

CHAPTER 11 - FACILITATING COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

11.1 KEY PROVISION: Communication exists among all of the individuals providing instruction and services to individuals with disabilities.

Discussion: Individuals with difficulty achieving success in school are the responsibility of the general education program. Timely identification and provision of the necessary support services is in the best interest of the student. Communication between the general educator, the adapted physical education teacher, and the site administrators is critical to the acceptance and proper accommodation of the individuals with disabilities. Regardless of the reason(s) that cause a student to have difficulty achieving success in school, the general educator must be a key partner in the process if the challenged student is to be placed into his/her classroom.

Many general physical educators identify limited awareness and support as the major reason for their resistance to including individuals with disabilities in their classes. This limited awareness and support falls in several categories including:

- Student's legal right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE);
- General educator's responsibilities to each student under his/her tutelage;
- Accommodations/modifications available to the general educator when working with a particular student with a disability;
- How a general educator can safely and competently accommodate a student's disability;
- Forms of support and resources available;
- LEA (Local Education Agency) and site administrators' awareness of their responsibilities to the student and the general educator and how to accommodate their needs to facilitate their success.

It is the responsibility of the adapted physical education teacher to initiate and maintain communication with other professionals as well. Part of this responsibility is to educate and inform the general education faculty about disabled students and their educational needs. Itinerant adapted physical education teachers need to be particularly aware of this responsibility at each of the sites that they visit. It is important to make sure school site staff are introduced to the adapted physical education teacher, and know how to contact him/her in order to coordinate facilities, equipment, instruction, meetings and student schedules.

Best Practice: Effective collaboration includes communication, preparation and proactive planning. Suggestions for increasing communication to facilitate collaboration between the adapted physical education teacher and other professionals includes the following:

- Maintain a positive, friendly approach to collaboration between the general educator, the adapted physical education teacher and other individuals.
- It is important to keep lines of communication open between all professionals involved with a student with a disability. A general education teacher would feel unsupported if a special education student was placed in their class without the proper collaboration between all professionals involved. This does not lend itself to good teacher morale or a positive educational experience for the student.
 - a. Conduct periodic scheduled meetings of the professionals and/or paraprofessionals involved with each class or student should be held to assess progress and to discuss future strategies.
 - b. Communication should occur regularly between all professionals and instructional aides working with a particular student. This includes informal means such as notes, phone calls/e-mail, and daily/weekly report form.
 - c. Communicate regularly with instructional aides and “peer buddies.”
 - d. General education staff (e.g., physical education dept. chair, general classroom teacher, principal or designee) should inform adapted physical education teachers of procedures for scheduling of individuals, use of facilities and use of equipment.
- LEA and site administrators must understand and support special education service at each school site.
- Conduct in-services regarding updates on resources, programs, requirements (e.g. 200/400 minutes of physical education instruction every ten days), procedures, strategies and methods for successful inclusion.
- Support collaboration efforts between all team members to facilitate successful inclusion.
- Adapted physical education teachers should initiate communication with general education staff to provide information on ways to modify, adjust and accommodate tasks and activities for individuals who need accommodations but do not receive adapted physical education.
- Counselors and administrators should make every effort to place individuals with disabilities in classes that are appropriate to meet individual needs with goals such as:
 - a. Ensure the success and safety of the individuals with and without disabilities in the class.
 - b. Arrange for class size that enables accommodations and modifications to be implemented.
 - c. Balance enrollment throughout classes to ensure an appropriate ratio of individuals with and without disabilities.
 - d. Assign instructional aides, peer tutors, or other support as needed.
- Adapted physical educators can further support collaboration by:
 - a. Inviting general educators and administrators to observe lessons. Attend professional conferences together.
 - b. Teaching joint APE and GPE classes.
 - c. Providing teachers of special day classes with general physical education information.

- d. Supporting curriculum taught in general and special education classes
- e. Creating and maintaining lists of physical education vocabulary (e.g., jump vs. hop, leap vs. jump, locomotor vs. non-locomotor), playground game rules or instructions for self-made equipment (e.g., newspaper balls, milk carton scoops, tin can stilts).
- Adapted physical education teachers should consider the following to be part of each school community.
 - a. Scheduling time for collaborative consultation.
 - b. Ensuring general education teachers have access to IEP and adapted physical education assessment reports.
 - c. Informing school personnel of times, days of week and phone number where the adapted physical education teacher may be contacted for questions or help (leaving a schedule and business card at each school may be an efficient procedure).
 - d. Introducing him or herself to others on the school campus (e.g., administration, general physical educators, administrative assistants, nurse, custodian, instructional assistants, playground supervisors other service providers).
 - e. Participating in school programs and activities.
 - f. Attending staff meetings.
 - g. Appreciating other professional's job roles and duties.

11.2 KEY PROVISION: On the job skills and strategies for the adapted physical educator – collaboration with classroom teachers.

