

Answering Frequently Asked Questions About Adapted Physical Education

Introduction

This guidance document answers common questions about providing physical education services for students with disabilities. The document was developed as a resource for physical educators, adapted physical educators, school district administrators, and parents as they work to provide consistent adapted physical education (APE) services for students with disabilities.

Questions

1. [Is physical education required for students with disabilities?](#)
2. [What is the difference between APE and specially designed physical education?](#)
3. [Who is qualified to provide APE services?](#)
4. [At what age are children with disabilities eligible to receive APE services?](#)
5. [How does a student qualify for APE services?](#)
6. [When should students with disabilities have IEP goals related to APE?](#)
7. [Am I allowed to see my students' IEPs?](#)
8. [What is the difference between APE services delivered under an IEP and a Section 504 plan?](#)
9. [What type of support is provided to students with disabilities who qualify for APE services?](#)
10. [Should adapted physical education be provided in a separate class?](#)
11. [If a student is receiving APE services in a small group or one-on-one class, what should be taught?](#)
12. [How is APE different from physical therapy or occupational therapy?](#)
13. [What role does APE play in the transition process?](#)
14. [Does APE apply to intramurals or athletics?](#)
15. [Where can physical educators, parents and administrators learn more about APE services?](#)

Answers

1. Is physical education required for students with disabilities?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), schools and school districts that receive public funds and that offer physical education for their students must make physical education available to students with disabilities.

IDEA, which is the main federal law governing education for children, adolescents and teenagers with disabilities, requires that schools provide each student with a disability “the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to nondisabled children,” unless the student is enrolled full time in a separate facility or the student’s individualized education program (IEP) prescribes a specially designed physical education (also known as adapted physical education) program. In that case, schools must “provide the services directly or make arrangements for those services to be provided through other public or private programs.”

Each student with a disability also must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the same amount of physical education, in days and minutes, as students without disabilities, unless the student’s IEP team deems it inappropriate for that student. The IEP team may determine that a student with disabilities needs more or less physical education time than his or her typically developing peers. In that case, the amount of adapted physical education services that the student receives per week should be documented on the IEP.

Legal Citation

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). Title 34. Sec. 300.108

The State must ensure that public agencies in the State comply with the following:

- a) *General. Physical education services, specially designed if necessary, must be made available to every child with a disability receiving FAPE [free and appropriate public education], unless the public agency enrolls children without disabilities and does not provide physical education to children without disabilities in the same grades.*
- b) *Regular physical education. Each child with a disability must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to nondisabled children unless—*
 - 1) *The child is enrolled full time in a separate facility; or*
 - 2) *The child needs specially designed physical education, as prescribed in the child’s IEP.*
- c) *Special physical education. 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.*
- d) *Education in separate facilities. The public agency responsible for the education of a child with a disability who is enrolled in a separate facility must ensure that the child receives appropriate physical education services in compliance with this section.*

2. What is the difference between APE and specially designed physical education?

For practical purposes, the terms mean the same thing. Some school districts differentiate between these terms to indicate a student's placement. For example, some schools might call an inclusion class with accommodations made for students with disabilities "adapted physical education," and might call a small-group placement "specially designed physical education."

Specially designed physical education is special education (specially designed instruction) and may occur during the regular physical education class if that represents the least-restrictive environment — as IDEA mandates — for a student with disabilities. Supplementary aides and services also may be provided in a regular physical education class to ensure that the student is able to participate and make progress.

Note: The terms "adapted" and "adaptive" should never be used interchangeably when describing specially designed physical education services (Sherrill, 1998). "Adaptive" is a term that describes behaviors, skills or functions. The goal for specially designed physical education services is to modify equipment, rules, environment or instruction to best suit the child's needs, not to change the student.

Legal Citation

CFR. Title 34. Sec. 300.39

(b) *Individual special education terms defined.*

(2) *Physical education means*

(i) *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.*

3. Who is qualified to provide APE services?

Teachers providing general physical education (GPE) must meet the state-established licensing criteria for instruction in that subject or content area. At a minimum, those providing APE services should meet the appropriate state's requirements for providing GPE. In many states, teachers who hold certification in GPE are also allowed to provide APE services to students with disabilities.

