consistency
- Keeps eyes open and on the ball

### Advanced

- Passes the ball using a bounce or chest pass or overhand pass while moving
- Passes the ball at various distances to a partner while moving
- Passes the ball while moving with confidence and consistency

## PASSING & CATCHING ACTIVITIES

### Assisted Wall Bounce Pass

#### *Bounce passing accuracy and strength*

Students stand 5-10 feet from a wall, depending on ability. Have students bounce pass the ball off the ground toward the wall. Then, students take a forward step while passing to increase force of the throw. They can catch the ball as it bounces back, if needed. As they improve, students can catch their own bounce-backs.

### Target Chest Pass

#### *Chest passing accuracy and strength*

Create a target on the wall and have the students stand about 5-10 feet away, depending on ability. Students pass the ball with both hands from their chest. The ball should hit the target in the air. Taking a step forward while passing will give more power to the throw.

### Passing with Movement

#### *Ability to pass while moving in multiple directions*

Pair students together based on ability level. Both students take sideways steps while passing and receiving the ball. This requires the students to constantly judge the distance the ball is traveling.

**Variation:** Increase difficulty by having the students take forward and backward steps.

### Loose Ball Recovery

#### *Instincts and coordination for retrieving loose balls while reinforcing passing*

Place students in groups of three to five by ability and assign one to be the “Passer.” With other students in a line, the “passer” rolls or bounces the ball to the left or right of each student. Students move to get behind the ball and retrieve it. Then, pass the ball back to the “passer” and return to the start position. Give each student three to five attempts before moving to the back of the line. Switch passers so all students have a turn at retrieving the ball.

### Shuffle Step Passes

#### *Passing with movement, speed and accuracy similar to gameplay*

Pair students based on ability and have them face each other about 10 feet apart. Students begin shuffling sideways down the court, while passing one basketball back and forth to their partners. Both bounce and chest passes can be used.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a smaller ball or a ball with bells for students with smaller grip or vision challenges.
- Have students practice bouncing the ball on the ground and catching it as often as possible, or as a warm-up.
- Physically guide students through passing motion and reinforce trapping drills.
- Use pictures and other fun images as wall targets.
- Use a beach ball or lighter ball to begin passing if students seem afraid of the harder basketball.



# PASSING & CATCHING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student's chest pass is too soft*

## What To Do

Start with elbows close to body and push wrist and fingers through the ball  
Try smaller/lighter ball (size 3 or junior size)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student's bounce pass is too high and too slow*

## What To Do

Start with ball at waist and aim for a bounce spot closer to teammate  
Partner with student and demonstrate correct height and force

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student's passes are off target*

## What To Do

First two fingers of each hand should be pointing to target/person at the end of the pass  
Practice passing to target on wall

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student closes eyes while catching*

## What To Do

Begin passing while standing close to partner and take one step back at a time  
Use beach ball or lighter ball so it is less intimidating



# DRIBBLING

Dribbling is one of the most fundamental basketball skills. A player in possession of the ball must dribble in order to move around the court so all players must be effective dribblers to be successful at playing the game. Good ball handling requires good dribbling skills. It's not only important to learn how to dribble well, but a player must also know when and where not to dribble. Becoming a good dribbler will require much practice, good fundamentals and high confidence, so when teaching dribbling, always be prepared to bring a student back to the basics. When teaching any skills and drills, consider the language and vocabulary. Dribbling is a term many students may not be familiar with. Begin with terms like bounce and tap and then introduce the term dribbling.

## DRIBBLING ACTIVITIES

### Stationary Dribbling

#### *Ability to control and dribble basketball*

**Description:** Give students a basketball to explore and play with independently. Let students feel the texture of the ball and what it is like to release it to a target. Show students how to hold the basketball with the pads of the fingers and not the palm of the hand. Have them practice and get a feel for the difference between holding with the palm and finger tips. Students' non-dominant hands can be used to guide the ball and the strong hand should be directly on top of the ball. Standing in place, students push the ball toward the floor with only one hand on top of the ball at a time. Then, students "dribble" to a target on the floor trying to hit it each time. Complete ten dribbles with the right hand, then ten with the left. Gradually encourage the students to use only one hand and to look up instead of at the ball while dribbling.

### Alternate Hands 5-4-3-2-1 Dribble

#### *Higher level of dribbling control and cognition*

**Description:** Have students stand in place and dribble the ball five times with one hand. After the fifth dribble, have them bounce the ball across the front of the body to the other hand. Then, dribble the ball five times with the other hand. Instruct students to bounce the ball back to the first hand, then dribble four times without stopping. Repeat, each time doing one fewer dribble on each side.

**Variation:** Advance the drill by adding movement.

## Dribbling with Movement

### *Controlling a dribble while moving in multiple directions*

**Description:** Once students have mastered the skill of stationary dribbling with one hand in a fluid motion, introduce movement into the drill. Instruct the students to dribble the basketball while walking ten steps forward and ten steps backward or use cones and have students dribble to the cone and back.

**Variation:** Introduce side-to-side movement, such as a sliding or shuffle step.

### Cone Weave

#### *Dribbling with higher pace and spatial awareness*

**Description:** Set up a series of cones in a straight line. Students line up and dribble the basketball while weaving in and out of the cones. When they reach the last cone, they turn around and complete the drill again. Have them first complete the drill at a walking pace, then gradually increase to jogging and running.

### Dribble Freeze Tag

#### *Dribbling with control and urgency while avoiding other players*

**Description:** Select an area sized for the number of students participating. One student is designated "It." Each student must continually dribble within the selected zone. During this time, "It" will dribble around trying to tag other players. If a player loses the dribble, is tagged by "It" or steps out of bounds, they must freeze in place. A player can be unfrozen if another player dribbles the ball between their legs and controls it. All players are unfrozen if "It" loses control of her dribble. Play for 3 to 5 minutes or until all players are frozen.

### Connect the Dots

#### *Dribbling with control, precision and agility*

Spread a variety of targets throughout the practice area, creating straight lines, slaloms and zigzags. Designate targets by number. Have students line up behind the starting line and dribble to each target, connecting the dots.



## Teaching Tips for Success

- Use a larger, lighter ball or a ball with a hand placement guide.
- Use hand-over-hand, letting students put their hands on top of yours to feel the rhythm of dribbling, allow them to feel the roundness of the ball, dimples and weights, ask the students what the ball feels like.
- Students can wear a wristband to help differentiate right from left hand or dominant from non-dominant hand.
- Play dribbling games like red light/green light and freeze tag to help students become more comfortable with the ball.
- When dribbling, keep the ball at hip or waist height so it is easier to control.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Dribbles the ball at least three bounces in a row using two hands
- Dribbles the ball with one hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place

### Proficient

- Dribbles the ball with right then left hand more than three bounces in a row while standing in place
- Alternates the dribble between both hands more than three bounces in a row while standing in place
- Dribbles the ball while walking at least ten steps

### Advanced

- Dribbles the ball while running at least twenty steps
- Dribbles the ball with either hand while moving in any direction
- Dribbles the ball using finger tips



# DRIBBLING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student pushes the ball too far out to make contact on the bounce and continue the dribble*

## What To Do

Have student start with dribbling in place, controlling the bounce and meeting it with hand

Use poly spot or marker to practice bouncing/dribbling to target on floor

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student watches the ball when dribbling*

## What To Do

Tell student to keep head up and look occasionally for the rim

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student takes too many dribbles*

## What To Do

Give the student a spot on the wall to focus on

Have student push the ball out from the waist more and run after it

Have student dribble while moving or dribble and slide

Demonstrate and dribble alongside to give sense of pace and timing

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student loses balance on the forward foot, causing the pivot foot to drag (travel)*

## What To Do

Tell student to hop before she stops and land with feet shoulder-width apart, with head up

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student dribbles too high or wide to control the ball when changing direction*

## What To Do

Practice the bunny hop

Practice dribbling at knee height; first stationary, then moving and changing direction



# SHOOTING

Shooting is perhaps the most important skill in basketball and possibly the most challenging to teach. All the other skills are tools a team uses to get the ball and the players into position to score. A student cannot become a good shooter without good form, mechanics and practice, practice, practice! As often as possible, teach by modeling proper form, demonstrating shooting motion and correcting poor form immediately following a shot. If students can develop confident, accurate shooting skills, they will be harder to stop on the court.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Uses a two-handed overhand and underhand shot and hits the backboard
- Hits the backboard with a set shot

### Proficient

- Makes a basket with a set shot
- Hits the backboard or rim on a layup attempt, using proper form
- Hits the backboard with a jump shot, using proper form

### Advanced

- Makes a basket on a layup attempt, using proper form
- Makes a basket with a jump shot, using proper form
- Hits backboard or makes free throw or foul shot

## SHOOTING ACTIVITIES

### Pass to Shoot

**Developing a sense for shooting; transitioning movement from passing to shooting**

**Description:** Place targets at various heights on the wall. Have students line up about 5 feet from the wall and take turns “shooting” at the wall.

**Variation:** Students can also practice shooting over a rope or net that can gradually be raised higher.

### Shoot to Self, Wall, Partner

**Shooting with proper technique and power**

**Description:** Show students proper shooting form and follow-through. Have them shoot ten shots up in the air to themselves, then ten to the wall or partner.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- If possible, use a lower or adjustable basket with a backboard to help students build confidence in their shooting ability.
- Begin with smaller, lighter balls until moving to standard basketballs.
- Practice shooting form in pairs before moving to shooting at basket.
- Use poly spots or floor markers to assist with distance and positioning from basket for various shots.

## One-Handed Set Shot

**Shooting at the basket and better form**

**Description:** Students line up close to the basket. Each student takes a turn shooting the ball at the basket with proper form. After each shot, demonstrate pointers for form improvements before sending them to the back of the line; rotate about three times. Then, have each student shoot three times in a row, giving more pointers when necessary.



## Pass and Shoot

**Shooting after receiving a pass**

**Description:** Group students for as many hoops as you have in the gym. Line each group up under basket, facing one other student or teacher. The student/teacher passes to the first student, who will catch the ball and shoot it. Demonstrate improvements after each shot. Have students complete the drill as many times as possible.



## Shooting Under Pressure

### *Shooting over a defender and following the shot*

**Description:** Divide students into teams of two or three. Teams line up along the side or front of the basket. The drill starts when the shooter is passed the ball. Teach the shooter to step to receive the pass, get in proper shooting position, then take a shot. Coach or peer partner plays “Hands-up” defense to passively contest the shot. If a shot is missed, the shooter follows to get the offensive rebound and returns to the end of the line. Tally a team’s made shots and strive to improve the team’s score.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- When shooting a layup, tell students to imagine there is a string tied from their shooting elbow to the same side knee; this may help them coordinate the mechanics of the shot.
- The basic movement of a layup is similar to a skip so have some fun practicing skipping.
- Use poly spots or markers to assist with proper placement for shooting and layups.

## Layup Using Backboard

### *Taking a proper layup while moving toward the basket*

**Description:** Demonstrate the proper layup form. Have students practice layups from two steps away from the basket without dribbling. Once the motion of the shot can be performed, have them practice approaching the layup from a walking dribble, gradually moving to a running dribble and from receiving a pass.

## Two-Ball Layup or Power Up

### *Scoring low post with layups or shooting*

**Description:** Place two basketballs on the floor, one on each block. Starting from inside the lane, have students pick up a ball and perform a proper shot or layup. After the shot, the students do the same with the ball on the other block. Each student will repeat this for 30-60 seconds. Have a peer partner rebound under the basket and put the ball back on the block after each shot. Keeping track of made baskets can help assess skill.

## Rapid Fire Shooting

### *Shooting, rebounding, passing*

**Description:** Place students in groups of three with one shooter, one rebounder and one passer. The shooter shoots the ball, the rebounder retrieves the ball and then passes to the passer, who passes the ball back to the shooter when she is ready. After the shooter takes five shots, everyone rotates.

**Variation:** Have shooter dribble one bounce, then shoot, increase bounces before shot, add stop and shoot, using a variety of shots and combinations to increase difficulty.





# SHOOTING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Mechanics are correct, but student still misses*

## What To Do

Watch to make sure student is keeping eyes on the target while shooting  
Practice Rapid Fire Shooting with a focus on "spotting" the basket before shooting

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student lowers the ball while flexing the knees, lengthening the shooting stroke and making it easier to block the shot*

## What To Do

Remind student to keep the ball high and move only the legs during the down and up part of the shot

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student jumps at the end of the shot, drifts off balance and misses*

## What To Do

Have student work on jumping and landing on the same spot of the floor

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Shot is short of the basket*

## What To Do

Make sure student is using legs to start the shot and following through  
Start with a lower basket, then move up

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is slow to shoot after receiving a pass*

## What To Do

Have student practice being in a shooting position (knees bent) when receiving a pass, then immediately turning to shoot



# REBOUNDING

Rebounding can be one of the most important factors in winning a basketball game. Offensive rebounding gives teams extra chances to shoot and defensive rebounding stops shot attempts from the offense. Unlike the other skills in basketball, attitude and confidence are the most important factors in rebounding. A good rebounder not only knows how to get into the right position, but is determined to do the best she can to get the ball and is aggressive enough to fight for it!

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Attempts to catch a ball that is tossed in the air
- Attempts to catch a ball that rebounds off the backboard
- Tracks the ball as it is shot at the basket
- Turns to face the basket and takes ready position for rebounding

### Proficient

- Catches a basketball that is tossed in the air
- Catches the ball after it rebounds off the backboard and bounces once on the floor

### Advanced

- Moves to “box out” an opponent before jumping for a rebound
- Collects the ball, gains control and determines whether to pass or shoot



# REBOUNDING ACTIVITIES

## Jump and Grab

**Learning the basic concept and motor functions of rebounding**

**Description:** Group students in pairs. Have teacher or peer partner lightly toss a ball up and out of the student rebounder's reach. The rebounder should jump, grab the ball with both hands and place it under his chin with elbows out.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- If possible, use a lower or adjustable basket with a backboard to help students build confidence in rebounding.
- Begin with smaller, lighter balls until moving to standard basketballs.
- Practice running and jumping to the basket without the ball to reinforce the movement.

## Rebounding a Tossed Ball

**Rebounding higher balls and balls coming off the backboard**

**Description:** Group students into pairs. Have one peer partner toss the ball in the air above the other, who is the rebounder. The rebounders should take a step to the ball, jump and grab it from the air.

**Variation:** Toss the ball off the backboard or rim to give practical gameplay experience. Repeat three to five times per student.

## Rebound with Outlet

**Rebounding with opposition and looking for the next pass**

**Description:** Divide students of similar ability into groups of three or four. One student will start as a shooter and the rest start as rebounders. The shooter takes a shot in front of the basket. After the ball is shot, the rebounders all attempt rebounding it. Whoever gets the ball must pass to a teacher or peer, who is waiting as an outlet pass. Repeat the drill until a student gets three rebounds. That student then becomes the next shooter, and the shooter becomes a rebounder.



# REBOUNDING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student keeps getting cut off from the rebound by opponents*

## What To Do

Advise student to locate opponents before focusing on the ball so she can position herself between the opponent and the basket

Set up and practice rebounding scenarios outside of game play at slower pace to point out what to look for

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student loses balance as people move around him near the basket*

## What To Do

Make sure student keeps feet apart enough to stay balanced and move off the balls of his feet

Practice repetitive jumping

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student has trouble holding on to a rebound*

## What To Do

Make sure student is grabbing with both hands as firmly as possible

Have students practice catching the ball off a wall





# TRACK & FIELD

Track & Field offers a variety of accessible opportunities for students of all abilities to train and compete at their optimum level, as well as master skills that can lead to lifelong involvement in sports and fitness. Combining running, jumping and throwing into one discipline, track & field can serve as a building block for all other sports.

The activities here can be implemented with basic sports equipment; tape measure, stopwatch, batons, softballs, string and a long jump pit or long jump mat. Participation in track & field helps to advance the following sports and team play skills:

## MOTOR SKILLS

- Proper form, mechanics and fundamental sport skills development
- Full body strength and agility
- Proprioceptive and kinesthetic body awareness
- Proper posture and core strengthening
- Balance, weight shifting
- Body and spacial awareness
- Coordination and full body movement
- Aerobic fitness
- Visual tracking
- Eye-hand, eye-foot coordination
- Jumping
- Timing

## COGNITIVE SKILLS

- Following directions
- Expressive and receptive language
- Game rules
- Responding to starts and stops
- Distance, weights and measures

## SOCIAL SKILLS

- Peer interaction
- Teamwork
- Sportsmanship









# RUNNING BASICS

Mastering good running form takes many years, much practice and great patience. Although it seems instinctive, proper running requires purposeful, controlled movements that may not come naturally. Mastering these movements and combining them smoothly can be exceptionally challenging for many students, especially those with special needs. Running drills can place stress on knees, hips and other joints if students are not using proper form, therefore it is very important to adapt or modify drills when necessary.

Incorporate these drills as regular warm-up exercises or as part of other sports development drills to reinforce terminology, proper form and concepts such as speed, intensity and smooth motion.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Holds arms bent at waist, swing from elbow not shoulder
- Runs with feet wide apart or toes pointed outward
- Strides that are too short or exaggerated and too long
- Lands flat-footed or on toes slightly bent
- Runs with heavy feet
- Leans forward or backward, hunched shoulders
- Tight fists

### Proficient

- Swings arms in opposition below waist
- Runs with short strides
- Runs with moderate to high knees
- Walks/jogs reasonable distance without tiring
- Maintains “running tall” posture, looks forward

### Advanced

- Arms swing in opposition at hips, no crossing chest
- Mid-foot hits ground with light feet
- Eyes and face stay forward
- Runs with comfortable stride, not overextending
- Relaxed, movement is smooth and continuous
- Runs short distances without tiring





# POSTURE ACTIVITIES

## Puppet

### *Visualizing good posture*

**Description:** Good posture helps make a runner more efficient and promotes a strong, confident and positive attitude. Have students stand in a circle. Instruct them as follows, “Close your eyes and picture yourself as a puppet controlled by a puppeteer with a string attached to your head. The string is holding your posture vertical and perpendicular to the ground. Keep your chest out. Head and torso are fixed and steady. Now, “Open your eyes.” Have them look at a point about 30 feet in front. Remind them to keep their hips and back erect, creating an overall “tall” posture. Now, have them walk around in a circle in “running tall” posture. Then, call out, “Slump!” Students drop chest, shoulders and head and continue walking in a slouched position. As they walk the circle ask them to think about how they are feeling. Do they notice the difference? Slumped posture restricts breathing. Can you see in front of you if you are slumped? Do you feel strong and confident when you stand tall?

## Running Tall

### *Posture, form and stability*

**Description:** Review and demonstrate “running tall” form: spine straight, shoulders down with a slight forward lean with head up so chin is parallel to the ground, looking forward, and with arms and hands are relaxed.

