

## Ability Adaptation Guidelines

### CONSIDERATIONS

### SUGGESTIONS (Involve players and get agreement on changes)

#### Action

- Varying skill levels among players' can provide a healthy challenge. However, extreme differences create inequities and a child may lose interest and quit.
- Aim to decrease the impact of ability differences/create a fair activity for all players.

- Before playing, decide what changes can be made to accommodate players' varying skill levels.
- Define all terms:
  - what is the action or how to do it, number of times ball goes around, series of actions, how players or marker move through the grid.
  - bounce, roll, throw, pass, hit, miss, fault, crouch, jump, step.
- Decide what help is needed - work on one skill at a time, have player stand in to jump, to hold/hit with a racquet (if grasp is weak, wrap a tensor bandage around the racquet and the player's hand, hit with a large arm movement).

#### Boundaries/ Space

- Clearly marked boundaries help players follow rules and encourage safe play.
- It is difficult for players with visual/physical challenges to stay within boundaries.
- Paths and spaces between players must be wide enough for children with equipment to travel safely and to allow for turning.

- Have players using an assistive device (wheelchair/walker) keep a wheel or leg of the walker within the boundaries.
- Increase space between players by having children touch fingers instead of holding hands.

#### Equipment

- Equipment that is suitable for all players allows more children to participate in a game.

- Consider ball size, softness and bounce (a large, soft ball is easier to catch than a small, firm one).

#### Pace of Play/ Travel

- Challenges in locomotion/travel, manipulation and stability skills impact fairness/equity.
- Guidelines may permit a player to use a different skill to promote equity in moving.

- Increase the time allowed for activities.
- Players can travel in various ways/at different speeds (walk, hop, take small steps).
- Change speed of play (turn ropes slower/allow more turns between jumpers).
- Increase challenge by increasing the number of times around bases/circle.
- Changing the distance between bases/the length of the field.
- Partner to share the challenges (1 to hit and 1 to throw/run).

Most children will have the skills necessary to play the games. Some do not, so we have introduced to most games **Ability Adaptation Guidelines**. These are key words to help you decide what changes can be made to a game so children with varying levels of motor and/or cognitive skills can participate safely. All situations that may arise are not covered above.

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#### Pairing

- Partnering with another player, for stability, allows children with ability challenges to safely and successfully participate in ball, tag and group games. Consider the effect of excitement on a player's movement and social skills.

- Have players with different skills form a pair (running-stability/catching-throwing/hitting-running).
- One player pushing another player in a wheelchair. A player in a wheelchair must be in control of their chair at all times.

#### Safe Tagging/Hitng

- The act of tagging or being hit by a thrown ball can frighten a player and put them at increased risk of injury from falling.

- Decide how tagging will be done and select safe tag spots/zones.
- Use tag flags (small bits of cloth hanging from a pocket in a designated spot on the body).
- Select a softer ball to decrease impact of a hit and to make catching easier.
- All hitting with balls must be below the waist. Select a safe hit spot/zone.
- For players using assistive devices select a hit/tag area (small wheels on wheelchair/spot on a walker).

#### Safety

- Ability challenges may affect a child's reaction time, increasing the risk of injury.
- Providing support during a challenge promotes the development of physical and social skills, builds confidence and fosters self-esteem.
- Consider the effect of excitement on players' social skills.

- Get to know all players' ability levels.
- Select actions that can be done safely (run through, pairing).
- Hula hoops may create a safety hazard for players in wheelchair/walkers.

#### Scoring

- Ability challenges may give an unfair advantage to some players and lead players to quit.
- Changing aspects of a game can provide equal opportunity and still provide a challenge for other players without boring some players.
- Discussing these considerations provides an opportunity for children to learn empathy.

- Set time limits if excitement leads to excessive aggressiveness/bullying.
- Decide how to score (contact with ball may count as a hit).

#### What ends a turn?

- A player's skill improves with practise, encouragement and support; inequity in skill levels affects fair play for everyone; playing rather than competing provides practise.

- Change distances to be travelled, pace of play, actions.
- Set guidelines. Give more time.
- Make allowance for players' ability (an effort for an action may count as a hit).

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