

# Inclusion In Sport

## Resource manual



A resource to support inclusive practices of persons with disabilities in organized sport.



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## Part 1: Introduction

### Purpose, Significance and Intention

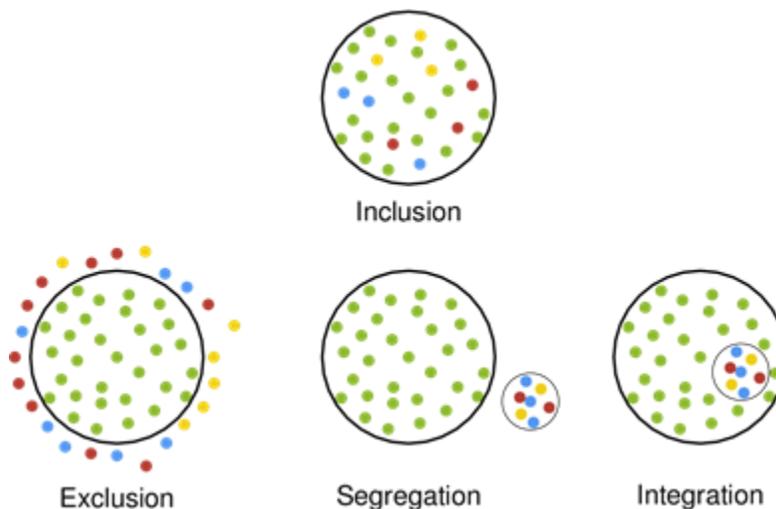
Welcome to the Inclusion in Sport Manual! The purpose of this manual is to help foster an environment where individuals of all abilities and unique needs are welcomed into organized sport in a way that is safe, successful, and meaningful to them, their family members, their coaches and their fellow teammates. It is a common misconception that coaches require highly specialized skills, experiences and training to support an athlete with a disability, however, this is not necessarily the case.

The Inclusion in Sport Manual is designed to provide coaches and staff with the tools, resources, and information necessary to create inclusive experiences and learn more about how they can positively impact families of children and youth with additional needs. Individuals with disabilities deserve the same access to meaningful sport and recreation opportunities, and we have recognized the need for information sharing and education surrounding this topic.

The intent of this manual is not to make organized sport coaches and staff experts on the subject. Rather, it is intended to provide a simple, easy to follow, compact resource so that coaches and staff feel empowered, prepared, and equipped to accommodate unique needs and disabilities of players who are interested in sport.

### Why Inclusive Sport?

Every child & youth, regardless of their developmental age, ability, or perceived deficits deserve and have the right to access meaningful sport opportunities. Statistics Canada reported in 2017 that 14% of the Canadian population 15 years or older (almost 4 million people) reported having a disability that limits them in daily activity. The successful inclusion of a person with a disability is important, and is mutually beneficial to many parties. Not only does it provide a positive experience to that individual, it helps foster independence, teamwork, and inclusionary behaviours of other players and supporting staff.



As depicted in the above diagram, striving for inclusion of players with unique needs goes far beyond having them participate on the sidelines or be simply integrated in a way that does not result in meaningful and genuine participation. It is important that when we think about creating a positive experience for individuals with different needs, we are striving to create an experience that thrives on inclusion of all individuals. Though many families will opt for segregated sport opportunities (ex. Special Olympics), it does not mean that ALL individuals with disabilities must participate through this model.

## **Common Barriers Faced by Individuals with Disabilities**

There is no denying that individuals with disabilities and/or unique needs face additional challenges when it comes to accessing meaningful sport and recreation opportunities. As a result of such individualized needs, many families choose not to participate in sport because of the constant barriers faced for their child and/or their family. It is our goal to break down some of these barriers, as this will allow us to reach successful inclusion. Here are some of the barriers faced by individuals with disabilities when it comes to accessing and participating in sport:

- Not having early exposure and experiences in sport
- Lack of understanding, awareness, and education on how to include people with disabilities
- Limited opportunity available to experience participation, training and/or competition
- Non-accessible spaces such as gymnasiums, buildings, stadiums, etc.
- Attitude towards disability from individuals in the sport community such as parents, coaches, teachers, etc.
- Lack of access to appropriate support personnel or adapted equipment (availability, financial, etc.)