Typically, as part of earning a degree in GPE, the candidate must pass only one three-credit APE course. However, some states that offer separate licensure in APE require documented coursework and teaching in APE. Some university programs offer a minor or concentration requiring additional coursework and experiences such as clinicals and student teaching in APE.

SHAPE America recommends that "highly qualified" APE teachers meet these four criteria:

1. A bachelor's degree in physical education teacher education and state licensure to teach physical education.

2. At least 12 semester hours of credits in courses that address the education needs of students with disabilities, with a minimum of nine semester hours devoted specifically to APE.
3. At least 150 hours of practicum experience.
4. Graduation from a professional-preparation program based on the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS).

School district administrators should be aware that a typical physical education teacher preparation program will have one required course in which future teachers learn about modifying instruction for students with disabilities and other aspects related to the special education process. This is a course that is intended to prepare GPE teachers to instruct students in general physical education or inclusion settings. It is not intended to prepare teachers to be APE specialists in the manner that states that they have an add-on teaching license in APE or the certified APE credential from APENS.

Not all teacher preparation programs offer extensive coursework for preparing physical education teachers to be APE specialists. SHAPE America encourages districts to seek teachers who have completed coursework beyond the one adapted PE course required for GPE certification, or who have pursued more advanced professional development via coursework or graduate study. Effective and qualified APE teachers are available. Programs that prepare specialists in APE regularly receive job notices from school districts across the county, and it's common practice for a graduate of a school in one state to take an adapted PE job in another state.

The [National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities](#), a leader in advocacy for high-quality physical education for students with disabilities, offers a state-by-state listing of universities that offer advanced teacher preparation in APE.

In addition, SHAPE America advises that APE services not be provided by physical or occupational therapists. Please see Question 12 for more details.

IDEA. Sec. 612 (2004).

(14) Personnel qualifications:

(A) In general.—The State educational agency has established and maintains qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities.

4. At what age are children with disabilities eligible to receive APE services? Parts B and C of IDEA, 2004, establish that when students with disabilities are determined eligible for APE services and/or programming, they may receive APE services. From birth to age 2, infants and toddlers with disabilities, and their families, are eligible for early-intervention services under Part C of IDEA. Children and youths ages 3 to 21 are eligible for special education and related services under Part B of IDEA. From birth to age 21, children and youths with disabilities must be provided physical education as specified in the following types of plans:

- An individualized family service plan (IFSP) from birth to age 2.
- An IEP and/or individualized transition plan (ITP) from ages 3 to 21.

Most often, a child's IFSP is serviced in the home or daycare setting, and the adapted physical educator works closely with the parents or caregivers to guide them in addressing the child's motor needs. Often, the adapted physical educator also coordinates with the child's "motor team," which includes the physical, occupational and speech therapists, who are considered "related service" personnel.

Once a qualifying child with a disability age 3 and above enters preschool, the adapted physical educator continues to work closely with families and related-service personnel, but he or she also engages with the general physical educator to generate strategies for including the child in GPE if that is considered the least restrictive environment for the child. By federal law, when a student with disabilities turns age 16, his or her IEP team must develop an ITP, to begin planning for skills to promote healthy living after the student leaves school. Some states elect to begin this process at age 14. Refer to Question 12 for more information related to transitioning and students with disabilities.

Legal Citation

IDEA. Sec. 631 (2004).

- (b) Policy.—It is the policy of the United States to provide financial assistance to States—*
- (1) to develop and implement a statewide, comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary, interagency system that provides early-intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families;*
 - (2) to facilitate the coordination of payment for early intervention services from Federal, State, local, and private sources (including public and private insurance coverage);*
 - (3) to enhance State capacity to provide quality early-intervention services and expand and improve existing early-intervention services being provided to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families; and*
 - (4) to encourage States to expand opportunities for children under 3 years of age who would be at risk of having substantial developmental delay if they did not receive early- intervention services.*

IDEA. Sec. 612 (2004).

