

What is Adapted Physical Education?

Adapted physical education is the art and science of developing and implementing a carefully designed physical education instructional program for an individual with a disability, based on a comprehensive assessment, to give the individual the skills necessary for a lifetime of rich leisure, recreation, and sport experiences to enhance physical fitness and wellness. (Auxter, Pyfer, & Huettig, 2001).

Who is an Adapted Physical Education Teacher?

The adapted physical education teacher (APE) is the person responsible for developing an appropriate physical education plan for individuals with disabilities. The APE teacher is a physical educator with highly specialized training in the assessment and evaluation of motor competency, physical fitness, play, and leisure, recreation and sport skills. The APE teacher has the skills necessary to develop an individualized physical education program and to implement the program.

The APE teacher is a direct service provider, not a related service provider, because special physical education is a federally mandated component of special education services [USCA 1402(25)].

Special Education

The term 'special education' means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of an individual with a disability, including:

- Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings and
- Instruction in physical education: The federal regulations define physical education as "the development of:
 - Physical and motor fitness;
 - Fundamental motor skills and patterns; and
 - Skills in aquatics, dance, individual and group games, and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports)". [34 C.F.R. 300.13 (b) (9)]



What skills does an Adapted Physical Educator need?

The Council for Personnel Preparation for the Handicapped (sic) endorsed the following recommendation for competencies in adapted physical education:

- ❖ Knowledge of motor characteristics, behaviors, and developmental sequences (including birth through age 22) associated with various disabilities in relation to normal motor development;
- ❖ Knowledge of neurological basis of normal and abnormal motor control and sensory motor integration methods for teaching physical education to individuals with severe disabilities, nonambulatory individuals, and individuals with multiple disabilities;
- ❖ Skills in psychomotor assessment and a variety of physical education techniques and procedures for implementing the individual education plan; and
- ❖ Developmental teaching methods/materials and gymnasium organizational abilities in physical and motor fitness, fundamental motor skills and skills in aquatics, dance, individual and group games and sports for individuals with disabilities and/or motor problems.

What responsibilities should an Adapted Physical Education Specialist assume?

- ❖ direct service provider (hands-on teaching)
- ❖ assessment specialist, completing comprehensive motor assessments of individuals with disabilities and making specific program recommendations
- ❖ consultant for physical education and special education staff providing physical education instruction for individuals with disabilities
- ❖ IEP (Multi-disciplinary Team or Admission, Review, Dismissal) Committee member who helps develop the IEP in the psychomotor domain
- ❖ student and parent advocate
- ❖ program coordinator who develops curricular materials, develops intra and inter-agency collaborations to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, and monitors progress on IEP's.

Who are the other direct service providers?

Direct service personnel are those professionals identified in the federal laws as having a primary educational responsibility for individuals with disabilities.

Other professionals also provide direct educational service to individuals with disabilities. They include the Special Educator, a Vision Specialist working with a blind/visually impaired individual, and a Hearing Specialist working with a deaf/hearing impaired individual. The 1999 Reauthorization of IDEA includes the Orientation and Mobility Specialist as a direct service provider, as well. The orientation and mobility specialist is trained to help students who are blind or visually impaired develop the skills necessary to navigate throughout their environment independently.

Who the Adapted Physical Educator is NOT?

The APE professional is NOT a related service provider. Related services are provided so the individual with disabilities can benefit from instruction. The primary function of related services personnel is to assure that the individual's educational goals on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) can be met. The following are related service personnel:

Occupational Therapist

The occupational therapist (OT) is trained to address skills associated with activities of daily living, work activities, and play or leisure activities. A physician's prescription is required for OT services to individuals with medically related conditions. The decision, however, regarding whether a student has an educational need for occupational therapy is the decision of the IEP Committee.

Physical Therapist

The physical therapist (PT) is trained to provide services that address range of motion, gait therapy, mobility assistance, and other interventions. A physician's

prescription is required for PT services to individuals with medically related conditions. The decision, however, regarding whether a student has an educational need for physical therapy is the decision of the IEP committee.

Recreation Therapist

The recreation therapist is trained to use recreation services for purposeful intervention in some physical, emotional, or social behavior to bring about a desired change in that behavior and to promote the growth and development of the individual.

Speech and Language Therapist

The speech and language therapist is trained to develop expressive and receptive speech and communication skills in students with language disorders.

The Multidisciplinary Approach

A comprehensive method of service delivery is best achieved by a multidisciplinary team approach. Critical to this approach is that each team member cooperate with other members to pool the knowledge of separate disciplines to develop goals that will ensure the most effective learning environment for the individual with a disability. A multidisciplinary team should consist of both direct service and related services personnel.

Recommended Internet Sites for Adapted Physical Education/Adapted Physical Activity

AAHPERD

Adapted Physical Activity Council

A council of the American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness (AAALF), one of six associations of the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD). APAC's mission is to promote quality movement experiences for individuals with disabilities through research, advocacy, publications, programs at conventions and workshops, position statements, standards of practice, and cooperation with other organizations whose interest in people with disabilities.

P.E. Central

P.E. Central is THE Web Site for the general physical educator. Professionals interested in APE will be particularly interested in the wealth of lesson plan ideas.

The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability

This Center was created by Dr. James Rimmer, the recipient of TWU's Distinguished Alumni Award [2003] because of the consensus that physical activity is a key to optimal health, that inactivity is a serious health concern for individuals with disabilities, and that people with disabilities are at a greater risk than the general population for developing secondary health conditions due to sedentary lifestyles. This is a WONDERFUL resource.

Palaestra: Forum of Sport, Physical Education & Recreation for Those with Disabilities

This wonderful journal, edited by Dr. David Beaver and Phyllis Beaver, provides a wealth of information for those interested in enhancing the active lives of individuals with disabilities.

National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPERID)

NCPERID promotes research, professional preparation, service delivery, and advocacy in physical education and recreation for individuals with disabilities.

PELINKS4U

This is a wonderful website designed to foster healthy activity and healthy lives. The site shares current information about physical education, wellness, health, and advocacy. It hosts a monthly page re: adapted physical education.

[Adapted Physical Education National Standards](#)

This web site gives specific information re: the competencies/knowledge needed by an individual who is recognized as a CAPE [a Certified Adapted Physical Educator]. [For more information](#) contact Dr. Tim Davis, APENS Coordinator, at SUNY Cortland.

Internet Communities

[ADAPT-TALK](#)

Adapt-talk is an independent Internet Community, dedicated exclusively to issues that its Adapted Physical Activity subscribers wish to bring forward. Subscribe today. It's easy - and FREE - and a wonderful forum to exchange ideas, concerns, and strategies to better meet the needs of those we serve.