

Ability Adaptation Guidelines

CONSIDERATIONS

SUGGESTIONS (Involve players and get agreement on changes)

Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Varying skill levels among players' can provide a healthy challenge. However, extreme differences create inequities and a child may lose interest and quit. Aim to decrease the impact of ability differences/create a fair activity for all players. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Before playing, decide what changes can be made to accommodate players' varying skill levels. Define all terms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> what is the action or how to do it, number of times ball goes around, series of actions, how players or marker move through the grid. bounce, roll, throw, pass, hit, miss, fault, crouch, jump, step. Decide what help is needed - work on one skill at a time, have player stand in to jump, to hold/hit with a racquet (if grasp is weak, wrap a tensor bandage around the racquet and the player's hand, hit with a large arm movement).
Boundaries/Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly marked boundaries help players follow rules and encourage safe play. It is difficult for players with visual/physical challenges to stay within boundaries. Paths and spaces between players must be wide enough for children with equipment to travel safely and to allow for turning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have players using an assistive device (wheelchair/walker) keep a wheel or leg of the walker within the boundaries. Increase space between players by having children touch fingers instead of holding hands.
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment that is suitable for all players allows more children to participate in a game. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider ball size, softness and bounce (a large, soft ball is easier to catch than a small, firm one).
Pace of Play/Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenges in locomotion/travel, manipulation and stability skills impact fairness/equity. Guidelines may permit a player to use a different skill to promote equity in moving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the time allowed for activities. Players can travel in various ways/at different speeds (walk, hop, take small steps). Change speed of play (turn ropes slower/allow more turns between jumpers). Increase challenge by increasing the number of times around bases/circle. Changing the distance between bases/the length of the field. Partner to share the challenges (1 to hit and 1 to throw/run).
Pairing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnering with another player, for stability, allows children with ability challenges to safely and successfully participate in ball, tag and group games. Consider the effect of excitement on a player's movement and social skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have players with different skills form a pair (running-stability/catching-throwing/hitting-running). One player pushing another player in a wheelchair. A player in a wheelchair must be in control of their chair at all times.
Safe Tagging/Hitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The act of tagging or being hit by a thrown ball can frighten a player and put them at increased risk of injury from falling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decide how tagging will be done and select safe tag spots/zones. Use tag flags (small bits of cloth hanging from a pocket in a designated spot on the body). Select a softer ball to decrease impact of a hit and to make catching easier. All hitting with balls must be below the waist. Select a safe hit spot/zone. For players using assistive devices select a hit/tag area (small wheels on wheelchair/spot on a walker).
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability challenges may affect a child's reaction time, increasing the risk of injury. Providing support during a challenge promotes the development of physical and social skills, builds confidence and fosters self-esteem. Consider the effect of excitement on players' social skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get to know all players' ability levels. Select actions that can be done safely (run through, pairing). Hula hoops may create a safety hazard for players in wheelchair/walkers.
Scoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability challenges may give an unfair advantage to some players and lead players to quit. Changing aspects of a game can provide equal opportunity and still provide a challenge for other players without boring some players. Discussing these considerations provides an opportunity for children to learn empathy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set time limits if excitement leads to excessive aggressiveness/bullying. Decide how to score (contact with ball may count as a hit).
What ends a turn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A player's skill improves with practise, encouragement and support; inequity in skill levels affects fair play for everyone; playing rather than competing provides practise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change distances to be travelled, pace of play, actions. Set guidelines. Give more time. Make allowance for players' ability (an effort for an action may count as a hit).

Most children will have the skills necessary to play the games. Some do not, so we have introduced to most games **Ability Adaptation Guidelines**. These are key words to help you decide what changes can be made to a game so children with varying levels of motor and/or cognitive skills can participate safely. All situations that may arise are not covered above.