(A) In general.--A free appropriate public education is available to all children with disabilities residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school.

5. How does a student qualify for APE services?

There is no federally mandated standard for qualification for APE services. Qualification criteria vary by state, and even by school district. To qualify for special education services, including APE, IDEA mandates the submission of a referral and parental consent for evaluation. Once a school district receives parental consent, IDEA mandates that the IEP team use a variety of assessment tools to create an IEP containing appropriate education content for the student. When evaluating students for special education services, the local education agency must evaluate them in all areas of suspected disability, including motor abilities.

Some states and school districts elect to establish qualifying criteria for APE services. If a student is identified under the criteria established in IDEA as having a disability, he or she may qualify for APE services. In school districts with qualifying criteria for receiving APE services, the common criteria guideline is a score of 1.5 standard deviations below the mean or below the 7th percentile on a standardized motor test *and/or* an inability to be independently safe *and/or* successful in the general PE environment due to physical, cognitive or emotional needs. A list of commonly used APE assessments is provided under Question 15.

Note: SHAPE America has published the position statement [Eligibility Criteria for Adapted Physical Education Services](#).

Legal Citation

CFR. Title 34. Sec. 300.304

(b) Conduct of evaluation. In conducting the evaluation, the public agency must--

(1) Use a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional, developmental and academic information about the child, including information provided by the parent, that may assist in determining—

(i) Whether the child is a child with a disability under Sec. 300.8; and

(ii) The content of the child's IEP, including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum (or for a preschool child, to participate in appropriate activities);

(4) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status and motor abilities.

6. When should students with disabilities have IEP goals related to APE?

Students with disabilities should have APE-related goals in their IEPs if careful evaluation indicates a need for adapted physical education. To determine the need for such services, as well as to develop measurable and attainable IEP goals, SHAPE America recommends that the school complete a comprehensive assessment or evaluation that includes the student's psychomotor, cognitive and affective learning domains. Also, the school should gather information from multiple sources regarding the student's ability to participate safely and successfully in physical education and synthesize that information into a report for the IEP team to consider.

Information about how the student communicates, participates and follows directions, rules and strategies will help the IEP team develop appropriate goals. Those assessment/evaluation results should drive the development of the plan, developed through consensus by the IEP committee members, contains individual goals and objectives to be implemented per the individualized instruction needs. Each year, the IEP team reviews the student's progress toward mastery, strengths and areas of concern, and considers new and updated goals and objectives for the student. The IEP team should write goals and objectives for the student that are measurable and that are based on ongoing formative and summative evaluation results, and data outcomes.

Legal Citation

CFR. Title 34. Sec. 300.320

(a) General. As used in this part, the term "Individualized Education Program" means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting in accordance with Sec. 300.320 through 300.324, and that must include²

- (1) A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including:
 - (i) How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children); or
 - (ii) For preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities;
- (2) (i) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to:
 - (A) Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and
 - (B) Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability.

7. Am I allowed to see my students' IEPs?

Yes! Congress revised Section 300.323(d) under Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) so that public agencies are required to ensure that each regular teacher, special education teacher, related services provider and any other service provider who is responsible for implementing a child's IEP is informed of his or her responsibilities under the IEP, including the prescribed accommodations, modifications and supports. Teachers and related service providers should contact the special education director at the school for approval and access to a student's IEP.

CFR. Title 34. Sec. 300.323

When IEPs must be in effect.

(d) Accessibility of child's IEP to teachers and others. Each public agency must ensure that—

(1) The child's IEP is accessible to each regular education teacher, special education teacher, related services provider, and any other service provider who is responsible for its implementation; and

(2) Each teacher and provider described in paragraph (d)(1) of this section is informed of—

(i) His or her specific responsibilities related to implementing the child's IEP; and

(ii) The specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the child in accordance with the IEP.

