

**ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Purpose.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Terminology.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Procedural Issues.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Examples of Least Restrictive Environments Related to Physical Education and Review of the Evaluation or IEP Process.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Adapted Physical Education Resources.....</b>	<b>10</b>

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## **Introduction**

Since 1975 children with disabilities have been guaranteed, by federal and state law, access to appropriate educational programs that include physical education. By law, children with disabilities must have the opportunity to participate in any program available to children without disabilities unless the need for other arrangements is clearly documented in the child's Individual Educational Program (IEP). Further, if a specially designed program is prescribed, the school district is responsible for the provision of such service.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of these guidelines is to clarify how physical education is defined in the law for children with disabilities and how appropriate programming should be implemented. In addition, the guidelines are designed to help teachers better understand what procedures should be followed when a student with a disability enters their physical education classroom.

## **Terminology**

### ***Adapted Physical Education:***

A diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms designed to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities who may not participate safely or successfully in the regular physical education program. Adapted Physical Education programs should be established by the evaluation process or the Individual Educational Program (IEP) process.

### ***Assessment Procedures:***

Specific assessment procedures should be conducted to include information from the areas of physical and motor fitness, fundamental motor skills, and skills for individual and group games. According to federal and state law, assessments must be comprehensive; therefore, placement into the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for physical education cannot be established from a single motor assessment score. Administration of such assessments must be conducted by personnel trained to interpret scoring and recommend appropriate programming.

### ***Direct Services:***

Those services provided to Students with Disabilities (SWD) as established through the evaluation process and written in the student's IEP to assure appropriate education. Since the curriculum area of Physical Education (which includes Adapted Physical Education) is specifically mentioned in the definition of Special Education, it should be interpreted as a Direct Service and not a Related Service. Related Services cannot replace Direct Services during program implementation; therefore, local school districts should not prescribe a Related Service in place of a Direct Service on the student's IEP, i.e., Physical Therapy in place of Adapted Physical Education.

### ***Eligibility of Service:***

Once an evaluation has been completed, consideration must be made as to the Special Education services needed to meet the student's individual needs. If it is decided the student needs Special Education to benefit from his/her educational experience, then these services are established and must be provided by the local education agency. This process is considered establishing "eligibility" for Special Education. Special Education services are provided by trained personnel with specific areas of expertise. In Physical Education, this would mean the student would be receiving Adapted Physical Education in place of Regular or Modified Physical Education as indicated on the student's IEP.

### ***Individual Education Program (IEP):***

An IEP is a written statement for each SWD developed by a meeting with representatives from the local educational agency, the teacher, the parents or guardian, and the student, if appropriate, for the purpose of establishing an appropriate educational placement. Some consider the IEP to be a “management” program to guide appropriate service delivery, which includes the area of physical education. An IEP should include a statement of:

- \* **present level of performance**
- \* **annual goals**
- \* **short term objectives**
- \* **needed transition services**
- \* **projected dates of services**
- \* **appropriate evaluation procedures**

Every SWD should have a statement related to physical education programming on their IEP. Physical education is not the same as Physical Therapy (PT) or Occupational Therapy (OT). PT and OT are medically based services and considered Related Services. Physical education is an educationally based service, which is consistent with the intent of the federal and state law.

### ***Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):***

The Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for learning should be the one in which, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with disabilities are educated with students without disabilities. Removal from the regular education setting only occurs when assessment data indicate prescribed goals cannot be met in that setting. ***LRE establishes a continuum of educational placement alternatives which in Indiana are:***

- 1) **Regular Physical Education (see definition on page 4)**
- 2) **Modified Physical Education (see definition below)**
- 3) **Adapted Physical Education (see definition on page 2)**

### ***Modified Physical Education:***

This term describes physical education programs that provide an alternative to regular physical education programming for students with temporary medical exceptions such as sprained ankles, broken bones, recuperation from minor surgery, or an extended illness. Modified Physical Education programming may also include students having spiritual or cultural objections to the regular physical education programming. Class procedures may need to be modified and not placement alternatives, i.e., separate changing facilities, the elimination of swimming and showers, modified dress requirements, or being excused from participating in contact sports. Goals and objectives for the regular physical education program may be slightly

modified to address the temporary condition of the student.

***Modified Physical Education could be a placement alternative or LRE for the SWD, provided this placement was established from assessment data as a result of the evaluation process.***

### ***Personnel Standards for Adapted Physical Educators***

Federal and state law establish that the state shall maintain standards to ensure that personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained to assist in provisions of Special Education services. Schools also want to hire the *most qualified individuals* in order to provide the most appropriate educational programming.

