



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.

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.

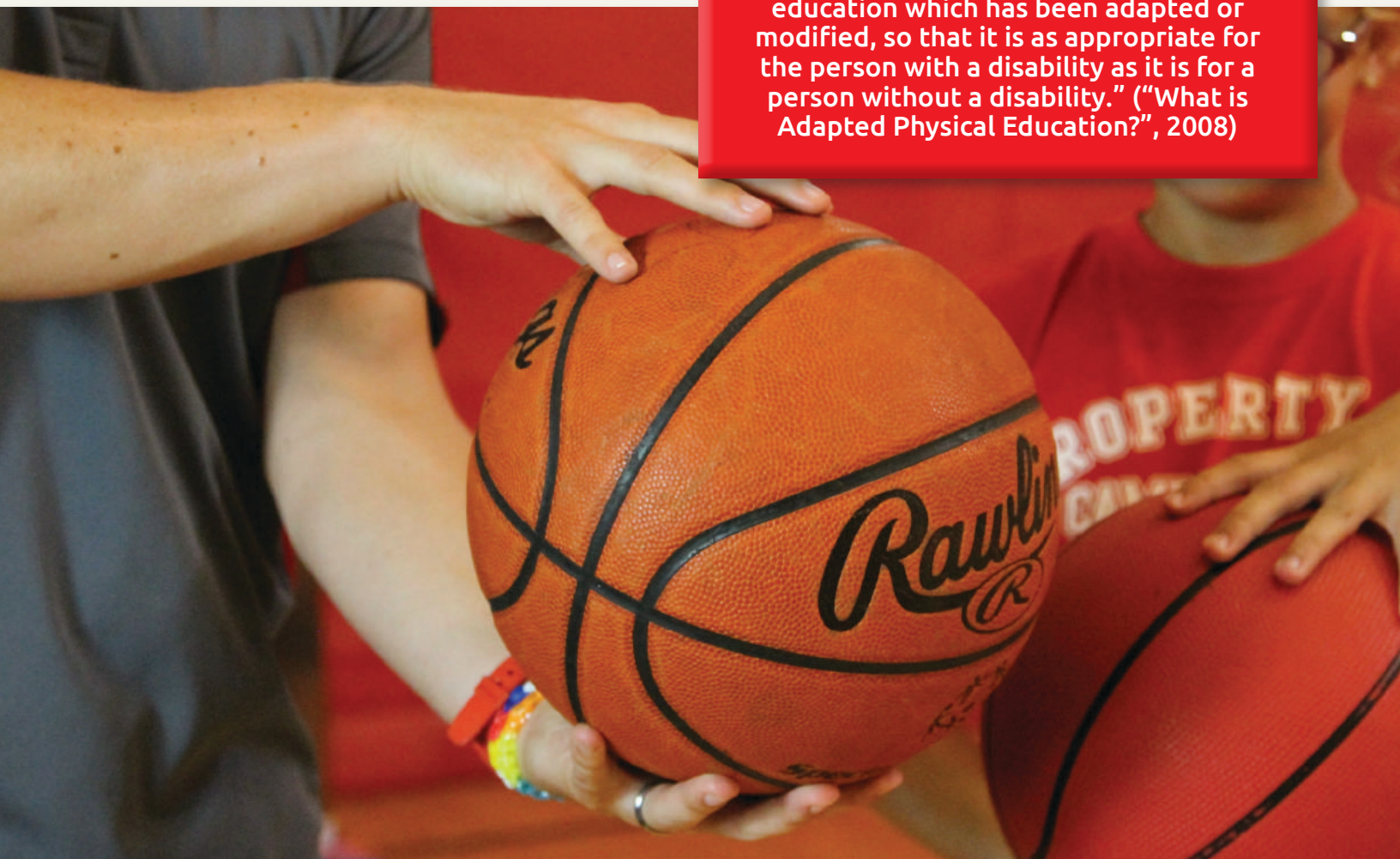
LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR INCLUSIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