## **Part 2: Creating an Inclusive Space**

### **Etiquette & Language**

A child with a disability shall be treated with the same dignity and respect as any other person, including the way in which they are spoken to. Here are some quick reminders about proper etiquette when communicating to someone with a disability:

- **Use Person-First language**
  - Always put the person before their diagnosis
  - Ex. Say “A player with a learning disability” instead of “learning disabled player”
  - This is justifying that we are people first, and a child’s diagnosis does not define them as an individual

- Best practice is to address a person by a term in which they prefer (ex. Some individuals prefer to reference their disability as “disability”, “special need”, “limitation”, etc.)
- **Keeping it Confidential**
  - Never “out” a person or blame their challenges/deficits on their diagnosis
  - If a family discloses a disability to you, it is never right to share that information with others on the team
  - Even in times when other players or parents pry with questions, it is never acceptable to share a child’s personal information or diagnosis with members of the team or public
- **Speak to a person based on their chronological age, not their developmental age**
  - Chronological age is the age of a person based on the number of years they have been alive. Developmental Age is the age of a person at which they function emotionally, socially, and cognitively
  - Many individuals may have a chronological age of 16, but a developmental age more similar to a child aged 9-10
    - It is imperative that you are always speaking to the child based on their chronological age (their real age) as failure to do so does not promote independence, degrades ability, and sets low expectations of them
- **Talk to the individual, not their support person**
  - There may be a time when a participant attends a sport with a support person (either a paid staff, a therapist, or a parent/guardian). However, it should always be the person with a disability that you are addressing and speaking to, not their support person. Even if they are unable to answer you, effort should still be made to converse and keep eye contact with that individual
- **Always presume competence**
  - When meeting/ interacting with, or coaching a person with a disability, always presume that they have the ability to succeed. Once we start putting limitations on different types of learners, we generally become less accepting and willing to adapt or make modifications for that person to succeed. By presuming competence in all players, you are setting the stage for success and creating a culture that everyone on the team has value and something to offer

**Verbiage & etiquette that promotes an inclusive culture:**

INSTEAD OF...	TRY...
The autistic hockey player	Their name OR the hockey player with autism
Physically challenged player	Player with a disability
Player suffering from _____	Player diagnosed with _____

**Terms that are no longer in use and/or respectful to use:**

DO NOT USE	ACCEPTIBLE ALTERNATIVE
Cripple/crippled	"Has a physical/mobility disability"
Wheelchair bound	"Wheelchair user" or "Uses a wheelchair"
Handicapped	"person with a disability"
Mentally retarded	"person with an intellectual disability"

**Developing an Intake Process**

What is an intake process?

- An intake process is a preventative measure that involves the asking of questions by the coach/team to have a comprehensive understanding of a participant's needs prior to the start of their involvement on a team
- The intake process can be as informal or formal as set out by the coach and administrators
- An intake process can be done over the phone, in person, or through the registration process (ie. Registration form or on its own designated form)
- Typically, an intake includes a series of questions that provide more detailed information about a child's needs, deficits, challenges, or abilities related to a specific topic (in this case, sport)
- The person conducting an intake should have a good idea of how to support a person based on the questions answered and the conversations had during this intake process

How would an intake process be helpful?

- An intake process is helpful when working with individuals, especially children, as it provides an opportunity to get a better understanding of what to expect when supporting that specific child
- Not only this, but an intake form allows the family an opportunity to express to the organization some challenges that you may face when supporting this individual, and some resources, tips and tricks on how to ensure success
- When we know ahead of time how to support a child with differing needs, we are better equipped to succeed and support them in the best way possible
- Without an intake form or process in place, we may never find out about possible triggers or helpful strategies, or even that a diagnoses exists which could lead to problems once the season takes off

Why does an intake process foster a positive and inclusive team culture?

- One way to foster inclusion and show support and advocacy is to show families you are willing to work with them by having some kind of intake process in place to get the information ahead of time
- Not only this, but by having prompting questions on a registration form, you are opening up the opportunity for families who don't have a child with a disability, but rather a child who requires some extra support in some areas to have a safe space to indicate so
- Intake contributes to an inclusive culture as instead of giving the impression "your child won't succeed here", instead, it leaves them with the impression "your child belongs here – how can we make sure this is a successful and fun experience for all?"
- By embedding intake into your registration provides the sense of belonging to parents and guardians of children and youth with disabilities

Examples of suitable questions for an Intake Process/Intake Form

- Does your child have a disability and/or unique need that we should be aware of?
- Are there any barriers to participation that your child may face in this sport?
- Does your child have a method of communication that may be more successful for learning and cooperation?
- What are some of your child's interests and hobbies outside of this sport?
- Are there any specific things we can do to ensure a successful experience and participation on this team?