Discussion: It is extremely important to have a good working relationship with the classroom teachers. Meeting the mandated physical education minutes (200/400 minutes every 10 days) often requires a collaborative relationship between classroom and adapted physical education teachers. Establishing mutual professional respect for one another is one of the keys to success as an adapted physical education teacher.

Best Practice: Collaborative consultation is a professional interaction process that is effectively utilized to help meet the needs of the student, therefore creating a safe and successful general physical education environment. In some situations a collaborative goal is written and both adapted physical education teacher and another teacher/specialist will be listed as responsible for implementing the goal.

It is rare that the adapted physical education teacher provides all the required minutes of physical education instruction for the individuals. As a result, the classroom teacher is responsible for the remainder of the physical education minutes. The adapted physical education teacher should offer collaborative consultation with the classroom teacher by working on similar skills and units of instruction.

If the adapted physical education teacher is teaching an entire class, the classroom teacher should be involved. It is a great advantage to have the extra adult presence and it is often critical for safety. In addition, the individuals are supported for staying on task, behavioral problems are minimized and more work on individual goals is accomplished because all individuals are involved in activity. Another advantage is that the classroom teachers observe what happens during the lesson and can try some of the activities on their own. Along these lines, it is beneficial to point out easy activities to repeat, give helpful tips, and when possible, provide a short written description. Creating the atmosphere of collaboration will make all teaching efforts much more likely to create success for included individuals.

11.3 KEY PROVISION: On the job skills and strategies for the adapted physical educator – collaboration with general physical educators.

Discussion: Many individuals receiving adapted physical education service participate in a general physical education program to meet the mandatory physical education minutes (200/400 minutes every 10 days). General physical education teachers have those individuals in their classes and need support for successful inclusion. An effective strategy of support is through a collaborative consultation model.

Best Practice: The following is a list of the outcomes and possible actions that teachers working in a collaborative consultation relationship could apply to their practice.

- Background information. There is basic information needed by the general physical education teachers to start off the year successfully. Packets of information could be created to share some of the past experiences that the included student may have had in their physical education learning. The packets could include: 1) IEP goals and objectives, 2) worthwhile equipment, 3) information from previous general physical education teachers on strategies that worked, or didn't, 4) strategies to complete physical fitness testing, and 5) overall accommodations, modifications or strategies and student preferences to create a successful physical education experience.
- Develop goals. The general physical education teacher and adapted physical education teacher should work together to create appropriate goals to mark successful inclusion. This will assist that student participation is not the only measure of successful inclusion.
- Create a consultation plan. This will include information the general physical education teacher desires and what the adapted physical education teacher will deliver. It will list the "when and how" the consultation interactions will take place.
- Documentation. Ongoing documentation should be used to keep the meetings at a regular interval and document what is discussed and what are the current issues. Copies can be delivered or sent electronically to all involved. This documentation will ensure implementation of strategies discussed during the scheduled consultation interactions.

- Strategies. General physical education teachers need ready-to-use strategies for their classes. Adapted physical education teachers can give specific information about the individual student so that their classes will be inclusive, because they might not always have time or the knowledge to do this on their own. Several books are available that provide resources for the physical education teacher regarding inclusion, such as:
 - Lieberman, L, and Houston-Wilson, C. (2009). *Strategies for Inclusion: A Handbook for Physical Educators*. Champaign, Illinois: Human Kinetics.
 - Block, Martin E. (2006). *Teacher's Guide to Including Students With Disabilities in General Physical Education*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.
- Regarding same, there are two highly useful resources available for physical educators; Lieberman & Houston-Wilson, 2002; Block, 2007.
- Plan ahead. The general physical education teacher must provide as detailed information as possible on their units of instruction to the adapted physical education teacher. For example, the general physical education teacher can provide a unit plan that will discuss the types of skills, drills, activities and game play for the adapted physical education teacher. The adapted physical education teacher in return can create appropriate inclusion strategies and rubrics or unit goals for the included student.
- Value roles. Both the general physical education teacher and the adapted physical education teacher need to feel valued in his or her role in the collaborative consultation process. Adapted physical education teachers should ensure the general physical education teacher is part of the IEP process including input on goals and objectives. General physical education teachers should ask for desired information and give input for goals and objectives. Pope, M. (2009)

11.4 KEY PROVISION: On the job skills and strategies for the adapted physical educator – collaboration with instructional aides.

Discussion: Instructional aides (paraeducators) can provide valuable assistance to the adapted physical education teacher during adapted physical education instruction. These individuals may also be referred to as assistants or instructional aides. These instructional aides may include aides from the child's classroom, an aide assigned to a particular student for behavior support or special circumstances, or an aide assigned, full or part-time, to adapted physical education.

Best Practice: Creating an atmosphere of mutual respect will assist in the future collaborative relationship with instructional aides. Tips for working with instructional aides:

- Take time to establish expectations or roles within the teaching environment.
- Give instructional aides information on each student's disabilities and medical needs.
- Provide IEP goals and objectives.