8. What is the difference between APE services delivered under an IEP and a Section 504 plan?

Students with disabilities who do not meet IDEA's criteria for a "child with a disability" may have a plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. To qualify as having a disability under IDEA, a student must have one of the disabilities identified in IDEA and must need special education and related services. If a child has one of the disabilities identified in IDEA but comprehensive evaluation reveals that he or she does not need special education services, the student might qualify for services under Section 504. Or, a child might qualify under IDEA as needing services, but he or she has not been identified as having one of the disabilities recognized under IDEA. For example, a student with diabetes or a seizure disorder could qualify for services under Section 504.

If evaluation reveals that a student with a disability qualifies for services under section 504, a "504 plan" is developed that identifies accommodations and services that the student must be provided. Those services could include APE services. Although guidelines are set by school districts, the requirements for reporting and documentation under Section 504 tend to be less stringent than those required under IDEA.

9. What type of support is provided to students with disabilities who qualify for APE services?

The term “supplementary aids and services” means support that is provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with their typically developing peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Schools and school districts may provide support for students with disabilities who qualify for APE services in any placement in which the students are receiving physical education, including general, small-group, one-on-one or “reverse-inclusion” physical education classes, as in when peers without disabilities are invited to participate in self-contained APE activities.

Supplementary aids and services can come in many forms. The first step in providing an education environment developed for the varied needs of all students in the class is to apply the principles of universal design for learning (UDL). For more information on designing a UDL classroom, see *Getting It Right From the Start: Employing the Universal Design for Learning Approach* (Lieberman, Lytle & Clarcq, 2008) in the Resources section of this document.

Another form of support includes modifying the curriculum, equipment, aspects of the environment and/or rules of play to enable students with disabilities to participate successfully in physical education lessons. Personnel and peers also can provide support. Adapted physical education specialists serving as instructors, as team teachers or as consultants to general physical educators provide the most knowledgeable type of support that a school or district can provide.

When a student is receiving APE services in the general physical education setting, collaboration between the APE specialist and the GPE instructor is imperative. Both professionals have specific expertise, and their partnership will ensure that the student receives comprehensive support and services. Ideally, they also work with the student’s “motor team” (occupational and physical therapists) for comprehensive support. Also, qualified paraprofessionals can play a significant role in the success of a student with a disability in physical education.

Many teachers also find success in using trained peer tutors as supports, and parent volunteers also are valuable resources when seeking support for students with disabilities who are receiving APE services.

Legal Citation

IDEA. Sec. 602 (2004).

(33) Supplementary aids and services.—The term “supplementary aids and services” means aids, services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with section 612(a)(5).

10. Should adapted physical education be provided in a separate class?

IDEA mandates instruction in GPE or APE, if necessary, as a direct-instruction service for students with identified disabilities. IDEA also mandates that students with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least-restrictive environment. Specifically, IDEA states that, “to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who do not have a disability, and special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved.”

Subsequently, if feasible, schools and school districts must provide supports in the GPE class before they can consider an alternative placement for a student with disabilities. Such supports could include modifications to the curriculum, activities and equipment; APE instruction support; paraprofessional assistance; or peer assistance. If a school or school district provides those supports without success, or if the severity of the disability renders those supports unfeasible, the school or school district may consider an alternative placement for the student. See Question 8 for a description of alternative placements.

If a student is determined to have a disability that prevents him or her from being safe and/or successful in GPE without supports, the student should qualify for APE services. The school or school district could provide those services in a GPE class or in an alternative placement. The placement options will vary and are based on many factors, including the student’s needs.

As we see, then, APE is a service. To avoid confusion, and to send a clear message that APE can happen in any setting, SHAPE America advises schools and school districts to name alternative PE classes for the type of instruction they provide. For example, an alternative class could be called “Small-group physical education.” Schools and school districts also could use a combination of settings (e.g., attendance in GPE for some units and small-group PE for other units). Here is a summary of placement options:

- ” General physical education
- ” General physical education for some units
- ” General physical education for parts of the lesson
- ” Small-group physical education (full-time, some units, or parts of a lesson)
- ” One-on-one physical education
- ” Reverse inclusion
- ” Home or hospital

Legal Citation

IDEA. Sec. 612 (2004).