## **Methods of Inclusion**

### **Embrace the Opportunity**

- Although integrating a player with a disability may be out of your comfort zone, it is important to note that other players and families will always take point from your leadership
- As a coach, by demonstrating qualities and components of inclusion, this is more likely to foster understanding and advocacy to the rest of your team and their families
- Coaches and staff should not get caught up on the fact that this player may be a hindrance to the team
- Instead, they should view this as an opportunity to embrace differences, and spend more energy on finding positive ways for that player to succeed

### **Treat the athlete like you would any other**

- Aside from modifications and adaptations to the program and/or delivery of the sport, an athlete with a disability should be treated just like any other player
- There should be no “special treatment” for a child with a disability – but rather, meaningful adaptations that will result in their success
- At all times, athletes should be provided the same opportunity and experience as their typically developed teammates
- For an individual with a disability, it is very likely that the ultimate goal that they have for themselves and that their families have for them, is to become independent and lead meaningful independent lives in the future
- As a coach, you can foster and encourage this independence by having the same expectations of athletes with disabilities that you do of their typically developed teammates. For example, if it is an expectation that athletes are to pick up equipment at the end of the practice, then that expectation should still stand true where possible for the athlete with a disability
- As you would with any other athlete, focus on their areas of improvement, successes, and personal growth within the sport – these athletes want to participate in the sport just like any other

### **Provide opportunities for meaningful leadership**

- One way you can foster and demonstrate your belief in each player's abilities is to assign them leadership roles on the team
- Similarly to how you would with typically developed athletes, give a player with a disability opportunity to choose a drill, select a relay team, etc. This shows the athlete and the rest of their teammates that you believe in their ability to succeed

## **Use creativity and collaboration to adapt**

- Coaches carry an immense amount of creativity when it comes to engaging their players both individually and within a team dynamic
- As coaches would with an athlete who had a temporary injury, get creative in your approach to how a program can be delivered with modifications
- It is encouraged that a coach ask the athlete directly what can be modified, changed, or adapted to meet their needs
- If the athlete is unable to express their needs and desired adaptations, it is best to go to the parent/guardians with ideas and suggestions and collaborate alongside them to get the best result
- Note: methods of including and adapting a participant with a disability requires a lot of trial and error and patience. It may not be successful on the first, second, or third try, but the goal should still be kept in sight and consistent efforts should be made during the trial and error process. Not only does it show commitment to the athlete, but it demonstrates to the other teammates that this member is a valuable player just as any other

## **Learn, educate, and do your research**

- Knowledge is power when accommodating individuals who learn, act, or experience the world differently than what we are used to
- Do your research and look into the governing bodies of each sport to determine what accommodations have been used in the past that may be helpful for your athlete
- Take the extra effort to engage with other coaches, governing bodies, teachers or administrators who may have helpful tips and tricks from past experiences

## **Part 3: Disabilities & Strategies**

### **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder?

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurological disorder that impacts how the brain functions
- ASD is 4 times more common in boys than in girls
- ASD is a spectrum disorder which affects each person differently, and is never represented exactly the same between two individuals

Characteristics of Autism Spectrum Disorder:

Individuals with ASD show challenges in 3 key areas:

- Communication:
  - May be non-verbal
  - May struggle with understanding and/or regulating emotions

- Behaviour:
  - o May demonstrate repetitive or ritualistic behaviours
  - o Ex. hand-flapping, rocking, or repeating certain words/phrases
- Socialization:
  - o May not maintain eye contact
  - o May struggle with interacting with peers

Common Characteristics that may be experienced in sport:

- Challenges with change in routine or sudden change of plans
- Trouble transitioning from one activity or drill to the next
- Sensitivity to light, smell, sound, etc., or new environments as a whole
- Trouble understanding or comprehending instructions, rules, etc.

