

ADAPTING INSTRUCTION IN HORSE SHOES: INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION



Horseshoes is a popular recreational activity that many people enjoy to play. This is a good reason to teach it to all students, including those with disabilities. After learning the rules, instruction of the throw, and then practicing the skills needed to play, students can take part in this physical activity with friends and family.

The activity can be adapted for individuals with various skill levels. With instructional emphasis on personal skill development and a classroom environment that encourages everybody to participate to the best of their ability, each student can benefit and inclusion will be effective.

It is in physical education at the junior high/middle school level that the foundation of sport skills are established and then applied during intramural and community recreation programs. Whether students with disabilities go on to join a disability sports program in the community or recreate with family and friends, they need the same instructional opportunities as their classmates without disabilities.

Assessment

Evaluate each student's present level of horseshoe throwing skill for probability of success. Assess previous experience, fitness level, motor functioning, attitude toward his/her disability, and willingness to participate.

Safety Considerations

1. Present activities according to the student's physical characteristics and capabilities, as well as his/her mental age.
2. Deafness and hearing impairment: In cases where hearing loss is present, it is advisable to avoid participation when there is excessive change in temperature, excessive wind, or dampness. If exposure is unavoidable, the child should wear earplugs.
3. Orthopedic impairment: Be sure the horseshoes area is free from foreign objects or obstacles. Instruct students with physical limitations on the proper methods of falling.
4. Asthma: Activity should occur in areas that are minimal in dust and allergic substances. Instead of a sand pit, students can throw in the grass.
5. Visual impairment: Use bright colored equipment when a student is partially sighted. Be sure to establish a buddy system and audio signals for a horseshoe coming toward the individual.

Instructional Adaptations

The following ideas are designed to facilitate the inclusion of students with disabilities into general physical education during instruction of horseshoes. Successful participation for some students requires equipment which has been adapted to their particular needs. Requests for purchase or construction of equipment can be facilitated through the Individual Education Program (IEP). If special equipment is necessary to help a student progress in physical education, then it should be identified at the Case Conference and included on the IEP form.

General adaptations can include:

1. Use kinesthetic teaching.
2. Allow rule modifications and equipment change as needed.
3. Use visual aids or hand signals.

Specific adaptations for associated disabling conditions are listed below. The adaptations are provided in categories by disability in order to facilitate easy access to the information. However, each student with a disability is unique and capable and should not be limited within a category.

Cognitive and Sensory Disabilities

Deaf/Hearing Impairment

1. Establish basic hand communications.
2. Have a general outline of what will be covered in class written out in advance.
3. Employing the buddy system.
4. Provide physical demonstrations of the skills.
5. Face the student so it is easier for him/her to read your lips.
6. Minimize background noise.

Mental Retardation

1. Present instruction slowly and clearly
2. Use demonstration and emphasize imitation.
3. Give brief directions and repeat them often.
4. Enhance successful experiences (larger stakes, shorter distance to throw, larger and lighter horseshoes).

Visual Impairment

1. Make the stakes a bright color so they don't blend in to the surrounding area.
2. Use a block to mark off throwing area.
3. Make sure there are no obstacles in the throwing path.
4. Set up a buddy system to help guide the student in the right throwing direction.

Affective Disabilities

Autism

1. Use demonstrations or pictures for the student to see; post around so they serve as reminders.
2. Do not use too many verbal cues because the student may have difficulty understanding.

Emotional Disturbance

1. Encouragement is always essential. Provide many opportunities for success.
2. Individual and partner activity is best before progressing to group work.
3. Keep near you to support his/her learning.

Psychomotor Disabilities

Orthopedic Impairment

One Arm Involvement

1. Use lighter horseshoes if there is trouble throwing
2. Use smaller horseshoe for easier gripping
3. Use wrist support for students with limited hand strength and closer distance if needed.

Two Arm Involvement

1. Have student to put horseshoe on foot and experiment with tossing it.

One Leg Involvement

1. Allow student to use a crutch or assistive device to balance self.
2. Allow student to work with a partner for balancing.
3. Student could throw from a seated position in a chair.

Other Health Impairment

Asthma

1. Avoid or reduce exposure to coldness.
2. The activity area should be relocated from the sand pit to a less dusty environment, such as grass.
3. Avoid outdoor activity areas that have recently had the grass cut.

Cardiovascular Condition

1. Do not rush students to do drills or activities.
2. Have a buddy with the student to retrieve the horseshoes.

Diabetes

1. Have student throw from a sitting position if needed.
2. Students may need to check their blood sugar level before activity.
3. Always have some type of food around.
4. Have water available for students to drink and encourage them to drink the water.

Barriers to participation in horseshoes and other sports by individuals with disabilities are decreasing. More than ever, physical education teachers must endeavor to read professional journals, attend conferences and workshops, and join professional organizations to avail themselves of information on how to teach specific sports to their students of varying skill levels. Being an informed professional is half the battle in allowing students with disabilities to gain access to lifetime activities like horseshoes.

Resources

Dunn, J. M., & Leitschuh, C. A. (2006). *Special physical education* (8th ed.). Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt.

Rudy, L. (2007). How to coach a child with autism. *Autism Blog*. Retrieved May 4, 2008 from <http://autism.about.com/b/2007/07/09/your-advice-requested-how-to-coach-a-child-with-autism.htm>

Schmottlach, N., & McManama, J. L. (2006). *The physical education activities handbook* (11th ed.) San Francisco, CA: Benjamin Cummings.

This information was developed by Ricky McKee,
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The adaptations and teaching strategies contained in this document are only suggestions. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent must be obtained.