(5) *Least-restrictive environment:*

(A) In general.—To the 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 education 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 services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

IDEA. Sec. 602 (2004).

(33) Supplementary aids and services.—The term “supplementary aids and services” means aids, services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with section 612(a)(5).

11. If a student is receiving APE services in a small-group or one-on-one class, what should be taught?

IDEA mandates that students with disabilities must be provided with equal access to the general education curriculum. Therefore, if the least-restrictive environment for students with disabilities is not the general education environment, including GPE, then those students still should follow the GPE curriculum, but in an alternate setting. For example, if the GPE class is completing a baseball unit, students with disabilities whose least-restrictive environment is a small-group or one-on-one placement could learn catching skills by catching scarves blown by a fan, or could practice striking skills by using their hands, instead of a bat, to knock a ball off an upside-down cup placed on the wheelchair tray. Regardless of whether a student receives physical education in the GPE class or in an alternate placement, the instruction must address his or her individual needs and IEP goals (Roth & Columna, 2012). Subsequently, the physical educator or adapted physical educator who is providing services to a student with a disability in a small- group, one-on-one or reverse-inclusion class, should use the GPE curriculum and the student’s IEP goals as the primary guide for developing the curriculum.

Legal Citation

CFR. Title 34. Sec. 300.39

(3) Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology or delivery of instruction—

- (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and*
- (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the education standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.*

12. How is APE different from physical therapy or occupational therapy?

Physical education is considered a ³ G L U L C F W W U S P E C I A L E D U C A T I O N service: a service provided directly to the student by a special education teacher (i.e., a physical education teacher). Unless otherwise identified by the state, physical therapy and occupational therapy are considered related services: those provided to help the student benefit from special education services. Therefore, physical and occupational therapy may not be substituted in lieu of physical education because they are not considered special education services.

They do, however, share several areas of emphasis with APE. According to the American Physical Therapy Association (www.apta.org), a school-based physical therapist uses his or her unique expertise in movement and function to promote motor development and participation in everyday routines and activities that are part of the education program. The physical therapist performs therapeutic interventions, including compensation, remediation and prevention strategies and adaptations. The focus is on functional mobility and safe access to and participation in activities in natural learning environments.

The primary physical education curricular areas that physical therapy complements are muscular strength and endurance, mobility and flexibility. An example of how a physical therapist and adapted physical educator collaborate is when they assist a student with a disability to gain the skills needed to ambulate as independently as possible. In such a case, the physical therapist could work with a student in physical education as the student learns to walk on a balance board.

Occupational therapy complements physical education curriculum in the areas of addressing sensory needs, managing transitions in the PE environment, and completing life skills (e.g., changing clothes in the locker room). Occupational therapy and APE could overlap, as in cases of assisting students with disabilities as they manage their environment. For example, an occupational therapist could provide a weighted vest to a student with autism to address attention and sensory needs, and could assist the student with taking turns in a catching activity.

A collaborative approach among the physical therapist, the occupational therapist and the adapted or general physical education teacher is the best way to meet the needs of many students. That collaboration should begin with the assessment process. Testing together, using a ³ P X O W L G L M O D S C H O L D U S S I M I L A R team member to see the skills that he or she would like to address and to discuss observations and testing results. Also, the goals and objectives for a student in both PE and therapy might be similar, so developing that V W X G H Q W ¶ V individual IEP goals collaboratively also represents best practice. Although team members will discuss how their goals complement one another, each specialist has goals within the IEP that are particular to his or her specialty. The goals that the physical therapist has established for a student, for example, may not be used in lieu of APE goals. Adapted PE goals, for example, are education-based and can focus on the V W X G H Q W ¶ V individual and sport skills, fitness, understanding of rules and strategies, and ability to manage the emotional demands within the PE environment.

For more ideas for the ³ P X O W L G L M O D S C H O L D U S S I M I L A R Principles and Methods of Adapted Physical Education and Recreation (Auxter, Pyfer, Zittel & Roth, 2010).

