



# Supporting All Students to be Fit for Life

*Inclusive approaches to physical education*



# Our Charge

Accelerating solutions that  
prepare children for a  
lifetime of health & fitness



# The Issue

NATIONWIDE, YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES ARE **4.5 TIMES LESS** ACTIVE THAN YOUTH WITHOUT DISABILITIES<sup>1</sup>

**Some of the most reported barriers to participation include:** <sup>2,3,4</sup>

-  Functional limitations
-  Lack of appropriate and inclusive opportunities and facilities to be active
-  Cost and time constraints
-  Fear of being injured and/or stigmatized

*In addition:*



**More than half of K-12 schools** allow students to be exempted from required physical education for a cognitive disability<sup>5</sup>

This matters because people with intellectual disabilities are

disproportionately affected by chronic conditions  
People with intellectual disabilities are:

**5X** more likely to have diabetes<sup>8</sup>

**3X** more likely to have arthritis<sup>8</sup>

**2X** more likely to have cardiovascular disease &



**2X** more likely to be obese<sup>8</sup>

**3X** more likely to be admitted to the hospital<sup>8</sup>

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> The Aspen Institute – Project Play. Physical Literacy in the United States: A Model, Strategic Plan, and Call to Action.

<sup>2</sup> Shields N, Synnot AJ, and Barr M. Perceived barriers and facilitators to physical activity for children with disability: a systematic review. Br J Sports Med. 2012;46:989–997.

<sup>3</sup> King G, Law M, King S, Rosenbaum P, Kertoy MK, Young NL. A conceptual model of the factors affecting the recreation and leisure participation of children with disabilities. Phys Occup Ther Pediatr. 2003;23(1):63-90.

<sup>4</sup> Rimmer JA and Rowland JL. Physical activity for youth with disabilities: A critical need in an underserved population. Developmental Neurorehabilitation. 2008;11(2): 141-148.

<sup>5</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014.

<sup>6</sup> Active Schools; NCHPAD. Inclusive Physical Education and Physical Activity: Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities - Survey Report. 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School Health Policies and Practices Study 2016.

<sup>8</sup> Special Olympics Health. Inclusive Health - Key Facts. Available at: <https://ihc.brightspotcdn.com/22/62/695c912d4cf1853dc898ec9242fd/inclusivehealthkeyfactsonepager-1.pdf>

# Our Solution

ENSURE THAT EVERY CHILD  
HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
**MAXIMIZE THEIR HEALTH AND  
FITNESS**

**Participation in regular physical activity can  
improve overall well-being by fostering:** <sup>1,2</sup>



- ✓ Independence
- ✓ Coping
- ✓ abilities
- ✓ Competitiveness
- Teamwork



- ✓ Formation of friendships
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Development of self-identify



## Sources

<sup>1</sup> Patel DR and Greydanus DE. The pediatric athlete with disabilities. *Pediatr Clin North Am.* 2002;4(4):803-27.

<sup>2</sup> Dykens EM, et al. Exercise and sports in children and adolescents with developmental disabilities. Positive physical and psychosocial effects. *Child Adolesc Psychiatr Clin N Am.* 1998;7(4):757-71, viii.

# What is Inclusive Physical Education?

## Our definition:

Learning environments where students with disabilities are engaging with their peers without disabilities, accessing and participating in the physical education curriculum in meaningful ways.



# Inclusive Physical Education

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Physical education provides

"an opportunity for everyone to shine...

it [should] perfectly exemplify acceptance and inclusion

of all abilities. The effect on self-confidence and

self-esteem for all involved [can be] profound..."

~ Peggy Mace, mother of two students with Down syndrome  
enrolled in the Dover High School (NH) Unified Wellness Program



# Considerations to promote an inclusive physical education classroom

*At the heart of PE is learning how to move and play alone and with others.*

# Leverage Peer Support

Students learn best from their peers.



*Students in Dover High School's Unified Wellness Program dancing together.*

# Utilize the Principles of Universal Design

One size will not fit all.

+ Provide options for activities and instruction.



*Providing options for fitness assessments - wall push-ups (L) and 90-degree push-ups (R)*

# Utilize Support Services

You do not need to have all the answers.

- + Think about other support personnel who can be utilized (e.g., paraprofessionals, occupational and physical therapists, and others).



*Paraprofessionals support students in Dover High School's Unified Wellness Program.*



# Practical strategies to promote an inclusive physical education classroom



# Utilize instructional strategies that match the learner's strengths and accommodate multiple types of learning modalities.

- Using visual aids and physical modeling techniques (visual learners).
- Providing verbal cues and instruction (auditory learners).
- Allowing participants to “learn by doing” and incorporating movement throughout instruction (kinesthetic learners).
- Combine approaches to reach all learners.



# Utilize fitness assessment data\* to support individual goal setting and plans for improvement.

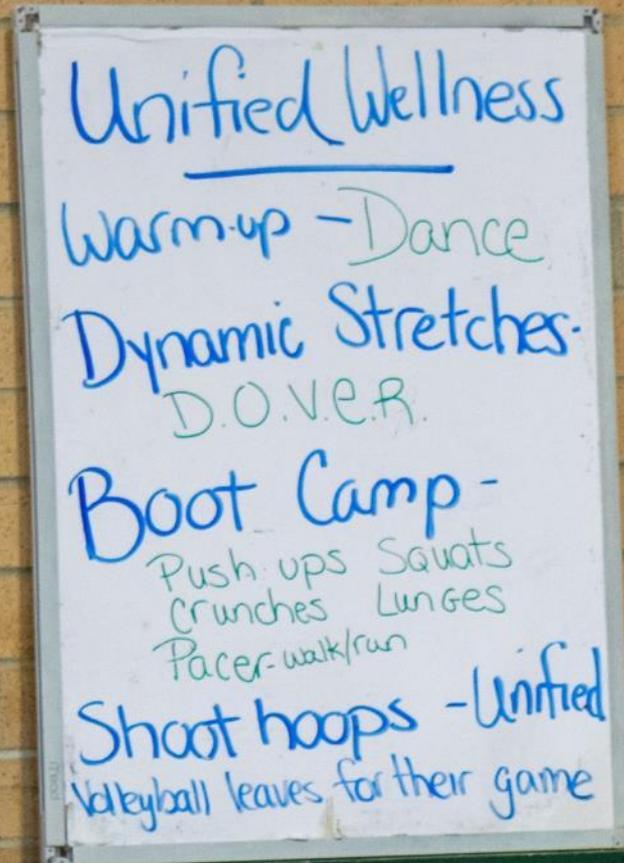


- Use assessment data to determine Present Level of Performance (PLP).
- Identify areas of need based on items in which standards have not been met.
- Create goals and objectives based on areas of need.
- Incorporate goals and objectives into a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- Identify appropriate activities to promote health-related fitness.



Note: Select portions of the Brockport Physical Fitness Test Manual and FitnessGram® Manual are provided for use at [pyfp.org](http://pyfp.org)

# Plan instructional time to support progressive learning.



- Consider order of presentation of materials (e.g., begin with activities that are easily attainable and move toward more demanding tasks, then conclude with a successful experience).
- Maintain structure and routines to support predictability (e.g., post plan for the day's class, so students know what to expect).
- Allow for breaks, as needed.

# Arrange the class in a variety of ways to optimize class cohesion and engagement.

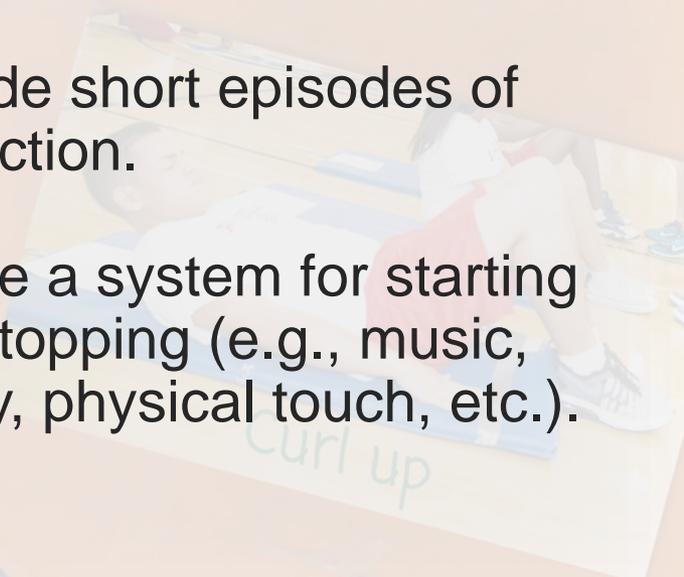


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- A photograph of three students in a gymnasium. On the left is a young girl with a ponytail wearing a bright pink and blue zip-up hoodie and colorful patterned leggings. In the center is a young woman with glasses wearing a maroon zip-up hoodie. On the right is a young man wearing a grey and white patterned long-sleeve shirt and blue jeans. They are standing on a wooden gym floor with green and white wall panels in the background.
- Large group (warm-up).
  - Small group and/or peer-to-peer (drill work).
  - Stations (focused skill-building).

# Utilize cues or supports that will foster independence.



- Provide verbal cues (accompanied by demonstrations, guided assistance, tactile teaching, visual aids, etc.).
- Provide short episodes of instruction.
- Create a system for starting and stopping (e.g., music, buddy, physical touch, etc.).



# Modify activities.



- Allow more opportunities for students to practice the task or skill.
- Modify or eliminate some rules.
- Slow down the pace of the game.
- Adapt the objective of the game.
- Add guidance or assistance, where appropriate.
- Change the number of players.
- Decrease time of play.
- Modify competitiveness.



# Modify equipment.



- Include choices based on the intent of the outcome (e.g., to practice striking an object over a net, use different racquets, balls, birdies, etc.; widen, lower, or otherwise modify the size of the nets/goals; etc.).
- Vary the size, texture, and weight of equipment (e.g., bigger/smaller; softer/harder; longer/shorter).
- Use audible methods, when appropriate.

# Modify environment.



- Increase visual cues.
- Monitor noise level.
- Consider lighting.
- Use music, when appropriate, to motivate students.

# Summary



- Work towards making sure everyone is a valued member of the class.
- Use appropriate data to set goals and recognize progress.
- Work with a class to determine adaptations.
- Provide choices to support and engage all learners to be active and fit for life!

# Additional Resources



[video link]

[Presidential Youth Fitness Program  
Resource Library](#)

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Special Olympics  
**Health**

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[inclusivehealth.specialolympics.org](http://inclusivehealth.specialolympics.org)