

## **INCLUDING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

In essence, Adapted Physical Education (APE) is about identifying constraints imposed by disability on the individual then modifying the task (activity) and/or the environment. In short, we modify the task or the environment to meet the specific needs of the learner. What follows are examples (Block, 1994) of general constraints and ways to modify or adapt physical activities. This list is not exhaustive, but is intended to give the reader an idea of problem solving approaches used in APE.

### **If the student has limited strength**

- Shorten distance to move or propel object
- Use lighter equipment (e.g., balls, bats, hockey sticks)
- Use shorter striking implements
- Allow student to sit or lie down while participating
- Use slightly deflated balls or suspended balls

### **If the student has limited running speed**

- Shorten distance or make it longer for others
- Vary the locomotor pattern (allow walking vs running)
- Make safe zones for tag games

### **If the student has limited stamina**

- Shorten distances
- Reduce size of playing area
- Provide safe zones
- Reduce activity time for student
- Allow more frequent rest period for student

### **If student has problems with balance**

- Provide chair/bar for support
- Teach balance techniques (widen base, extend arms)
- Increase width of balance beam
- Use carpeted rather than slick surfaces
- Show student how to fall properly
- Place student near wall for support
- Allow student to hold peer's hand

### **If student has limited coordination and accuracy**

- Use stationary balls for kicking/striking
- Decrease distance for throwing, striking, shooting
- Make targets and goals larger
- Use larger balls for kicking, striking, catching
- Increase surface of striking implement

### **Application**

Vary the number of players in a game: 4 x 4 soccer, etc.

Vary movement requirements: some students walk, others run; some hit a ball off a tee, others hit pitched ball; skilled students use more complex movements, less skilled students use simpler movements.

Change the field of play. Have special zones for students with less mobility; make the field narrower or wider as needed; shorten distance for students with movement problems.

Change the objects used by some students: some will be more successful with lighter bats but larger balls. Lower the basket for some students.

It is also possible to change the level of organization in games or sports. Have fixed lanes for soccer.

Vary the limits/expectations: number of turns student receives, no strikeout rule. In basketball, modify rules for traveling, double dribble, etc. Have the student play the most appropriate position on field or court: child with mobility problem pitches. In soccer, child takes all free kicks for his/her team.

Use simplification: Make the activity easier than usual: use scarves to juggle.

### **Examples of Modifications for Students Who Use Wheelchairs**

#### Soccer

- Change Surface – it is hard to move a wheelchair in the grass, so instead play on the blacktop
- Have someone help push their chair if they fatigue easily
- Give the student using a wheelchair a hockey stick or some other similar piece of equipment to pass the ball with

#### Basketball

- Lower the hoop
- Smaller court
- Use large trashcans as baskets
- Allow more pushes with the wheelchair per dribble

### Softball

- Use whiffle balls
- Use batting-tees for everyone
- Closer bases
- Count to 10 before throwing the ball
- If the wheelchair stops the ball it is an out
- Allow the wheelchair to slightly over-run each base

### Volleyball

- Lower net
- Use lighter objects for the ball, i.e. balloons, beach balls
- Play sitting volleyball (everyone sits on the floor or everyone sits in a chair)
- Allow one bounce per side