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 DISABILITIES¹

Some of the most reported barriers to participation include: ², ³, ⁴

- 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 disability⁵

This matters because people with intellectual disabilities are disproportionately affected by chronic conditions

People with intellectual disabilities are:

- 5x more likely to have diabetes⁸
- 3x more likely to have arthritis⁸
- 2x more likely to have cardiovascular disease & asthma⁸
- 2x more likely to be obese⁸
- 3x more likely to be admitted to the hospital

Sources

Participation in regular physical activity can improve overall well-being by fostering:

- Independence
- Coping
- Abilities
- Competitiveness
- Teamwork
- Formation of friendships
- Creativity
- Development of self-identify

Sources

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.
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

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

One size will not fit all.

+ Provide options for activities and instruction.
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
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.

- 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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inclusivehealth.specialolympics.org