- Resolve conflicts when they arise.
- Allow instructional aides to be an active member of the multidisciplinary team.
- Provide documentation log for instructional aide to open communication with the adapted physical educator.

The adapted physical education teacher and instructional aide can and should work collaboratively with the student(s). The instructional aide must be under the direct supervision of the adapted physical education teacher and is not responsible for developing lesson plans and selecting methods of instruction. The role of the instructional aide in adapted physical education is to assist and supplement the adapted physical education teacher in carrying out instruction to improve the quality of educational opportunity for the individuals. An aide can help in a variety of ways, some of which include monitoring and reinforcing skills and student behavior, supervising student safety, providing instructional prompts, leading a small group and facilitating movement and positioning. The instructional aide should also be prepared to work under the supervision of the adapted physical education teacher during adapted physical education instruction.

<p>11.5 KEY PROVISION: On the job skills and strategies for the adapted physical educator – scheduling.</p>
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Discussion: A schedule must be set before teaching can begin. Creating a schedule that takes into account caseload, number of school sites and locations, travel, assessment and reports time can be complicated however it needs to be developed and will be a valuable tool.

Scheduling Considerations

- Bus arrival and departure times.
- Bell schedule, including recess, breakfast and lunch times and toileting schedules.
- Communicate with classroom teachers and other related services early in year or even at the end of the previous year to establish an agreed upon time for adapted physical education.
- Set assessment times to minimize cancellations to set adapted physical education schedule.
- Adapted physical education teachers schedules should be provided to:
 - School administrators
 - Administrative assistants
 - Relevant teachers
 - Other service providers
 - APE supervisor
- Teachers and administrative staff must have adapted physical education contact information in the need of cancellation of service due to illness, emergency drills or others.

- Once set, schedules should be respected by promptness and attentiveness. When cancellations cannot be avoided, communication with school site personnel and rescheduling may be necessary.

Best Practice: There are numerous ways to indicate, on the IEP, how a student will receive APE services; minutes per week, per session, per month, individual or in a group setting. In considering the service, the individual's needs are top priority. However, it is also important to consider the adapted physical education teacher's caseload and schedule. An itinerant teacher needs to be flexible because of all the variables involved. An effective strategy is to indicate minutes per month rather than times per week. For example, 240 minutes per month rather than two times a week for 30 minutes. Minutes per month, gives flexibility to accommodate holidays, pupil free days, and sick days. Each LEA has guidelines for documenting the location, amount and frequency for which service will be provided. Districts and/or SELPAs will help determine options for providing services.

Many children with IEPs receive multiple services, making it imperative that each service provider communicates with the classroom teacher during the scheduling process. Communication with all service providers will minimize conflicts during schedule creation. Completed schedules should be shared with school administration staff, teachers and other service providers. Changes to the adapted physical education schedule may occur due to an addition of a student or school site therefore notification of the adapted physical education supervisor and school staff is necessary. Meetings, holidays and others instances sometimes require a session with a student to be rescheduled, the adapted physical education teacher should make appropriate contact to reschedule and make up these missed sessions.

Providing adapted physical education contact information is highly recommended in order to be notified ahead of time if a student is absent, an assembly or fire drill will be occurring and so forth. Advance notification of this type may provide opportunities to complete other necessary duties (e.g. assessments, observations, IEP work). An example of a letter of introduction from LAUSD is located in Appendix B.

11.6 KEY PROVISION: On the job skills and strategies for the adapted physical educator – equipment.
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Discussion: An abundance of and variety of typical and specialized physical education equipment is available for physical education activities. Adapted physical education teachers are responsible for the care, maintenance and storage of equipment. An itinerant adapted physical education teacher may need to travel with equipment in his or her vehicle, utilizing a main storage room at a school site or office site. There may be some schools that have a room, closet or storage area where some of the adapted physical education equipment and materials can be stored on site.

Best Practice: Adapted physical education teachers should keep an inventory of equipment and take the time to label adapted physical education equipment. Administration and school sites can assist the adapted physical educator in finding a safe, accessible and secure location to store adapted physical education equipment. Developing a relationship with on-site physical educators may open the door to borrowing school site equipment if and as needed. Appendix I has a detailed list of suggested equipment.

11.7 KEY PROVISION: On the job skills and strategies for the adapted physical educator – assessment & data collecting.

Discussion: An important aspect of teaching adapted physical education is assessing individuals and collecting data. It is important to allow time in the weekly schedule for formal assessments and observations. Collecting ongoing data on individuals receiving adapted physical education services is a priority. This includes tracking progress on IEP goals. It is important to have documentation to show to parents, administrators and other IEP team members, to indicate the individual’s progress or that he/she has met goals.

Best Practice: Creating a time block in the adapted physical educator’s schedule specifically for assessment is key to time management for assessing and data collection. Creating a goal worksheet or notations on a lesson plan assists in maintaining records of individual student performance. (For examples, refer to Appendix H).