

The Pocket Reference— A Tool for Fostering Inclusion

A pocket reference can help regular physical educators identify appropriate ways to work with students with disabilities.

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Harold is a seven-year-old who has mental retardation and cerebral palsy and uses a walker to travel. He is currently included in general first grade physical education, but his physical education teacher has been struggling with ways to include Harold. While she has managed to make several simple modifications in warm-up and specific skill activities to accommodate Harold, she is worried that these modifications are not really helping him meet the goals and objectives outlined in his individual education program in physical education. In addition, some activities she has presented have been particularly difficult to modify for Harold. For example, Harold cannot jump rope, and she really did not know what to do with him during a three-week Jump Rope For Heart unit. She decided to assist him in jumping rope during the unit, but that meant that he was doing an activity (i.e., jumping rope) that she knew he might never learn. She does not mind having Harold in her general physical education class, but she does not feel that his unique needs are being met.

As shown in this scenario, inclusion is more than just making accommodations so that students with disabilities can successfully participate in the same activities as the rest of the class. Students with disabilities have individual education programs (IEPs) that often include objectives, activities, equipment, and/or instructional techniques that are different than what are used by their peers. These differences must be integral to the general program if students with disabilities are to be appropriately included in general physical education. In this article, we describe a "pocket reference" that can help regular physical educators stay abreast of a student's IEP goals and objectives. This reference is designed to quickly identify appropriate ways to incorporate these goals and objectives, as well as alternative movements, instructional techniques, and equipment needs within general physical education routines and activities.

What Is Inclusion?

One of the most common misconceptions regarding inclusion is the

idea that students with disabilities must participate in the same activities, use the same equipment, and follow the same instructional cues as their peers without disabilities. For example, Grosse (1991) defined inclusion (which she termed "education in the mainstream") as "...curriculum is that prescribed for all children of a particular age and/or grade...instruction is given by a teacher trained to teach non-disabled, average children...equipment used is what is considered regular sport/movement apparatus" (p. 40). Similarly, Beaver (1993) described inclusion as "...literally placing everyone...into the regular curriculum" (p. 5). What Grosse and Beaver described may be how many regular physical educators try to include students with disabilities, but it does not reflect the true inclusion philosophy.

Inclusion suggests that students with disabilities receive their individual education program in physical education (IEP-PE) in the context of general physical education with adaptations and supports as needed to ensure appropriateness, safety, and success (Block, 1994). Students who

Summary of Harold's IEP Objectives

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Harold is a 12-year-old male student with a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). He is currently in the 6th grade and is enrolled in a general physical education program. The following are the objectives for Harold's Individualized Education Program (IEP) for physical education:

Annual Goals

1. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

2. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

3. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

4. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

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10. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

11. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

12. Harold will demonstrate the ability to perform basic motor skills (running, jumping, and walking) at a level consistent with his chronological age.

are included in general physical education can and should work on: (1) different levels of the same curriculum as their peers, using similar or different equipment, instructions, and supports (i.e., multilevel curricular selection) (Block, Provis, & Nelson, 1993); or (2) a completely different curriculum from their peers, using similar or different equipment, instructions, and supports (i.e., curricular overlapping) (Block & Vogler, 1994; Giangreco & Putnam, 1991; Rogers, 1993). Students with disabilities should never be forced to participate in the same activities as peers without disabilities if these activities are deemed dangerous or inappropriate. Decisions as to what activities a student with disabilities should work on, how that student should work on these activities, and how much support the student needs should be individually prescribed and based on multiple factors. These factors should include a student's motor, cognitive, language, and social skills; the student's interests as well as his or her family's interests; what is available in the community; and the overall lifetime leisure goals of the student.

While providing IEPs for students with disabilities in general physical education constitutes appropriate inclusion, in practice this can be extremely difficult. How can a regular physical educator stay abreast of a student's IEP goals and objectives as well as provide the necessary equipment and instructional modifications? How can a regular physical educator incorporate these IEP goals and objectives and modifications into the general physical education program?

The Pocket Reference

One method we have found to be particularly effective is a pocket reference. The pocket reference provides a list of activities and instructional arrangements that take place in general physical education in the course of a lesson, week, unit, semester, or even year. Beside this list is a second list of the student's IEP-PE

Warm-up Modifications (continued)

Classmates	Harold
Locomotor skills: hop, run, gallop	Run or walk with the use of his walker or with the teacher's assistance (place hands on his shoulders)
Crab walk	Reverse push-ups; Harold lies on his back and pushes against teacher's or a peer's hands
Seal walk	Lies on his stomach and pulls himself forward with his hands while teacher lifts his stomach off of the ground; can also creep on hands and knees without assistance
Curly ups	Harold's feet are held on the floor; his arms crossed on his chest and assist him toward his thighs by pulling slightly on his arms
Mountain climbers	Depending on warm-up combination (i.e., is he standing or sitting), reverse dead ups or high knee lifts
Jumping jacks	High knee lifts while holding onto walker or can stand and do arm movements

Body Management Modifications

Classmates	Harold
Non-locomotor skills: twisting, shaking, turning, etc.	Sit and perform these skills or will be assisted in standing; use Harold to demonstrate to class
Body awareness	Sit and perform these skills or will be assisted in standing; receives extra verbal cues as well as demonstration and physical prompting
Spatial awareness	Move with his walker with assistance of the teacher or peer in understanding his personal space within general space
Quality of movement	Walk fast/slow, forward/backward with walker; may need extra verbal cues
Dance	Walk with walker or with a teacher's assistance (work on control)
Use of space	Harold will walk with walker or with a teacher's assistance; may sit or lie on the floor when asked to demonstrate low space; may raise arms when asked to demonstrate high space

Locomotor Skill Modifications

Classmates	Harold
Walk	Walk with walker with the teacher's assistance, or by placing hands on shoulders and walking with him (focus on speed and control)
Run	Fast walk with walker

he spends less time in tumbling and more time at the manipulative station. Other students spend the majority of their time working on tumbling and less time on manipulative skills. Harold still is included, and all children do all activities (i.e., tumbling and manipulatives). The difference is the time spent engaged in these activities.

Developing the Pocket Reference

Ideally, an adapted and a regular physical educator, together with other key members of the child's IEP team, develop the student's IEP-PE and the corresponding pocket reference. For example, if the regular physical educator is not sure how to give instructions to the student with disabilities, the speech therapist can provide information on alternative ways to communicate to the student that can be placed on the pocket reference. Other key members of the collaborative team who can provide assistance in developing the pocket reference include: the student's physical therapist who can provide information about wheelchair positioning, how to assist the student in functional stretching, or how to have the student sit when listening to instructions; the student's vision therapist who can provide information (and adapted equipment) about teaching safe traveling in the gym, making the gym safe for students with visual impairments, and how to provide assistance and cues to students with visual impairments; the student's occupational therapist who can provide information on assistance in activities of daily living, adapted equipment for manipulative activities, and positioning to facilitate hand use; and the student's special education teacher who can provide general information about the student's personality as well as specific information on behavior management techniques, reinforcers, and activities that tend to agitate or confuse the student. As the regular physical educator becomes more familiar with particular students and interacts more with members of the collaborative team, he or she can take a larger role in developing IEP-PEs and pocket references.

