

What is Adaptive Physical Education?

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In many states, all elementary and secondary students must receive physical education as a part of their educational program. The federal law Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA enacted by Congress in 1975) entitles all students with Disabilities to receive a free, appropriate public education, including appropriate physical education. Adapted physical education (APE) is vitally important to the quality of life for students with disabilities.

The Adapted Physical Education (APE) program is developmentally appropriate physical education. It is adapting, modifying, and/or changing a physical activity so it is as appropriate for the person with a disability as it is for a person without a disability. APE provides numerous ways that some sports and activities can be modified and/or changed. The goal is to have an activity where ALL students can fully participate in Physical Education. Change the word "adapted" to "differentiated" and you have the idea of Adapted Physical Education. It is GOOD teaching which differentiates the curriculum, task, equipment, and/or environment as appropriate for each child, so ALL students can successfully learn and participate in physical education.

Federal law mandates that physical education be provided to students with disabilities and defines Physical Education as the development of:

- physical and motor skills
- fundamental motor skills and patterns (throwing, catching, walking, running, etc)
- skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports)