

# Including all pupils in physical education

All children should be engaged in active quality physical education (PE) lessons focusing on learning with the head (knowledge), heart (self-esteem, social skills), and hands (physical skills) (Vasily 2015) and related to the objectives of the *Primary School Curriculum Physical Education*.

The Irish Primary Physical Education Association (IPPEA), will present a series of articles in support of all children's learning in PE, with a focus on children with additional needs (AN). Additional needs refer to those children with particular learning needs arising from a range of differences including cognitive, motor and physical, sensory, communicative and/or behavioural. The term AN may be best understood as Special Educational Needs (SEN). Each article will focus on a different additional need in PE. A constant feature of the articles will be practical teaching actions and links to videos and other resources. In general, there is no right or wrong with inclusion. What's important is what is best for the child for them to participate to their fullest in any PE lesson.

## Preparing for Inclusive PE lessons

The following checklist may be useful in planning your PE programme for the year.

- ☛ Is your PE programme quality, does your school get the 'green light'? The following link is an easy guide: <http://bit.ly/IPPEAQualityPE>.
- ☛ Have you designed a plan for the year including a broad range of content drawn from the different strands of the PE curriculum? All children's development flourishes through a broad range of PE experiences.
- ☛ Who is teaching the PE lesson? The

class teacher is the constant in the child's school day. You know how each child learns. If external providers (e.g. coaches) are supporting the PE programme, remember that 'the coach should support the role of the teacher in the implementation of a programme which will benefit the individual child and the class' (*Physical Education Teacher Guidelines*, p.27, 1999). Useful guidelines for working together with external providers can be found at <http://bit.ly/IPPEAExternalProvider>.

- ☛ Do you use the Inclusion Continuum as a tool in determining how a lesson might be designed? Options include:
  - Open – all children do the same activity with no adaptations
  - Modified – all children do the same activity but your Teaching style, Rules, Equipment or Environment (area) (see TREE box) are adapted to promote the inclusion of all regardless of their abilities
  - Parallel – all children aim to achieve the lesson objective, but they do so at their own pace and level by participating in groups based on their abilities
  - Reverse integration – children without an additional need are included in adapted activities together with children with additional needs, e.g. badminton using a balloon, goalball
  - Separate – a child practices a skill individually to progress to the point where full participation with the class group is possible. Sometimes the child may prefer to practise an activity with the support of an SNA or buddy.

See The Inclusion Club website episode 12: *Introduction to the TREE Framework*

<http://bit.ly/TREEFramework>.

The TREE model may help frame your planning and selection of PE experiences with an emphasis on inclusion particularly when you are teaching children with additional needs. The model prompts consideration of:

- **Teaching Style:** Adapting communication modes
- **Rules:** Simplifying the rules
- **Equipment:** Modifying the equipment used
- **Environment:** Adjusting where the activities take place and how they are structured

Source: Australian Sports Commission. Disability Education Programme

## Teaching Action

Beginning today, take one significant step. If you have a child with additional needs talk to the child/parent/SNA/physiotherapist/occupational therapist. Gather as much information as possible about the capabilities of the child related to PE. What has the child been 'doing'? What more might the child be able to do? What support might be needed?

The next article will apply the TREE model to specific PE activities with a focus on intellectual capabilities.

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