Break students into small groups. Set up two cones 10-15 feet apart for each group. Next, have students “walk tall” with beanbags on their heads from one cone to the other. When this is mastered, students increase walking pace with the beanbags on their heads. Then, students remove beanbags and jog/run with “running tall” posture from one cone to the other. Reinforce that this is the “running tall” position. Verbal cues can include, “Look forward” and “Back straight.” Take teachable moments to demonstrate not running tall when you see students leaning forward, backward and looking down.

**Variations:** Run a relay race with beanbags on heads; run in pairs with one student acting as the teacher providing verbal cues.

## Tightrope

### *Balance and body awareness and control*

**Description:** Good balance and the ability to eliminate counterproductive movements that waste energy are critical to gaining speed and endurance in running. Have students walk along a straight line on the floor, track or field or create a line with tape. Instruct them to take big steps along the line, kicking their leg up to reach the opposite arm. Have

them continue walking along the line hand to toe, moving slowly and maintaining balance for about 40-50-feet, and then jog back to the beginning of the line.

**Variations:** Have students reach opposite hand to toe toward the ground. Or, have students copy common movements that lead to inefficiencies as they walk along the “tightrope,” head bobbing, head shaking, body swaying, body twisting, knees and toes pointing inward or outward or hands angling inward.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Place a sticker on the back of each student and have them run in line directing their eyes at the sticker on the person in front of them, not at their feet or up in the air.
- Keep limb and trunk movement to the left and right to a minimum, point out hips and help students recognize when they are twisting.
- Use peer partners for students needing extra help. The ability to coordinate the arm swing with the leg movements takes much practice.
- Demonstrate “running tall” position frequently, emphasizing head up, and relaxed shoulders and arms.



# ARM MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

## Beat the Drum

### *Arm movement control and accuracy*

**Description:** Line students up in rows as if they are in a marching band. Ask them to imagine they have drums on their hips with the tops facing forward, not down. Demonstrate where the drums are and have the students show you the tops of their drums. Demonstrate good arm swing until all students have it. Then, while standing in place, have the students begin swinging their arms to hit their “drum.” Remind them that the tops of the drums are facing forward, not upward and the pinkies and outsides of the hands strike the drum face. As they swing their arms, clap in rhythm, count, “One-Two-One-Two” or play music. It may be helpful to demonstrate a few examples of bad form, where hands cross the middle or swing from side-to-side and miss the “drums.” Call out verbal cues like, “Stand tall,” “Soft shoulders,” “Loose fists,” and “Pump arms.” Assist students by holding up hands as targets for them to hit with each swing.

**Variation:** Increase difficulty by beating the drum while jogging.

## Egg Toss

### *Relaxed hands, proper placement of palms*

**Description:** Mark a starting line and finish line on a track, field or gym floor. Place students in groups of five to eight and have them line up behind a starting line. Give each group two plastic eggs. Demonstrate how to hold the egg with a relaxed hand and with the pointed end up to ensure that palms are always facing each other and not down. Have students run to finish line and back holding eggs and concentrating on keeping hands relaxed and palms facing inward with thumbs up. When students return to start line they pass eggs off to next student. Repeat until all students have turn.

**Variation:** Conduct drill using hard boiled eggs and look to see if egg shell cracks.

## Arm Mode Crazy Course

### *Recognize and practice proper arm motion*

Set up cones around practice area to create a crazy pattern. Make several courses, depending on number of students participating. Divide students up into groups behind each course. Students will take turns running through the course with their arms in different “modes.” First, demonstrate “stiff arms” mode where hands are “glued” to their sides, straight and with no movement as they run. Have students feel and discuss what it’s like to run without the movement

of their arms. Next, “relaxed arms” mode. Demonstrate relaxed shoulders and arms swinging lightly and naturally. Students run through course in relaxed arm mode and see where their arms go while relaxed. Stress relaxing the shoulders. Then, “pump arms” mode where students keep elbows bent at 90 degree angle and pump back and forth with all movement coming from relaxed shoulders. Elbows do not bend. Demonstrate and have students complete the course in “pump arms” mode. Students can repeat the three modes and discuss how each feels different and which one feels most stable and makes it easier to run.





# LEG MOVEMENT ACTIVITIES

## Fast Feet

### *Leg speed and strength*

**Description:** Instruct students to take small steps and work on very fast leg action. Arms and feet move very quickly. Knees should bend only slightly, most of the movement is on and off the balls of the feet. Forward speed is not important. The drill can also be done in a stationary position.

## Heavy Feet/Light Feet

### *Understanding the difference between heavy and light feet*

**Description:** Students line up on one side of the gym. Instruct students to run to the other side of the gym like they have heavy feet. Verbal cues can include, “Plop,” “Stomp” and “Bricks on your feet.” Have them run back with light feet. Verbal cues can include, “Tip-toe feet” and “Feathers on your feet.” Tell students their feet should feel like springs. Visual cues such as a picture of a brick or feather can be used. Progress to using a start and change signal every 15-30 seconds, as they run from end to end, alternating between heavy and light feet.

## High Knees

### *Running tall and range of motion*

**Description:** The purpose is to lift the knee high while bouncing gently off the ground or track. Using a short stride, instruct students to bounce off toes and take an exaggerated high step, coming up onto the ball of the left foot while raising the right knee. Students should drive knees as high as possible with each stride, moving forward slowly with the exaggerated high knee motion and bouncing on opposite foot. There is no emphasis here on speed of movement, simply “running tall” and light and getting a good range of motion.

## Marching

### *Running “tall”*

**Description:** Think marching band! Students take a “running tall” position, a gallant form with a very slight forward lean. Have students begin by walking slowly forward on the balls of their feet using small steps, keeping heels off the ground. Their knees should come up high, with thighs parallel to the ground. Arms swing slowly and deliberately in rhythm with leg strides. Emphasize staying “tall” while rapidly lifting and driving down the knees in a coordinated movement.

## Butt Kicks

### *Leg speed and strength*

**Description:** Have students jog forward. With small strides, have them kick up each leg as high as possible so their back

heel hits, or comes close to hitting the buttocks with each step. Arms should be in a relaxed running action and knees low. Most of the movement should be with lower leg.

**Variation:** Increase the speed to make the drill more challenging.

## Stop Light

**Description:** Tell students that each color signals a certain speed: slow, medium and fast. When you hold up the color for that particular speed, students will run in place at that speed. When they are running fast, they should be mostly on the balls of their feet.

**Variation:** Break the class into groups with a leader for each group.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Have student run straight at you to make sure that the shoulders stay parallel to ground and upper body is not twisting back and forth.
- Use poly spots or markers to show proper foot placement.
- Keep distances short; 60-70 feet at most.
- Encourage students to always run relaxed at every speed.
- When they become tired or are unable to maintain proper form, stop and let students rest; running when tired or with poor form may lead to injuries.
- Have students walk with quick steps on balls of feet to practice form and forefoot strike.
- Emphasize the foot striking the ground under the student’s body, not ahead of it.



# RUNNING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is not running in upright position*

## What To Do

Remind student to picture a string, like a puppet pulling her up, and practice what she thinks that looks like

Do Funky Run and other fun activities that show the difference between good posture/form and poor posture/form

Create a visual target for students to look at, encouraging them to run with head up and eyes forward

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is landing on heels not ball of foot*

## What To Do

Place tape on the ball of foot and have student walk to see what it feels like to hit the midfoot

Have the student walk with quick steps on balls of feet

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is swaying arms and upper body side-to-side*

## What To Do

Demonstrate proper arm positioning while standing still

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student's shoulders are hunched with fists tight*

## What To Do

Have students run with squishy balls in hands

Do shoulder shrugs as warm up exercise to encourage student to relax shoulders





# STARTS

A good start can make all the difference in any track event, regardless of the distance. At the beginning of a race, runners need to start out strong and fast. The shorter the race, the less time a runner has to reach full speed so a strong start can be the determining factor in winning. There are two components to being a good starter: reaction time and explosiveness.

There are two primary types of starts: the standing and the block start. We will focus only on the standing start. Refer to the *Special Olympics Athletics Sports Training Guide* for Block Start drills.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Stands behind start line
- Stays still in “Set” position
- Stops at finish line

### Proficient

- Identifies power foot
- Bends front knee slightly, balancing weight on both legs
- Remains still in “Set” position
- Stands behind line, relaxed, power foot in front on ball of foot
- Pushes off with power foot using ball of foot

### Advanced

- Stays low, using arms to drive body forward
- Holds 3-point start position
- Extends legs fully, driving arms and legs forward
- Pushes strongly off ball of power foot, swinging back arm forward

## Start Commands

### “On Your Mark” Command

#### Developing proper form

The “On your mark” command is used when students come to the starting line to begin the race. Students should stand behind the start line, relaxed with power foot in front. The toe of the back foot should be behind the heel of the front foot, about 7-10 inches apart. Encourage students to look up slightly, focusing about 6 feet ahead.

### “Set” Command

#### Developing proper form

On the “Set” command, students must become as still as possible. Instruct students to bend front knees slightly (about 120 degrees), placing weight on ball of power (front) foot. The arm opposite the power foot should be held in front of students’ bodies, with a slight bend at the elbow. The other arm should be back, bent slightly just past the hip with the hand closed. Encourage and remind students to remain as still as possible.

### “Go” Command

#### Developing proper form

On the “Go” command, starter’s pistol or whistle, instruct students to drive back leg forward, leading with the knee, swinging front arm back. At the same time, students should push strongly off ball of power (front) foot, swinging back arm forward forcefully. Encourage students to stay low, using arms to drive body forward.

## STARTS ACTIVITIES

### Finding the Power Foot

#### Developing proper form

**Description:** In this start, the student places “power foot” forward, pushing off with explosive force for strong launch. You can easily determine the “power foot” by having students pretend to kick a ball. The foot that is used to kick the ball is the back foot, or “quick” foot. The foot that is used to support the body is the front foot, or “power foot.”



## On Your Mark, Get Set, Go!

### *Understanding terminology, purpose and timing*

**Description:** Place students in pairs. Demonstrate first the position for “On your mark.” Have one student call out, “On your mark” and another find the position. Do the same with “Get set.” Next, combine “On your mark, get set,” and have students practice moving from one position into the other on the call of their partner. Reinforce the power foot when students are standing in the “Get set” position. Finally, introduce “Go!” and combine all three steps, having students push off their power foot to make their most explosive start.

## Bounding

### *Leg strength and power*

**Description:** Bounding drills are designed to develop the explosive leg power required to make a good start. Beginning from a slow jog, instruct students to leap forward and upward with a high knee lift. Have students alternate legs and concentrate on good form. Remind them to keep head up and drive arms upward, as this will help keep the whole movement together. Have students repeat for eight to ten steps on each leg and jog out of each repetition.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Be sure verbal cues are understood before beginning start drills.
- Use color signs; red, yellow, green as visual cues for “On your mark,” “Get set” and “Go!”
- Demonstrate proper push off and leg/arm positioning so students can gain a feel for when they are in position and when weight is in the right place.
- Colored shoe laces, stickers, etc. can be used to help students determine right from left, or to identify power foot.
- Practice verbal cues for starts often.

## Stand-Up Start Drill

### *Creating an explosive start*

**Description:** Have students stand in a “running tall” position with feet a comfortable distance apart and head, neck and hips in alignment. Instruct students to place power leg forward at the starting line, bending at the knee. In “Set” position, bend forward from the trunk and bring arms up in position opposite the legs. On command, whistle or gun, encourage students to drive down arms and legs, attaining maximum acceleration.

## Partner Push Drill

### *Develops leg/knee power and strong arm thrusts*

**Description:** The purpose of this beginning drill is to develop powerful and explosive knee drive and strong thrusting arm action. Students take the proper “Set” position. Stand in front of the student with hands on his shoulders. On command, the student pushes explosively at a 45 degree angle (not upright) into a fully extended position while the coach provides strong resistance and support.

## 3-Point Start

### *Creating an explosive start*

**Description:** Students place the hand opposite the front leg on the track with the other arm bent back with hand at hip. The knee of rear leg is placed opposite front foot. Eyes should focus on the track just in front of feet keeping the head down. On the command of “Set” raise the hips above the head/shoulders. On “Go,” drive out, keeping the head low, and move into upright “running tall” position after four to five strides.

## Crouch/4-Point Start

### *Creating an explosive start, especially for sprints*

**Description:** The four-point start is most commonly used in sprinting. Have students get into a crouch position with both hands just behind the starting line. The front knee is over the start line and the back knee is placed on the ground next to the front ankle. The fingers form a bridge (on fingertips) behind the start line, with the thumbs pointing toward one another. The head and neck are in line with the spine. On the “Set” command, both legs extend so the hips are slightly higher than the shoulders. Students should be stable, remaining motionless until the “Go” command.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate and assist students with getting a feel for how high their hips should be in the “Set” position.
- Use images or real pictures to show and reinforce positioning for three-point and four-point start.
- To help students stay in lane, set up a crooked lane and have students walk/run/jog while staying in their lane.
- Reinforce concepts of start and finish, have students practice racing to marked targets on your command and stopping on target.
- Place an additional marker about 20 feet from marked finish line so students can practice running through the finish and decelerating to a stop.



# STARTS COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student jumps the "Go" command*

## What To Do

Reinforce verbal cues

Add visual cues along with the verbal cues, like a green flag or sign

Break start down into steps

Practice taking off and running to a target on the "Go" command alone

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student cannot hold the "Set" position*

## What To Do

Check to be sure student has the strength and flexibility needed to hold the positions. If not, modify the movements and reinforce those positions for that student

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student changes mind about which foot she wants to push off of*

## What To Do

Use ribbon or tape to identify student's power foot

Compare drive from each foot and show student which one was faster and stronger

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Makes a late start, stays too long in "Set" position*

## What To Do

Partner student with a peer and practice moving just from the "Set" position to "Go" on the peer's command

Use a flag along with the "Go" verbal command to see if the visual cue helps



# SPRINTING

Sprinting is the art of applying speed and intensity to good running form. Power and coordination are the fundamental ingredients in the production of speed. Since a sprinter runs a short distance, a powerful start is critical to allowing the sprinter to reach maximum speed quickly in a race.

Speed is determined in two ways: how long the steps are (stride length) and how quickly they are made (stride frequency.) Foot strike refers to how the foot contacts the ground. A student controls speed by how much force is applied with each foot strike. The quicker the foot strike, the faster the student runs.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Identifies power foot
- Bends front knee slightly, balancing weight on both legs
- Performs a stand-up start
- Maintains upright posture with “running tall”
- Pushes off the track with balls of feet

### Proficient

- Remains still in “Set” position
- Stands behind line, relaxed, power foot in front on ball of foot
- Moves foot backward under body upon landing
- Drives knees up so thigh is parallel (horizontal) to track
- Swings arms forward and back without rotating shoulders
- Performs a three or four-point start with some inconsistency

### Advanced

- Stays low, using arms to drive body forward
- Pushes strongly off ball of power foot, swinging back arm forward
- Sprints under control for entire race
- Maintains good form while running as fast as possible
- Performs a three or four-point start in good form consistently





# SPRINTING PHASES

Sprinting is broken down into four phases: start, acceleration, momentum maintenance and finish.

**1. Start** – Revisit Starts section.

**2. Acceleration**– the rate of increasing speed from the start.

The acceleration phase is achieved by driving or pushing with the drive leg. This requires a forward lean, directly proportional to the amount of acceleration. Remember that acceleration does not mean speed, it means the rate of increasing speed. As the drive leg is pushing, the free leg is also driving low and fast to place the foot under the body's center of gravity. With each step, speed increases until top speed is reached. Each leg is driven powerfully until it's fully extended. Vigorous arm action is helpful in maintaining balance, rhythm and relaxation.

**3. Momentum Maintenance**– maintaining the speed once it has been established.

The momentum maintenance phase is achieved by combining basic mechanics with the speed attained in the accelerating phase. The knees drive up high so the thigh is parallel to the track. Students need to maintain "running tall" posture, with slight forward body lean from ground, not from the waist. Arms swing forward and backward vigorously, without rotating shoulders or twisting at waste.

**4. Finish** – the finish phase starts as students approach the finish line and are usually running as fast as possible. It's important that students focus on maintaining good sprinting posture with normal stride action through the finish line. Practicing the finish and deceleration is necessary and can be fun. As they take the last stride, have students lunge forward and lean through the finish line, pretending that the finish is beyond where it really is to continue momentum and then gradually reduce speed to a jog and walk. A "deceleration zone" can be marked on the track with tape to give students a visual reference. Use the verbal cue "Lean through" as students approach the finish line. Demonstrate and practice deceleration separately as part of teaching this phase.

## SPRINTING ON A CURVE

Runners lean inward around the curve, keeping feet parallel to the curve. Demonstrate and practice running on a curve using the verbal cue, "Lean in!"



### Teaching Tips for Success

- Make practice fun and effective by playing sprinting games like red light/green light, capture the flag, tag or relays.
- Have students stand in a circle and practice "leaning in" and "leaning through."
- Have students exaggerate pushing their chests forward as they cross the finish line.
- Keep the focus on good form and doing personal best.
- Assess your students' endurance for sprinting; they should not tire or become exhausted trying to run too fast.



# SPRINTING ACTIVITIES

## Quick-Step Running

*Develops quick leg action over distance*

**Description:** Have students assume their “running tall” position. Students run in place, bringing heels up and under buttocks and then move out to running forward in medium-length strides with low knee lift. The upper body is tall and lifted with a slight lean forward. Head should be level and arms and shoulders relaxed. Students should maintain a smooth pace throughout the run and take walking lunges back to start.

## Fast Leg Drill

*Develops quickness in legs and arms*

**Description:** Students stand along a starting line in the “running tall” position. On your “Go” command students should quickly alternate driving knees up (high knees) while pumping arms for about 10-15 seconds. Repeat three times. This is also a great warm-up drill for sprinters as they advance.

## B-Skips

*Develops quick leg action, drive up/drive down and consistency in proper foot strike*

**Description:** Students start in “running tall” position. On your command they begin skipping, lifting knee high and extending their leg out in an almost exaggerated kick forward as if stepping over a hurdle. The foot is always toe up. Students remain on their toes with hips in a neutral position so the knee can reach its best height before the leg is extended out. Ensure they strike the ground on the ball of the foot and under their center of gravity to propel forward not upward. This leg extension is a great activity for stretching the hamstring. When finished, have them jog back to start. Alternate legs for three reps of ten to twenty-five skips.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Break movement into three parts: begin with regular skipping, then add high knees before combining all into one movement.
- Stand in front of the student and have the student run in place, hitting your hands with her knees, to demonstrate correct knee lift.
- Practice marching drills to reinforce high knees.

## Basic Sprint

*Develops proper sprinting form*

**Description:** Students take “running tall” position at start line. Practice start commands using verbal and visual cues. Instruct students to sprint a certain distance (20-50 meters) and jog back to the start for a brief rest before running the drill again.

**Variations:** Make sprints longer, add more repetitions and work with the student to improve the stand-up start, as well as sprinting form.

