

Vancouver Regional Pediatric Team

PE ADAPTATION IDEAS

Here are some general ideas that hopefully will help you brainstorm adaptations to various activities to better include all children.

ADAPTATION

Adaptation means changing or modifying to include everyone.

There are no right and wrong ways to do activities in Physical Education, just different ways.

Basketball with all the rules implemented is not a more valid activity than a modified version of the same game where everyone can play.

If something is not working for your class you can change it!

When a game or activity has been adapted everyone has a role.

With a modified activity, planned with everyone in mind, everyone will have a chance to experience success and develop positive attitudes toward Physical Education.

Sometimes peers can feel that students with special needs get special treatment (ie. special rules/equipment) and it's "not fair", but if you explain to them that by changing the rules, etc. you are making it equally fair for everyone, not "easier" for the student with special needs, then they usually are supportive.



There are many variables which can be modified when adapting PE. These can be broken into three broad categories:

- a. Equipment
- b. Physical environment
- c. Instructional components

N.B. Planning adaptations does not necessarily mean always thinking ahead of inclusive activities (ie) extra planning and extra work. A modification could be a simple change in an activity or equipment choice during a PE class if you notice a student struggling. Once you know a student's capabilities and strengths you will be able to more readily think of what may work for a student with special needs during an activity in PE.

EQUIPMENT MODIFICATION



SIZE

- the size of an object affects how easy it is to catch or throw, kick, hit, or target
- a large ball can be caught more easily with two hands
- a small ball can enable a child with use of only one arm to participate, by catching and throwing single handedly
- a large racquet head or bat circumference might enable a child with difficulty targeting to hit a ball or birdie. This is also good for students with coordination difficulties
- a thicker handle might enable a child with a weak grasp to hold onto an object. Think big for weak hands.
- larger bowling pins are easier to knock over (with even more chance of success with a larger ball as well)
- a larger basket or bucket to target gives more chance of success
- shorter handled equipment might enable children with smaller hands to grasp and control a racquet or baseball mitt, etc.
- size can be graded (ie. from larger to smaller, to progress difficulty and encourage skill development)

WEIGHT

- the weight of a ball affects how quickly or slowly it moves, as well as how much strength is required to manipulate it
- a heavy ball moves more slowly and may not bounce away from a student who has difficulty coordinating
- a light balloon or beach ball rather than a regular ball will stay in the air giving a student more time to react to it
- lighter objects take less strength to hold onto and manipulate (ie. lightweight racquets)
- a slightly heavy ball will roll further and knock over more pins



TEXTURE

- the texture of an object, how soft or hard it is, whether or not it can be bent and squeezed, how rough or smooth it is, affects how difficult it is to manipulate
- a highly inflated ball may bounce higher and further with less effort
- soft balls (ie. nerf ball, or under inflated ball) may be caught and held on to by squeezing, when a harder ball cannot be manipulated
- bean bags might be caught more easily than balls (plus they don't bounce away)
- velcro on mitts or balls enable catching without grasping
- smooth surfaces are harder to hold because they are slippery

SHAPE

- the shape of an object affects how easily it can be manipulated or thrown, how easily it is grasped and squeezed, and how easily it can be caught with one or two hands
- a child may be able to grasp a frisbee or hook a ring that is thrown but not be able to catch a round ball
- a horseshoe may be grasped and flung more easily than a ball
- a whiffle ball may be tossed and held with the help of one or two fingers in the holes
- balls with handles attached, or knob like projections give something else to hold on to
- odd shapes such as a knotted towel can be hooked or grabbed easily
- a ball wrapped and tied in a blanket bounces and can be easily caught



PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The playing area can be adapted to meet different needs and ability levels:

- boundaries can be reduced for a child with limited endurance
- the height and width of the goal can be reduced for a student with reduced coordination as goaltender
- a modified goal area (ie target or bucket on floor) can be used rather than a traditional goal area (a child should use his/her arms to guard it vs. running to block it).
- physical boundaries can be made more prominent by using benches or brightly coloured cones to designate border
- a grid can be used on the floor to designate the boundary for each child to be responsible for, ensuring everyone has a chance to touch the ball
- the target area can be made larger, or the place where each child stands can vary in the distance or angle form the target
- the corner can be used to prevent the ball from rolling away from student – reducing the time spent chasing the ball

ADAPTED RULES

- change the way everyone plays the game or change the way one person plays to equalize abilities and teams
- use frequent rotation in/out of game for rest periods
- include verbal cues as part of the game (ie children must yell “hop, step” as they move around gym to practice skipping)
- if a component of an activity is a skill a child cannot perform (ie. a game of tag in which children can't be tagged while standing on one foot when one student is unable to balance on one foot) change the rule (ie. children can't be tagged when their hands are on their heads)
- allow as many chances as needed for success, rather than “three strikes, you are out”
- if one child never gets the ball, implement a rule such as each child must touch the ball before a goal is counted, or every member must have a shot on goal before the score is final
- limited numbers (ie. 3 on 3) and rotate if too many players make it confusing or crowded
- modify traditional games (ie. allow ball to be caught and then thrown in a form of volleyball, or play a form of basketball where dribbling is not necessary) either for the entire PE session, or for one of two games
- it is important to remember that traditional games are not set in stone – it is not cheating to change the rules, it is creative!
- allow students to create their own games, giving them ideas about equipment and where you will play. Tell them everyone must have a role. You will be surprised at how creative they can be!
- During paired activities, encourage frequent partner changes so that partners do not become intolerant of students who are physically awkward



SIMPLIFIED SKILLS

- games can be broken down into a series of skills – basketball is not a skill, it contains many skills (ie. dribbling, passing, catching, shooting, blocking, etc.)
- skill development does not have to take the form of drills, it can be a game which focuses on one or two skills
- a simplified version of a more complex skill can be used (ie. if a student can't catch and throw with one hand, allow her/him to use two hands)
- allow student to practice components of a complex skill before learning a larger skill (ie. stationary bounce before dribbling)
- try to allow for additional time to practice a skill (ie. loan equipment for recess or lunchtime to give a student extra time to learn a skill)
- be aware of how children learn skills developmentally (ie. jumping before hopping, walking along a line before balancing on a curb or balance beam)

ADAPTED ROLES

- being a score keeper
- refereeing; simplify this by having a flag the student raises to signal that a rule has been broken
- leader (ie. caller) for students to move around in different ways "hop", "forward", "run", "slower", etc.
- always takes throw ins
- these roles may better meet a child's abilities and work towards their individual goals
- adapted roles should always be interspersed with activities, always join in when possible



COOPERATIVE AND SOCIAL GAMES

Cooperative games have no winners and losers – everyone works toward a common goal.

Example:

- parachute games where the goal for everyone is to keep the ball in the air

Social games do not involve physical skill, rather their goal is socialization and amusement.

Example:

- blindfolded game where person has to identify whispered voice

HOW ARE THESE GAMES BENEFICIAL

- Everyone is included – no one gets lost on the sidelines, or avoids the ball.
- Students find physical activity fun or desirable.
- No threat posed to the self-esteem for children who are often not successful at competitive games.
- Reduced risk of not feeling wanted on a team, as skill level is not important.
- Cooperative games build teamwork skills, students learn to encourage and support each other.
- Physical skills and physical fitness can be developed in a safe and fun atmosphere.
- These activities could also be done on the stage with a few other students who forgot their gym clothes or who aren't participating for other reasons.
- You may want to use a cooperative social game for warm up or cool down to a PE class.