

Active Solutions

Adaptations to Include Children with Diverse and Intensive Needs in Physical Activity

An inclusive environment promotes physical activity for all children and ensures that all children receive the benefits of physical activity.



In order to provide an inclusive environment, it is important to adapt the environment and activities to meet the needs of children with varying interests and abilities. Children with disabilities may face unique challenges, but with appropriate adaptations, can meaningfully participate in physical activity.



Including all children in physical activity...

- Inclusion is a belief system and an attitude that children with disabilities can be provided with the same opportunities that are offered to children without disabilities. Participating differently in an activity does not lessen its value. A child with a disability can have an active lifestyle that meets their individual needs and interests. Once this attitude is achieved, it must be put into action.
- Always encourage families to check with an appropriate professional (i.e., physician, physical therapist, occupational therapist) to be aware of any risks and necessary safety precautions needed to ensure the safety of children with disabilities in physical activity.



Adaptations to Include Children with Diverse and Intensive Needs in Physical Activity

Possible adaptations:

- **Recognize and minimize distractions** – remove extra equipment that may be a distraction or hazard.
- **Change boundaries** – reduce the size of the space, court, or playing field.
- **Vary the height of the target.**
- **Ensure year round access** – clean sidewalks of snow and ice, and keep grass short to allow wheelchairs to roll more easily.
- **Provide a variety of equipment to ensure choice** – deflate balls to allow for better grip.
- **Use different methods to achieve the same task** – roll, pass, kick.
- **Modify the time for children to complete the activity.**
- **Modify the rules of the game** – make sure all children are involved before a team can score, or allow more chances.
- **Vary the intensity of the activity** – allow rest breaks when needed.

Funding opportunity:

- The Enabling Accessibility Fund (EAF) supports community-based projects across Canada that improve accessibility, remove barriers, and enable Canadians with disabilities to participate in and contribute to their communities. The Small Project Component of the EAF provides grants of up to \$75,000 for projects that improve the existing environment through renovation, construction and

Resources and organizations that can help:

There are many tools and links that provide suggestions for adapting activities for the diverse needs of the children you care about.

- The Active Living Alliance for Canadians living with a Disability (ALACD) promotes, supports, and enables Canadians to lead active, healthy lives through the support of nationally coordinated leadership, encouragement, promotion and information (<http://www.spra.sk.ca/alacd/>).
- The *All Abilities Welcome! Toolkit* from ALACD is a great resource to help address barriers and create an inclusive experience for all children (<http://www.spra.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=91a90ae7-eed1-47cc-aef9-325a067c8c71>).
- The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability's (NCPAD) website discusses the benefits of physical activity for children with disabilities, as well as the fears and obstacles that come with trying to be physically active (<http://www.ncpad.org>).



retrofitting of buildings; modification of vehicles for community use; and make information and communication technologies more accessible (http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability_issues/eaf/cfp/ms_projects/application/m30.shtml).



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