## Back-to-Front

*Develops speed and endurance*

**Description:** Divide students into groups of six to eight, based on ability. Instruct them to jog in a single file line. The last runner in the group sprints past teammates to front of the line to become the new leader. When the new student reaches the front of the line, the new last person sprints to the lead and so on. Continue for a specified time or distance, or until everyone has had the chance to sprint.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Emphasize that students must stay in their lanes during sprint races. Change designated lanes for reinforcement.
- Practice sprinting form on straightaways and curves.
- Have other students stand at finish line and call out, “Finish” when the sprinter crosses the line.
- Keep distances short (20-50 meters at most).
- Encourage students to always run relaxed at every speed, keeping body upright and arms loose.
- When they become tired or are unable to maintain proper form, stop and let them rest; running when tired or with poor form may lead to injuries



# SPRINTING COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student's arms and shoulders twist and rotate while running*

## What To Do

Practice proper form while running in place

Have student sit on ground, legs stretched in front, and practice proper arm movement

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is not running in upright position*

## What To Do

Make sure drive leg is being fully extended (push off)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is very tense with fists clenched, facial muscles scrunched, shoulders up high*

## What To Do

Practice running relaxed; emphasize proper breathing

Practice running with egg drill

Have student run with squishy balls in hands

Practice relaxation and breathing techniques

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student weaves in lane*

## What To Do

Have student practice running on lane line

Have student run behind or alongside peer partner

Use poly spots to create a more defined visual path



# RELAYS

Relays allow track & field participants to come together as a team. Relay races are as much about skill as they are about speed. Relays combine the art of running fast with a baton and passing it from one teammate to the other, with precise timing, proper technique and above all, teamwork. Relay races involve three exchanges, with the fourth runner crossing the finish line with the baton. The most difficult concept to instill in relay participants is running away from someone while trying to receive something from that person, from that person within the exchange zone. The ultimate goal of the relay is to move the baton around the track and across the finish line in the fastest way possible. Incorporate relay passing into daily conditioning exercises.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Performs a stand-up start
- Holds baton in hand while running
- Sprints under control with “running tall,” erect posture, slight forward body lean from ground with some consistency

### Proficient

- Runs the curve, staying in lane
- Passes and receive baton in exchange zone with designated technique
- Lunges forward and leans through finish line

### Advanced

- All intermediate skills with good form and technique at increased speed, coordination and consistency
- Passes baton in exchange zone while running

# RELAY BASICS

## Selecting Relay Runners

Select your 4x100 meter relay runners based on their individual ability to exchange the baton smoothly, with speed, in addition to being strong sprinters. You may find that some students are better at handing off than receiving a baton. Place the students accordingly. The lead-off runner only has to hand off, but must be consistent at getting a strong and legal start. The second and third runners have to both receive and hand off the baton. The fourth runner only receives the baton, but must know how to effectively finish a race.

## Roles for each Runner

- 1. Lead-off:** Passes baton only. Gets the team out in front. Must be a fast starter, aggressive and strong, with good acceleration and balance. Can run the curve and stay in lane.
- 2. Second:** Receives and passes baton. Keeps the team in the race, if the team is not in first place, the job is to get them there. Second is a very fast runner with ability to run strong straightaway and excellent speed and endurance.
- 3. Third:** Receives and passes baton. Puts team in a position to win. Must be a strong runner, able to run well from behind, maintain a lead and build upon it and run the curve while staying in the lane.
- 4. Fourth or Anchor:** Only receives baton. Secures the victory! Must be able to run well from behind or maintain a lead. Is most competitive runner with ability to catch and pass other runners and race to the finish.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- **Demonstrate correct hand position for passing and receiving baton.**
- **Use foam rings to start if baton is difficult to hold.**
- **Start with standing exchange, then walking, then running.**
- **Demonstrate ready position for outgoing runner.**
- **Play games to help students become comfortable holding and passing the baton before introducing exchanges.**
- **Take as much time as needed practicing the exchange while walking and gradually pick up the pace.**



## Holding the Baton

Instruct students to grasp one end of the baton with fingers around the baton and thumb lying on top of it. At first, it may be helpful to stick a piece of tape around the baton, indicating where the students should grasp it.

## The Exchange

In beginning exchanges, the carrier has the baton in the right hand; the receiver accepts the baton in the left hand and immediately shifts it to the right. (Adjustments can be made for left-handed runners.) The risks are that students could drop the baton when changing hands and the shift may hinder running action.

In advanced exchanges, the receiver does not switch the baton from one hand to the other. It is recommended to teach students the advanced exchange wherever possible. The runners exchange as follows:

1. **First runner:** carries baton in right hand
2. **Second runner:** receives in left hand, carries in left hand and passes with left hand, stands closer to the right in the lane
3. **Third runner:** receives in right hand, carries in right hand and passes with right hand, stands closer to the left in the lane
4. **Fourth runner:** receives in left hand, carries in left hand, stands closer to the right in the lane

## Up-Sweep (Palm Down)

The receiving runner's hand is placed with the palm facing behind her body and with the thumb and finger forming an upside down "V." The incoming student passes the baton in an upward movement into the receiving hand. Upon command from incoming runner, or when incoming runner hits predetermined mark, outgoing runner begins to sprint.

## Down-Sweep (Palm Up)

To start, the receiving runner's hand is placed with palm facing down and with the thumb and fingers forming an upside down "V." With this pass, the outgoing runner runs to a predetermined spot in the exchange zone or responds to a verbal command. The arm is then extended straight back with target hand held high, nearly parallel to the track. The palm is now facing up, fingers slightly spread, and the thumb turned toward the torso. The incoming runner, while maintaining a normal sprint action, extends the baton and arm forward in a downward sweeping motion.



# THE EXCHANGE ZONE

There are three exchange zones in the 4x100 relay and each is 20 meters long preceded by a 10-meter acceleration zone. See the graphic below for the location of each zone on a standard track. The receiver begins running in the acceleration zone, but the baton must be passed in the exchange zone. The key to this is coordinating the speeds of both runners. To gauge when the outgoing runner should begin running a “check mark” is placed on the track that gives a cue to the outgoing runner to begin running. The position of the check mark is based on the speeds of both runners. In order to pass the baton smoothly, the runners must match speeds. Many relays are won or lost in these zones, so drills to increase a team’s baton-passing efficiency are vital to success in the sprint relay.

## Stepping into the Exchange Zone

The first runner begins with the baton. The receiver takes seven steps, then reaches back for the baton. Runners who will receive the baton in the right hand begin striding with the right leg, and vice versa. After counting seven steps, the receiver reaches back for the baton and the passer hands it over. The passer, who’s following, doesn’t count steps. As the receiver’s hand comes back, the passer should finish that stride then pass the baton. Passer and receiver can also use verbal cues as signals during the exchange. Again, make sure the receiver maintains proper form and doesn’t look back.

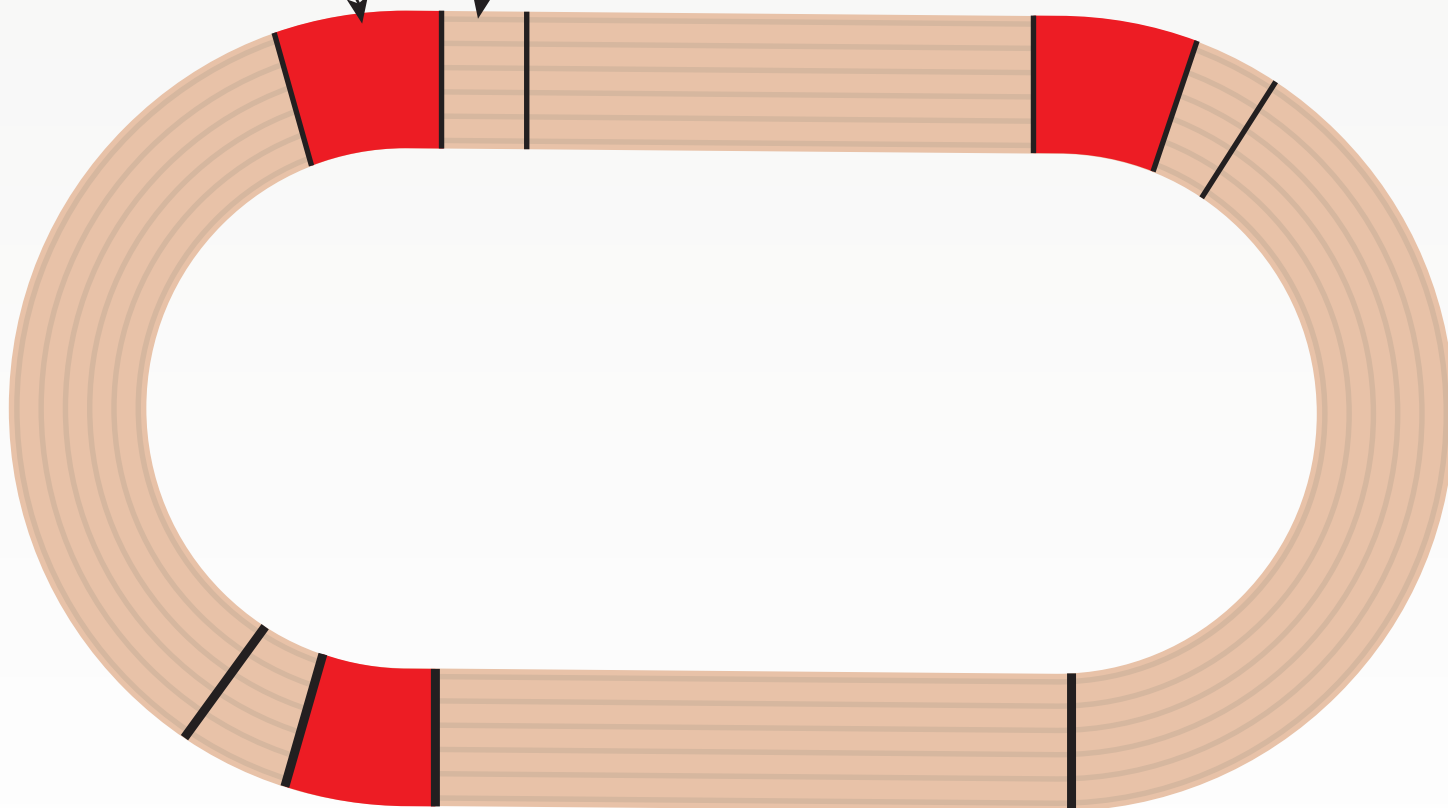


## Teaching Tips for Success

- Start simple; have students walk through the zone, then run through the zone without the baton.
- Introduce the “check mark,” and let them become familiar with moving through the zone; next introduce the baton; walking through the exchange, gradually picking up pace.
- Emphasize making the exchange as quickly as possible.
- Mark off the exchange zones on the track with bright colored tape so students become familiar with the space.

**Handoff Zone – 20m**

**Acceleration Zone – 10m**



**START  
FINISH**



# RELAY ACTIVITIES

## Light Touches Drill

### *Develops proper passing technique*

**Description:** Divide students into relay teams. Students take staggered positions on track, as if running a relay, with the fourth leg runner in front of the third leg, who is in front of the second leg, in front of the first leg. Instruct the first leg runner to hold baton in their right hand and then pass them forward to the second legs, who should receive batons with their left hand, palm facing down and fingers and thumb creating an upside down “V.” The passing should continue until it reaches the fourth leg runner. Repeat.

**Variation:** Increase the difficulty by having the students walk while passing the baton.

## Continuous Relay

**Description:** When students can pass the baton without dropping it while walking, introduce more speed. Place students into relay teams and have them take their relay positions on the track. Encourage the students to focus on proper form as the incoming runner passes to the next runner. Runners should remain where they finished while the baton is carried around the track. Repeat.

**Variations:** Increase the difficulty by advancing to a run, then a sprint, as well as increasing the distance of the relay, all while focusing on proper passing form and technique.



# RELAY COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Passer drops the baton*

## What To Do

Practice with foam ring

Have the student work with a peer partner to practice hand-off while walking

Encourage passer to keep eye on hand of receiver

Make sure student is not gripping baton too tight

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Receiver drops baton*

## What To Do

Practice with foam ring

Make sure receiver maintains the right pace and doesn't speed up too soon

Encourage receiver to grip baton tightly once the exchange is made

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Students cannot make the exchange within the zone*

## What To Do

Revisit hand exchange drills, working separately on each skill

Focus on where student should be looking during the exchange as the passer and receiver

Mark exchange zone clearly, have students work in pairs on timing





# LONG JUMP

Being able to jump fast, far and high is important in many sports. Jumping skills improve overall stability and core strength, as well as kinesthetic and proprioceptive awareness. Practicing the acceleration, control and consistency required to execute a powerful horizontal and vertical jump is not only fun, but reinforces skills for running, standing starts and sprinting.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Reaches, extending arms and upper body forward
- Bends knees and ankles, swinging arms backward, low past knees on landing
- Swings arms up and out toward landing area
- Back to front movement with arms on takeoff

### Proficient

- Can spring forward off both feet
- Extends legs forward, leading with heels
- Keeps head forward to prevent falling backward
- Lands in pit or on mat, heels first
- Bends knees to absorb landing

### Advanced

- Performs a three-to-nine-step stride approach
- Takeoff from board by extending takeoff leg
- Arches back to achieve hang position
- Extends legs, and reaches arms forward and back
- Hits the sand heels first with knees bent



## LONG JUMP BASICS

The goal of the long jump is to leap as far as possible from a marked takeoff point. Long jump is divided into two separate events, the standing long jump and running long jump. Running long jump is a more advanced event.

There are three steps to teaching the long jump: approach, takeoff and in-flight, (step or hang style.) In-flight includes the landing. Allow students to become comfortable with each of the three steps and then combine them.

Always begin in the “Ready” position: student stands behind the board/line with feet shoulder-width apart, toes pointed out slightly. Chin is up and head straight. Arms extended in front of body and relaxed at sides. The back is straight and body leaning forward slightly.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate ready-to-jump position to student as often as needed.
- Use verbal commands such as, “Ready!” and visual cues to help student assume “Ready” position.
- Practice jumping on bouncy surfaces, such as springboards or small exercise trampolines.
- Jump over a towel or two separated ropes on ground to improve distance.





# STANDING LONG JUMP

Standing long jump is done from a stationary position and does not include the approach.

## Takeoff

The takeoff is done by swinging the arms forward and low past knees, then up toward landing area. From “Ready” position, students bend knees and ankles and strongly swing arms back, then up and out with force as both legs drive and extend off ground. On the exhale, students spring forward off both feet at a 45 degree angle; using strong ankle and leg extension to create a powerful takeoff (thrust.) The toes leave the ground last.

## In-Flight

In-flight, students extend their bodies with a slight arch to their backs and raise arms above head. Legs are brought under buttocks and then forward by bending 90 degrees at hips. The legs then extend forward, leading with heels and arms swing downward past legs. Remind them to keep feet parallel and slightly apart. Their heads should be forward to prevent falling backward or looking ahead of landing.

## Landing

Students should extend heels forward to gain maximum length, with the momentum carrying them forward, and land in pit or on mat, heels first.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Have students practice landing after jumping off a box or springboard.
- Emphasize moving legs and arms on a vertical, or back-to-front plane to keep students’ momentum going forward.
- Place a mat or soft surface beyond the landing to encourage students to lean forward after landing.
- Introduce the skills by having students jump over a series of lines spaced increasingly further apart.
- Demonstrate two-foot takeoff emphasizing taking off from both feet.
- Remind students to land with “soft” (bent) knees.





# STANDING LONG JUMP ACTIVITIES

## Jumping

**Description:** To help students get a feel for the jumping movement and experience the sensation of leaving the ground, practice jumping on bouncy surfaces, such as springboards, small exercise trampolines or foam rubber. If students are having difficulty, pair jumpers and non-jumpers and have them face one another, hold hands and jump together.

## Jumping Games

**Develops powerful, explosive leg action**

**Description:** Conduct jumping games to promote long jump skills. Here are a few examples:

- Play red light/green light using jumping instead of running
- Play a game of tag incorporating jumping along with running
- Play music and have the students jump when the music is on and freeze when the music is off
- Have students jump over a series of lines spaced increasingly further apart

## Circle Jumping

**Develops powerful, explosive leg action**

**Description:** Place a series of ten to twelve hoops on the ground. Instruct students to jump from hoop to hoop. Initially place hoops close to each other, then set them progressively further apart to demand long-reaching strides and explosive leg action. Encourage students to bend knees and use a forward and upward swinging motion of the arms to help each jump.

## Low Obstacle Leaps

**Develops powerful, explosive leg action and spring in legs**

**Description:** Create and place five obstacles about 3 feet apart. Instruct students to jump over the obstacles. Once students land, they immediately hop or bound over the next obstacle. Remind students to use arms to obtain height and distance over obstacles.



## Teaching Tips for Success

- Demonstrate and emphasize the forward and upward swing of the arms to help each jump.
- Emphasize back-to-front motion to keep momentum going forward.
- Have students practice jumping over a towel or two separated ropes on ground to improve distance.
- Practice moving legs and arms on a vertical or back-to-front plane to keep students' momentum going forward.



# RUNNING LONG JUMP

In the running long jump, speed is critical to carry the jumper a further distance, so great long jumpers are often great sprinters. Make sure your students can execute a proper sprinting pattern and reproduce it over and over again before considering the running long jump. The successful long jumper requires speed and spring, combined with the ability to stride consistently. The goal is to sprint and hit the takeoff board with the push-off leg without adjusting the stride at any time.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Place different colored footprints on the runway.
- Have students practice approach run as often as possible so that a consistent run develops.
- Have students measure the approach themselves so they know the start point.
- Use colored bands, stickers, colored shoelaces, etc. to help students identify takeoff leg.

## Determining Takeoff Leg

The student's stronger leg is usually the takeoff leg. Have the student take three consecutive hops from a standing start using the right foot and then left. The leg on which they hopped the farthest is likely the takeoff leg. If a preference is not shown, most right-handed people will use their left foot for takeoff.

## Measuring an Approach

The goal of the approach is to gradually accelerate to a maximum, but controlled, speed that can be used to propel the jumper at the takeoff point. As students progress through skill and strength improvements, the length of the approach will be adjusted, moving from three to five, seven and nine strides. To measure the approach, have students stand on the takeoff board and run back down the runway, counting the number of strides. Mark the point where the student stops or reaches the number of strides she plans to use for the approach. This is the initial mark that will be adjusted forward or backward. Students face takeoff board from this mark. Run approach several times and note location of first and third steps taken with takeoff foot. Matching the stride to meet these two checkmarks will help students run a consistent approach.

## The Takeoff

Have students perform the approach run and plant takeoff foot on board behind foul line. Instruct them to stretch upward immediately prior to takeoff. They should takeoff strongly from board by extending takeoff leg, bending other leg and driving thigh up and over sand pit. Their upper body should be straight, head up and vision focused ahead in the sand. Instruct them to land in a running position on non-takeoff foot and run through the sand.