Tools and Strategies to Support in Sport:

- Facilitate peer interactions – go the extra mile to introduce the player to others, and build more introduction activities into the team to foster a positive dynamic
- Allow for sensory breaks – give the child an opportunity to sit quietly on the sidelines, or in a designated safe space. This will allow for processing time, and build trust with a player.
- Try to create a sensory aware environment
  - o Remove all drills or activities that might involve children chanting or yelling, lowering lights if/when possible, avoiding echoing spaces and/or create a designated change space for specific children that is quieter
- Provide predictability
  - o Stick to a similar routine each practice, meet, or game
  - o Provide this routine to the child/family ahead of time (can be written out or demonstrated with pictures)
- Modifying instruction
  - o Allow for processing time when giving instruction
    - This means providing time after you have given an instruction for a child to take in the information and process the words you are saying
  - o Explain concepts, rules, and instructions slower and with less steps
    - It may be helpful to do a separate explanation to a player with Autism as they may benefit from the 1:1 attention and broken down instruction compared to the rest of the group



## Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)

What is Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder?

- ADHD is a neurobehavioral disorder that is usually diagnosed in childhood and persists into adulthood, and is equally diagnosed in both males and females
- ADHD are patterns of hyperactivity/impulse that impacts brain functions and development such as memory, attention, concentration, impulsivity, hyperactivity and social skills

Characteristics of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder:

- Challenges with listening, holding attention on tasks or play activities
- Often loses things necessary for certain activities (ex. School materials, sports equipment, personal belongings)
- Easily distracted (ex. May have trouble learning plays, anticipating moves and strategizing)
- Inattention (ex. May have trouble in sports that require moderate amounts of focus during times in which they aren't playing such as baseball)
- Does not seem to listen when spoke to directly
- Fidgets (ex. Can't sit still, squirms in seat, taps hands)
- Trouble with turn taking or waiting (ex. Waiting in line or for their turn during practice)
- Interrupts or intrudes on others
- Runs, climbs, or moves excessively when it is not appropriate
- Low frustration tolerance (ex. Have trouble losing in a game and could result in aggression, tantrums, etc.)

## Tools & Strategies to Support in Sport

- Change drills, activities, or patterns frequently to keep the attention of a child and prevent boredom
- To promote re-stimulation, the athletes position in the game as much as possible (example from forward to defense)
- Put children with ADHD in a position that is very active and is most likely to keep them busy and involved in the game as much as possible
- Give extra responsibilities to this athlete, especially during waiting periods (can include being a “coach assistant” and complete extra simple tasks or requests you’ve set out to them to keep them busy, engaged, and not engaging in troubling behaviours)
- Children with ADHD succeed much more with individualized sport (ex. swimming, martial arts, tennis), however, this does not mean that they do not benefit from, enjoy, or succeed in team sports. Where possible in a team sport, try to foster as much individualized competition and growth as possible.)

## **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD)**

What is Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder?

- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorders are a group of conditions that can occur in a person when the mother drinks alcohol during pregnancy
- FASD can lead to physical and behavioural challenges for a child

Characteristics of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder:

- Hyperactive behaviour
- Trouble keeping attention
- Poor coordination or abnormal muscle tone
- Poor memory
- Speech and language delays
- Poor judgement and impulse control
- Challenges with staying on task
- May have sensory challenges such as tuning out background noise

## Tools & strategies to Support in Sport:

- Set clear boundaries, rules and expectations from the start
- Provide predictability and stick to a routine when possible
- Create a defined structure to practice, games, etc.
- Introduce skills and build in drills that require less coordination when possible, OR modify certain drills to require less coordination to be completed
- Allow for extra processing time when explaining a drill, rule, activity, etc.
- Be aware of loud background noises that may be hindering a child's ability to absorb information

## Physical Disabilities

What are physical disabilities?

- Physical disabilities have limitations on a person's physical functioning and mobility
- There are several different diagnoses that can impact an individual's physical abilities, some of which include:
  - Loss or deformity of limbs
  - Muscular Dystrophy
  - Cerebral Palsy
  - Spina Bifida

Characteristics of Differing Physical Disabilities:

- Loss or Deformity of Limbs
  - As a result of a birth defect or an accident that may have occurred
  - May have artificial limbs in order to complete activities and sports with full functionality
- Muscular Dystrophy
  - Progressive loss of muscle strength over time (usually the most affected are muscles around the neck, shoulders and hips)
  - May require a wheelchair
- Cerebral Palsy
  - Non-progressive disorder that impacts both the brain and motor functioning
  - Challenges with movement, coordination, vision, speech, and intellectual and behavioural functioning
  - Often require adaptive equipment and/or mobility devices (ex. Wheelchair, walker)
  - Reduced range of motion and variations in muscle tone (ex. Could be very stiff)
  - Lack of muscle control and coordination, can be slow moving
  - Delays in reaching physical development milestones

- Spina Bifida
  - Caused by a development defect of the spinal cord
  - May cause paralysis of the lower part of the body
  - May require adaptive equipment and/or mobility devices (ex. Crutches or wheelchair)

#### Tools & Strategies to Support in Sport:

- Ensure the space in which you are conducting this sport is accessible to all (ie. Ramps, adequate space available for wheelchairs, etc.)
- Patience during communication and participation (ex. Some individuals will have a speech impediment making it hard to understand them at first)
- Make modifications to drills or practice activities that allow for an equal playing field
- Modify expectations and allow for more completion time for a player with a disability
- Encourage and facilitate peer to peer interaction between able-bodied players and players with mobility challenges
- Provide physical support when needed (ex. Child who is unable to get themselves up after falling on the ice) – this should be reviewed with the family ahead of time
- **Note:** It is important to note that physical disabilities vary drastically from one person to the next, and in order to ensure safety of this player, it is best to connect with the family about specific limitations and ways to ensure success

## Down Syndrome

What is Down syndrome?

- Down syndrome is a genetic disorder caused by an extra 21<sup>st</sup> chromosome, giving it its alternate name of *Trisomy 21* that is characterized by intellectual disability and some physical traits

Characteristics of Down syndrome:

- Low muscle tone
- Smaller than typical stature
- Upward slanted eyes
- May take longer to reach developmental milestones
- Challenges with impulse control
- Require assistance with regulating emotions
- May have accompanying health conditions such as hearing loss or heart problems

### Tools & Strategies to Support in Sport:

- Review rules and set boundaries – use simple terms and review them often
- Support with visuals (ex. Pictures on a piece of paper or drawing out the drills or plays) to explain expectations and provide predictability
- Provide warnings for transitions (ex. 5 more minutes until we change activities, 1 more minute until we switch drills, 2 more minutes on the ice, etc.)
- Motivate the athlete based on things they enjoy (ex. Make a drill about Paw Patrol if that is something they are interested in)
- Recognize and celebrate successes, no matter how “small” they may feel

## **Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD)**

### What is Oppositional Defiant Disorder?

- Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is a behavioural disorder often diagnosed in children
- ODD can cause a child to be uncooperative, defiant, and hostile to authority figures such as parents, teachers, coaches, etc.

### Characteristics of Oppositional Defiant Disorder:

- Actively refuse to comply with rules or requests
- Intentionally seeking to annoy or upset others
- Easily irritated and frustrated by others
- May have frequent outbursts of anger
- May struggle with building and maintaining relationships
- Speaking harshly or unkindly
- Arguing or refusing to take direction from an adult/authority figure
- Blaming others for mistakes
- Impulsive tendencies

### Tools & Strategies to Support in Sport:

- Work hard to build trust and rapport over time
- Be preventative, and understand what some triggers may be and avoid them in the future (Ex. If you know that being in a certain position on the field upsets them, avoid this moving forward)
- Provide breaks to decompress often (ex. Let them sit off on the sidelines, build these breaks in often and make them a part of the routine)
- Ensure the environment is a safe place (ex. Don't leave out items or materials that are not safe and/or can be misused by a child who is escalated)
- Pick battles worth fighting, and don't push the child to do something when it isn't “worth the fight”

## Part 4: Behaviour Management Supports and Tools

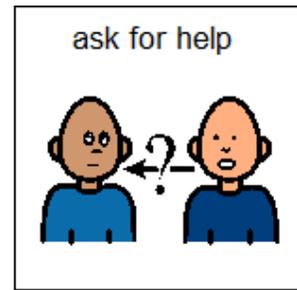
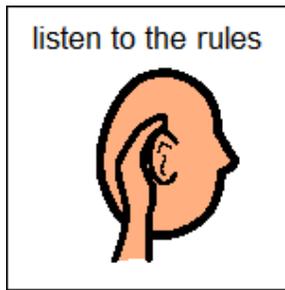
### Reinforcement & Motivation

