

Tip Sheets

Adapting Activities for Youth

Strength and Endurance

- Lower nets, goals, and targets.
- Reduce the distance an object must be thrown, served or hit.
- Reduce the weight and size of objects, balls or striking tools.
- Lower the center of gravity; play games seated or lying down.
- Slow rolling balls by deflating them and/or adding surface resistance so a missed an object won't travel so far.
- Reduce activity time.
- Decrease the points needed to win.
- Reduce game speed; walk vs. run.
- Consider movements other than walking/running such as scooters.

Balance and Agility

- Lower the center of gravity. Keep as much of the body in contact with the surface as possible. Lean against a wall before throwing or when resting.
- Widen the base of support by standing with feet apart.
- Use extended arms for balance.
- Increase the width of lines, pathways, and objects used in the activities.
- Use chairs as balance aids.

Coordination and Accuracy

- Use larger, lighter, and softer balls.

- Decrease the distance and speed of thrown objects.
- Increase the variety of acceptable throwing objects to include bean bags, Nerf® balls, and tennis balls.
- Increase the size of targets.
- Begin with a stationary ball for kicking and striking.
- Shorten the length of striking implements like bats and racquets.
- Introduce materials to prevent the balls from traveling a far distance (backstops, mats, and backdrops) or consider a ball with a string attached.

Social Skills and Peer Isolation

- Select activities that incorporate peer-to-peer interaction such as group tag, cooperative and new games.
- Create rules that increase numbers of students participating; i.e. soccer goal kicks must include three players touching the ball prior to shooting.
- Before the activity, clearly identify behavioral and social expectations.
- Provide a space/place for participants to emotionally 'rest' and regroup.
- Decrease the downtime in an activity.
- Increase the range of acceptable participation in an activity. For example, provide a choice of running, walking, jumping rope and then rotate activities.

Cognitive and Behavioral Issues

- Discover effective starting and stopping signals. Use them consistently.
- Alter the level activity difficulty.
- Provide visual cues. (Student must start on the black line and stop on a red dot).
- Consider peer demonstrations.
- Consider hands-on demonstrations when appropriate—move the youth's arm through the motion of dribbling.
- Consider asking for a rotating peer buddy to support full participation.
- Simplify rules.
- Decrease frustration by reviewing elements of an activity that may be a trigger, such as the ball being missed and rolling away.
- Provide rehearsals and slow-motion practice before beginning.
- Eliminate irrelevant stimuli.

For more information on youth adaptations, visit www.inclusivechildcare.org.

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