Legal Citation

IDEA. Sec. 602 (2004).

(26) *Related services.*—

(A) *In general.*—The term “related services” means transportation, and such developmental, corrective and other supportive services (including speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, school nurse services designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a free appropriate public education as described in the individualized education program of the child, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services, except that such medical services shall be for diagnostic and evaluation purposes only) as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children.

13. What role does APE play in the transition process?

As of 2004, IDEA defines transition services as “a set of activities for a child with a disability that:

- (a) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation;
- (b) Is based upon the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences and interests; and
- (c) “Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult-living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.”

Because IDEA requires documentation of goals only in the areas of vocational education, training and independent living, goals related to APE services often are overlooked. For that reason, it is imperative that physical educators advocate for integrating goals related to APE into each student’s transition plan. The IEP should reflect the significant impact that skills acquired through the physical education curriculum can have on a student’s transition from high school. For example, muscle strength and endurance, flexibility and balance are necessary skills for many vocations that require lifting objects, climbing stairs, climbing ladders, etc., as they are for independent living.

That said, the sole purpose of providing APE services to students with disabilities should not be to validate the inclusion of fitness goals by aligning them with the areas of vocation or independent living. Instead, physical education and/or adapted physical education must play a key role in students’ transition plans if, as young adults, they are to continue to maintain healthy, active lives by joining local community and recreation facilities. That intent is evident in the law’s definition of transition, which includes community participation, community experiences and post-school adult-living objectives. Upon entering transition age, teenagers who qualify for special education

services need to be surveyed to determine their preferred leisure, recreation and/or sport activities, as well as after-school programs of interest. Parents and/or caregivers also should indicate their recreation pursuits, so that physical education programming and supporting IEP goals can provide for individualized instruction in the interest areas of both students and caregivers. These surveys can be conducted by the adapted physical educator, recreation therapist or special educator.

Transitioning students might need to develop functional living skills for using different facilities, including opening lockers, showing identification as they enter recreation facilities, and registering for fitness classes or recreation leagues. Adapted PE also plays an important role in preparing transitioning students to create their own fitness plans or exercise routines so that they can continue following them independently after graduating from high school.

IDEA also recognizes other transition periods in a student's schooling, including moving from early childhood to elementary school, from elementary school to middle school, and from middle school to high school. During those periods, the student's current adapted physical educator and/or physical educator should communicate with the student's future physical educator to discuss the student's needs, abilities and communication style. Also, all teachers should review the cumulative or special education file and IEP contents of each new student with a disability to ensure a clear understanding of the student's instruction-related and health-related needs.

Legal Citation

IDEA. Sec. 602 (2004).

(34) Transition services.—The term “transition services” means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

(A) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation;

(B) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences and interests; and

(C) Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

IDEA. Sec. 614 (2004).

(d) Individualized Education Programs—

(5) Multi-Year IEP Demonstration—

(C) Definition.—In this paragraph, the term “natural transition points” means those periods that are close in time to the transition of a child with a disability from preschool to elementary grades, from elementary grades to middle or junior high school grades, from middle or junior high school grades to secondary school grades, and from secondary school grades to postsecondary activities, but in no case a period longer than 3 years.

14. Does APE apply to intramurals or athletics?

Section 300.26 of IDEA defines physical education as ³ W 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; and (ii) Includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education and motor development W All students need to develop sport skills, not only to be equipped to lead a lifetime of physical activity, but also to provide them with the skills to succeed in nonacademic settings, such as recess and intramurals. Sec. 300.117 of IDEA mandates that public agencies, including schools that receive public funds, must ensure that each child with a disability participates with children without disabilities in extracurricular activities to the maximum extent appropriate.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees individuals with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all programs, services and activities provided by state and local agencies that receive federal funding, including public schools. ADA requires that such agencies make reasonable accommodations in program policies, practices and procedures to avoid discriminating against people with disabilities. That includes making reasonable accommodations to intramural and interscholastic sport program policies, practices and procedures.

