

## Gym Adaptations

The student can be involved in gym activities at a variety of levels. The objective is to reinforce some of the multidisciplinary skills in the gym activity as well as social inclusion. Involve peers on a one to one or buddy system and through scripted routines, wherever possible. This may involve the use of communication skills, (e.g., signing, communication board, voice output, using a Communication/Interaction Model, etc.), cause and effect, switch use, and fine or gross motor skills. For examples of some of these modifications, refer to the activity matrix. The levels of participation may vary for different units and lessons. The following are various levels of adaptation:

- a) Full Participation: No modifications are necessary to engage in the activity, (e.g., ambulatory student may engage in swimming with minimal supervision).
  
- b) Adapted Participation: The student participates in the class activity with some adaptations to the following:
  - Equipment: Modify the game or activity in some way, (e.g., everyone uses scooter boards or is blind folded; larger/lighter equipment, nerf balls; partially deflated balls or balloons to slow down the speed; netted ball for throwing; bowling ramp; bright coloured pinnies for visually impaired; etc.)
  
  - Rules: (e.g., additional strikes, throws, etc. allowed; change the scoring system such as first base = home run; classmate runs for student; increase or decrease the number of players to offset the team with the disabled student; etc. )
  
  - Distances: (e.g., run/wheel half the distance; serve a volleyball closer to the net; modify boundary lines with bright orange pylons for increased visibility; lower nets; move closer to target; etc.)
  
  - Complexity: Simplify the objective in the game/activity, (e.g., in basketball game, the student's job is to move with or follow one student with a matching pinnie; sitting unsupported for 2 minutes straddled on the horse for upper body work; encourage stretch, full range of movement and reinforcement of physio objectives in activity; focus on a specific skill such as communication or switch use; etc.)
  
- c) Parallel Participation: The student is involved in the class activity but focuses on his/him/her own skills, (e.g., communicates with vocalizations or gestures "more" if student wants a classmate to continue to jump beside him/him/her on the trampoline; works on physio stretches during swim time; etc.) Incorporate buddies or peers wherever possible.

d) Supportive Participation: The student does not participate directly in the game or activity, but is involved in providing a service of some sort to the class, (e.g., cheers recorded on a "Big Mack"; switch access a light brite with the score on it; switch access the starting gun sound for a race, etc.)

\*(The above strategies were adapted from the "Moving To Inclusion" series from the Ministry Of Health. For more information, write to CIRA/CAHPER, 1600 James Naismith Drive, Gloucester, Ontario K1B 5N4. Telephone: 613-748-5639)

(non-ambulatory; grade 1)

- Ball game
- activate a switch to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song .
  - keep the score on a light bright box, switch activated.
  - play catch with a nerf ball with buddies.
  - use velcro pads strapped onto the student's knees as classmates throw lightweight balls to be caught on the velcro pads.
  - whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and the student could be in the game with the T.A. assisting from behind.
  - move around the floor to bases with a classmate pushing the wheelchair.
  - classmates could run for the student, the student could choose the classmate
- Skipping
- Classmates could pre-record some of their favourite skipping chants and songs. The student could hit the switch to activate the song for friends when skipping or playing ball.
  - The student could count how many jumps each person gets before they are out, using a switch and beeper.

(non-ambulatory; elementary gr. 3)

- Ball game
- The student could activate a switch to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song
  - The student could work in a corner or on the stage with a buddy on some of his/her physio objectives.
  - The student could play catch with a nerf ball with rotating buddies so that no one person misses out on the whole game.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and The student could be in the game with the T.A. behind him/her to assist.
- Gymnastics
- The student should continue to get out of his/her wheelchair whenever possible.
  - The student could work sitting on a roll.
  - The student could sit on the horse in a straddle position with assistant behind him/her while working on his/her back support.
  - The student could lay across a large ball and rotate to experience motion and balance.
  - The physio therapist could observe a class or some of the equipment and look for ideas of the student to participate and work on some of his/her own physical goals.

(semi-ambulatory; elementary gr. 3)

- Volley ball
- The student could activate a tape recorder to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song.
  - The student could play with a nerf ball with rotating buddies so that no one person misses out on the whole game. Encourage the student to hit back with his/her hands overhead rather than catching the ball.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball for a warm up and the student could be in the game with an assistant or classmate behind him/her to assist.
- Gymnastics
- The student could work at rolling on the mat.
  - The student could lay on a scooter board and use some arm motion to pull or push him/herself; The student could also sit on the scooter and move him/herself with his/her hands. The student could have a contest with a classmate.
  - The student sit or lay on the trampoline while a classmate gently bounced beside him/her. Look for opportunities for choice making: (e.g., Stop periodically and ask him/her if she wants "more". The student could sign/communicate "more".) The student could also stand on the trampoline with assistance while others walk and bounce beside the student. The student might also walk on the trampoline with assistance.
  - The student could sit on a large ball that keeps his/her hips and knees at 90 degrees and attempt not to fall off; she could also work on developing balance on a rocker board while sitting or standing with someone else.
  - The student should practice sitting on a roll or a small gym bench or box while reaching for objects on the floor on either side or the student. After

practice, place the objects in locations which challenge him/her to reach further behind as well as stretching out and crossing over with arms.

- The physio therapist could observe a class or some of the equipment and look for ideas for the student to participate and work on some of his/her own physical goals.

#### Basketball

- The student can practice throwing a ball with a classmate; Buddies can be rotated so no one person will miss too much of his/her gym period.
- The student could work at throwing a nerf ball into a classroom garbage can in place of a hoop. The student should be encouraged to used signs such as in and out as she is retrieving the ball. Try placing the garbage can on a bench and encourage the student to shoot straight forward or slightly up, not always down.
- During a game, the student could work on moving in various directions in him/her chair. If she is wearing a colored pinnie, she could be matched with a buddy and him/her task would be to move with the buddy.
- Another option when the class is playing a basketball game: T.A. could sit off to the side, seated in the center between the two courts with directional cards with arrows. The student's task would be to move in the direction of the arrow as T.A. holds the card or points. A buddy could assist him/her to look at the cards and move in the appropriate direction. This could be reinforced when she walks down the hall.
- Option for basketball: the student gets to move anywhere in the gym when the game is on, but when the whistle blows, she must freeze or stop. The student could resume moving when the signal is given to commence the game. For variation, change his/her method of locomotion. (e.g., scooter board, walker, wheelchair, walking hand in hand, etc.)

#### Baseball

- The student could practice catching and throwing a nerf ball with a partner. With practice and hand over hand, she could learn to swing a large flat edged plastic bat.
- The student could work on tossing and picking up the ball. The student needs to work on bending over and reaching for the ball with two hands. A lightweight beach ball is good to work with.
- The student could practice hitting the T-ball with a classmate or two.

#### Games

- The student would benefit from learning to play floor hockey with different sized balls and using both hands to hold onto the stick.
- The student could practice bowling with classmates using lightweight plastic floor pins. The student should participate in rolling the ball with assistance.
- Freeze tag would be good for the student to reinforce listening skills.
- Kim can switch teams during the activity if it is repeated more than once.
- Stronger P.E. students can be steered onto the student's team to give balance in skills.
- Students on other teams could start from lying down positions instead of standing.
- One or two more students could be added to the other teams to provide balance.
- Wheel the student beside another student instead of after.

(nonambulatory; gr. 4)

- Ball game
- The student could activate a switch to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song .
  - The student could keep the score on a light bright box, switch activated.
  - The student could play catch with a nerf ball with buddies.
  - The student could continue to use the velcro pads strapped onto the student's knees as classmates throw lightweight balls to him/her to be caught on the velcro pads.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and the student could be in the game with the T.A. behind him/her to assist.
  - The student could move around the floor to bases with a classmate pushing his/her wheelchair.
  - Outside ball games could continue to use classmates which could run for the student. The student could choose the classmate she wanted to run for him/her.
- Volley ball
- The student could activate a switch to play a tape with cheers.
  - The student could play catch with a nerf ball with rotating buddies so that no one person misses out on the whole game.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and The student could be in the game in him/her standing frame with the T.A. behind him/her to assist.
- Floor Hockey
- The student could have a hockey stick attached to the side of the student's wheelchair. A classmate could move him/her around.
  - The student could have a large board dropped down below the student's feet on the wheelchair or at the base of the standing frame. The student could play goalie and stand guard at the net.
  - Adaptation: There could be two goalies at each net and the student could be one of them.
  - For variety, players have to play with a stick and a bean bag on scooter boards. The student could try holding onto the stick while being pulled around on the scooter.
- Skipping
- Classmates could pre-record some of their favourite skipping chants and songs. The student could hit the switch to activate the song for friends when skipping or playing ball.
  - The student could count how many jumps each person gets before they are out, using him/her switch and beeper.
- Four Square Ball
- The student could play with a partner in the square with a nerf ball and some assistance.
- T-Ball
- Tie a string onto the ball which will hang down. The student could grab the string and pull the ball to move it around.

(ambulatory; gr. 4)

- Volley ball
- The student could activate a tape recorder to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song. A cheer could be recorded on him/her intro talker. The student could also use his/her augmentative communication device to announce the scores periodically.
  - The student could play catch with a nerf ball with rotating buddies so that no one person misses out on the whole game.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and the student could be in the game with an assistant or classmate behind him/her to assist.
- Gymnastics
- The student could work at rolling on the mat.
  - The student could lay on a scooter board and may use some arm motion to pull him/herself; the student could also sit on the scooter and move him/herself with his/her legs. The student could have a contest with a classmate.
  - The student could jump on the trampoline with a buddy. Look for opportunities for choice making: (e.g., Stop periodically and ask him/her if she wants "more".)
  - The student could lay across a large ball and rotate to experience motion and balance; the student could also work on developing his/her balance on a rocker board. (\* see Occupational therapist for explanation)
  - The student may benefit from walking through the rungs of a ladder which is laid down on the floor. The student could make a choice of whom the student would like to accompany him/her in the task.
  - The student should practice sitting on a roll or a small gym bench or box while reaching for objects on the floor on either side or him/her. After practice, place the objects in locations which challenge the student to reach further behind as well as stretching out and crossing over with arms.
  - The physio therapist could observe a class or some of the equipment and look for ideas for the student to participate and work on some of his/her own physical goals (e.g., stretching exercises, etc.)
- Swimming
- Different buddies from class could be selected each week to go with the student. The student can be involved in activities which are repeatedly stopped. The student should be asked if she wants "more" of the activity to reinforce communication. Look for opportunities for choice making in activities.
- Skating
- Double bladed skates are available for preschoolers to offer support and stability.
  - "Sit skating" is also an option if the student is not ready for skates at this point. The student sits in a sled like shell and classmates can pull him/her around. These are available at some regional centers. (\*Check with Child Development Center or C.P. Sports for availability of equipment.)
- Basketball
- The student can practice bouncing a ball with a classmate; The student can also work at bouncing off a gym wall; Buddies can be rotated so no one person will miss too much of his/him/her gym period.
  - The student could work at throwing a ball into a classroom garbage can in place of a hoop. The student should be encouraged to use signs such as "in"

and “out” as he/she is retrieving the ball.

- During a game, the student could work on running in various directions. If the student is wearing a colored pinnie, he/she could be matched with a buddy and his/her task would be to run with the buddy.
- Another option when the class is playing a basketball game: the T.A. could sit off to the side, seated in the center between the two courts with directional cards with arrows. The student's task would be to move in the direction of the arrow as the T.A. holds the card. A buddy could assist the student to look at the cards and move in the appropriate direction.
- Option for basketball: The student gets to run anywhere in the gym when the game is on, but when the whistle blows, the student must freeze or stop. The student could resume running when the signal is given to commence the game. This reinforces following directions and good listening skills.

