

Adapted Physical Education (APE)
(Adapted from Butte County SELPA Procedural Manual)

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Introduction

The purpose of the Adapted Physical Education (APE) section is to provide information on the eligibility criteria for APE, interventions prior to referring students to be tested for eligibility, assessment of needs, and available reference resources.

Eligibility Criteria for Adapted Physical Education (APE)

Federal Law

Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) includes special education physical education instruction as follows:

§ 300.39 Special Education.

(a) General.

(1) Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including -

(i) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and

(ii) Instruction in physical education.

(2) Special education includes each of the following, if the services otherwise meet the requirements of paragraph (a)(1) of this section -

(i) Speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under State standards; (ii)

Travel training; and

(iii) Vocational education.

(b) Individual special education terms defined. The terms in this definition are defined as follows:

(1) At no cost means that all specially-designed instruction is provided without charge, but does not preclude incidental fees that are normally charged to nondisabled students or their parents as a part of the regular education program.

(2) Physical education means -

(i) The development of -

(A) Physical and motor fitness;

(B) Fundamental motor skills and patterns; and

(C) Skills in aquatics, dance, and individual and group games and sports (including intramural and lifetime sports); and

(ii) Includes special physical education, adapted physical education, movement education, and motor development.

Authority for Title 34 § 300.39 Special Education outlined above is provided Title 20 United States Code (U.S.C.) § 1401 and reads,

20 U.S.C. 1401 (29) Special Education. The term 'special education' means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including -

- (A) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and
- (B) instruction in physical education.

Physical Education Defined

Title 34 CFR 300.108 Physical Education. The State must ensure that public agencies in the State comply with the following:

(a) General. Physical education services, specially designed if necessary, must be made available to every child with a disability receiving FAPE, unless the public agency enrolls children without disabilities and does not provide physical education to children without disabilities in the same grades.

(b) Regular physical education. Each child with a disability must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to nondisabled children unless -

- (1) The child is enrolled full time in a separate facility; or
- (2) The child needs specially designed physical education, as prescribed in the child's IEP.

(c) Special physical education. If specially designed physical education is prescribed in a child's IEP, the public agency responsible for the education of that child must provide the services directly or make arrangements for those services to be provided through other public or private programs.

(d) Education in separate facilities. The public agency responsible for the education of a child with a disability who is enrolled in a separate facility must ensure that the child receives appropriate physical education services in compliance with this section.

(Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(5)(A))

California Code of Regulations (CCR) reads,

§ 3051.5. Adapted Physical Education for Individuals with Exceptional Needs.

(a) Adapted physical education is for individuals with exceptional needs who require developmental or corrective instruction and who are precluded from participation in the activities of the general physical education program, modified general physical education program, or in a specially designed physical education program in a special

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class. Consultative services may be provided to pupils, parents, teachers, or other school personnel for the purpose of identifying supplementary aids and services or modifications necessary for successful participation in the regular “D” Physical education program or specially designed physical education programs.

(b) Adapted physical education shall be provided only by personnel who possess a credential issued by the California CTC that authorizes service in adapted physical education.

Note: Authority cited: Sections 56100 and 56366.1, Education Code. Reference: Section 56363, Education Code; and 34 C.F.R. Sections 300.34 and 300.156(b)(1).

Assessment of Needs (Reference: “Adapted Physical Education Guidelines,” Fresno Unified School District)

The role and responsibilities of the adapted physical education specialist include assessing and identifying an individual’s needs; collaborating or consulting with other service providers; and providing direct Adapted Physical Education service. Title 5 CCR §§ 3051.5 (a)-(b) and CA Education Code §§ 56320 (f)-(g).