- What is reinforcement & motivation?
  - Reinforcement can be anything a person enjoys, has a specific interest in, or desires
  - Reinforcement can include a tangible item, food, experience, a favourite person, an action, a hobby, verbal praise, etc.
  - If a child is motivated for a certain item, that motivation can be used to encourage positive behaviours to happen again
  - Examples of Reinforcement in a sport setting can include
    - Playing a desired position
    - Being paired with a certain assistant coach or other player for a drill
    - Receiving a sticker
    - Being picked to complete a special task
    - Being chosen to demonstrate a drill
  
- **How does reinforcement/ motivation work?**
  - Reinforcement is helpful as it is a tool that can be used to encourage positive behaviours
  - Positive reinforcement is providing something desirable to a person when they are exhibiting a behavior you want to see again
  - Individuals with intellectual and/or behavioural disabilities are often very motivated by certain reinforcers, and are encouraged to behave a certain way if they know that reinforcement is coming
  - Reinforcement makes a child want to do a desired behaviour again, therefore increases positive behaviours
  
- **How can reinforcement and motivation help in a sport setting?**
  - If we know how to reinforce a child, we can build in reinforcement into our environments to encourage positive behaviours we'd like to see again
  - If the athlete is motivated and continually participating, they are improving their skills to the best of their ability
  - If there is a component to sport that an athlete is aversive to, it may be successful to incorporate what is reinforcing to them and use a "First-Then" model (First – undesirable action, Then – reinforcement)
  - *Example: Jason loves Maddy as an Assistant Coach and is always looking for her on the court. Knowing that Jason has trouble staying focused on the current drill, we will use Maddy as motivation to get Jason to complete the current drill. "Jason – if you show me how you dribble to the blue line and back 3 times, you can be in Maddy's group the next activity"*

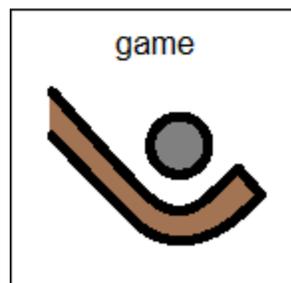
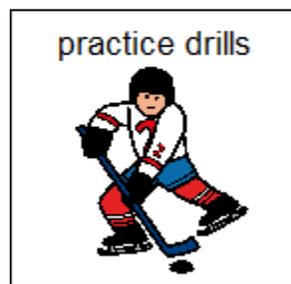
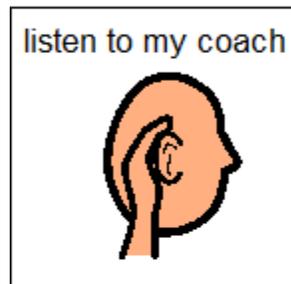
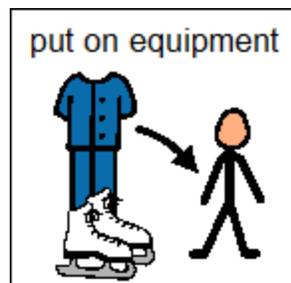
## Visual Support Tools

- The use of visuals can be a helpful way to support communication and understanding for players with disabilities
- Visual Supports can include:
  - Photographs
  - Hand-drawn pictures
  - Symbols or signs
  - Printed clip-art type photos
  - PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System) – used formally in therapy & school settings
  - Drawing a drill on a coaches board
- **Why use visuals?**
  - Can help children learn new skills
  - Enhance communication with self and others
  - Can demonstrate units of time
  - Can help make associations between pieces of information
  - Aid in memory
  - Allow for extra processing time
  - Draw and keep attention
  - Show sequential steps in a task
- **How can I incorporate visuals into a sport setting?**
  - Visuals can be used to label equipment, spaces or important items related to sport
    - *Example: Place a Stop Sign picture on the front of the exit doors around the rink for a player who is constantly attempting to leave the ice*
  - Visuals can be used to support a specific set of tasks
    - *Example: Demonstrate “front stroke” with the use of 3 pictures: breath, pull arm back, push arm forward*
  - Visuals can assist with transitions to and from sport
    - *Example: Use visuals to support the process of putting on equipment prior to practice (put on baseball clothes, put on hat, put on cleats)*
  - Visuals can be used to provide predictability and create a schedule for better understanding of time
    - *Example: Use visuals to explain the plan for the lesson – 1) Arrive to the court, 2) Warm Up, 3) Drills, 4) Scrimmage/Free Play, 6) Cool Down*
  - Visuals can be used to accompany instruction
    - *Example: A picture for dribble, a picture for shoot, a picture for travelling, a picture for passing*

## My Rules at Practice



## My Hockey Schedule



## Modifying Instructions

Individuals with disabilities and/or unique needs may require modifications to how instructions are being delivered. Modifying instruction is one of the easiest tools to accommodate a different kind of learner.