## In-Flight – Step Style

From takeoff, students drive right knee and left arm forward and upward over sand pit. While in flight, they extend lead leg with the takeoff leg trailing, appearing to be in a stride position mid-flight. They should circle right arm overhead and bring left leg forward, so that arms and legs are parallel. When preparing to land, have them extend arms and upper body to reach forward, dropping arms below legs and bending knees upon hitting the sand. They should land in the sand heels first, with hands sweeping past hips. Instruct them to roll over on toes, falling forward.

## In-Flight – Hang Style

From takeoff, students should drive right knee and left arm forward and upward, holding left leg and right arm back, then driving left leg and right arm (they are parallel). They should arch back to achieve "Hang" position. They should then circle arms clockwise while lowering upper body toward thighs, extending legs, and reaching arms forward and back. They should hit the sand heels first and bend knees, moving upper body forward and rolling over toes, falling forward.



# RUNNING LONG JUMP ACTIVITIES

## Cross the Brook

*Develops jumping and falling forward and tall body position during jump*

**Description:** Place two ropes on the ground about shoulder-width apart to start, forming a “brook.” Have the students jump from one side of the brook to the other, focusing on driving from the legs and using proper jumping technique. Space the ropes farther apart to work on hopping distance.

## Pop-ups

*Increases height on jump and develop tall body position during jump*

**Description:** Place string or light rope across pit about 10 feet from takeoff board. The distance of the rope can be adjusted depending on skill level. Instruct students to take the “running tall” position and begin short approach. They should run toward pit with moderate, controlled speed, hitting board and driving up and out beyond marker and landing into pit. Repeat several times to work on proper form.

## Combination Skills: Approach/Takeoff/Landing

**Description:** Line students up one at a time on the runway on their individual starting point. Have them begin their approach by stepping forward with the takeoff foot. On a verbal command, students accelerate to the takeoff board, planting the appropriate approach step (three to nine strides) on the board. Encourage students to take off strongly from the board, driving the knee opposite the takeoff foot forward and over the landing pit. Show students how to extend their legs forward, bring the upper body down to the thighs and drop the arms below the legs in preparation for landing. Students should land in the pit, heels first with hands behind the hips. Upon landing, instruct students to thrust arms and upper body forward, remembering to bend their knees to absorb the impact, and then roll over their toes and fall forward. Start with shorter approaches then gradually increase distance as students’ skill improves.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Break down skill and demonstrate and practice each move separately.
- Have students use a three or five stride approach, then work up to nine strides.
- Student always takes first stride with takeoff foot.
- Move the start back, always taking an odd number of strides, until a consistent approach is achieved.
- Increase length of approach as flight technique improves.





# LONG JUMP COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student takes off on the wrong foot and looks down at board*

## What To Do

Re-check approach and start point  
Practice doing run the exact same way each time  
Do run-up on track with controlled acceleration

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is not getting any height in the jump (stays close to ground)*

## What To Do

Increase drive; make sure upper body is not angled forward; use extension of legs  
Practice bounding and jumping drills  
Strengthen core muscles with warm-up/fitness exercises

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student lands upright*

## What To Do

Increase forward reach and momentum; increase height so legs can be repositioned  
Strengthen core muscles  
Practice two-footed jumps

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is not extending and moving arms and legs during flight*

## What To Do

Increase confidence, control and/or strength; make sure takeoff leg is fully extended so student is getting height  
Jump from boxes





## TURBO JAV

At a fraction of the size and weight of a traditional javelin, the Turbo Jav was designed to teach throwing fundamentals and proper mechanics in a safe and fun environment. Even advanced athletes in other throwing sports can benefit from using the Turbo Jav to improve throwing accuracy and technique.

The skills and drills presented in this section have all been derived from an instructional booklet produced by Tom Petranoff, two time world record holder in Javelin, inventor of the Turbo Javelin, and owner of Throwing Zone Athletics.

### Skill Progression

#### Basic

- Grips the Turbo Jav appropriately
- Throws the Turbo Jav from a standing position
- Aims for a close target

#### Proficient

- Throws the Turbo Jav with a one or multi-step approach
- Hits close targets consistently
- Throws the Turbo Jav for distance

#### Advanced

- Throws the Turbo Jav with a full approach
- Consistently hits targets at various distances
- Consistently throws for long distances



# TURBO JAV BASICS

## The Grip

The grip refers to both the part of the Turbo Jav where the thrower holds it, as well as how the thrower holds it. On the grip area, you'll find a line of raised dots followed by a raised "V." This is called the "Y system." The grip should be placed in the students' hands with the dots facing down into their palms. The crease of the thumb and index fingers rest on the raised V, while the fingers wrap around the lip of the grip. Proper hand placement on the Turbo Jav is essential for learning how to accurately throw it.

## Throwing Mechanics

1. **Stance:** Student stands with feet shoulder-width apart and entire body facing forward. The non-throwing arm is pointing in the direction of the throw.
2. **Grip:** See above for proper Grip.
3. **Carry:** Student brings the Turbo Jav up to head height directly beside the eye, keeping it parallel with the ground.
4. **Drawback:** Keeping the Turbo Jav level and point facing forward, the throwing arm pulls the Turbo Jav back above the head and over the shoulder so the tail is now behind the student.
5. **Throw:** With a smooth, continuous motion, student pulls the Turbo Jav forward through their center of gravity and throws it over the shoulder. Ensure good follow through to achieve optimum flight and distance.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Break down and practice Throwing Mechanics and individual body movements without the Turbo Jav first.
- Use tape to mark key positions for proper grip.
- Demonstrate that Turbo Jav should glide like a paper airplane.
- Place markers or poly spots on the ground to help students stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Reinforce importance of throwing over the shoulder; throwing to the side of the body will result in bad flights and increase injury risk.
- Start with easy throws at first to get the feel of throwing over the shoulder.



# TURBO JAV ACTIVITIES

## Target Throw

### *Develops accuracy and proper throwing form*

**Description:** Designate a throwing line and a safety area behind the throwing zone for students waiting. Set up standing targets or buckets about 15-30 feet away from the throwing line. Divide students into groups so that each group has one Turbo Jav. Demonstrate and practice proper throwing form as described in Throwing Mechanics. Students throw, aiming for the target or bucket. Award points to keep track of accurate throws. For example, one point for hitting the bucket and three points for getting it in. To encourage proper throwing mechanics, be sure that points are only awarded if the rubber nose of the Turbo Jav hits the intended target or bucket.

**Variation:** Advance drill by moving the throwing line further away from the targets.

## Basketball Hoop Throw

### *Develops accuracy and proper throwing form*

**Description:** Designate a throwing line about 15-30 feet away from a basketball hoop and backboard with a safe zone behind the throw zone for students who are waiting. Divide students into groups so that each group has one Turbo Jav. Review proper throwing form. Using proper form, students throw the Turbo Jav at the backboard. Award points when the nose of the Turbo Jav hits the backboard. For example, one point for hitting the outside of the backboard, three points for hitting the square and five points for hitting the backboard and going through the hoop.

**Variation:** Advance drill by moving the throwing line further away from the backboard.

## One Step Approach

**Description:** Designate a throwing line and a safety area behind the throwing zone for students waiting. Divide students into groups so that each group has one Turbo Jav. Students take one large step behind the throwing line. Instruct students to step forward with the same leg as their throwing arm. For example, a right-handed thrower will start with the right foot forward. Students draw the Turbo Jav back in the carry position, with the opposite arm pointing in the direction of the throw. Students then step forward with their back foot and, in a continuous motion, throw the Turbo Jav by pulling the tail through the point. One step throws can be used for both target and distance throws.

## 3-5-7 Step Approach

**Description:** Once students have mastered the throwing mechanics, they can add steps to their approach to help increase their throwing distance. Students start with a three-step approach, which begins the same as the one step approach; with the same foot forward as their throwing arm (i.e. right-hand thrower=right foot forward). Instruct students to raise the Turbo Jav into the carry position. For right-handed throwers, the first step would be with their left (back) foot, followed by the right foot moving quickly to allow the third step off the left foot to plant quickly. Once the left foot is firmly planted, students throw the Turbo Jav. Left-handed throwers follow the same progression, just beginning with the left foot forward. Once students have mastered the three-step approach, add two more steps to make it five, then two more which would complete the seven-step approach.

**Variation:** Advance this approach by moving from a walk to a jog, then a run.

## Full Approach

**Description:** Once students have mastered a seven-step approach at a running pace, they can move on to the full approach. Most throwers will start with a minimum of eleven steps and build from there, but usually not using more than 75-80 feet for the full approach. Students begin a full approach with the same form as the 3-5-7 approaches, making sure to follow through after the throw. Remind students to focus on running smoothly and keeping the Turbo Jav point level and in the direction of the throw. Begin the full approach at a walking pace, gradually moving up to a jog, then a run.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Model approaches and have students walk through with you before introducing the Turbo Jav to the approach.
- Reinforce the importance of the follow through, especially as the length and speed of the approaches increase.
- Use sticker or other visual marker to designate throwing hand/foot.
- Be sure student has strength and range of motion to complete throw, if not modify activity.



# TURBO JAV COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is having trouble keeping Turbo Jav level*

## What To Do

Turbo Javs come in two different weights; try a lighter one if possible  
Re-check for proper grip placement

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student throws with arm, not shoulder*

## What To Do

Remind student to bring non-throwing arm in toward the rib cage when throwing to allow for the throwing shoulder to rotate forward

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student has difficulty coordinating all movements*

## What To Do

Break down movements into three steps and practice each on separately before combining

Be sure student has strength and range of motion to complete throw, if not modify

Practice without Turbo Jav for as long as needed

Use peer partner who has mastered mechanics to work with student



# SOFTBALL THROW

Throwing a softball well is essential to participating in the game. In Special Olympics, Softball Throw is an event in the sport of Athletics (Track & Field.) Many students who find other Track & Field events challenging can excel at softball throw and have a lot fun doing it. While it is a great training tool for the shot put, it also builds strength and coordination and gives students the confidence to try other sports that involve throwing, such as football, softball and baseball.

## Skill Progression

### Basic

- Can release ball forward a minimum of 10 feet
- Has full range of movement in arms and shoulders
- Can grip ball firmly, placing thumb under ball with index, middle and ring finger on top, and little finger on side
- Transfers body weight from the right leg to the left leg

### Proficient

- Can use a high forward release
- Raises right arm with elbow pointing back and hold ball behind the head
- Bends left arm and holds it in front of chest
- Brings right arm up and forward, leading with elbow

### Advanced

- Extends right arm, snaps wrist and releases ball off fingertips
- Follows with throwing arm, down and across body
- Uses a run in preparing for the throw





# SOFTBALL THROW BASICS

## Gripping the Softball and Ready Position

### *Learning proper grip and finger placement on ball*

Have students pick up a softball with their throwing, dominant hand. Students place their thumbs under the ball with the index finger, middle and ring finger on top and the pinky finger on the side. This grip may vary depending on the size of the student's hand. Instruct students to apply pressure by squeezing their fingers to keep the ball in the hand. The finger pressure on the ball should be evenly distributed. A too tight grip can prevent proper spin on the ball. The grip should be firm, but not too tight, thus allowing the wrist to be flexible and create backspin.

## Underhand Throw

1. Position feet parallel, at shoulder-width apart, pointing towards the target.
2. Place weight on dominant foot or throwing arm side.
3. Bring the throwing hand and arm back in a pendulum-style swing with the palm facing forward.
4. At top of the backswing, take a step forward with the left foot, while bending the knees.
5. Swing arm forward, releasing ball when fingers are pointing at target.
6. Allow back foot to step up parallel to forward foot, a bit more than shoulder-width apart.



## Overhand Throw

1. Using proper grip of the softball, keep hand on top of ball as you reach the position where the palm is facing away from target above the shoulder (do not lock elbow).
2. The back foot starts to pivot and turns the body sideways.
3. The elbow should be at the same level as the shoulder and the hand is above the head.
4. The transfer of weight from back to front begins as the elbow leads the arm into the release position (above the head in line with the shoulder.)
5. The arm circle path from start to release point is on line to the target.
6. As the ball is released, the fingers will pull down with force across the seams. The thumb leads the hand downward towards the ground upon release.
7. The follow-through: the hand follows through down and towards the "glove-side." The back leg should continue following through (as if stepping). The goal at time of release is to create complete vertical backspin on the ball.

## Throwing Mechanics with Ball

### *Understanding steps and movements in proper throwing*

Break down throwing mechanics into individual steps, practicing each movement separately without a ball, adding the next as the student masters each. Next, combine all movements and practicing still without the ball. When students have mastered the mechanics of the approach, throw and follow-through, introduce the ball, practice proper grip and continue to focus on throwing technique. Do not be concerned with distance at this point. Smaller and/or lighter balls (rubber softballs, tennis balls, etc.) can be used to help learn the proper technique.

## Throwing for Distance

Advanced students should practice throwing for distance. After the first throw, visually mark where the ball landed, using items such as small flags, cones, Frisbees, etc., so the student knows the distance she needs to surpass. Practice throwing over a barrier, like a high jump standard with the crossbar. Emphasize holding up the throwing arm and throwing overhand. Give each student three tries, encouraging them to try and beat their previous throw.







## Teaching Tips for Success

- Stand behind students and move their arms through throwing motion.
- Practice throwing motion without a ball first, then with ball.
- Demonstrate grip by touching the athlete's fingertips with your hands. Place the students fingers in the correct position.
- Make sure students' left shoulders are lower than the right, and their backs are arched when releasing the ball, this allows for maximum force.
- Use markers for proper foot placement.
- Student can wear wrist band, sticker, etc. to designate throwing hand.
- Make sure ball is proper size to fit students' hands.
- Students with small hands may place all four fingers on top and the thumb to one side and hold the ball in the palm of the throwing hand.
- Place footprints on the ground and have students follow the pattern for throwing.



# SOFTBALL THROW COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student holds the grip too tight*

## What To Do

Make sure ball is not in the palm of the student's hand

Make sure student has finger pressure evenly spaced

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student holds the grip too loose*

## What To Do

Make sure the student is holding the ball with a tighter and even grip

Ask the student to pick up the ball with her finger tips

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student does not grip the ball with the finger tips*

## What To Do

Manually adjust the student's fingers so she is using the finger tips and not the palms of her hand

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student releases the ball too early and the ball falls short of target*

## What To Do

Encourage student to hold ball longer to ensure a higher release point

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student releases the ball too late and the ball misses the target*

## What To Do

Encourage student to release ball sooner to ensure a lower release point.  
Demonstrate the correct release point

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student steps with the wrong foot forward*

## What To Do

Place a piece of tape on the correct foot. Re-emphasize the proper technique with demonstration and physical prompt if necessary

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student has improper weight transfer and the ball lands wide of target*

## What To Do

Provide varying targets from left to right to reinforce bringing ball across body (or to prevent across body weight transfer)









## SHOT PUT

The shot put is a Track & Field event involving “putting” (throwing by using a pushing motion) a heavy spherical weight—the shot—as far as possible, using one hand. The shot is made of solid metal and is put from a circle 7 feet in diameter. The circle has a stop board 4 inches high at its front; if the competitor steps on or out of the circle, the throw is invalidated. The shot is put with one hand and must be held near the chin to start. It may not drop below or behind shoulder level at any time.

### Skill Progression

#### Basic

- Holds shot appropriately in throwing hand
- Places shot against the neck, with palm turned out
- Aims for a close target from standing put

#### Proficient

- Throws the shot with a one or multi-step approach using correct stance
- Hits close targets consistently
- Throws the shot for distance from sliding put

#### Advanced

- Throws the shot with a full approach and rotation
- Consistently hits targets at various distances
- Consistently throws for long distances from gliding put



# SHOT PUT BASICS

The skills and drills presented here are derived from the National Throws Coaches Association website, as well as CoachesEducation.com for beginner's Shot Put.

Step-by-step teaching progressions can be used to lead the beginner through the various aspects of shot put technique, from how to hold the shot to a full throw using the rotational or glide technique. It is important that each step of a teaching progression focuses on a single aspect of technique and that only one new technical element is introduced with each successive step. By teaching the shot put in such a progressive manner, the beginning shot putter is allowed to learn one step at a time and will not be overloaded by having to concentrate on too many things at the same time.

## THE GRIP

1. Hold shot with both hands. Place shot in throwing hand and spread fingers around shot. Do not rest shot in palm of hand.
2. Place thumb and little finger wider apart for balance and support.
3. Raise shot above head, wrist flexed backwards. At this point, the shot is supported on the sides by the thumb and little finger.
4. Bring arm down, place shot against the neck (below the ear) with palm turned out.
5. Lift elbow parallel to the floor, away from the body. Check to see that the thumb is pointing down. Apply pressure against the shot to support it. Once the student is able to demonstrate that he can hold the shot properly, he is ready to learn the basic elements of the throw.

### Teaching Tips for Success

- Practice placement of fingers to learn proper grip around the shot before moving on to the stance.
- Make sure the elbow stays behind the shot.
- Reinforce that the shot is held at the base of the fingers, not the palm.
- Cup the shot with fingers and thumb along the back side of the ball. Don't touch the shot with palm, and don't spread out fingers around the ball. Use dominant hand.





# SHOT PUT STYLES

**NOTE:** This section is written for right-handed shot putters. Switch “right” and “left” if you are left-handed.

## Standing Put

1. From ready position, stand straddle near toe board, facing perpendicular to direction of throw (left shoulder at front of the ring.)
2. Shoulders are parallel to direction of throw.
3. Left arm (non-throwing arm) is relaxed, extended in front of body.
4. Step back and bend right leg, keeping back straight.
5. Turn upper body 90 degrees away from direction of put.
6. Body weight is over bent right leg.
7. Drive hips and chest counterclockwise toward direction of put.
8. Extend right arm and snap fingers, releasing shot.



## Sliding Put

1. From ready position, stand straddle near middle of ring, facing perpendicular to direction of throw (left shoulder at front of the ring.)
2. Lower upper body and flex right leg to quarter squat.
3. Lift left foot and extend it forward, sliding body toward front of circle.
4. Rotate right leg and extend body upward to force hips around to direction of put.
5. Right leg remains flexed and body is perpendicular to direction of throw.
6. Rotate right leg and extend body upward to force hips around to direction of put.
7. Thrust chest forward and extend both legs.

## Teaching Tips for Success

- Use the legs. Explode from the bent position up toward the sky.
- Put body weight behind the put.
- Bend knees and drop buttocks back toward the middle of ring to prevent falling forward and incurring a foul.

8. Transfer weight to left leg.
9. Extend right arm and push shot with fingertips.
10. Release shot, right arm extending in direction of put.

## Gliding Put

1. From ready position, stand at rear of circle, facing away from the direction of put; weight is on right leg.
2. Place ball of left foot on throwing surface.
3. Hop backward powerfully, turning both feet 90 degrees, parallel to toe board.
4. Land on both feet simultaneously.
5. Rotate and raise trunk upward; feet begin turning wse
6. Transfer weight from right to left foot, pivoting both feet and knees toward direction of put.
7. Keep right elbow away from body, and extend right arm forcefully.
8. Keeping thumb down, put the shot and forcefully snap the wrist and fingers outward.