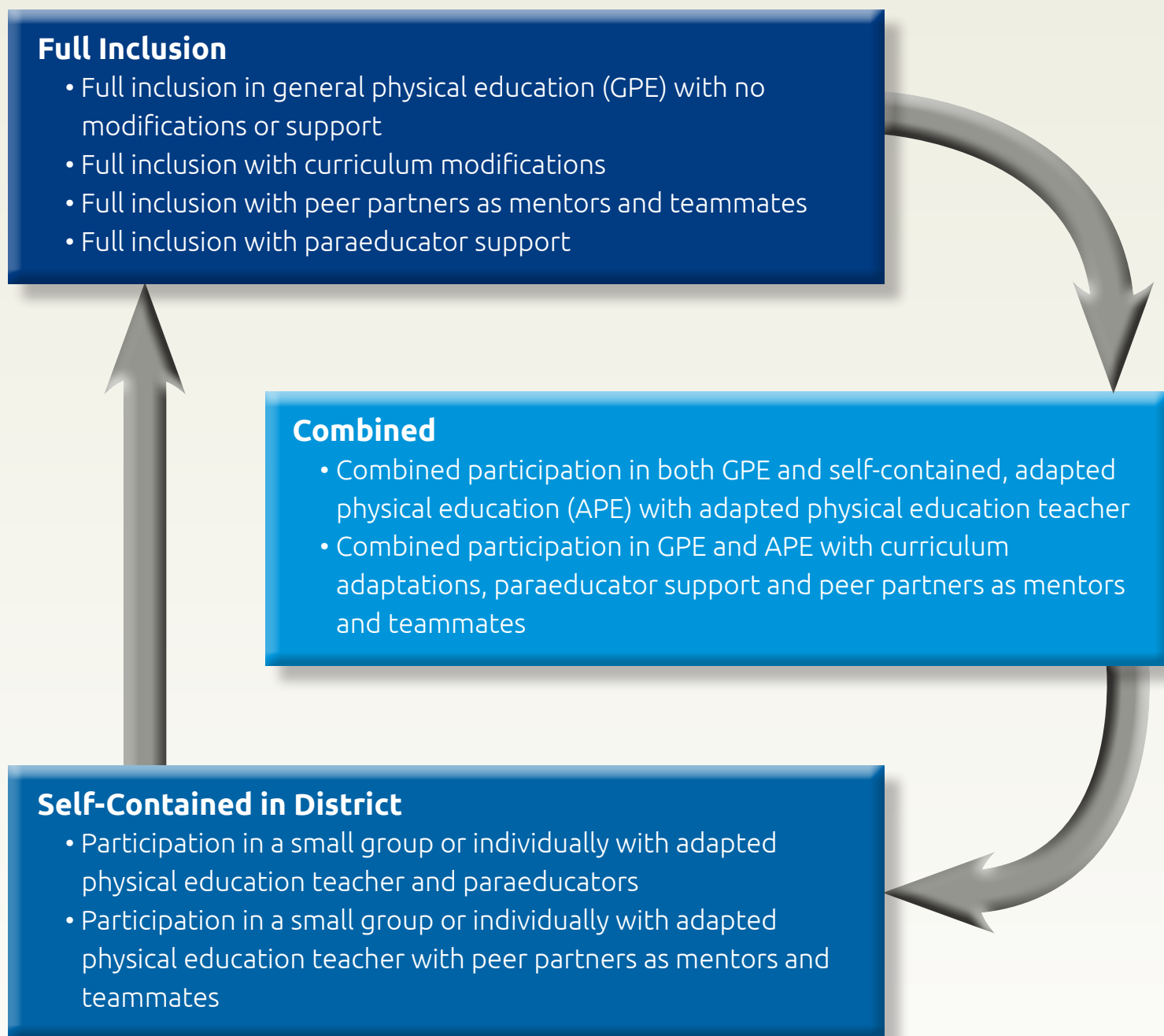


Diagram 1. In determining the least restrictive environment for participation, options along a continuum of environments, from self-contained to full inclusion, can be combined to address each student's specific abilities and needs. Placement should be viewed as fluid and flexible, where students can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

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.



