



Adapting Physical Education Activities For Children With Special Needs

Inclusive practice

Before we give you some practical solutions and tips to get children with SEND more involved in their PE lessons, it might be helpful to be reminded of or introduced to **The Activity Inclusion Model (AIM)**.

The Activity Inclusion Model (AIM) is a vehicle which enables teachers to facilitate inclusion. It is a participant-centred model which helps you to think about how to organise lessons to cater for all ability groups, not just those with disabilities.

Understanding how to do things differently is key to success. Changing the way we think about teaching lessons is fundamental to outstanding teaching; we don't have to always do things in the same way.

The Activity Inclusion Model is one of a number of different inclusion models you may have heard of. The Inclusion Spectrum and Sports Inclusion Models are similar models.

The AIM works by categorising activities into four different groups.

- **Open activities** are simple, naturally inclusive activities where everyone is included without adaptation or modification, e.g. warm up and cool down activities.
- **Modified activities** are where everyone can do the same activity but adaptations are made to the space, task, equipment and grouping of participants to support the inclusion of some pupils. Modifications can be applied to support young people who are still acquiring skills or those who need to be challenged further.
- **Parallel activities** are when participants are grouped according to ability in order to provide different entry points into the same activity. Each young person takes part at a level appropriate to their ability.
- **Specific activities**. In certain situations it may be impossible for young people with a disability to play alongside their non-disabled peers. This can include disability sports where disabled learners play their sport individually or with their disabled peers. It can also be used as a short-term means of developing skills and confidence with a view to inclusion.

You might also have heard of the **S.T.E.P** model?



S.T.E.P is a simple tool which, when used with the Activity Inclusion Model, can guide you through what could be changed to make an activity more inclusive.

This enables you to make an activity harder or easier to ensure there is appropriate challenge for all learners to achieve. Ask yourself:

- **Space** - Where the activity is happening? How can you adapt it?
- **Task** - What activity is happening? Can the way the activity is performed be adapted to support or challenge different pupils?
- **Equipment** - What is being used for the activity? There are endless variations in equipment enabling young people to find the best way to participate in PE.
- **People** - Who is involved in the activity? For example, you could have different numbers of individuals on teams to balance a game.

Putting Theory Into Practice

Here are some practical suggestions to put the STEP theory into practice.

SPACE

- Make the area bigger or smaller.
- Have different-sized playing areas either side of a net.
- Introduce specific zones.
- Play on a different surface.
- Change the height at which the activity is completed, e.g. on the floor.
- Adjust the positioning of targets.
- Allow participants to start from different places.

TASK

- Simplify the activity by leaving some of the rules out.
- Change rules to foster inclusion, e.g. provide more time.
- Number of touches of the ball.
- Different targets scoring different points.

EQUIPMENT

- Lighter balls travel slower in the air and give more time. Balloons are even better!
- Larger balls are easier to see or catch.
- Softer or slightly deflated balls travel slower along the ground.
- Different coloured balls are good for children with visual impairment. It might be that they prefer one particular colour.
- Larger bats are easier to hit with.
- Lighter bats are easier to manipulate.



- Rackets can be attached to hands, wrists or arms.
- Use equipment that makes a sound for visually impaired students, e.g. bell / rice balls.

PEOPLE

- Pupils can work independently, in groups, in pairs, in teams.
- Group pupils with different/same roles, different/same ability, different/same size.
- Pupils take part in their own space, a big/small/restricted space depending on their needs.



THE **STEP** FRAMEWORK

All PE lessons will include children with a wide range of abilities. STEP is an easy way to remember how to adapt PE lessons and sports sessions to fit the changing needs of the children. You might need to adapt a lesson to fit less or more able pupils within it or to make a whole group activity easier or harder as they progress.

SPACE

- Level (height)
- Playing area (bigger or smaller)
- Distance traveled
- Targets or goals further away or nearer

More space gives more reaction time, allowing children to make a decision and performing a skill. Less space demands a higher skill level to react quicker with less time.

TASK

- Easier - Simplify the rules
- Harder - Introduce more rules
- Rotate roles
- Time - Allow more or less time
- Change rules to aid inclusion
- Different ways to take part e.g. seated, standing, one hand, two hands
- Differentiating tasks in the group

EQUIPMENT

- Vary the size, shape, colour, texture, weight
- Make it bigger or smaller e.g. instead of a rounders bat use a tennis bat
- Softer or slower versions to make it easier e.g. tennis and cricket balls
- Make sure you use the correct size for the childrens age

Lighter and bigger balls will be easier to see and catch and will increase confidence.

PEOPLE

- Less defender makes it easier for attackers
- Larger numbers in a group means less time for each child to take part
- Smaller groups allow for more time for each child
- Putting children together who are the same ability, height, role.
- Working independently, in pairs, groups or teams

A team of 9 attackers with 1 defender will find it easier than equal teams of 5. Outnumbering allows for more time and success when practicing skills.

S.T.E.P. is a model used to remind you to think inclusively at all times and adapt activity accordingly.