## The Reverse - Weight Transfer

1. After shot is put, right arm continues past body to the left. Left arm continues back around body.
2. Switch feet - right foot moves toward toe board, and left foot moves to the back. All of weight is on right leg.



# SHOT PUT ACTIVITIES

## Warm-up Drills for Shot Put

The underhand toss, chest pass and wrist-flip drills help warm up and prepare the body for the motions of shot put.

### Underhand Toss

To perform the underhand toss, have students stand on the toe board facing the field, holding the shot with both hands in front of the body, bend knees and drive the shot up and out with legs and arms. This drill works on using the entire body to launch the shot.

### Chest Pass

The chest pass should also be done facing the field. Students hold the shot with both hands at chest level, and push the shot up and out, working on your arm extension.

Wrist flips work on the final step of the throw, and can help add an extra foot or two of distance if done correctly. Students hold the shot with throwing hand against neck. While facing the field, they use wrist to “Flick” the shot out from the neck.



## Teaching Tips for Success

- The student should always enter and exit the ring from the rear.
- Break down putting into parts and practice the parts.
- Elbow must stay behind the shot.
- Demonstrate proper way to enter and exit ring.
- Have student keep right elbow at shoulder level during put.
- Move hips forward and keep chest high and square to direction of put.
- Extend the legs during put.
- Put shot with fingers.
- Finish put with right arm extended in front of body, hand above head level.
- The student is balanced the entire time in the throwing circle.
- Practice without a shot, with a softball, and finally with the shot.
- Put begins with extension of legs.
- Do not watch shot after release.
- Student's chin and chest are straight and up.
- As technique improves, left arm gets more involved in putting action.
- Keep shot next to neck before the put, to avoid throwing shot.



# SHOT PUT COACHING CHART

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student is throwing the shot instead of "putting" it*

## What To Do

Correct the hand/arm/elbow positioning, keeping elbow high

Make sure shot is cradled under the chin

Practice in standing put stance

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*The student's shot is not going upward when put*

## What To Do

Remind student to use legs when thrusting; make sure upward direction is being followed with the body.

Use a target to "put over" in the air (i.e., hold a stick or bar in the air)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*Student lands upright*

## What To Do

Increase forward reach and momentum; increase height so legs can be repositioned

Strengthen core muscles

Practice two-footed jumps

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

*No distance/power in student's put*

## What To Do

Break down movements

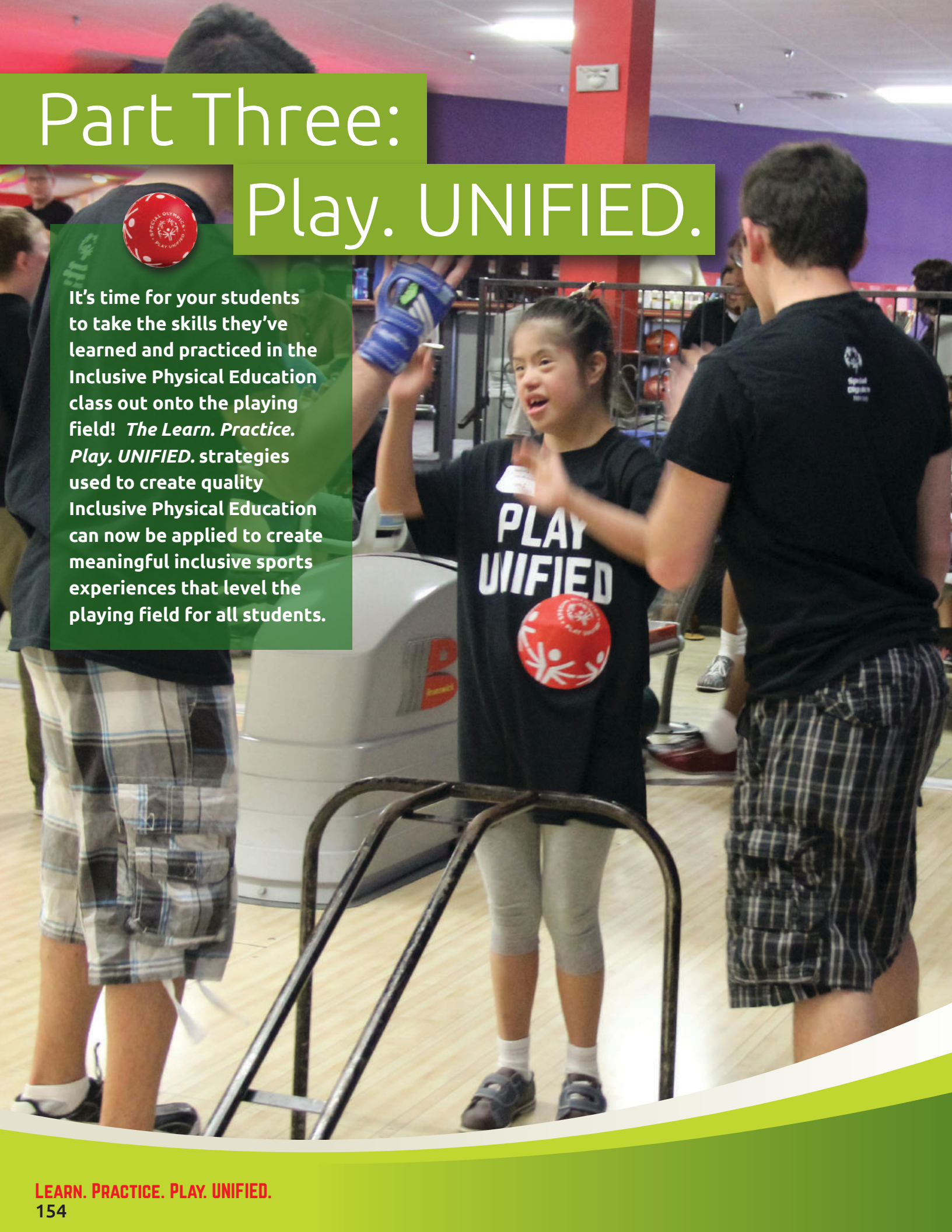
Lift upward simultaneously with legs and back, making sure the legs are thrusting and parts are occurring in the right sequence

Practice without shot for as long as needed, or use a lightweight ball to get the feel of the motion

Use peer partner who has mastered mechanics to work



# Part Three: Play. UNIFIED.

A young girl with a red ball on her back, standing in a gym. She is wearing a black t-shirt with 'PLAY UNIFIED' and a red ball logo. She is holding a blue and white ball in her right hand. She is standing in front of a metal frame. There are other people in the background, including a boy in a black t-shirt and plaid shorts. The gym has a wooden floor and a red wall in the background.

It's time for your students to take the skills they've learned and practiced in the Inclusive Physical Education class out onto the playing field! *The Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.* strategies used to create quality Inclusive Physical Education can now be applied to create meaningful inclusive sports experiences that level the playing field for all students.



# SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS® THREE LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

**Play** provides a road map to guide you in becoming a trailblazer and leader in utilizing sport and game play to create school communities where every student is an important and valued member of the team, and has the opportunity to discover his and her full potential.

**Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** uses the Special Olympics Unified Sports® model of three participation options – player development, recreation and competition – as a framework for creating a combination of game play opportunities that provide access to positive experiences for all students, whether they are playing for continued skill development, fun and exercise, or to compete and win.

## TALENT MAKES PLAYS. TEAMWORK MAKES A STATEMENT. GAME ON!

Dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences, Unified sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

There are three Unified sports models, each with a different structure and function, but all three having social inclusion as a main goal.

*To learn more about Special Olympics Unified Sports® see the Resources section of this book and visit Unified Sports at: [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org).*

Beau Doherty, President and CEO of Special Olympics Connecticut introduced Unified Sports to the Special Olympics movement in 1989. In the 2006 Special Olympics Connecticut Annual Report, he wrote:

“With each day we are one step closer to showing the world what we’ve come to understand—our athletes are not “people with intellectual disabilities,” they are just ‘people,’ and like all people they should be judged by their abilities, rather than their disabilities.”

## DESIGNING INCLUSIVE SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPTIONS UTILIZING THE THREE UNIFIED SPORTS MODELS

### Player Development

Approximately equal numbers of students with and without disabilities, not necessarily of similar abilities, play together as teammates. Teammates of higher abilities serve as mentors to assist teammates of lower abilities in developing sport-specific skills and tactics, and in successfully participating in a cooperative team environment. Students should all be of similar age, however, player development allows a greater age variance for mentors. For example, middle or high school students hosting Young Athletes, Unified Game Days or sport clinics for elementary or Pre-K students.



**Examples of Unified Player Development activities include:**

- **Inclusive PE** – Peer partners with and without disabilities play on the same teams for Unified scrimmage and/or modified game play. Peer partners without disabilities participate as both mentors and teammates in teaching drills and lessons.
- **Unified Game Days and Sports Clinics** – School athletic teams or students in higher grade levels run activities and events for younger students, such as Young Athlete programs, in either self-contained or inclusive classes.
- **Student Athlete Coaches** – Assist with practices for the schools’ Special Olympics teams, as mentors and teammates for training drills and scrimmage play.
- **Intramural** – Club sports programs can offer a player development option for students who benefit from more guided and modified game play.



## Recreation

Students with and without disabilities play together with some modifications and mentoring. Recreational play does not follow any prescribed training, competition and/or team composition requirements. Recreational opportunities may take place in partnership with schools, sport clubs, the community and other private or public organizations as introductory one-day events, exhibitions or demonstrations, or ongoing activities such as physical education classes and intramurals.

### Examples of Unified Recreation activities include:

- **Unified Game Days** – Unified teams of students from similar grades play one another in one or more sports stations along with fun games or activities.
- **Unified Recess** – Specific activities, areas or days are set up for students to interact and play together equally and meaningfully.
- **Intramurals, Pick-up Games** – Establish a Unified intramural club after or during school, or set days where courts or fields are open for Unified pick-up soccer or basketball. Try new sports like kickball or bocce.

- **3-on-3 Tournaments** and other modified game play activities. These can be part of the end of an Inclusive PE unit or practiced in PE and held as part of a school-wide event.
- **Unified Rec Night, Interscholastic Rec Games** – Organize an inclusive rec program in your district or with other schools in your area on a weekday night or weekend where students can play for fun. Teams can be set ahead of time, or games can be organized on the spot as students show up.
- **Unified Rec Night** – Declare one night a week Unified Rec night where students show up and play a sport. Fields or courts can be divided so one is for player development and the other for recreational game play.
- **Inclusive Recreation Programs** – Identify or work with your local recreation program, YMCAs and youth sports clubs to apply the Unified sports models to creating inclusive recreation programs that can serve your students.







## Competition

Players with and without disabilities participate together as teammates on sports training and competition teams. Teams are comprised of approximately equal numbers of athletes with and without disabilities, of similar age and ability, and play games with no modifications or assistance.

### Examples of Unified Competitive activities include:

- **Play Unified Shriver Cup Tournaments** – Register teams for the annual statewide Unified tournaments in soccer, basketball and bowling, organized through Special Olympics New Jersey Play Unified program.
- **Add new Unified team sports** to your interscholastic competitions.
- **Organize co-curricular competitions among school-based teams** as competitive and/or tournament style events that engage the school community as fans. Tie the competition to a school wide athletic, educational or social event.
- **Special Olympics College Unified Clubs** – Across the state, colleges sponsor College Unified Clubs that train and compete against one another in SONJ's Shriver Cup Unified Tournaments. Special Olympics eligible athletes in your program, 16 years and older, are invited to come out and play on teams with college students and compete with other programs in the state. Learn more by visiting College Unified Clubs at [www.sonj.org](http://www.sonj.org).
- **Introduce New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Unified events** – Work with your NJSIAA Conference and other schools in your area to create Unified teams or divisions as part of existing school-based interscholastic athletics. Suggest Unified relay teams in swimming and track, or Unified soccer, basketball, golf, tennis, bocce or bowling.





## PLAY UNIFIED AND SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRAINING AND COMPETITION PROGRAMS WORK TOGETHER TO GIVE SCHOOLS MULTIPLE PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES

By combining the *Play Unified* school-based resources along with *Special Olympics Training and Competition* and *Young Athlete* programs, schools can offer robust and sustainable inclusive sports and physical activities for students of all abilities, from K-12.

### *Play Unified* Co-curricular and Interscholastic Sports

Special Olympics New Jersey (SONJ) is excited to partner with schools and districts to create inclusive sports and social programs that ensure physical education, athletics and fitness, and co-curricular activities are accessible to all students. Across the globe, Special Olympics has shown that the transformative power of sports can create environments of acceptance, in which people of all abilities have the opportunity to achieve success and become teammates and friends, on and off the playing field!

The *Play Unified* school-based initiative is aimed at fostering social inclusion through Unified sports and inclusive leadership initiatives. It is designed to support individual schools in creating a variety of inclusive sport and social experiences customized to meet the needs, interests, abilities and resources of the school and the students.

**Play Unified School Partners (Pre-K through high school) are eligible to receive grants, trainings, equipment and technical assistance to support them in utilizing Special Olympics sports, education and leadership initiatives to provide inclusive co-curricular, interscholastic and recreational activities in an environment that values and recognizes the gifts and contributions of every student.**

As part of the *Play Unified School Partnership*, Special Olympics New Jersey organizes interscholastic recreational and competitive events that bring Play Unified Schools together to compete and make new friends. The Play Unified program is completely school-based. Unified teams participating in these events are only from *Play Unified School Partnership* schools and of similar age. Schools are invited to register teams for the events, and are not required to form a Local Training Program.

Learn more by visiting Unified Sports Resources at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)







## SPECIAL OLYMPICS TRAINING AND COMPETITION PROGRAM

Special Olympics provides meaningful training and competition opportunities for individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate in 24 different sports in four seasons throughout the year. New Jersey offers sports training and competition through Local Training Programs, located in 13 regional Areas across the state. A Local Training Program (LTP) is a team or group of teams sanctioned by Special Olympics New Jersey to offer sports training programs to registered Special Olympics athletes. LTPs organize and manage all of the state's school and community-based teams.

**School-based Special Olympics Training and Competition programs serve only athletes enrolled in their school/district, while community based programs are not affiliated with a school and are open to registered athletes from anywhere in the region and of any age, 8 and older. Your school's LTP can offer traditional and/or Unified training and competition programs.**

**Traditional Local Training Program:** Start a school-based Special Olympics sports program for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Select one or more of the sports offered to meet your goals and resources, and identify a coach. These teams and independent athletes are eligible to compete with other Special Olympics teams throughout the state in area, sectional and state competitions.

**Unified Training and Competition:** Bring athletes with and without disabilities together on one team to train and compete against other Special Olympics Unified Sports® teams around the state.

**All schools are encouraged to form a Local Training Program or become affiliated with a Local Training Program in your community to offer your students optimal opportunities to *Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED!***

**To start a Local Training Program at your school visit Find a Local Program at: [www.sonj.org](http://www.sonj.org) or call Special Olympics New Jersey at 609-896-8000.**



## PLAY UNIFIED CLUB

### Club sport structure

Solely school-based: only schools in the *Play Unified School Partnership* participate.

Schools participate in school-based and interscholastic activities organized through the *Play Unified School Partnership* program.

Unified only: all teams consist of students with and without disabilities playing on the same teams.

Students play against teams from other schools in their area that are of similar age.

*Play Unified* leagues offer regional competitions between schools and three state competitions in soccer, basketball and bowling.

Teams practice a minimum of three times to prepare for tournaments and state competitions.

Regional interscholastic events are organized among local schools, but not required.

## SONJ TRAINING AND COMPETITION

### Travel league sport structure

School and community-based: any school, community organization or independent group can start a Local Training Program for athletes 8 years and older.

Schools register to form a Local Training Program with Special Olympics New Jersey. They identify one or more coaches and choose to participate in one or more of 24 sports offered in 4 seasons (fall, winter, spring and summer).

Offers two types of training and competition: sport events where only athletes with intellectual disabilities train and compete together, and Unified teams of athletes with and without disabilities.

Teams play against teams from around the state that are divisioned by skill level. Students may compete against teams or athletes of different ages, but similar skill level.

Athletes/teams participating in SONJ Training and Competition train once a week for 8 weeks prior to competitions.

Team or league sports like soccer, floor hockey, basketball and volleyball require one league game a week, in addition to one practice a week for 8 weeks.

Teams/athletes are eligible to compete in area, sectional and state competitions. Teams are not obligated to advance beyond area competitions, if they prefer. Some state tournaments require overnight stays that provide wonderful opportunities for building independence, social skills and giving athletes a true travel sports experience.



# PLAY UNIFIED IN SCHOOL

Special Olympics New Jersey is committed to assisting schools with developing sustainable inclusive sports, education and social opportunities that build self-confidence, and promote a culture of inclusion and acceptance. We partner with schools to ensure that every student has an equal opportunity to participate safely and successfully in physical education, athletic, co-curricular and recreational activities that lead to a healthy, active and fulfilling lifestyle.

The **Play Unified School Partnership** provides strategies and resources to assist schools with developing a variety of meaningful inclusive sports experiences for their students in response to the New Jersey Equity in Athletics and Physical Activities Act, P.L. 2014 c.10, signed into law by Governor Chris Christie on June 19, 2014. The law requires schools to provide students with disabilities equal access to physical education and athletic activities. The Play Unified club and interscholastic sports initiatives, and our Special Olympics Training and Competition programs offer schools a variety of sports and physical activity participation options to ensure that every student has the opportunity to experience and enjoy.

Over 30 states currently have partnerships with their interscholastic athletic associations to provide inclusive athletic competition opportunities as part of their sanctioned interscholastic athletic programs. New Jersey is on the way! Special Olympics New Jersey invites schools, coaches, athletic directors, administrators and all affiliated with the NJSIAA to join us in establishing an interscholastic partnership in New Jersey.

In the meantime, Special Olympics New Jersey offers interscholastic competitions in soccer, basketball, bowling and bocce through the **Shriver Cup Tournaments** and the **Play Unified program**.

To learn more about **Special Olympics Unified Sports®** programs across the country visit Unified Sports Resources at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)



## 2. Join the Partnership and Establish a Play Unified Inclusive Club

Students of all abilities can lead and have the power to positively impact their school communities. Schools participating in the Play Unified School Partnership establish student led, inclusive Play Unified Clubs, where students with and without disabilities work with educators and administrators to organize inclusive sports and social programs. These youth led clubs become the creative force and energy behind your inclusive sport and social initiatives.

## 3. Ensure that Every Student has the Opportunity to Experience the Joy and Benefits of Sports

Inclusive sports options do not have to be tied to interscholastic sports your school already offers. The students in your Play Unified Club can poll the student population to determine which sports they would like to see. Identify sports that are more accessible like bocce and bowling. Try fun events such as Unified kickball along with more traditional sports such as track, swimming, soccer, basketball, tennis and golf. Consider Unified fitness programs such as Unified weight training or yoga.



