

Philosophy of Inclusion

Benefits of Inclusion

Children with Disabilities

Participating in inclusive programming:

- Builds critical skills including gross motor, adaptive, communication, and social skills
- Promotes self-esteem and a positive self-image
- Provides opportunities to challenge oneself, increase resilience and develop perseverance
- Creates a greater sense of belonging - both within the program and in the broader community
- Improves opportunities to develop authentic, meaningful relationships with peers based on common interests
- Results in more positive social interactions with peers outside of the program

Children without Disabilities

Participating in inclusive programming:

- Provides opportunities to learn from and interact with people they may perceive as different
- Teaches children to respect their peers, demonstrate acceptance and have a better understanding of diversity
- Creates opportunities to practice empathy, compassion, patience and flexibility
- Highlights that disability is a natural part of life
- Supports children to prioritize their role as a teammate while participating to the best of their own ability
- Broadens peer networks and reduces instances of bullying

Coaches and Leaders

Leading an inclusive program:

- Helps develop the knowledge needed to make accommodations and be responsive to the needs of diverse children in the program
- Provides enhanced opportunities to practice flexibility, creativity and leadership skills
- Emphasizes the role adult mentors can take in helping children build personal and social skills

Families and Caregivers

Successful experiences in inclusive programs:

- Reduces stress and feelings of isolation
- Helps to raise expectations of what is possible for children with disabilities
- Increases willingness to participate in other community events, programs and activities

Broader Community

A commitment to inclusive programming:

- Focuses attention on personal achievements and abilities rather than disabilities
- Creates opportunities that are truly reflective of the entire community, meeting the dynamic and diverse needs of all individuals
- Reinforces the message that recreation improves physical and personal development