Physical education teachers should have the appropriate license for the grade level they are teaching. To meet the highest standard, a teacher providing services in Adapted Physical Education should have the same license plus current certification in Adapted Physical Education. Those teachers without such certification should be able to demonstrate satisfactory progress toward completing applicable course work necessary to meet the Adapted Physical Education certification for the state of Indiana or document successful completion of the national certification exam for Certified Adapted Physical Educator (CAPE).

### ***Physical Education (Regular):***

As defined in Public Law 105-17 (most recent reauthorization of PL 94-142), physical education is the development of:

Physical and Motor fitness

Physical fitness - strength, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility

Motor fitness - balance, coordination, power, speed

Fundamental motor skills

Throwing, catching, running, jumping, striking, kicking, etc.

Skills needed in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports).

The term physical education includes special physical education, ***adapted physical education***, movement education, and motor development.

***Related Services:***

Related Services are defined as those services which are supplementary and complementary to the instructional program and are required for a student to benefit from Special Education. Such services may be developmental, corrective, or supportive in nature and are generally provided by persons other than the teacher to whom the student is assigned. Examples of Related Services are Therapeutic Recreation, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Corrective Therapy.

***Special Education:***

Specially designed instruction, provided at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of the student identified as disabled in accordance with the federal law (PL 105-17). Special Education may include:

- classroom instruction
- community based instruction
- instruction in hospitals, nursing homes, or other institutions
- **instruction in physical education**, vocational education, or speech-language therapy

***Student Eligible for Service:***

Children with disabilities that, based on multi-disciplinary assessments established through the evaluation process, require special education services. A child should be evaluated by a qualified physical educator or adapted physical educator to determine if special services are needed. These services should be implemented in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).

***Student with a Disability or SWD:***

Federal and Indiana State Law, PL 105-17 and Article 7 respectively, use the following categories to define children with disabilities. These categories are established through diagnostic procedures:

Autism, Deaf-blindness, Deafness, Hearing Impairment, Mental Retardation, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impairment, Serious Emotional Disturbance, Specific Learning Disability, Speech or Language Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, Visual Impairment including Blindness.

## Procedural Issues

Suggested procedures to follow when a SWD is placed in your physical education classroom.

Step	Action	Suggested Procedures	Additional Response
1	SWD enters or is placed into your PE class with or without your notification.	Speak to Special Education classroom teacher. Seek background information on SWD. Review IEP and look for statements related to Physical Education Placement and not Related Service programming i.e., PT or OT.	Talk with principal. Contact parents to gain additional background information. Seek programming suggestions from Adapted Physical Educator.
2	Background information has been checked. Review IEP for physical fitness & motor programming information.	Seek physical fitness & motor assessment information from the IEP reported by: - Physical Education/PE teacher - Physical Education/APE teacher - Physical and/or Occupational therapy/therapist	If assessment information is present, review, interpret, plan, and implement programming. If yes, go to Step 5. If no physical fitness & motor assessment is present, then go to Step 3.
3	If no physical fitness & motor assessment information is recorded or is not available.	Request or refer the student for a physical fitness & motor assessment by contacting Special Education personnel for an assessment by an Adapted Physical Educator.	Special Education personnel should contact parents for consent to the physical fitness & motor assessment. Local education agency should arrange for an APE assessment. Ask to be involved with the Assessment Process.
4	Results of Assessment are reported at IEP meeting, and IEP written to include PE Placement in LRE.	Placement must be in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE).	Go to Step 5 <u>or</u> 6
5	Placement decision indicates LRE should be Regular or Modified PE.	Regular PE teacher seeks additional programming suggestions from Adapted Physical Educator and Related Service personnel and implements the programming.	Must modify curriculum to meet needs of SWD and follow goals and objectives of curriculum and the IEP.
6	Placement decision indicates LRE should be Adapted Physical Education.	Service to student should be provided by a qualified PE teacher or an Adapted Physical Educator. Specific goals and objectives for IEP must be addressed and reported in accordance with evaluation process.	The regular PE teacher should consult with an APE for programming developments as needed.
7	Program Evaluation for Steps 5 or 6.	Each program evaluation must address the goals and objectives of the IEP. Periodic measurement of these goals is the responsibility of the teacher providing services.	All IEP evaluations should be in accordance with Local Education Agency timelines.
8	Results of Evaluation reported.	Regular PE teacher should use the program evaluations for preparation of IEP updates and Case Conference reports.	Regular PE teachers should attend Case Conferences as required by law and provide program updates.