## LET'S PLAY!

Here are some quick tips to get you started.

### 1. Develop a Game Plan

How does your school plan on making sports and physical activity programs accessible for all? You may already offer no cut sports opportunities, have all students included in physical education or, offer all students the opportunities to participate in intramurals. But, do all students feel welcome and are the activities fully inclusive? Explore how these programs can be made more accessible and how they can be used to encourage more students to come out and play.





#### 4. Organize Co-curricular and Extracurricular Sports and Fitness Activities

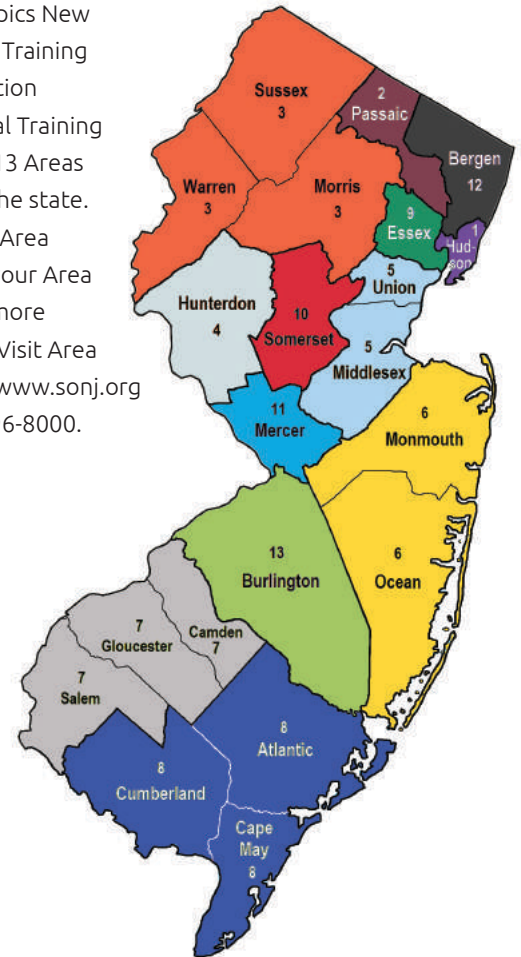
- It is important to have a Play Unified School Management Team in place that is comprised of representatives from special services, athletics, physical education and health, administration and other key areas to ensure that resources and facilities are available to support your programs.
- Develop a three-year plan. Start small and build on each year.
- Aim to incorporate one program from each participation option level: player development, recreation and competitive.
- Collaborate with other Play Unified Schools in your region to set up interscholastic practice sessions, games or tournaments.



#### 5. Participate in Special Olympics New Jersey Play Unified League competition

Each year Special Olympics New Jersey organizes interscholastic competitions among **Play Unified** Schools that are participating in the **Play Unified School Partnership** program. High schools and middle schools field Unified teams in sports that include bowling, soccer, basketball, softball and bocce, and play one another in recreational and competitive events.

Special Olympics New Jersey offers Training and Competition through Local Training Programs in 13 Areas throughout the state. Identify your Area and contact your Area Director for more information. Visit Area Programs at [www.sonj.org](http://www.sonj.org) or call 609-896-8000.



#### 6. Enter Shriver Cup Tournaments

Play Unified teams at the high school and college level are invited to compete for the **Shriver Cup** in a statewide championship tournament in Unified soccer, basketball and bowling (high school only) each year.

#### 7. Establish a School-based Special Olympics Local Training Program

You can establish a school-based LTP with one or more coaches and a group of Special Olympics eligible athletes. Just identify a sport and Special Olympics New Jersey will assist you starting the program as well as provide resources for uniforms and equipment to get you started. Your LTP can offer traditional or Unified training and competition programs.



# UNIFIED GAME DAY

*The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.*



**Unified Game Days** offer students of all interests and abilities, “an opportunity to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship” in an environment of fun and celebration. **Unified Game Days** are an integral part of the **Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.** program and all Play Unified Schools are asked to implement them as a part of their inclusive sports and physical activities offerings.

## WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FIELD DAY AND A UNIFIED GAME DAY?

**A school-wide field day is not a Unified Game Day. At a Unified Game Day, students with and without disabilities play and learn alongside one another on the same teams.**

A **Unified Game Day** builds off a school’s Inclusive Physical Education program as a culminating event to demonstrate skills and celebrate the friendships made in the class. Unlike a traditional field day, in which special needs students can be isolated from their peers and travel through stations in a segregated group, a **Unified Game Day** integrates all students on teams. Every activity is inclusive and fully inclusive and accessible to all. Students without disabilities play alongside students with disabilities as teammates, rather than as mentors or tutors.

**Unified Game Days** are skill demonstration “game days” that can include a variety of physical activity and fun fitness stations designed to bring young people together to:

- Apply all they’ve learned in Inclusive PE,
- Try something new they have not yet mastered or may be too shy to tackle in an educational setting, and
- Have a fun day of physical activity while making friends.

**Unified Game Days** are great ways to bring together an entire class, school, groups of schools and communities to celebrate the accomplishments of all students. They are designed to be:

- Festive and celebratory
- Teambuilding vs. Competitive
- Inclusive and accessible, with modified and adapted activities interwoven to benefit all students



## UNIFIED GAME DAY MODELS

Although every school's *Unified Game Day* will be customized to meet the goals, interests, ability level of their students, and skills taught in their Inclusive PE classes, there are three basic models that can be used as a starting point for planning:

1. School/Professional sports team hosted *Unified Game Day*
2. Schoolwide *Unified Game Day* (Single Sport or Multi-Sport)
3. School hosted Unified Track & Field Meet

## SPORTS TEAM/OLDER GRADE HOSTED UNIFIED GAME DAYS

These Unified Game Days are hosted by students older and of greater ability. They can be single or multi-sport game days, or Young Athlete Unified Game Days. This is an excellent activity to engage members of athletic teams and member of your Play Unified clubs. Students in the upper elementary, middle and high schools can be trained to hold Young Athlete Unified Game Days for the Pre-K through 1st grade students.

## SCHOOL WIDE UNIFIED GAME DAYS

**Single Sport:** Choose a sport and offer multiple skill and scrimmage stations at player development and recreational levels. Mix in fun fitness stations with yoga, Zumba, warm-up/cool-downs and running games.

**Multi-sport:** Select two to six different sport skills stations that students move through with one or two dedicated to game play. Always target skills stations and games to accommodate the abilities of the students with greatest challenges so they can participate equally. Mix in fun fitness stations and try playground game stations such as kickball and four square.

## SCHOOL WIDE TRACK & FIELD MEET

Work with the athletic department and track teams to set up a track & field meet. Inclusive teams will move from event to event and participate in Unified relays. Base the track & field meet on the events included in the *Learn. Practice. Play. UNIFIED.* Track & Field section.

**Call Special Olympics New Jersey for more detail on planning your *Unified Game Day*!**

## PLAY UNIFIED IN THE COMMUNITY

### 1. Partner with Recreation Centers, YMCAs and Youth Sports Organizations

Introduce Unified sports to your local Recreation Centers, Ys and youth sports organizations in your area. Share information about programs that include young people with disabilities with your students. Be a coach or help them start a Unified team, recreational league or training program.



### 2. Share information on Community-Based Special Olympics Local Training Programs Near You

If you do not have a school-based Special Olympics Local Training Program, find one near you and share the information with families of students who are eligible to participate. Some LTPs may also have Unified teams or be interested in starting one with your help! Contact Special Olympics New Jersey or the Area Director in your region. For more information go to Find a Local Program at [www.sonj.org](http://www.sonj.org).

### 3. College Unified Sports Clubs

Is there a College Unified program in your area? Across the state, students in 12 colleges and universities sponsor College Unified Sports Clubs that train and compete against one another in SONJ's Shriver Cup Unified Tournaments. Special Olympics eligible athletes, 16 years and older, are invited to come out and play on teams with college students and compete with other programs in the state.



## UNIFIED SPORTS COACHING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

To ensure coaches, partners and volunteers have the support, strategies and resources needed to develop and implement meaningful inclusive sports programs, Special Olympics New Jersey offers professional development, coaching and Unified partner trainings on social inclusion, inclusive sports coaching and physical education, disability awareness and being a Unified partner for teachers, students, coaches and parents at each participating school.

“Young people with disabilities don’t often get a chance to play on their school sports teams, but more and more U.S. states are adopting the unified sports approach that Special Olympics pioneered. The governor of New Jersey just signed a bill into law that encourages schools to make opportunities for sports participation available to all students. Special Olympics New Jersey, which championed the new law, is cited in the new law as a consulting organization. For almost 20 years, Special Olympics has offered sport teams that blend people with and without intellectual disabilities, and that is a model that encourages sports and fun, and which also gets people together to learn more about each other.” (“Unified Sports”, n.d.)

To learn more go to: <http://www.specialolympics.org/unified-sports.aspx>

## SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY COACH EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM

Throughout the year Special Olympics New Jersey offers sport specific training programs for coaches, along with general sessions and webinars on coaching athletes with different abilities. As a school-based Unified sports coach, all of these resources and supports are available to you.

To learn more about coaches certification and training call Special Olympics New Jersey. Review Special Olympics’ sport specific coaching handbooks at Coaching Resources at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)

### NFHS Coaching Unified Sports online course

“Coaching Special Olympics Unified Sports®” provides techniques and tools for coaches who work with these programs, where Special Olympics athletes with intellectual disabilities and individuals without intellectual disabilities (partners) train and compete together as a team. For more Information visit: <http://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000>



“By playing on Unified teams, it is easier for kids to connect and become friends without having the social anxiety of trying to start a conversation or approach someone that you have never seen or talked to before.

Kids connect simply by saying “pass the ball” or “great goal.” The friendships that are created on the field or court are often seen after the games too. Unified Sports is a call to action for all schools to try to create an environment where special education and regular education students can work together in a social environment.

The ultimate goal of Unified Sports is to create a totally unified atmosphere where everybody is included and accepted.”

Connor Bradley, Unified Partner  
Montgomery High School, Team New Jersey  
2014 USA Games



## WORKS CITED:

**Athlete-centered coaching guide. (n.d.).**

**Retrieved January 2015, from**

[http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/AthleteCentered\\_CoachingGuide.pdf](http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/sports-essentials/general/AthleteCentered_CoachingGuide.pdf)

**Copies of IEPs. (n.d.). Retrieved January 2015, from**

<http://www.uft.org/teaching/copies-ieps>

**Inclusion. (n.d.). Retrieved from**

<http://www.nchpad.org/602/2551/2008-12~Issue~~The~Pat hway~to~Inclusion~~From~Principle~to~Profit>

**Isaacson, M. (2015, May 26). Unified sports' mission continues: It's all about inclusion. Retrieved from**

[http://espn.go.com/specialolympics/story/\\_/id/12951899/special-olympics-world-games-unified-sports-project-unify-continue-make-positive-impact](http://espn.go.com/specialolympics/story/_/id/12951899/special-olympics-world-games-unified-sports-project-unify-continue-make-positive-impact)

**Jacobs, H., Martin, C., Albert, A., Summerill, L., & Siperstein, G.N. (n.d.). Project UNIFY year 6**

**final evaluation report 2013 – 2014. Retrieved from**

[https://www.umb.edu/editor\\_uploads/images/centers\\_institutes/center\\_social\\_development\\_education/Project\\_UNIFY\\_Year\\_6\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](https://www.umb.edu/editor_uploads/images/centers_institutes/center_social_development_education/Project_UNIFY_Year_6_Final_Report.pdf)

**Kasser, S., & Lytle, R. (2005). Inclusive physical activity: A lifetime of opportunities. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.**

**New Jersey core curriculum content standards for comprehensive health and physical education: Introduction. (2014). Retrieved from**

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/cccs/2014/chpe/standards.pdf>

**O'Reilly, B. (2014). New Jersey core curriculum content standards: Comprehensive health and physical education. Retrieved from**

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/aps/cccs/chpe/>

**Regulations: Part 300/D/300.320/a/1. (n.d.).**

**Retrieved from**

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cregs%2C300%2CD%2C300%252E320%2Ca%2C1%2C>

**Sapon-Shevin, M. (2008). Learning in an inclusive community. Educational Leadership, 66(1), 49-53.**

**Unified sports. (n.d.). Retrieved from**

<http://www.specialolympics.org/unified-sports.aspx>

**Welcome to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP's) IDEA website. (n.d.).**

**Retrieved from** <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/home>

**What is adapted physical education? (2008). Retrieved January 2015, from**

<http://www.apens.org/whatisape.html>

## LEGISLATION CITED:

**New Jersey Equity in Athletics and Physical Activity Act Chapter 10. (2014, June 19). New Jersey Legislature.**

**Retrieved from**

[http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2014/Bills/PL14/10\\_.PDF](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2014/Bills/PL14/10_.PDF)

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) Frequently asked questions: New Jersey core curriculum content standards: Comprehensive health and physical education. (n.d.). Retrieved from**

[http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq\\_chpe.htm](http://www.state.nj.us/education/genfo/faq/faq_chpe.htm)

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

**Sec. 300.114 LRE requirements. (n.d.).**

**US Department of Education. Retrieved from**

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cregs%2C300%2CB%2C300%252E114%2C>

**Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

**Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973. (n.d.). United State Department of Labor. Retrieved from**

<http://www.dol.gov/oasam/regs/statutes/sec504.htm>

**Rosa's Law – S.2781**

**Civic Impulse. (2015). S. 2781 — 111th Congress:**

**Rosa's Law. Retrieved from**

<https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/111/s2781>

**Rosa's Law. (2010). Special Olympics.**

**Retrieved from**

<http://www.specialolympics.org/Regions/north-america/News-and-Stories/Stories/Rosa-s-Law.aspx>

**Chapter 50. (2010, August 16). New Jersey Legislature. Retrieved from**

[http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/50\\_.HTM](http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2010/Bills/PL10/50_.HTM)





# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES





## Play Unified. Live Unified.

Special Olympics New Jersey is committed to ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to participate safely and successfully in Physical Education and athletic, extracurricular and recreational activities that lead to a healthy, active, and fulfilling lifestyle.

Throughout the year, Special Olympics New Jersey offers training and competition in 24 sports to 25,000 children and adults with intellectual disabilities. An area of targeted growth for Special Olympics programming is partnering with and supporting New Jersey's schools. Currently, over 10,000 students, in over 100 schools and 10 colleges, experience sports, fitness, fun and friendship in environments where everyone is welcomed through Special Olympics' school-based Play Unified Clubs and Unified sports and social inclusion programs.



## Play Unified School Partnership Program

Through the Play Unified School Partnership program, Special Olympics New Jersey offers schools and districts grants, professional and coaches training, equipment and technical assistance to support them in designing and implementing robust, sustainable fully inclusive sport, fitness and extracurricular programs to enrich the lives of all their students.



## What is Special Olympics Unified Sports®?

Special Olympics Unified Sports® joins people with and without intellectual disabilities together as teammates, each one a meaningful and equal part of the team. Teams are made up of peers of similar age and ability who play together in developmental, recreational or competitive settings. It is inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.



Co-curricular	Interscholastic	SONJ/Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusive P.E.</li> <li>• 3 on 3 &amp; mini-tournaments</li> <li>• SONJ Play Unified Club sports &amp; fitness activities</li> <li>• Unified Game Days</li> <li>• Unified Sports clinics</li> <li>• Intramurals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SONJ Play Unified club competitions</li> <li>• NJSIAA athletics; inclusive team participation and/or Unified divisions/events</li> <li>• School-based Special Olympics training and competition program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-based SONJ training and competition</li> <li>• Community-based adaptive sports &amp; fitness programs</li> <li>• Inclusive sports and fitness at recreation centers</li> </ul>

## Join the Partnership!

For information about Special Olympics Play Unified School Partnership Program, contact:

- **Susan Colacello**, Education and Outreach Director, Special Olympics New Jersey: (609) 896-8000, ext. 284 or [scc@sonj.org](mailto:scc@sonj.org)
- **Bill DePonte**, Athletic Director, Burlington City High School (609) 387-5800 or [wdeponte@burlington-nj.net](mailto:wdeponte@burlington-nj.net)



1 Eunice Kennedy Shriver Way  
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648  
[www.sonj.org](http://www.sonj.org) / (609) 896-8000  
Contact Susan Colacello at  
[SCC@sonj.org](mailto:SCC@sonj.org) (609)896-8000





## The Playbook on the New Jersey Sports Legislation

By: Maria E. Fischer Esq. and S. Paul Prior Esq.  
Hinkle, Fingles & Prior, P.C.

On June 19, 2014, Governor Christie signed legislation regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in athletic activities (N.J.S.A. 18A:11-3.5 et seq.). This historic law is effective in the 2015 – 2016 school year.

### 1) Why is the new sports law important?

This law requires school districts *ensure students with disabilities have equal access and opportunities to participate in athletics*, as well as, *provide opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in existing adaptive and Special Olympics Unified Sports® programs*. It applies to athletic programs including clubs, intramural, and interscholastic athletic activities.

### 2) What is required of school districts under the new sports law?

School districts must make reasonable efforts to provide a student with a disability the opportunity to participate in existing adaptive or Special Olympics Unified Sports®. Therefore, *school districts must be prepared to provide inclusive sports options for students with disabilities as early as July 1, 2015*.

### 3) How does this law differ from requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”)?

IDEA	NJ SPORTS LEGISLATION
1. Provide equal opportunities to participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities	1. <b>ENSURE</b> equal access and opportunity to participate in athletic activities
2. NO requirement to provide nonacademic services and extracurricular activities to students with disabilities	2. District must make reasonable efforts to provide opportunities to participate in existing adaptive and Special Olympics Unified Sports®
3. Requires an IEP team determination of the extent a student shall not participate	3. Student must be allowed to try out for and if selected participate in athletic programs
4. Must include supplemental aids and services students need to participate	4. Same
5. Unclear the extent to which reasonable modifications must be provided	5. <b>MUST</b> make reasonable modifications as long as the modification does not create a health or safety risk or fundamentally alter the game
6. Students with disabilities do not have a right to be on a competitive team	6. Same
7. District does not have to create separate activities for students with disabilities	7. District must provide an opportunity to participate in existing adaptive or Special Olympics Unified Sports®/existing adaptive and Special Olympics Unified Programs

### 4) Is a student entitled to play on a competitive team?

No, a student with a disability is not entitled to play on a school’s competitive team. However, this legislation ensures a student with a disability must be given an opportunity to try out for and if selected, participate on a competitive team. If not selected, districts must provide students with an alternative adaptive or Special Olympics Unified Sports® option.

### 5) Is a district required to provide modifications and accommodations to a student?

Yes, each school district must ensure the provision of reasonable modifications or services necessary to give a student with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in athletic activities.

### 6) Are there exceptions which limit a student’s opportunity to participate in athletic activities?

Yes, if inclusion of a student with disabilities presents an objective health or safety risk to the student or to others; or fundamentally alters the athletic activity. In either of these instances, the student may not be able to participate in the activity, but the District **must** provide the alternatives mentioned above.