Here are some ways you can modify instruction to better suite your athlete:

- **Tone**

- Certain children may respond better to differing tones of voice when being instructed
- While some athletes may respond well to a stern tone of voice, others may not and as it may in fact make matters worse
- Try to match your tone to their personality

- **Use of words**

- Generally, the less words used to deliver an instruction, the more receptive a child with a disability will be
- Be cautious of the number of words you are using to ask a question or deliver information
- It may be helpful to first deliver the instruction as you normally would to the group, and then delivery individualized instruction to a specific athlete with less words
- Breaking down steps is also a helpful tool instead of delivering many steps at a time
- Example:

Instead of....	Try.....
"Everyone line up behind the blue line with your basketballs. Once it's your turn, dribble the ball to the green pylon and complete 10 jumping jacks for this warm up"	"Line up, dribble to the green pylon, do 10 jumping jacks"

- **Humor & Enthusiasm**

- An athlete may respond better to instruction when it is delivered in a playful manner Embedding humor and fun into your delivery instruction may capture the attention of the athlete resulting in better understanding and attentiveness
- Delivering instruction enthusiastically or through pretend play may also capture attention and encourage participation

- **Delivery**

- Broken down into smaller, easy to follow steps
- Clear and slow, allowing for added time to process
- Simplified with as little words as possible
- Repeat cues or provide prompts as needed

## Considerations to Adaptive Technique

Derived from Coaching Association of Canada

1. **ABILITY:** Adjust skill level based on individualized interests and abilities
2. **DIFFICULTY:** Adapt the skill or activity if it is too easy or too difficult for the athlete
3. **AREA:** Select a playing area that encourages equal participation (size, shape, access)
4. **PARTICIPANTS:** Change the number of athletes involved (consider smaller groups)
5. **TIME:** Adjust game time to allow for sufficient rest, processing time, transitions
6. **INCLUSION:** Change practice structure or teaching methods to meet athletes unique needs
7. **VARIABILITY:** Allow opportunity for different movements, demonstrations, activities, etc.
8. **EQUIPMENT:** Consider equipment size, shape, weight, availability, and access

## Part 5: Communicating with Families

### Appropriately Handling a Challenging Athlete

Do's	Don't
Try your best to support the athlete in the moment	Do not withhold the athlete or remove them from participating

Do's	Don't
Approach a family as soon as possible to notify them that the child is having some challenges	Do not wait until several weeks into the season to approach the parent/guardian with changes
Keep other athletes engaged in the activity/drill/sport	Do not stop the programming or participation for the whole group
Assign an extra volunteer or assistant to support the athlete if/when possible	Do not allow the participant to go unsupported if you have resources or additional support available

## Starting Tough Conversations with Parents and Guardians

- Prepare
  - Email/call ahead of time
  - Gather the information you need to have the conversation (ex. What behaviours have you observed? I.e. Not listening, hands on, leaving the group, etc.)
  - Have someone with you (ex. Assistant Coach), but do not gang up on the family
- Privately
  - Email/call ahead of time
  - Gather the information you need to have the conversation (ex. What behaviours have you observed? I.e. Not listening, hands on, leaving the group, etc.)
  - Have someone with you (ex. Assistant Coach), but do not gang up on the family
- Collaborative Approach
  - Email/call ahead of time
  - Gather the information you need to have the conversation (ex. What behaviours have you observed? I.e. Not listening, hands on, leaving the group, etc.)
  - Have someone with you (ex. Assistant Coach), but do not gang up on the family

## Tools for Moving Forward

- Make a Plan
  - Before leaving this meeting, create a plan that both parties can agree upon
  - This plan should include details of next steps and realistic options moving forward
    - Example – don't tell a parent that you can assign a volunteer to the athlete in the next couple of weeks if you aren't sure someone is available

