

# Adapted Physical Education Guidelines in Colorado Schools Fact Sheet



## For General Physical Educators

**Physical Education** is defined as: The development of (A) Physical and motor fitness, (B) Fundamental motor skills and patterns, and (C) Skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports) and (ii) includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education, and motor development. CFR 300.17

**Adapted Physical Education** is defined as a program to meet the unique needs of an individual with a disability who is unable to be successful in the general PE program/environment. It is personalized and specially designed to address the individualized needs of students who have disabling conditions that require modifications to the general program of physical education in order to benefit from instruction. APE teachers support the general physical education program by working towards Colorado Physical Education Standards.

**Adaptations, accommodations, and modifications within the existing general physical education program shall be documented before a child is referred to adapted physical education.**

When the manifestation of disability is suspected of preventing a student from benefiting from general physical education, adaptations/modifications to the physical education curriculum and/or instruction should be made prior to referring a student to adapted physical education. If the general PE teacher is uncertain of how to adapt to the student's needs, an informal consultation with the APE might be appropriate. For those students with significant manifestation of disability it may be appropriate to make an immediate referral to the APE teacher.

Some general physical educators are unclear as to how they can modify instruction, equipment and participation for their students who have disabilities. In such cases, the APE teacher may provide consultation to these teachers for the purpose of helping them identify different instructional strategies, modifications, and/or adaptations which may allow for meaningful participation in the least restrictive environment. Often, students with disabilities can participate successfully in general physical education if rules are modified, equipment is changed, the student is permitted to play a specific position on a team, or provided with a peer tutor or "buddy."

### **Least Restrictive Environment:**

**To maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and service cannot be achieved satisfactorily.**

Students are entitled to receive instruction in the least restrictive environment. The least restrictive environment refers to adapting or modifying the physical education curriculum and/or instruction to address the individualized abilities of each child within general education, to the degree possible. Placement decisions are documented on the IEP. Within the general physical education setting adaptations are made to ensure that each student will experience success in a safe and accessible environment. The least restrictive environment should allow for meaningful participation in the physical education curriculum and activities.

Placement may include any of the following:

- The general physical education setting.
- The general physical education setting with a general PE teacher making curriculum accommodations.
- APE teacher consultation with general PE teacher (Para Professional to be included).
- APE teacher collaborative teaching with general PE teacher (Para Professional to be included).
- Direct APE instruction provided to student(s) by an APE teacher outside of the general physical education setting

### **Adapted Physical Education Teacher, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist**

Occupational and physical therapy services are related services under the IDEA. The purpose of school based occupational and physical therapy is to support a student's access to special education programming.

Physical education is a federally mandated component of special education services. APE is a primary rather than related service. This means that physical education needs to be provided to the student with a disability as part of the child's special education. Physical education and adapted physical education are educational programs. OT and PT are support services whose objective is to facilitate access to educational programming.

When a student receives multiple services such as: APE, OT, PT, SLP... a collaborative approach amongst service providers is required to ensure generalization of skills across environments. In a collaborative model each service provider will be reinforcing the objectives and activities of the other service providers in order to maximize the student's benefit from special education programming.

### **General Physical Education Teacher & APE Teacher may play a role in the Individual Transition Plans (ITPS).**

The transition curriculum revolves around three main areas: instruction, community living and employment. Physical education programming, in the area of instruction, might focus on helping the student access community recreation centers and leisure activities.