

Fun With Friends Conversation and Resources

Background

Accessible recreation and adaptive sports provide children with disabilities the opportunity to participate in physical activities that are modified to meet their individual needs. These programs use specialized equipment, trained staff, and inclusive environments to ensure that every child—regardless of ability—can engage in play, movement, and competition. Activities might include wheelchair basketball, adaptive swimming, or inclusive playgrounds, all designed to promote physical health and enjoyment in a safe and supportive setting.

Beyond physical benefits, accessible recreation and adaptive sports foster social connections, self-confidence, and emotional well-being. Inclusive Recreation Activities go well beyond sports. They involve adapted theater and dance, arts and crafts, playground games, nature exploration, and more!

Participation encourages children to develop teamwork skills, set personal goals, and experience a sense of achievement. By focusing on ability rather than limitation, these activities empower children with disabilities to express themselves, build resilience, and feel a sense of belonging in their community.

To learn more about accessible recreation and adaptive sports, visit these resources:

[Accessible Recreation-Inclusive Recreation Resource Center](#)

[The Adaptive Sports Foundation](#)

[About Recreation Accessibility](#) (The Northeast ADA Center)

Conversation Guide

When speaking to children about adaptive sports and inclusive recreation, it is important to convey the key concepts to them in language or terminology that is meaningful to them. Here is a sample suggestion of how this might be done.

What Are Adaptive Sports and Inclusive Recreation?

Adaptive sports are versions of sports that are designed so that people with disabilities can play and compete just like anyone else. Sometimes the rules are changed a little, or the equipment is different, but the goal is always the same — to have fun, stay active, and be part of a team! Inclusive recreation means making sure that everyone, no matter their ability, can join in on games, activities, and adventures.

How Are Sports Adapted?

In adaptive sports, creativity is key! For example, in wheelchair basketball, players use wheelchairs built for speed and quick turns. In Goalball, athletes who are blind wear eye shades (because some players may have a small amount of vision) and listen for a ball with bells inside. There are also ways to change everyday activities, like playing tag or soccer, so that everyone can participate together. These adaptations help people focus on what they can do, not what they can't!

Why Are Adaptive Sports and Inclusive Play Important?

Playing together teaches us that everyone brings something special to the team. Adaptive sports show that strength, teamwork, and determination matter more than anything else. Inclusive play helps children make new friends, learn new skills, and understand that everyone deserves a chance to shine. When we create spaces where everyone can join, we build stronger, kinder communities.