



Why Adapted Physical Education is Important for Children with Disabilities



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The Law

- Federal Register (2006)

§ 300.39 (1) Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including—

(i) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and

(ii) **Instruction in physical education.**

Adapted vs. Adaptive

APE - Adapted Physical Education

Adapted - how an activity is modified so a student with a disability or anyone can succeed, be safe, and have a meaningful experience.

Adaptive - term aligned with behavior; may also be used to describe types of assistive devices.

Specially Designed Physical Education

- Specially Designed Physical Education is Adapted Physical Education
- This is also referred to as Adaptive Physical Education (APE) in our state statute

Benefits of Physical Education for Children with Special Needs

- Physical Improvements
- Cognitive and Mental Improvements in Confidence and Well-Being
- Behavioral Improvements in Attention, Relationships, and Academics

Benefits of Physical Education for Children with Special Needs

- Exercise can provide significant benefits for children in all of the developmental stages of life. It only makes sense, then, that regular participation in physical education classes would also promote positive advancements in students with special needs.
- Research has shown that physical education programs can do a great deal to improve the lifestyle of children with special needs
 - Increase competency in gross motor skills, help to control obesity, improve self-esteem, encourage an active lifestyle, and maintain motivation in various areas of life.

Indicators of a Quality K-12 School Programs

- Teacher qualifications/certifications
 - Wisconsin 860 Supplemental License
 - Certified Adapted Physical Educator (CAPE)
 - Wrights Law website – information on APE and teacher certification in US
- Eligibility and Comprehensive Special Education Evaluation
 - Placement Options for Service Delivery
 - Least Restrictive Environment
 - Adapted physical education is a service, not a placement
 - Data-based decision making
 - Progress monitoring

Indicators of a Quality K-12 School Programs

- Eligibility Criteria
 - SHAPE America recommends APE services if their comprehensive score is 1.5 standard deviations below the mean on a norm-referenced test
 - Or at least two years below age level on criterion-referenced tests or other tests of physical and motor fitness.

Indicators of a Quality K-12 School Programs

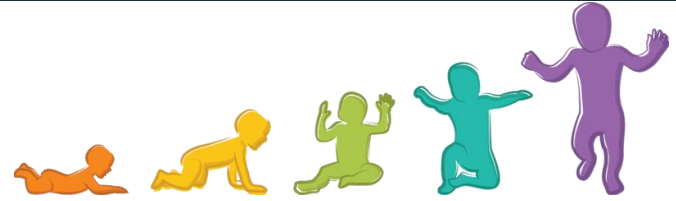
- Placement Options for Service Delivery
 - Least Restrictive Environment
 - Continuum of settings
 - Personnel support options

Adapted physical education is a service, not a placement

Early Intervention - IDEA

- Under 34 CFR 300.108(c), “if specially designed physical education is prescribed in a child’s IEP, the public agency responsible for the education of that child must provide the services directly or make arrangements for those services to be provided through other public or private programs.”
- OSEP Letter of Clarification (2013).
- Thus, under Part B, “if physical education is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability and is set out in that child’s IEP, those services must be provided whether or not they are provided to other children in the agency.”
- Furthermore, the requirements of Part B of the IDEA regarding IEPs for children with disabilities apply to preschool-aged children.

Early Intervention



- Provision of adapted physical education services to infants and toddlers are not intended to replace or duplicate occupation or physical therapy and vice-versa.
- Infants or toddlers may need APE to meet additional identified needs.
- The purpose of early intervention services is to “...promote all aspects of development of the infant/toddler with disabilities.”
- IDEA key provision: Services for infants and toddlers, to the maximum extent appropriate, are provided in natural environments, including the home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate.
- Services are provided in a setting other than a natural environment only when early intervention cannot be achieved satisfactorily for the infant or toddler in a natural environment.

Early Intervention - Access

- APE services may be provided to infants and toddlers (children under three years of age) by qualified personnel and must meet the other criteria delineated in IDEA '04, Part C Early Intervention.
- Federal law requires that states develop and implement plans to address the needs of developmentally disabled infants from birth through age two.
 - *Developmental disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, spina bifida, etc.) or born with “established risk,” = infant/toddler individual with a disability as documented by an assessment.*
- A major goal of the law is to fully incorporate the family into the process of early intervention.
- Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is used instead of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The incorporation of the family into planning represents a sensitivity to both the needs of the family and those of the child. A multidisciplinary team that includes family members and is based on an assessment by that team develops the IFSP.



Early Intervention

- APE for infants and toddlers involves a greater amount of assessment, provision of service in natural settings and collaborative consultation with families and other team members.
- Results in a smaller amount of direct instruction to individual children and may require more time per child than is needed for older children because of the differences in this age-appropriate service delivery system.
 - Approaches include child-or family-centered vs. teacher-directed learning
 - Opportunity for choice in activities
 - Self-initiated exploration
 - Experience with equipment
 - Incorporation of child's interest
- Administrators are advised to support scheduling and caseload assignment of adapted physical educators that reflect this service delivery model.

Best Practice: It is recommended that LEAs utilize trained and qualified APE teachers when providing services to infants and toddlers.

SHAPE Guidelines for Infants (0-1 year)

- It's important that infants are given the opportunities to practice newly developed skills like rolling and crawling.
- Instructors and caregivers are responsible for creating safe and encouraging environments for these practices to occur.



Infants

- **Guideline 1:** Infants should interact with caregivers in daily physical activities dedicated to exploring movement and environment.
- **Guideline 2:** Caregivers place infants in settings that encourage and stimulate movement experiences.
- **Guideline 3:** Physical activity should promote skill development in movement.
- **Guideline 4:** Placed in environments that exceeds/meets safety standards for performing large-muscle activities.
- **Guideline 5:** Those in charge are responsible for understanding the importance and promotion of physical activity and movement skills through provided structured/unstructured physical activity.

SHAPE Guidelines for Toddlers (1-3 years)

- Environmental opportunities greatly influence practices.
- Try setting out equipment, acting out stories, or chasing games.



Toddlers

- **Guideline 1:** Toddlers should engage in a total of at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.
- **Guideline 2:** Engage in at least 60 minutes per day of unstructured physical activity and should not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time.
- **Guideline 3:** Given ample opportunities to develop movement skills that serve as the building-blocks for future motor skillfulness.
- **Guideline 4:** Given access to indoor and outdoor areas that meet/exceeds safety standards.

Additional Resources

- **Wright's Law – Physical Education for Students with Disabilities**
 - <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm>

- **OSEP Policy Papers**
 - Substituting required physical education services by related services
 - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/osep-letter-to-tymeson-05-12-2021.pdf>
 - Physical education as part of a preschool student's IEP
 - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/idea/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/13-004807r-wi-tymeson-apefinal-7-31-13.pdf>

- **Zero to Three**
 - <https://www.zerotothree.org/>

- **Wisconsin Birth to Three**
 - <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/birthto3/family/index.htm>

Thank you!!



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