

### Adapting Experiences to Support Inclusion

Activities that target the ability levels of all those involved help children feel better about participation within the group. They are less likely to sit out if it is clear to them that they are a significant part of the group.

Inclusion is the important theme to remember. Individualisation does not suggest separate program plans for each child nor does it suggest designing different activities within the same group.

Participation must be comparable for children of all skill levels and abilities. Less skilled children should not be assigned only as "score keeper". Instead they should have opportunities to develop skills that would allow them to share in many aspects of the activity.

When you develop a new activity or modify an existing one to accommodate children with differing abilities, it is important to remember a few basic principles. No matter how creative an activity may be or how good the modifications may seem, if the activity does not meet the children's needs, your planning has been in vain and you will not be using the child's time effectively.

Activities must focus on the chronological ages of children before addressing their functional ages. There are no specific ways to individualise for every child however it can be beneficial to have basic guidelines which remind you about developing appropriate adaptations to activities.

- Establish where in the developmental continuum the child functions
- Analyse the elements of the activity
- Identify the elements of the activity that could be changed and alter them based upon individual needs
- Change the element only as much as necessary to afford success but to preserve the challenge

### Choosing an Activity

Many activities are typically geared to the highly skilled child in the group. Make activities more inclusive by:

- Presenting the activities sequentially, beginning with ones that require the level of skills either already developed by the children or that has an achievable result for all children without the focus of bringing down the skill level of the entire group.
- Identify opportunities to plan activities that compliment isolated skill practice within a 'unit' or theme.
- Organise activities to provide maximum participation for less skilled children.
- Suit the activities to the age and developmental levels of all children
- Adapt the activities in whatever ways are necessary to meet the needs and abilities of all children involved.

There may be occasions where only slight adaptations are necessary or there may be times when major changes are required to meet the diverse abilities, needs and interests of children within the group.

### References:

- Kasser S.L. (1995) *Inclusive Games Movement fun for everyone*, Human Kinetics South Australia
- Lieberman, L.J. and Cowart, J.F. (1965) *Human Kinetics*, South Australia
- Bruni, M. (1998) *Fine Motor Skills in children with Down Syndrome*, Woodbine House
- Millar T. (2001) *Inclusive Creative Activities*. Training Package Carata

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