- These details can include what you might be doing next class, new strategies you can try (as suggested by the parent), and what steps moving forward would be if those implemented steps aren't successful
- Set check-in dates/times
  - Let the family know that you will check in with them
  - Provide a date or rough estimate of your next check in including your method of communication (ex. I will check-in with you again via email after the next practice)
  - This check-in should not be glanced over or missed
  - By dedicating time to the family to check in, you are showing that you are taking it seriously and making an effort to set their athlete up for success
  - A check-in does not have to be to give bad news. It is also important to check-in with families to let them know of any growth or success you've experienced with that player
- Lay out expectations
  - It is important that when moving forward with making modifications for a player that realistic and true expectations are still discussed
  - As a reminder, lay out expectations of players again in a respectful and gentle way to the family, especially related to safety and success of self and others
    - Example – It is important that we keep other players and coaches safe when playing hockey. We will implement all the strategies and try the tools you've provided with us today. However, if Ben is unable to safely participate in the program with skates on during practice, this may not be the best fit for him at this time.
- Provide resources and/or other suitable options
  - It's important that families feel that if you are deeming a child's participation not suitable on your team, that you are still giving them opportunities or suggestions for how their child can participate in sport
  - This should be done in a way that demonstrates you are still on the same side with the family, and want their player to succeed just as much as they do
  - Let the family know you will follow up with an email with some agencies or sport organizations that may be a better fit for their athlete (See Part 6: Community Contacts & Resources of this Inclusion in Sport Manual)

## Part 6: Community Directory & Resources

### Community Directory

These Community Organizations and Agencies may be helpful to yourself or a family you are supporting.

ORGANIZATIONS	DESCRIPTION	EMAIL
<a href="#"><u>Special Olympics - Aurora</u></a>	Provides sports training and competitive programs for persons 10-65 years with a mental disability.	<a href="mailto:aurora@specialolympicsontario.ca"><u>aurora@specialolympicsontario.ca</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Town of Aurora – Inclusion Services</u></a>	The Town of Aurora offers specialized programs for individuals with disabilities as well as 1:1 support options for any of our Recreation programs.	
<a href="#"><u>Aurora Soccer Club – Stinger Stars Program</u></a>	FREE Special Needs soccer clinics for Boys and Girls 6-16 years of age. The Aurora Stinger Stars program is open to anyone with a physical or intellectual disability between the ages of 6-16 years of age.	
<a href="#"><u>Newmarket Nighthawks</u></a>	This organization was established to give developmentally challenged players the opportunity to participate in a hockey program geared to their own unique abilities	
<a href="#"><u>Variety Village</u></a>	Sport training and fitness center specializing in programs for children and adults with special needs	<a href="mailto:info@varietyvillage.on.ca"><u>info@varietyvillage.on.ca</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Autism Ontario – York Region</u></a>	Information, education, advocacy, self-help support group with links to community agencies for families living with Autism Spectrum Disorders.	<a href="mailto:york@autismontario.com"><u>york@autismontario.com</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Children’s Treatment Network</u></a>	Helps coordinate care for children and youth with multiple disabilities. Offers an Online Resource Center.	<a href="mailto:info@ctnsy.ca"><u>info@ctnsy.ca</u></a>

ORGANIZATIONS	DESCRIPTION	EMAIL
<a href="#"><u>Community Living – Central York (Aurora/Newmarket)</u></a>	Provides services and support to people with an intellectual disability to promote their participation, friendship and citizenship in the community.	<a href="mailto:info@clnad.com"><u>info@clnad.com</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Learning Disabilities Association of York Region</u></a>	To provide leadership in learning disabilities advocacy, research, education and services and to advance the full participation of children, youth, and adults with learning disabilities in today’s society.	<a href="mailto:info@ldayr.org"><u>info@ldayr.org</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>York Support Services Network</u></a>	Provide case management services for people with developmental disabilities or serious mental illness to help them achieve personal goals for living, working and learning in their chosen environment. Offers online Resource Center.	<a href="mailto:contact@yssn.ca"><u>contact@yssn.ca</u></a>

**Resources & Credits**

The following list of websites are informative and helpful resources that were used in the creation of this manual. They can be further used to better understand a certain type of disability that may lead to more successful and effective inclusion in sport.

WEBSITE NAME
<a href="#"><u>John Hopkins Medicine – Conditions &amp; Diseases</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Coaches Association of Canada – (NCCP Coaching Athletes with Disability E-Learning Module)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>National Down Syndrome Society</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Handicaps Welfare Association – General Information on Physical Disabilities</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>ADDitude – Inside the ADHD Mind</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Association for Applied Sport Psychology</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Guide for an Accessible Aurora</u></a>