## Examples of Least Restrictive Environments Related to Physical Education

<b>Continuum of Physical Education Settings (LRE)</b>	<b>Preferred Personnel Involved</b>
Regular Physical Education Class	Regular PE teacher
Regular Physical Education with consultation from Adapted Physical Education	Regular PE teacher and Adapted PE teacher
Adapted Physical Education for only specific skills or areas of weakness	Adapted PE teacher
Part-time Regular PE and part-time Adapted PE	Regular PE teacher and Adapted PE teacher
Full time Adapted Physical Education	Adapted PE teacher and Related Service as needed
Part-time Special School i.e., School for the Blind or Deaf	PE teacher at Special School
Full time Special School	PE teacher at Special School

## Review of the Evaluation or IEP Process

<b>Step</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>PE Involvement</b>
1	Referral - Student can be referred by several sources i.e., teacher, parent, administrator.	Teacher can request assessment after informal observations or screenings.
2	Obtain parental consent.	Once a formal request has been made for an assessment, parents must give consent.
3	Consent granted. Assessment conducted.	Regular and Adapted Physical Educators actively involved
4	Results presented at Case Conference and eligibility of service is decided.	
5	IEP developed, specific goals and objectives are written, and dates for review are established.	Regular and Adapted Physical Educators
6	Placement established, i.e., Regular, Modified or Adapted Physical Education.	Regular and Adapted Physical Educators
7	Program implemented.	Regular and/or Adapted Physical Ed.
8	Program evaluated.	Regular and/or Adapted Physical Ed.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. ***Is it possible for the IEP to indicate Regular or Modified Physical Education as the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) placement?***

Yes, remember the LRE should be the environment where the student learns the most. Such a program placement should be based on some of the following components: assessment results, the physical education curriculum, program goals and objectives, and teacher involved.

2. ***Our school district supports Inclusion, that's the same as Least Restrictive Environment, right?***

No. Least Restrictive Environment supports a continuum of placement options, while inclusion programming supports only one placement, that of regular education. To better understand this you have to understand the difference between inclusion philosophy and inclusion programming. An inclusive philosophy is a belief system or attitude that a school district might adopt. A school district might support the belief that all students should be educated in the same environment i.e., those with and without disabilities in regular physical education. However, it is the school district's implementation of such a belief that defines the difference between inclusive philosophy and inclusive programming. Inclusive programming establishes one setting for education, rather than a continuum of placement options as in LRE. With inclusive programming, school districts should establish a continuum of "support services" to interact with that setting i.e., SWD placed in regular or basic physical education with the Adapted Physical Educator or Physical Therapist attending the class to provide consultation to the teacher on programming for the student with a disability.

3. ***I teach high school physical education, and I have a student with a disability in my regular physical education class. I know the high school requirement for physical education is two semesters, but the student's IEP indicates services should be provided for all four years, what do I do?***

Many times students with disabilities need additional time to reach established goals and objectives on the IEP. Your school district must remember that the IEP is a mandated document that requires all aspects to be fulfilled; therefore, it would be in the best interest of your school district to make sure this student's IEP is completed. Additional years of programming might appear appropriate in this case.

**4. *I teach in a mid-sized rural school district, and we do not have an Adapted Physical Education specialist, what are our options?***

Your school corporation might consider supporting an itinerant Adapted Physical Educator with a neighboring school corporation. Another suggestion might be to designate a teacher in your corporation to seek additional training in Adapted Physical Education. There are several universities in the state of Indiana that prepare personnel in this area. Contact the Indiana Department of Education at 317-232-9136 for this information.

**5. *I have read several IEPs on students with disabilities in my class, and I have not found any information about physical education. I can only find programming suggestions for Physical Therapy. I thought Physical Therapy could not replace physical education in the IEP. Am I correct? What should I do?***

You are correct. Physical Therapy programming can not replace Physical Education services in the IEP. Your correct response indicates you have a basic understanding of the difference between Direct versus Related Services. As a quick review, Direct Services are those that should be provided for all students, those with and without disabilities i.e., if a student without disabilities in your school receives physical education, then a student with disabilities should also receive physical education. Remember that physical education programming must be provided in the least restrictive environment, which could mean modified or adapted physical education as stated on the IEP. If an IEP indicates that Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy should be provided in lieu of physical education, there should be assessment information supporting such a programming placement. That means you should find assessment information from a former physical educator and a therapist recommending Related Services instead of physical education. If you do not find any motor assessment information from physical education, you have the right to refer this student for such an assessment. Follow the suggested procedures on page 6.

**6. *Is it possible for a student to be placed in Modified Physical Education and later moved to Adapted Physical Education? I have had a student with disabilities in my physical education class, and I have tried to modify his programming for the past semester, but I feel this placement is inappropriate, what can I do?***

If the student's IEP indicated placement in a Modified Physical Education setting and that setting has proven inappropriate, you should have evaluation information to support this situation. With that evaluation information you should have enough data to request a reevaluation of the IEP placement and refer the student for another assessment to establish a more appropriate educational placement. Remember, many of the educational placements for SWD are established on reaching specific goals and objectives for physical education. The IEP process is in place to assure that the rights of students are upheld.

## Adapted Physical Education Resources

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