Also, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination in programs that receive federal funding, including public school programs. Schools must make reasonable accommodations to ensure that students with disabilities are not being ³ H [F O X on, H G denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination X Q G any such program or activity, including intramural and interscholastic sport programs and activities. Local education agencies may propose specially designed, separate programs and/or accommodations for participation in traditional programs that are separate or different when their existing programs cannot fully and effectively meet the interests or abilities of students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2007).

In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education ¹ Office for Civil Rights published a ³ ' H DFUR O O H D J X H ' letter that further details V F K R obligations for providing extracurricular athletic opportunities for students with disabilities, including athletics, clubs and intramurals. The letter ² available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201301-504.pdf>

² reviews school district V obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as noted previously. It also provides examples of potential discrimination in extracurricular athletics, and suggests strategies for districts, coaches and athletic associations to provide reasonable accommodations to athletes with disabilities.

Finally, the letter emphasizes the importance of providing separate or different athletic opportunities if reasonable accommodations and supplementary aids and services do not provide effective participation for students with disabilities. After-school programming is included as part of each V W X G I E R O and 504 plans.

Find additional guidelines, resources and tips for providing services for students with disabilities in both physical education and extracurricular activities in ⁸ 6 ' R Creating Equal Opportunities for Children and Youth With Disabilities to Participate in Physical Education and Extracurricular Athletics, available at <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/equal-pe.pdf>.

Legal Citation

CFR. Title 34. Sec. 300.117

In providing or arranging for the provision of nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, including meals, recess periods and the services and activities set forth in Sec. 300.107, each public agency must ensure that each child with a disability participates with nondisabled children in the extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child. The public agency must ensure that each child with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the child's IEP team to be appropriate and necessary for the child to participate in nonacademic settings.

15. Where can physical educators, parents and administrators learn more about adapted PE services?

Find more information about such services in SHAPE America's [Adapted Physical Education Resource Manual](#). The manual also lists many resources related to APE, as well as a list of APE higher education programs, which can provide consultation.

Find more resources on pp. 18 – 20 of this document.

SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators

1900 Association Drive, Reston, VA 20191

www.shapeamerica.org

(800) 213-7193 membership@shapeamerica.org

Guidance Document Contributors

Kristi Roth (Editor), University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point

Linda Hilgenbrinck, Denton, Texas, Independent School District

Deborah Marcus, Marley Glen School, Glen Burnie, MD

David Martinez, Cherokee County, Ga., School

District Cindy Piletic, Western Illinois University

Amaury Samalot-Rivera, State University of New York at Brockport

Special thanks to these reviewers

Luis Columna, Syracuse University

Tim Davis, State University of New York at Cortland

Barry Lavay, California State University, Long Beach

Garth Tymeson, University of Wisconsin–La Crosse

Suggested Citation

Society of Health and Physical Educators. (2016). *Answering frequently asked questions about adapted physical education* [guidance document]. Reston, VA: Author.

References

- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. 42 U.S.C. Title 42, Chapter 126. Available at <http://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm>
- Auxter, D., Pyfer, J., Zittel, L., & Roth, K. (2010). *Principles and methods of adapted physical education and recreation*. McGraw-Hill, New York, NY.
- California Department of Education Special Education Division. (2012). *Adapted physical education guidelines in California schools* (Revised 2012). Available at https://www.shastacoe.org/uploaded/Dept/selpa/SELPA_Resources/APE_Guidelines.pdf
- Lieberman, L., Lytle, R., & Clarcq, J. (2008). Getting it right from the start: Employing the Universal Design for Learning Approach. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 79(2), 32-39.
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. 20 U.S.C. § 6301. (2002). Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/107-110.pdf>
- Roth, K. & Columna, L. (2011). Collaborative strategies during transition for students with disabilities. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 82(5) 50-55.
- Roth, K. & Columna, L. (2012). Physical education for children with disabilities in segregated classes. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 83(5), 3-5.
- Sherrill, C., (2004). *Adapted physical activity, recreation, and sport: Crossdisciplinary and lifespan* (6th ed.). McGraw-Hill: Boston, MA.
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004). Available at <http://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm>
- U.S. Department of Education. (2007). *Free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities: Requirements under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html>
- U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. (2013). *Dear colleague letter*. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201301-504.html>
- U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights. *Protecting students with disabilities: Frequently asked questions about Section 504 and the education of children with disabilities*. Available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