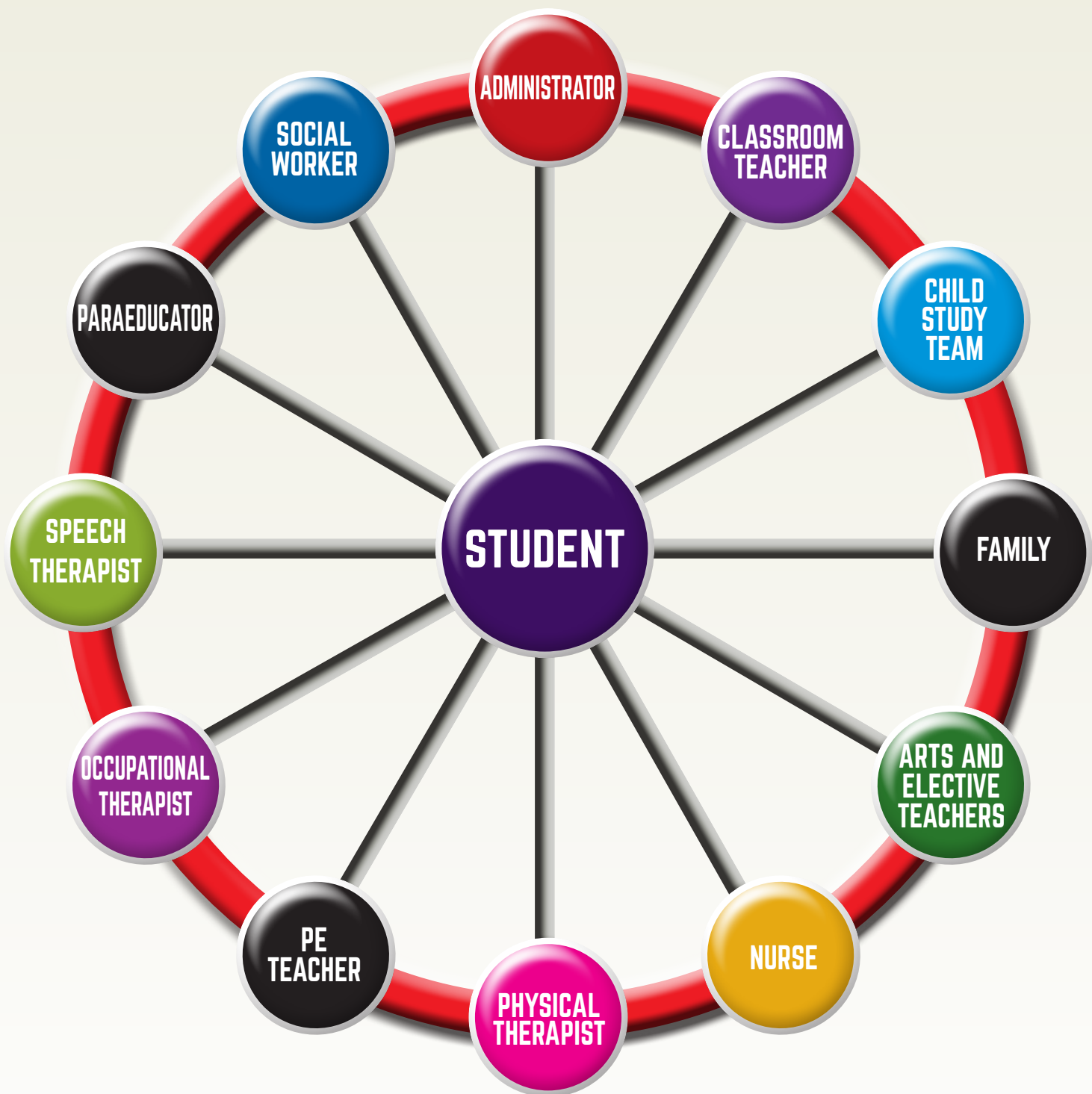
Know Your Team Members

- **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

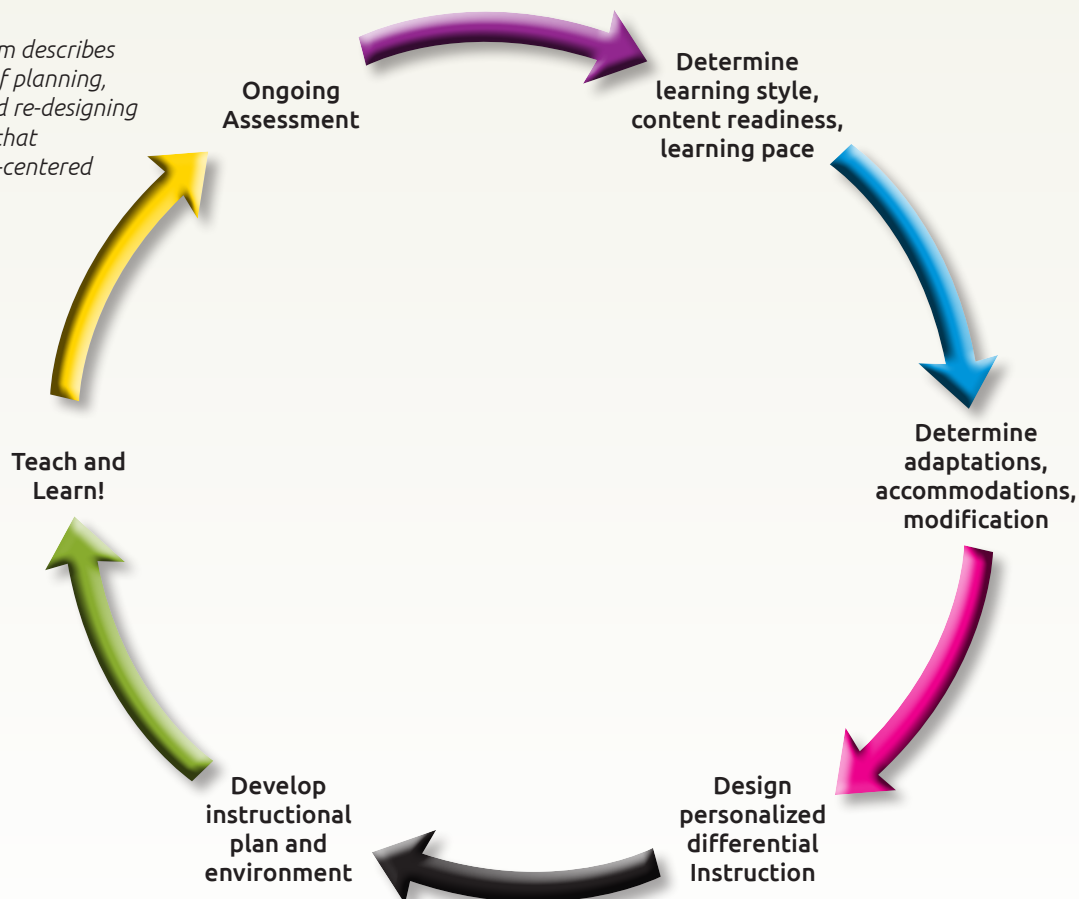
Each student’s instructional plan should start where he is ready to learn. Implementing an inclusive program can require detailed and thoughtful planning to ensure you are providing equal opportunities for all.

- 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.

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
 WARM-UP	1 10 MIN.	
 DRIBBLING	2 10 MIN.	
 PASSING	3 10 MIN.	
 SHOOTING	4 10 MIN.	
 GAME	5 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!**