#### Baseball

- The student could practice catching and throwing a nerf ball with a partner. With practice and hand over hand, the student could learn to swing a large flat edged plastic bat.
- The student needs to keep involved if possible. The student could fetch the bat and give it to the next person up to bat. The student could also run and catch the ball as an assistant to the back catcher.
- The student could work on tossing and picking up the ball. The student needs to work on bending over and reaching for the ball with two hands. A lightweight beach ball is good to work with.
- The student could practice hitting the T-ball with a classmate or two.

#### Games

- The student would benefit from learning to play floor hockey with different sized balls and using both hands to hold onto the stick.
- The student could practice bowling with classmates using lightweight plastic floor pins. The student should participate in rolling the ball as well as setting up the pins as the bending and placement of pins is good practice for him/her.
- Freeze tag would be good for the student to reinforce listening skills. The student should actually sit on the floor when tagged. A variation of this is to play music and freeze when the music stops.

(non-ambulatory; middle school gr.6/7)

- Volley ball
- The student could activate a switch to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song
  - The student could work in a corner or on the stage with a buddy on some of his physio objectives.
  - The student could play catch with a nerf ball with rotating buddies so that no one person misses out on the whole game.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and the student could be in the game with the T.A. behind the student to assist.
- Gymnastics
- The student should be encouraged to get out of his wheelchair as much as possible.
  - The student could work at rolling on the mat.
  - The student could lay on a scooter board and use some hand motion as he is slowly pulled.
  - The student could lay on the trampoline, while a classmate gently jumps to one side.
  - The student could practice sitting on the horse in a straddle position with Doug behind him while working on his back support.
  - The student could lay across a large ball and rotate to experience motion and balance.
  - The physio therapist could observe a class or some of the equipment and look for ideas of the student to participate and work on some of his own physical goals.
- Swimming
- If there are some activities which may be difficult to include The student, he may visit the local pool for this period with a buddy to go swimming. Different buddies could be selected each week, or each P.E. block.
  - The physio therapist could give the T.A. some suggestions for relaxing activities in the pool.

(non-ambulatory; high school gr.9)

- Volley ball
- The student could activate a switch to play a tape with cheers or a cheer song
  - The student could play catch with a nerf ball with rotating buddies so that no one person misses out on the whole game.
  - The whole class could play a game with a balloon or nerf ball and the student could be in the game with the T.A. behind the student to assist.
  - The student could switch activate a lite brite board with the score on it during intervals. A buddy would change the scores when needed. Once again, the student is providing a service to peers.
  - Instructions or directions for movements activities or games could be pre-recorded on a switch operated tape recorder.
- Weight room
- When on the leg lift machine, the student should straddle the bench with support with assistant behind him. The student needs to work at sitting independently.
  - See P.T. for exercises when developing strategies for the two arm pull bar,

bar bells and mats.

- See P.T. for exercises when developing activities for working on upper arm motion and range of legs.
- The student can practice "tailor sitting" when on the mat to give him an alternate sitting position and balance.
- The student can practice alternate floor sitting positions such as left and right side sitting, tailor sitting and perhaps long sitting.

#### Swimming

- The student needs to work on relaxation and movement in the water. Try having the student straddle the assistant. He will gradually relax back into the water.
- When playing motor boat, make sure that the student has had the opportunity to relax.
- Explore using different life jackets or neck rests.
- Aim to have the student relax, then when he is relaxed encourage him to move. Have only one person assist him.
- Have him face you and wrap his legs around your waist. To begin with he is just as tight as ever but part of his body is symmetrical and stable. Use your upper arms to tap his legs and gently you will feel them relax down. At the same time hold his shoulders, tap steadily and firmly (especially the left) and gradually he will begin to lie back in the water and relax. As the student lies further back begin to move with "Motor boat" type games, all the while swishing him side to side and bumping his bottom with your knees. Encourage him to stretch out further. As you feel him loosening up you can guide his arms to his sides and he can be guided into sitting up a little.
- Encourage the student to hold onto both your hands for support in the water, bobbing up and down, etc.
- Experiment with life jackets. The full body ones do give full support but so much so there can be no incentive to try to move.
- The neck support definitely supports the head freeing your hands to help him move and allow you to move to his side or feet. It gives the support where it is most needed at the head.