Resources

Advocacy

Title	Website	Description
Adapted Physical Education National Standards	http://www.apens.org/	Provides standards and national certification for adapted physical educators
National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPEID)	http://www.ncpeid.org/	Promotes research, professional preparation, service delivery, and advocacy of physical education for individuals with disabilities
NCPEID advocacy PowerPoint template	http://ow.ly/O99d8	A customizable PowerPoint template meant to support professionals who want to give advocacy presentations on adapted physical activity

Online Adapted Physical Education Handbooks/Guides

Title	Website	Description
Adapted Physical Education Guidelines in California Schools	https://www.shastacoe.org/uploaded/Dept/selpa/SELPA_Resources/APE_Guidelines.pdf	California state guidelines
Defining APE Best Practice for Connecticut Schools	http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2663&q=334452	Connecticut school resource
Colorado Guidelines for Adapted Physical Education	http://coahperd.publishpath.com/Websites/coahperd/images/divisions/2.%20CDEAPEManual.pdf	Colorado guidelines
Minnesota Developmental Adapted Physical Education Resource Manual	http://www.mndape.org/operational-guide.html	Minnesota school resource

Legal Guidelines

Title	Website	Description
Wrightslaw physical education and adapted physical education page	http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/pe.index.htm	Accurate, reliable information about special education law
U.S. Department of Education <i>Dear Colleague Letter</i> on participation in extracurricular athletics	http://goo.gl/bB35IC	Federal guidance on participation by students with disabilities in extracurricular athletics, including club, intramural and interscholastic
U.S. Department of Education <i>Dear Colleague Letter</i> on applicability of physical education for students ages 18-21 with disabilities in transition programs	http://goo.gl/9yE3H7	Guidelines on services for students ages 18-21
U.S. Department of Education <i>Dear Colleague Letter</i> on applicability of physical education for preschool children with disabilities	http://goo.gl/vi2lhd	Federal guidance on services for preschool children
U.S. Department of Education <i>Dear Colleague Letter</i> on denying mandatory physical education instruction for children with disabilities	http://goo.gl/jTN56v	Guidance on the practice of reducing physical education time to allow for academic remediation or instruction

Teaching Tips

Title	Website	Description
The National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability	http://www.nchpad.org/	Health and physical activity guidelines for individuals with disabilities
U.S. Department of Education's <i>Creating Equal Opportunities for Children and Youth with Disabilities to Participate in Physical Education and Extracurricular Athletics</i>	https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/equal-pe.pdf	Guidance document that offers instruction techniques, inclusion strategies, sport organizations, health and safety issues, and even a parent page to assist with activities in the home and community
Texas Woman's University Project Inspire	http://www.twu.edu/inspire	Teaching, advocacy, assessment and more
PE Central adapted physical education section	http://www.pecentral.org/adapted/adaptedmenu.html	Ask the Expert, activities, assessment, resource and more
North Carolina Adapted Physical Education Advisory Council	http://www.nc-ape.com/	Activities, resources, videos and more
SHAPE America adapted physical education webinars	http://www.shapeamerica.org/prodev/webinars/adapted/	Webinars on a variety of APE-related topics

Commonly Used Motor Assessments*

Title	Link
TGMD-2: Test of Gross Motor Development, Second Edition	http://www.proedinc.com/customer/productView.aspx?ID=1776
Brockport Physical Fitness Test Manual	http://www.humankinetics.com/products/
Competency Testing for Adapted Physical Education	www.doe.state.la.us/ide/uploads/2674.pdf
Project MOBILITEE	http://www.twu.edu/downloads/inspire/Project_MOBILITEE-1.pdf

* For a comprehensive list, please visit the *Adapted Physical Education Guidelines in California Schools* resource cited previously.