An APE specialist is part of the multidisciplinary assessment team whose responsibilities include assessing and identifying a child’s needs in the area of movement skills. To accomplish this, the APE specialist must choose appropriate assessment methods and instruments; administer the assessment; interpret the data; describe the present level of performance; and recommend the appropriate physical education service based upon the student’s identified needs. The APE specialist provides consultation to and collaborates with teachers, assistants/aides, parents, administrators, and other professionals. Examples of other professionals include, but are not limited to, physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech and language pathologists, special education teachers, orientation and mobility specialists, teachers of the visually impaired, hearing impairment specialists, assistive technology specialists, psychologists, and school nurses. Adapted Physical Education specialists provide direct adapted physical education service to students, identified through the individualized education program (IEP) team process, who need specialized instruction.

Through appropriate assessment and interpretation of data, the needs of the student, goals and objectives are identified. Children with disabilities often receive services from several teachers and specialists. Through consultation and collaboration among these professionals, the quality of instruction and intervention tends to be enhanced as information and strategies are shared.

Screening

The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) defines many parameters of the referral, assessment, and review processes. Although screening pertains to all children, no state or federal statutes or regulations define the term “screening,” and many interpretations exist regarding its definition. Often, the purposes of screening within general education are to identify other adaptations, accommodations, or modifications, or to determine whether formal assessment is needed for the purpose of identifying a child's needs and potential special education services. Screening should not be confused with assessment, as placement decisions in special education cannot be based upon information obtained from screening.

While screening policies and procedures are left to local control and must be stated in the local plan, IDEA specifies that before a child is assessed, an assessment plan must be developed and signed, parental permission must be obtained. Care must be exercised not to single the child out when screening. If you single the child out this would then be considered an assessment and would require a signed consent form.

The screening process could include:

- Review of school records;
- Consultation with the classroom teacher or other school staff;
- Pre-Referral Intervention/Checklist;
- Student Study Team action plan or 504 accommodation plan;
- Observation of an entire class; and,
- Physical Fitness Test Results.

It is suggested that the APE specialist screen children in a group setting. Information obtained from screening can be used to determine the need for a referral to APE or to identify other adaptations, accommodations, or modifications. The student's ability to participate in the general physical education curriculum and to achieve student performance standards should always be considered as part of any referral for adapted physical education assessment. In many cases, the general physical educator is qualified and responsible for conducting screening procedures. It is especially helpful when the screening procedures are based on the curriculum. Screening is not part of a formalized assessment plan.

Adapted Physical Education Services (Reference: “Adapted Physical Education Guidelines,” Fresno Unified School District)

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APE, like all special education, is offered in the least restrictive environment. Students with disabilities must be included to the maximum extent possible in the general physical education program. For students with disabilities who are receiving APE, and students who are participating in the general PE program with accommodations/modifications, a continuum of placement options may include one or more of the following:

- General physical education setting;
- General PE setting with accommodations/modifications;
- General PE setting with assistance from staff and/or APE specialist;
- A separate PE class setting with peers and additional staff as needed; or,
- Separate public school

The inclusion of students with disabilities into the general PE curriculum should not compromise the learning of other students in the class setting. However, supplementary aids and supports must be tried before placing a student in a more restrictive setting.

A collaborative approach is recommended for adapted physical specialist, which maximizes the quality of education for students with a disability. For example, when a student receives two or more services, (e.g. APE and Physical Therapy) often, the child's disability is such that it is interfering with a given movement performance. Assistive devices and specific exercises identified by a therapist often are needed to help the child. In these cases, the APE specialist, as well as the special education teacher, should be aware of how to use the specialized equipment and how to perform the exercises. On the other hand, children may perform skills with their peers during physical education that they are not motivated to perform in therapy sessions. By communicating with the therapist, the APE specialist can keep the other professionals informed about skill transfer to the educational settings that involve group participation.

Resources

[Guidelines for Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy in California Public Schools](#), California Department of Education, Second Edition 2012

[Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools](#) – Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve, Adopted by the California State Board of Education January 2005 and Reposted by California Department of education September 17, 2010

[Adapted Physical Education Guidelines in California Schools](#), California Department of Education, Revised December 2012. The link is provided below.

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