



Peter Harrison Centre
for Disability Sport

Tips for Including Children with Special Needs

By Nadine Geddes, Research Associate for the Institute of Youth Sport

Keeping children physically active is an important goal for all stakeholders in the field of education. There have been many initiatives that are aimed at making physical activity more accessible for children with disabilities, some of which offer additional training for staff that work with children that have special education needs (SEN). Recently there has been some evaluation research on staff training programmes conducted by the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport. The following is a list of recommendations on including SEN students in physical activities and how to make the most of your activity programmes.

Getting extra support

- Involve parents where possible, students may need the extra support. Often parents will have access to other additional resources e.g. sponsorship or transportation.
- Recruit older kids from your school or neighbouring schools to act as mentors or additional helpers.
- Create a network with the help of your school sports co-ordinator (SSCO). This could include other schools in your county, the inclusion officer for leisure in your county, local leisure centres, and sport clubs.
- Contact local charities to get free transport.

Activity suggestions

- Using symbols or colours for signs instead of words or numbers this will make them easier for most students to understand.
- Incorporate as many senses as possible, especially by integrating; textured and/or vibrantly coloured materials, music, and smells.
- Use outdoor spaces as often as possible.
- Use other facilities in your area, especially if your school does not have a pool, or outdoor space.

On-going development

- Contact the Youth Sport Trust (YST) for training programmes in your area, see: <http://inclusion.youthsporttrust.org/page/introduction/index.html> .
- Bring in people with special skills to teach students and staff new activities such as circus skills, dance, gymnastics, fitness classes.
- Have a monitoring system in place where students can see their progress.

To find out further information about this factsheet or the Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport, please email: phc@lboro.ac.uk or alternatively visit the website at: <http://www.peterharrisoncentre.org.uk/>