### 7) Who decides if an objective health or safety risk exists or if there is a fundamental alteration to the game?

This is not specifically addressed in the law. Based on other cases it seems clear, it is not the coach or athletic director alone. It is likely that this will be an IEP team decision. Remember, Athletic Directors and or coaches can be included as IEP team members.

### 8) If a student attends an out-of-district school program, what are his rights under the new law?

A student in an out-of-district school program has the right to participate in the athletic programs of the sending school district. There is, however, no requirement for the out-of-district school to create and provide athletic programs.

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation.  
Authorized and accredited by Special Olympics Inc. for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities



# UNIFIED GAME DAY

## Robbinsville High School

**Special  
Olympics**  
New Jersey



### What We Did

Our first Unified Game Day brought students from our high school and middle school special needs classes, and Project UNIFY members together to engage in outdoor activities and bonding. All participants received t-shirts for the event. We paired Project UNIFY members with and without intellectual disabilities and divided them into two teams, with a color to identify each. As it rained sporadically throughout the day, we had to adjust our schedule accordingly. Our day began with a game of musical chairs, we then took a brief break and had a snack. When the rain let up, we split into smaller groups that went through rotations of cornhole, water balloon toss and tug-of-war. We moved up our awards ceremony, where Project UNIFY members presented award ribbons to their teammates with disabilities under the cover of the bleachers. We headed into the school common area to have lunch, which was donated by a local pizzeria. Instead of playing kickball as planned, we watched a movie inside our school. Our superintendent joined us for closing remarks. Despite the weather and condensed time frame, all the students shared lots of smiles and friendships.

### Sample Schedule

9:00-9:30 AM	Athletes Arrive/Opening Remarks
9:30-10:00 AM	Musical Chairs
10:00 -10:15 AM	Break/Snack
10:13-11:45 AM	Rotations: Cornhole & Relays, Tug-of-Wars, and Water Balloon Toss
11:45-12:45	Lunch
12:45-1:15 PM	Kickball
1:15-1:30 PM	Awards Ceremony/Closing Remarks

### How to Plan Your Own Game Day

#### **Step 1: Get Approval from Your Board of Education**

Present a proposal introducing the idea and briefly outlining your plan to your Board of Education. Begin planning about four months in advance.

#### **Step 2: Select a Date**

When selecting a date, consider school-wide activities, potential weather conditions, and testing days (AP exams, state mandated testing, etc.) It is recommended that you pick a rain date a few days after your original date. We chose the end of May because we hoped for pleasant weather and all school-wide testing was over. As our field day approached, rain was predicted, but due to other factors we kept our original date.

#### **Step 3: Select Activities**

Select a variety of fun, outdoor activities that all participants can enjoy (it is helpful if you can borrow equipment). Plan events that are inclusive for all participants, including athletes with physical disabilities.

#### **Step 4: Arrange Transportation**

If athletes are coming from another school, speak to your administrators about coordinating transportation.

#### **Step 5: Create a Schedule**

Start by determining a beginning and ending time, taking into account the transport of athletes. It is more efficient to split participants into smaller groups that rotate through various activities. You may choose to split your participants into opposing teams (we did so by t-shirt color) for certain activities. Leave ample amount of time for lunch and breaks. Include an Opening Ceremony (our club advisor welcomed everyone and explained the activities), an awards ceremony (athletes were presented with a participation ribbon), and a Closing Ceremony (a school administrator can be invited to make closing remarks).

#### **Step 6: Purchases/Donations**

Ask local businesses to donate lunch. We ordered t-shirts, designed by a club member, for all participants and award ribbons for athletes using grant money. Although we borrowed most of the sports equipment from our school, we did have to purchase water balloons, bouncy balls and name tags. Snacks and water were donated by students and teachers. Club members also brought coolers and a tent. Depending on school funding, it may be necessary to raise money to make purchases.

#### **Step 7: Make Final Preparations**

Pair athletes with participants and form two teams. Make sure you have all activity equipment. Confirm food donations the day before. Club members set up about half an hour before the event. Be flexible and have fun!

### Activity Ideas

- Kickball
- Tug-of-War
- Water Balloons
- Relay Races
- Hula Hoops
- Cornhole
- Basketball Throw
- Wiffle Ball
- Jump Rope
- Outdoor Bowling
- Volleyball/Newcomb
- Musical Chairs



# UNIFIED KICKBALL TOURNAMENT

## Robbinsville High School

**Special  
Olympics**  
New Jersey



### Sample Schedule

Arrival: 10:00 AM

T-shirt handout/Introduction: 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

Game #1: 10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

Soccer Shoot-out/ Break: 11:00 AM – 11:20 AM

Game #2: 11:20 AM – 11:50 AM

Lunch: 11:50 AM – 12:30 PM

Awards: 12:30 PM – 1:00 PM

### What We Did

Our first winter kickball tournament included students with disabilities from the high school and middle school levels, and Project UNIFY members from the high school, all working together, collectively engaging in activities that enabled friendships to begin and grow. All participants received a shirt (white, black, red, or grey) that determined which team they would represent. We began by handing out the shirts and took part in an introduction oriented game where we shared interesting facts about ourselves. Subsequently, we broke into our teams and played the first kickball game. After the first game, as a means of breaking up the day, we allowed each student to take one shot on the soccer goal and celebrate with his/her dance of choice. We then proceeded to play our second and final game, which led into a pizza lunch. The day was concluded with an awards ceremony, in which the Project UNIFY members presented their teammates with disabilities with ribbons and shared what made them a unique player.

### How to Plan Your Own Kickball Tournament

- 1. Acquire approval from a supervisor.** It is imperative that administration and teachers are on board with the event.
- 2. Select a date.** Be sure to consider if your date conflicts with any other school-events and plan a rain date if need be.
- 3. Select a venue.** Consider transportation needs and be sure to use a venue large enough to house several kickball games at the same time.
- 4. Create a schedule and set teams.** Creating even teams to ensure fair games is crucial.
- 5. Order t-shirts based off of the set teams.** It helps to order shirts ahead of time in order to accurately get the correct sizes and for efficiency purposes.
- 6. Fundraise/accumulate donations.** Needless to say, running this event costs money for food, venue and other general costs. It is important to figure out where this money is coming from.



Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competition. Three models exist within Unified Sports: competitive Unified Sports, Unified Sports Player Development and Unified Sports Recreation. All three models provide different types of experiences in team sports such as basketball, football and volleyball and in other sports such as bocce, golf and tennis. Unified Sports is now offered throughout the world and has been a Special Olympics internationally sanctioned program since 1989.

Special Olympics Unified Sports promotes social inclusion through shared sport training and competition experiences for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities. Unified Sports has proven to be highly effective in achieving social inclusion. Athletes feel a sense of belonging; they can meaningfully interact with others, develop mutually rewarding relationships, are recognized as contributors and are received with acceptance and respect.

Research studies by Siperstein (2010) and Özer (2011) have confirmed the positive social impact of Unified Sports on individuals with and without intellectual disabilities as well as their communities. Unified Sports is effective in decreasing the problem behaviors of individuals with intellectual disabilities and improving attitudes of individuals without disabilities toward participants with disabilities. Unified Sports helps increase the skills necessary for individuals with intellectual disabilities to be accepted and fulfilled socially (developing meaningful relationships, being accepted and respected and being better prepared for community living).



All three models, defined below, have social inclusion as the core outcome; however, the structure and function of each model varies.

### Unified Sports (Competitive)

The Unified Sports competitive model combines Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) as teammates on sport teams for training and competition. Two things differentiate the competitive Unified Sports model from the other two models: 1) all athletes and partners on a Unified Sports competitive team must have attained the necessary sport-specific skills and tactics to compete without modification

of the current Special Olympics Official Sports Rules; and 2) teams that participate in this model may be eligible for advancement to Regional and World Games. A Unified Sports team is an inclusive sports program with approximately equal numbers of athletes and partners. Unified Sports teams should never be comprised solely of people with disabilities. Athletes and partners should be of similar age and ability in team sports. However, a greater variance in age and ability is allowed in specific sports such as golf. Refer to Article 1 of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for more details regarding age and ability matching by sport.

### Unified Sports Player Development

The Unified Sports Player Development model combines approximately equal numbers of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) as teammates on sports teams for training and competition. What differentiates Unified Sports Player Development from the other two models is: 1) teammates are not required to be of similar abilities, and 2) teammates of higher abilities serve as mentors to assist teammates of lower abilities in developing sport-specific skills and tactics, and in successfully participating in a cooperative team environment. Athletes and partners should be of similar age. However, a greater variance in age is allowed in specific sports such as bocce. (Refer to Article 1 of the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for more details regarding age matching by sport.) Because of differences in abilities, rules modifications are necessary and designed to both ensure meaningful involvement of all teammates and define for higher ability players their roles as mentors so they do not dominate play. Each Program is given the opportunity to establish rules modifications that fulfill these outcomes.

### Unified Sports Recreation

Unified Sports Recreation consists of inclusive recreational sports opportunities for Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners without intellectual disabilities. What differentiates this model from the other two is that this model does not follow any prescribed training, competition and/or team composition requirements established by Special Olympics. These recreational opportunities may take place in partnership with schools, sport clubs, the community and other private or public organizations as introductory one-day events, exhibitions or demonstrations (including *Unified Sports Experiences*) or ongoing activities such as physical education classes and intramurals.

Copyright ©2012 Special Olympics, Inc. All rights reserved.

All materials provided in this training are the copyright of Special Olympics, Inc. and may only be used for the purposes for which they are intended.

In no event shall these materials be copied, reproduced, distributed or displayed for commercial purposes without the express written permission of Special Olympics, Inc.



## INTERSCHOLASTIC UNIFIED SPORTS® INFO SHEET

### Special Olympics Mission

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

*"Special Olympics has pursued a fully inclusive sports participation path for people with various levels of intellectual capabilities and sporting abilities throughout our history, and with Unified Sports® since 1989"*

-Tim Shriver, Special Olympics Chairman & CEO

### National Federation of State High School Associations Mission (NFHS)

The National Federation of State High School Associations serves its members, related professional organizations and students by providing leadership for the administration of education-based interscholastic activities, which support academic achievement, good citizenship and equitable opportunities.

*"Inclusive school sports is an area of focus for us at the NFHS and we feel that Special Olympics Unified Sports is an ideal model for our schools to accomplish this"*

-Robert Gardner, NFHS Executive Director

### Project UNIFY®

Special Olympics Project UNIFY uses sports and education programs of Special Olympics to activate young people to develop school communities where all youth are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.

### Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Unified Sports is an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on teams for training and competition.

### Interscholastic Athletic Association Partnerships

**What:** A partnership between Special Olympics State Programs and their respective NFHS state member association to advance the mission and goals of both organizations. Project UNIFY is often the focus of these partnerships where Unified Sports is integrated as a sanctioned program of the state Interscholastic Athletic Association (IAA) for its member schools.

**Who:** According to the 2008 U.S. Census there are 14.98 Million students enrolled in U.S. Public High Schools (grades 9-12). It is estimated that 2% of all U.S. citizens have an intellectual disability (ID) and qualify as a Special Olympics Athlete (World Health Organization estimates 1%-3% globally have an ID). **This means there are as many as 300,000 potential Special Olympics athletes in public high schools.**

Special Olympics athletes team up with students without intellectual disabilities

to create proportionately rostered Unified Sports teams. These Unified Partners are recruited from the general education student population and typically do not have a background in competitive high school sports. Teams are formed and managed through the school Athletic Department. Special Olympics and the NFHS have developed a 90 minute online course for Coaching Unified Sports housed at [www.NFHSLearn.com](http://www.NFHSLearn.com), and offered at no cost.

There are currently over 2,000 schools in 40 states participating in Project UNIFY. Six of these states have an official Interscholastic partnership: Arizona, Connecticut, Indiana, Maryland, New Hampshire and Rhode Island.

**Why:** Interscholastic Unified Sports® increases school athletic participation by including a new population of students- both the Special Olympics athletes, and

the Unified Partners. Special Olympics athletes experience invaluable social inclusion and new sports opportunities. Project UNIFY changes attitudes about people with disabilities and positively impacts the climate in each school. Special Olympics is a lifetime program, when students get involved as youth, there is a good chance it will continue to impact the quality of their life after graduation.

*"Interscholastic Unified Sports brings a whole new dimension to an interscholastic program with a renewed perspective through the eyes of a new set of student athletes into our association membership, these young people may not have had the opportunity to participate in the past, now they do."*

- Chuck Schmidt, Associate Executive Director, Arizona Interscholastic Association

# Special Olympics Research Overview

**Special  
Olympics**



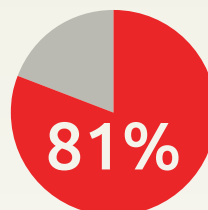
More than  
**4.5 million**  
Special Olympics  
athletes  
compete across  
**170**  
countries,  
averaging  
**258**  
competitions  
each day  
around  
the world.



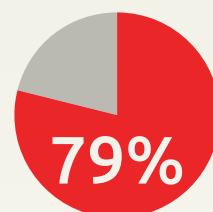
**94%** of Special Olympics athletes  
reported improved sports skills.



Children ages 2-7 experienced a  
**7 month gain**  
in motor skills after participation in an  
8-week Young Athletes program.



**81%**  
of students say  
that the Unified  
Strategy is  
changing their  
school for the  
better.

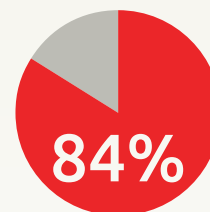


**79%**  
of Unified  
teammates  
without  
disabilities  
reported  
increased  
understanding of  
people with  
intellectual  
disabilities.



**65% of  
parents**

felt that participation in  
Special Olympics had raised  
their expectations of their  
sons and daughters.



**84%**  
of healthcare  
providers felt  
better prepared to  
treat people with  
intellectual  
disabilities.

Special Olympics'  
brand ranks highly in  
**familiarity  
and  
favorability  
ratings.**



**57%**

**Over half** of athletes' siblings in the United  
States felt that participation in Special Olympics brought  
their family closer together.



# Special Olympics Unified Sports Research

## WHY UNIFIED SPORTS?

While it is important for people with intellectual disabilities (ID) to have social experiences with their peers, oftentimes these experiences are elusive. For example, adolescents with ID are more likely to participate in activities with their family or on their own than with their peers.<sup>1,2</sup> Research suggests that organized social activities, such as sports, may be necessary to facilitate social involvement of people with ID in their communities.<sup>3</sup> **Unified Sports provides people with and without ID the opportunity to play on the same sports team, creating a space for friendships, physical activity, and fun.** Research on Unified Sports has found that Unified Sports athletes (participants with ID) experience improved social competence and social inclusion while decreasing problem behaviors.<sup>4,5</sup> Moreover, Unified Sports partners (participants without ID) improve their attitudes toward people with ID as a result of participating in the program.<sup>6</sup> In order to build upon this impact, Special Olympics continues to conduct research and evaluation to identify best practices and demonstrate the impact of Unified Sports on athletes, partners, and the community.

**“I can tell you this, there aren’t really many opportunities at all for her to leave and have a fun day like that, and be with peers, whether Unified friends or other special needs peers. It doesn’t happen at all. ...I think, something like this, to look forward to, having a feeling of activity of her own, friends of her own, that sort of thing, there’s no question in my mind that that’s a positive experience.”**

—Parent<sup>7</sup>

1 Hall, L. J., & Strickett, T. (2002). Peer relationships of preadolescent students with disabilities who attend a separate school. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 37(4), 399-409.

2 Abells, D., Burbidge, J., & Minnes, P. (2008). Involvement of adolescents with intellectual disabilities in social and recreational activities. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*, 14(2), 88-94.

3 Abells, D., Burbidge, J., & Minnes, P. (2008). Involvement of adolescents with intellectual disabilities in social and recreational activities. *Journal on Developmental Disabilities*, 14(2), 88-94.

4 Özer, D., Baran, F., Aktop, A., Nalbant, S., Ağlamış, E., & Hutzler, Y. (2012). Effects of a Special Olympics Unified Sports soccer program on psycho-social attributes of youth with and without intellectual disability. *Research in developmental disabilities*, 33(1), 229-239.

5 McConkey, R., Dowling, S., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2012). Promoting social inclusion through Unified Sports for youth with intellectual disabilities: a five-nation study. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 57(10), 923-935.

6 Özer, D., Baran, F., Aktop, A., Nalbant, S., Ağlamış, E., & Hutzler, Y. (2012). Effects of a Special Olympics Unified Sports soccer program on psycho-social attributes of youth with and without intellectual disability. *Research in developmental disabilities*, 33(1), 229-239.

7 Nanavati, J. (2015). Unified Sports in School Settings: Evidence of Impact. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.



# IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

Unified Sports is a key Special Olympics program, and over the course of the past five years it has seen tremendous growth. In 2014, **over 850,000 people with and without ID participated in the program**, a 21% growth rate from the previous year.<sup>8</sup> Athletes and partners benefit from Unified Sports in a number of ways. First and foremost, Unified Sports is a fun, challenging experience for athletes and partners that allows them to improve their sports skills and be part of a team.

- Participants enjoy their experience in Unified Sports. An [evaluation in Europe](#) found that large numbers of athletes (54%) and partners (40%) thought that **having fun was one of the most important aspects of Unified Sports**.<sup>9</sup> In the United States, having fun was one of the areas athletes and partners liked the most about participating in the program.<sup>10</sup>
- Unified Sports creates a place where athletes and partners strive to seek personal bests. An evaluation in Europe found that **partners reported feeling challenged** all (43%) or some (52%) of the time during training.<sup>11</sup>
- Participants improve their sports skills. Unified football athletes and partners in Europe **reported that their football skills improved** a lot (46%) or a little (46%).<sup>12</sup> A 2015 Special Olympics survey found that 91% of athletes and partners felt that their sports skills improved.<sup>13</sup>
- Preliminary research suggests that **Unified Sports can improve physical fitness among participants**. One study found that both athletes and partners improved their physical fitness after participating in Unified Sports when compared to those who did not participate.<sup>14</sup>

Similar to traditional Special Olympics sports, **Unified Sports also helps athletes and partners build confidence and self-esteem.**

- 82% of family members in the United States reported that athletes improved their self-esteem/self-confidence after participating in Unified Sports.<sup>15</sup>

---

8 2014 Reach Report (2014). Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

9 Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

10 Siperstein, G., Hardman, M., Wappett, M., & Clary, L. (2001). *National evaluation of the Special Olympics Unified Sports program*. A special report. Washington, DC: University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Utah, & Special Olympics, Inc.

11 Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

12 Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

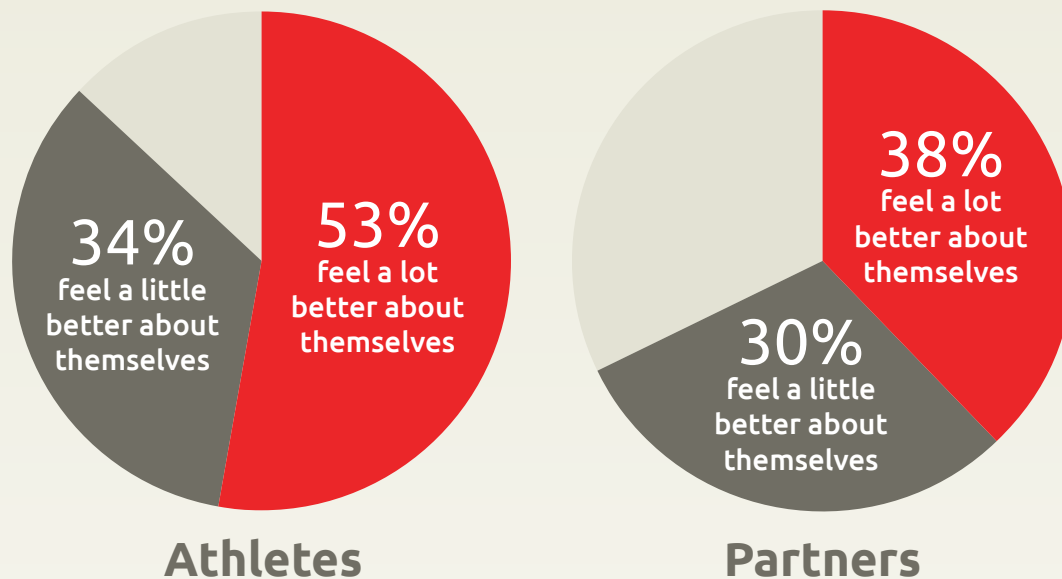
13 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

14 Baran, F., Aktop, A., Özer, D., Nalbant, S., Ağlamış, E., Barak, S., & Hutzler, Y. (2013). The effects of a Special Olympics Unified Sports Soccer training program on anthropometry, physical fitness and skilled performance in Special Olympics soccer athletes and non-disabled partners. *Research in developmental disabilities*, 34(1), 695-709.

15 Siperstein, G., Hardman, M., Wappett, M., & Clary, L. (2001). *National evaluation of the Special Olympics Unified Sports program*. A special report. Washington, DC: University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Utah, & Special Olympics, Inc.



- Unified athletes and partners in Europe also experienced improvements in self-esteem. Athletes reported feeling a lot (53%) or a little (34%) better about themselves after participating in the program. Similarly, 38% of partners felt a lot better about themselves, while 30% felt a little better.<sup>16</sup>



Through sports, athletes and partners are given the opportunity to spend time together, oftentimes for the first time, and share a common interest and goal. **This supports the development of friendships between athletes and partners as well as social inclusion on the team.** As partners spend more time with athletes, their attitudes and beliefs about athletes begin to shift, paving the way for greater acceptance of all people with ID.

- A study in Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia found that for many of the partners (57%), playing Unified football was also their **first experience interacting with people with ID**. After participating, the majority of partners (79%) reported that their understanding of people with ID improved.<sup>17</sup>
- Oftentimes, **Unified Sports teams socialize outside of practices and competitions, further building friendships and promoting social inclusion.** In a European study, many athletes (41%) and partners (39%) reported that they spent time with teammates outside of training and competitions.<sup>18</sup> In another Special Olympics survey, 65% of respondents reporting that they did activities together as a team outside of training and competition.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

<sup>17</sup> Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

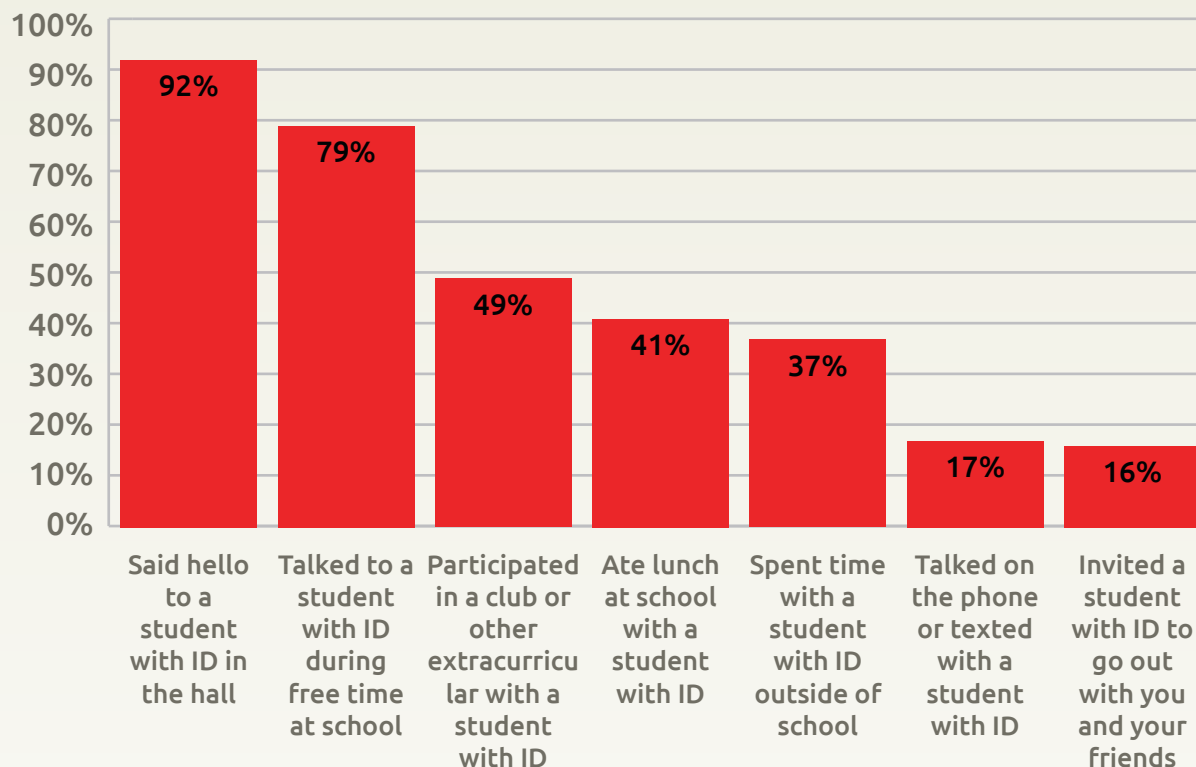
<sup>18</sup> Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

<sup>19</sup> Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.



- In a survey conducted by Special Olympics, **48% of partners reported that their closest friend on the team had ID.**<sup>20</sup>
- An [analysis of data on Unified Sports in U.S. schools](#) found that 79% of Unified Sports partners reported talking to a student with ID during free time at school and 41% reported eating lunch with a student with ID. They also held **positive beliefs about classroom inclusion** for students with disabilities.<sup>21</sup>

## UNIFIED SPORTS PARTICIPANTS REPORTED INTERACTIONS WITH PEERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN U.S. SCHOOLS<sup>22</sup>



Building friendships and social inclusion among the team is a key impact of Unified Sports. Evaluations have shown that finding committed partners and creating an environment where there is meaningful involvement of all players is important to building a successful program.<sup>23</sup> **Coaches also play an important role in this process** by serving as a role model for attitude and behavior toward people with ID, promoting equal and meaningful involvement of all players, and encouraging social interactions between athletes and partners outside of Unified Sports.<sup>24</sup>

20 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

21 Nanavati, J. (2015). *Unified Sports in School Settings: Evidence of Impact*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

22 Nanavati, J. (2015). *Unified Sports in School Settings: Evidence of Impact*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

23 Siperstein, G., Hardman, M., Wappett, M., & Clary, L. (2001). *National evaluation of the Special Olympics Unified Sports program. A special report*. Washington, DC: University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Utah, & Special Olympics, Inc.

24 Dowling, S., McConkey, R., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2010). *Unified gives us a chance: An evaluation of Special Olympics youth unified sports programme in Europe/Eurasia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.



In addition to being a fun, engaging experience, Unified Sports has a multitude of benefits for athletes and partners. As a result, participants express enthusiasm about the program and a survey conducted by Special Olympics found that **95% of athletes and partners indicated they plan to play Unified Sports again.**<sup>25</sup> The commitment and excitement about the program demonstrates the value of Unified Sports for people with and without ID around the world.

---

**“...I like how they developed a friendship. And I noticed it after we came back from our first event and I saw kids interacting in the hallways either just saying hi or giving a high five. And normally those kids wouldn’t even talk to each other prior to participating with this unified team.”**

—Coach, Special Olympics Florida<sup>26</sup>

---

## CREATING INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

In many communities, playing inclusive sports is thought to be infeasible. According to one study surveying public attitudes, **the vast majority of the public in nine out of ten countries thought people with ID were not capable of playing sports with people without ID.**<sup>27</sup> Unified Sports brings people with ID into the community and highlights their strengths and potential, in stark contrast to the negative stereotypes that are often pervasive.

A [study in Serbia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, and Hungary](#) sought to determine how Unified Sports contributed to social inclusion not only among teams, but in the broader community. It found that Unified Sports creates a culture of inclusion that is embedded in a wider culture of stigma and discrimination. **By consistently challenging the negative perceptions of people with ID and demonstrating their capabilities, Unified Sports creates “bridges to social inclusion” in the community.**<sup>28</sup>

---

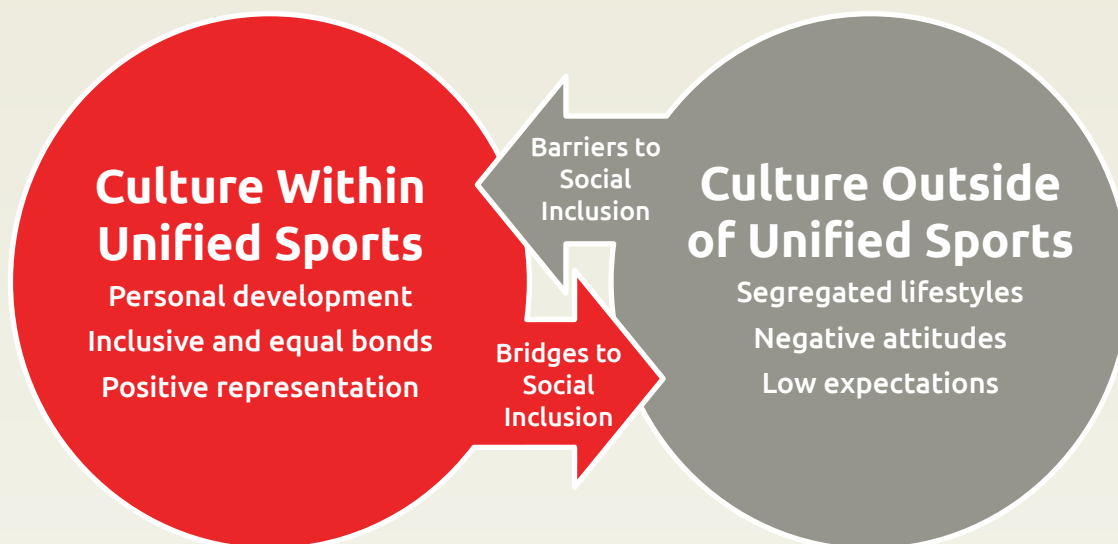
25 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

26 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

27 Siperstein, G.N., Norins, J., Corbin, S., & Shriver, T. (2003). *Multinational study of attitudes toward individuals with intellectual disabilities*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

28 Dowling, S., McConkey, R., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2010). *Unified gives us a chance: An evaluation of Special Olympics youth unified sports programme in Europe/Eurasia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.





There are four main elements of Unified Sports that challenge barriers to inclusion in the community. These are:

- 1. Promoting the personal development of athletes and partners.** Developing social and sports skills while focusing on ability, rather than disability.
- 2. Creating inclusive and equal bonds among athletes and partners.** Promoting true partnerships that are positive and inclusive.
- 3. Generating positive perceptions of athletes.** Serving as a platform to inform the community about people with ID.
- 4. Building alliances within the community.** Building parent support/advocacy networks and connecting with local sports organizations, schools, governments, etc. for support.<sup>30</sup>

These processes allow social inclusion to occur within Unified teams and in the broader community. Evaluations have shown that Unified Sports has in fact helped athletes enhance their involvement in the community. According to one Special Olympics survey, as a result of participating in Unified Sports, 83% of participants reported that they do more activities in their community.<sup>31</sup> Through the power of sport, Unified Sports connects people with and without ID, building bridges to social inclusion in the broader community and breaking down stigmas.

---

**“This team includes everyone, we play as one, we work together, that is the best way for Unified teams.”**

—Unified partner, Ukraine<sup>32</sup>

---

29 Dowling, S., McConkey, R., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2010). *Unified gives us a chance: An evaluation of Special Olympics youth unified sports programme in Europe/Eurasia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

30 Dowling, S., McConkey, R., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2010). *Unified gives us a chance: An evaluation of Special Olympics youth unified sports programme in Europe/Eurasia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

31 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

32 Dowling, S., McConkey, R., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2010). *Unified gives us a chance: An evaluation of Special Olympics youth unified sports programme in Europe/Eurasia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.



## KEY FINDINGS:

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS RESEARCH



In 2014, over **850,000 people** with and without ID participated in Unified Sports.<sup>31</sup>



**82% of family members** in the United States reported that athletes improved their self-esteem/self-confidence after participating in Unified Sports.<sup>33</sup>



In a survey conducted by Special Olympics, **48% of partners** reported that their closest friend on the team had ID.<sup>35</sup>



By consistently challenging the negative perceptions of people with ID and demonstrating their capabilities, Unified Sports creates **“bridges to social inclusion”** in the community.<sup>36</sup>



Unified football athletes and partners in Europe reported that their **football skills improved** a lot (46%) or a little (46%).<sup>32</sup>



After participating in Unified football, the majority of partners (79%) reported that their **understanding** of people with ID **improved**.<sup>34</sup>



A survey in five countries found that **85%** of athletes reported **exercising more** every week as a result of participating in Unified Sports.<sup>37</sup>

31 2014 Reach Report (2014). Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

32 Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

33 Siperstein, G., Hardman, M., Wappett, M., & Clary, L. (2001). *National evaluation of the Special Olympics Unified Sports program*. A special report. Washington, DC: University of Massachusetts Boston, University of Utah, & Special Olympics, Inc.

34 Norins, J., Haradan, C., Parker, R. (2006). *Evaluation of the Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia Unified Football Pilot Project: Findings from Austria, Poland, Romania, Serbia, and Slovakia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc. & University of Massachusetts Boston.

35 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.

36 Dowling, S., McConkey, R., Hassan, D., & Menke, S. (2010). *Unified gives us a chance: An evaluation of Special Olympics youth unified sports programme in Europe/Eurasia*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

37 Nanavati, J. & Haas, K. (2015). *Unified Sports Evaluation*. Washington, DC: Special Olympics International.



## RESOURCES:

In their book, **Strategies for Inclusion: A Handbook for Physical Educators**, Lauren J. Lieberman and Cathy Houston-Wilson outline a continuum of options that allow students to move from a self-contained environment to a totally inclusive environment, based on their unique needs. (**Strategies for Inclusion-2nd Edition, A Handbook for Physical Educators**, By Lauren Lieberman, Cathy Houston-Wilson)

<http://www.humankinetics.com/products/all-products/Strategies-for-Inclusion:-A-Handbook-for-Physical-Educators---2E>

**APENS – Adapted Physical Education National Standards - 15 Standards of Specialized Knowledge:**

<http://apens.org/15standards.html>

**Center for Parent Information and Resources:**

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/>

**Center for Social Development and Education at the University of Massachusetts Boston – Project UNIFY:**

[https://www.umb.edu/csde/research/project\\_unify](https://www.umb.edu/csde/research/project_unify)

**Commit to Inclusion:**

<http://committoinclusion.org/accessible-version/>

**Connecticut State Department of Education - Guidelines for Adapted Physical Education:**

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2663&q=334380>

**Designing and Implementing Effective Adapted Physical Education Programs By Luke Kelly**

**ERIC - Moving to Inclusion. Active Living through Physical Education: Maximizing Opportunities for Students with a Disability:** <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED391318>

**Instructional Models for Physical Education  
By Michael W. Metzler**

**Making Connections: From Theory to Practice in Adapted Physical Education By Janet A. Seaman, Karen P. DePauw, Kimble B. Morton, and Kathy Omo**

**Maryland State Department of Education - A Guide for Serving Students with Disabilities in Physical Education:**

<http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/NR/rdonlyres/84C4C717-B8FF-486B-8659-79F297DF5B38/19715/Servingstudents2.pdf>

**Moving into the future: National standards for physical education (2nd ed.):**

<http://physedteacher.home.comcast.net/~physedteacher/NatAcadStanPE.pdf>

**National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD) - Discover Inclusive Physical Education:**

<http://www.nchpad.org/1402/6261/Discover~Inclusive~Physical~Education>

**National Center on Universal Design for Learning at:**

[www.udlcenter.org/](http://www.udlcenter.org/)

**National Federation of State High School Associations - Coaching Unified Sports:**

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/36000>

**PALAESTRA - Adapted Sport, Physical Education, and Recreational Therapy:**

<http://www.palaestra.com/>

**Shape America:**

<http://www.shapeamerica.org/about/>

**Special Olympics Research Overview:**

<http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/research/Special-Olympics-Research-Overview.pdf>

**Special Olympics Unified Sports® Overview:**

[http://resources.specialolympics.org/uploadedFiles/special-olympics-resources/Topics/Unified\\_Sports/Files/4.1-UnifSp%20Models-Overview\\_v26\\_09-20-12.pdf](http://resources.specialolympics.org/uploadedFiles/special-olympics-resources/Topics/Unified_Sports/Files/4.1-UnifSp%20Models-Overview_v26_09-20-12.pdf)

**Special Olympics Unified Sports Interscholastic Unified Sports® Info Sheet:**

<http://media.specialolympics.org/soi/files/resources/UnifiedSports/InterscholasticInfo.pdf>

**State of New Jersey Department of Education - Model Curriculum: Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (K-12):**

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/modelcurriculum/peh/>



## **SONJ MISSION STATEMENT:**

To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities by giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy, and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS NEW JERSEY VISION:**

Special Olympics New Jersey will be the premier non-profit sports organization worldwide, known for excellence and innovation in providing opportunities to enrich the lives of all current and potential Special Olympics athletes, their families and society as a whole.

**Special Olympics New Jersey**

**1 Eunice Kennedy Shriver Way, Lawrenceville, NJ 08648**

**(609) 896-8000 / [www.sonj.org](http://www.sonj.org)**







# TEAMWORK IS A BEAUTIFUL THING.



Project UNIFY, the Special Olympics Unified Strategy for Schools, is supported by funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service or enterprise mentioned in this publication is intended or should be inferred.

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation, Authorized and Accredited by Special Olympics, Inc. for the Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities