



Addendum for Disability Inclusion



Special Olympics
Health

MADE
POSSIBLE BY **Golisano** FOUNDATION

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Introduction and Purpose of the Addendum

The Commit to Health program aims to promote healthy eating and physical activity for all participants, including individuals with disabilities. This addendum provides guidance on ensuring accessibility and inclusivity within the program, following best practices to accommodate people with diverse needs. The purpose of this addendum is to educate providers of the Commit to Health program on how to include people with physical, sensory, communication, intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in their program. This addendum aims to equip instructors with the knowledge to include all individuals, not to create separate classes for those with disabilities. Instructors should find what works best for each participant, including community partners and individuals with disabilities themselves when designing inclusion elements.

How to Use this Addendum

This addendum serves as a comprehensive resource to effectively implement the Commit to Health program with people with disabilities. It is designed to supplement the existing curriculum with targeted strategies, resources, and activities that are designed for disability access and inclusion. The first part of this addendum covers general inclusive practices that can apply for any health promotion program. The second part of this addendum addresses specific elements of the Foods of the Month, Community and Home Gardening curriculums. Information is provided for program facilitators on how to adapt these programs to be most appropriate and meaningful for participants with disabilities.

Health Status of People with Disabilities

Disability includes intellectual and developmental (IDD), physical, neurological, sensory, and learning disabilities, among others. Many individuals experience multiple disabilities, and the disability community is diverse, intersecting with factors such as socioeconomic, race/ethnicity, gender, and age. Over one in four people in the U.S. have a disability¹, indicating that parks and recreation programs are likely already serving individuals with disabilities. By implementing inclusive practices outlined in this addendum, these programs can expand their reach and better serve all participants.

Youth with disabilities face significant health disparities due to systemic barriers, including limited access to inclusive recreational programs, lack of adaptive resources, and societal stigma. These barriers contribute to increased health risks, including:

- Children with disabilities are **38% more likely to have obesity** compared to their peers without disabilities.²
- Adolescents with autism and Down syndrome are **2 to 3 times more likely to be obese** than their peers without disabilities.³
- Youth with disabilities are **24% less likely to meet recommended physical activity** guidelines.⁴
- Only **20% of youth with disabilities** participate in **regular physical education** programs, compared to 68% of their peers.⁵
- Children with **developmental disabilities** are **6.8 times** more likely to have seen a mental health professional in the past year than those without such disabilities (30.6% vs. 4.5%).⁶
- Approximately **43.3% of children with IDD experience food insecurity**, compared to 30.0% of children without IDD.⁷

Focusing on access to health promotion and physical activity in childhood can help prevent secondary health conditions, build confidence, and encourage lifelong healthy habits.

Best Practices for an Inclusive Program

This section shares effective ways to make health promotion programs more inclusive for people with disabilities. It provides strategies, examples, and key points to help program facilitators create and implement programs that support everyone.

Disability Education

To ensure that program staff understand disability-related adaptations and modifications you must provide disability education training. Staff should receive disability education training that includes communication and language, accommodations, general accessibility knowledge, and training on how to effectively utilize technology. Additionally, integrating people with disabilities into a health promotion program requires a basic understanding of how certain conditions can affect an individual's level of functioning and participation.

How a disability or condition can impact a person's participation in the program.

- **Intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)** result from impairments that affect understanding, communication, or behavior and can be attributed to brain injuries, developmental or learning disabilities.

Intellectual disabilities is a term used when a person has certain difficulties thinking, learning, remembering, and reasoning. Speak directly to the participant and not their caregiver.

Program materials will need to be in plain language, often at a 3-5 grade reading level with the addition of pictures/videos and repetition of information.

- **Mobility Disabilities** are often the most widely recognized conditions because of the visible use of aids such as a wheelchair, scooter, walker or cane. It is important to consider that mobility limitations can also affect stamina, balance, and ability to reach or grasp. Never touch or move a mobility device without asking the individual.
- **Non-apparent disabilities** may be hidden or not easy to see. This can include chronic conditions such as asthma, heart disease, or epilepsy. Many cognitive, learning, or mental health disabilities may also not be apparent. Always ask about any accommodations that participants may need during the registration process so that you can meet individual needs as best as possible.
- **Speech disabilities.** Individuals with speech disabilities may use alternate means of communication such as assistive devices to speak for them. A speech disability often has no impact on a person's ability to understand.
- **Vision loss and blindness.** It is important to understand the distinction between blindness (visual acuity of 20/200 or less) and low vision. Some people can distinguish between light and dark, or between contrasting colors, or read large print, but have difficulty with small print or low-light situations. They may use a cane or service animal to help with orientation and movement in an environment. Make sure that you have alternate formats of materials available like electronic for screen readers, large print, audio, or braille.
- **Deafness** or hearing loss often requires the use of different ways to communicate, including hearing aids, speechreading, or sign language. Individuals may also require the use of a text telephone (TTY) and may use other aids such as closed captioning, assistive listening devices, speak-to-text apps, or use of the nationwide telephone relay service. Eliminate distracting noise and face the person when speaking, not the interpreter.



Inclusive and Respectful Language

Person-first language emphasizes the person before the disability, for example "person who is blind" or "people with spinal cord injuries."

Identity-first language puts the disability first in the description, e.g., "disabled" or "autistic."

Sometimes communities prefer identity-first language, such as: Deaf or Autistic communities often embrace terms like "Deaf person" or "Autistic person" as affirmations of their identity.

Person-first or identify-first language is equally appropriate depending on personal preference. When in doubt, ask the person which they prefer.

Do Say 	Don't Say 
Person who uses a wheelchair/cane/assistive device	A crippled person, confined to a wheelchair, or wheelchair-bound
Person with an intellectual, cognitive, or developmental disability	The "R" word
Person who is blind, Person who is visually impaired	The blind
Person who is Deaf or hard of hearing	The deaf, or suffers a hearing loss
Person with a disability	The disabled, or Handicapped
Person with diabetes	A diabetic
Accessible parking space	Handicapped parking
Person with epilepsy	Epileptic

Program Set-Up

The program should be held in locations that are physically accessible to all participants and that can provide reasonable accommodations such as alternative formats of program materials or sign language interpreters. Program providers are not required to provide any accommodation that fundamentally alters the program.

Accommodations = supports and strategies that need to be made for the program to be made accessible for every

In addition to ensuring access to where the program is taking place, it is also necessary that accommodations are asked about and provided to participants needing them during the registration process and updated as needed throughout their participation in the program. Questions asking if participants need accommodations due to a disability should be added to all registration forms. Remember to ask about accommodations; do not ask if participants have a disability. Below are sample questions that can be used to ask participants about accommodations.

1. Do you require any specific accommodations to participate in this program? Select any that apply.
 - ☐ Bringing a caregiver with you.
 - ☐ Getting access to materials ahead of time.
 - ☐ Meeting with the instructor ahead of time.
 - ☐ Translation of materials to another language.
 - ☐ Other, please describe _____.
2. Are there any assistive devices or technologies you need to fully engage in the sessions?
3. Do you need materials in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, or electronic versions?
4. Will you need a sign language interpreter or any other communication assistance?
5. Are there any specific seating arrangements or physical accommodations you require?
6. Do you have any food allergies?
7. Is there anything else we can do to make the program more accessible for you?

Site Accessibility

Using the Site Accessibility Survey (included in the Appendix), you can evaluate the accessibility of key components of the environment. This includes the availability of trained staff, public transportation, restroom facilities, and accessible pathways to and inside the programming space. Conducting this survey is necessary for any site hosting this program. Please note that compliance with the questions on the survey does not guarantee compliance with the ADA or other accessibility laws or codes. It is recommended that you conduct accessibility reviews, walking/moving audits, and surveys in partnership with people with disabilities or disability organizations from your community. This will allow you to gather meaningful feedback to address issues that go beyond ADA requirements. This can be done by partnering with local disability organizations. Please refer to and complete the Site Accessibility Survey in the Appendix.

Participant Recruitment

Recruitment materials should demonstrate that people with disabilities can benefit from this program just like anyone else. Using inclusive language, accessible documents, online material, engaging social media content, and images of individuals with apparent disabilities are effective methods to recruit participants with disabilities into your program.

Inclusive marketing practices	Description
Inclusive and Welcoming Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use language that is respectful, positive and affirming. • Avoid jargon and stereotypes. • Refer to the chart on page 6 for examples.
Visual Representation of the Intended Audience	Represent people with disabilities through diverse imagery.
Statement About Accommodations	<p>Include a clear statement asking about accommodations.</p> <p>Example: We are committed to creating an inclusive experience for everyone. If you need any accommodations to fully participate, please let us know by contacting [Contact Information].</p>
Accessible Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use high contrast colors for readability. • Use sans-serif fonts. • Use large font, 16 to 18 points or more. • Write in plain language (refer to page X for details). • Keep content simple by placing one idea per line. • Use icons to aid in understanding.

Running the Program

Understanding principles of accessibility and universal design is essential for including people with disabilities. Universal design aims for environments and products that are usable by everyone, minimizing the need for adaptation. This approach ensures inclusion beyond legal mandates, enhancing accessibility for all. Organizations that provide any kind of health program in a public setting may have the obligation to be accessible to participants with disabilities. Under Titles II and III of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), it states that state and local government programs as well as public places must make their services accessible to people with disabilities.

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Another aspect of implementing an inclusive program is the use of plain language. Plain language

is a way of communicating that uses clear, straightforward words and structure, making information easy to understand for everyone. It involves using common words, short sentences, and clear structure to convey information without unnecessary complexity. The goal is to ensure that the intended audience can quickly grasp the content, regardless of their literacy level or cognitive ability. Using plain language in programs for people with disabilities is essential because it promotes inclusion, empowers individuals to make their own decisions, and enhances their ability to participate fully in activities and services.

Plain language is a style of communication that prioritizes clarity, simplicity, and ease of understanding.

Adaptations should be used to ensure everyone can participate in all activities. Adaptations should not fundamentally change the program. Participants are often the best resource for creating adaptations. Individuals with disabilities and disability service organizations should be involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of your program. To start, you can contact organizations in your community that serve people with a range of disabilities such as an [Independent Living Center](#). These organizations are a great resource because they are in every state and are run by people with disabilities. To ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are included, you can work with organizations like [The Arc](#) or [Special Olympics](#).

General Tips for Participants with Disabilities

- Speak directly to the participant, not their caregiver or assistant.
- Allow participants sufficient time to think and respond. This may be 5-10 seconds to process.
- Treat all participants with respect appropriate to their age, rather than based on their perceived abilities.
- Use plain, simple language to ensure everyone understands you.
- Offer content and examples in multiple formats.
- Use visual aids such as pictures, diagrams, and videos to enhance understanding.
- Repeat content and check participant's understanding as needed to ensure comprehension. This could be done by asking specific questions or asking participants to repeat what they learned.
- Be flexible with time. Repetition will be important, and some activities or explanations may take longer than usual.
- Talk about disability in a positive context.
- Always ask for permission before touching a participant, their service animal, or their adaptive equipment.
- Participants may have a caregiver support them in the program. Be aware that the caregiver may have a side conversation with the participant to support their understanding.

By applying universal design principles, the program should be designed so that anyone can join and participate. Below are more specific strategies to be aware of across multiple disability communities.

For participants with an intellectual or developmental disability (IDD) -

- Break down instructions into smaller steps
- Repeat information as needed and allow extra time for responses
- Provide alternate formats of materials, like handouts with minimal text and more pictures, videos, or hands-on learning activities
- Use plain language and one idea per line on written materials
- Include caregivers and support people in class
- Speak directly to the participant, not their caregiver or care partner
- Be prepared to read activities out loud



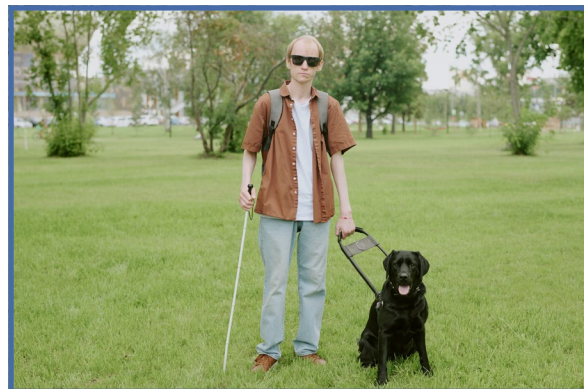
For Deaf participants or those with hearing loss -

- Provide effective communication, such as interpreter services or assistive listening devices
 - [SignNexus](#)
 - [Dial 711 for telephone relay services](#)
 - [The Language Line](#)
 - [United Language Group](#)
 - [ASLIS](#)
- Gain attention, face the person, and speak clearly
- Eliminate distracting noise
- Present instructions using non-verbal formats
- Arrange seats in a horseshoe or circle for group conversations
- Speak directly to the participant, not the interpreter
- Use close captioning, speak-to-text apps, and assistive listening devices
- Use a notepad to write down tasks
- Do not cover your mouth or chew gum when speaking



For participants with vision loss or blindness -

- Have alternate formats of materials available, like electronic for screen readers, large print, audio, or Braille
- Maintain a consistent classroom setting with limited obstacles
- Offer assistive devices like screen readers
- Allow service dogs or animals as per the ADA
- Identify yourself when speaking
- Offer your elbow as a sighted guide
- Be prepared to read activities out loud



For participants with a mobility disability -

- Choose accessible locations for all aspects of the program
- Use tables and equipment at adjustable heights for participants with limited mobility
- Never touch or move mobility devices without asking
- Be considerate of the extra time needed to move
- Never assume assistance is needed; offer and wait for a reply
- Provide adaptations as needed in partnership with participants
- Offer alternative physical activities tailored to various mobility levels, like seated and standing options.
- Allow flexible scheduling for those needing additional time to join the program. Understand that things can come up at the last minute.
 - Wheelchair-accessible transportation can be unreliable
 - Caregivers may not show up
- Unplanned medical issues may arise



How to GRAID Your Program for Inclusion: A Checklist

The next section of this addendum goes into curriculum specific elements that can be adapted for the inclusion of people with disabilities. As you are working through the elements of adapting your program, this checklist provides a comprehensive resource to guide you through this process. The GRAIDs: Guidelines, Recommendations, Adaptations, Including Disability is a tool and framework used to adapt evidence-based health promotion programs to be inclusive of people with disabilities. The GRAIDs are broken down by potential changes in five inclusion domains, referenced below. This checklist is intended to be used in addition to the Site Accessibility Survey for a more comprehensive audit of your program.

1. Built Environment- Structural features that support access.

- Are entrances, sidewalks, and paths clear, accessible, and free of barriers (e.g., curb cuts, ramps)?
- Are signs clear, easy to read, and available in alternative formats (e.g., braille or symbols)?
- Is the physical space welcoming for people with disabilities?
- Is there a predictable, structured layout with visual cues for navigation to this program site (e.g., arrows or color-coded paths)?
- Is the program space on a ground floor or accessible by an elevator?
- Are there accessible restrooms on the same floor as the program space?
- Are indoor and outdoor surfaces appropriate for wheelchairs or other mobility devices?
- Is there a minimum of a 3-foot-wide pathway through the program space?
- Are there quiet spaces or low-stimulation areas for sensory breaks?
- Are structures used in the program accessible? (e.g., raised garden bed)
- Are areas well-lit and maintained at a comfortable temperature?
- Is the program site connected to a public transportation route?
- Is there an accessible bus stop with an accessible pathway to the program site?
- Are there designated accessible parking spaces near the program site entrance?

2. Services- Supports that increase participation through assistance or communication.

- Are services like public or private transportation, aides, or peer support offered or facilitated?
- Have you identified accessible transportation options and provided this information to participants in advance of the program? (e.g., public transportation, Paratransit, ride sharing apps, taxi, volunteer transportation service)?
- Are interpretation services (e.g., sign language), closed captioning, or other accommodations available?
- Are inclusive communication practices used (e.g., plain language, multiple languages, alternate formats)?
- Are advertising materials inclusive and representative of people with disabilities?
- Do you offer a pre-program orientation or “meet and greets” to introduce people to staff and settings?
- Do you have volunteers or staff available to greet people as they arrive and help them find the program space?
- Is extra time given to complete tasks or ask questions?

3. Instruction- Educational strategies for staff and participants to enhance understanding and engagement.

- Has staff received training on disability education and accessible instruction methods?
- Are materials presented in plain language and supported with clear visuals?
- Is individualized instruction available when needed (e.g., with caregiver or family involvement)?
- Are visual aids or hands-on tools used to support comprehension?
- Do you allow for frequent repetition and review of key concepts?
- Are teaching methods adjusted based on feedback from participants with disabilities?

4. Equipment & Technology- Tools and devices that support engagement and learning.

- Are assistive tools or apps to support communication available?
- Is there a microphone in the program space or an assistive listening device available for participants with hearing loss?
- Is the technology used (e.g., websites, apps, digital materials) in the program accessible to people with various disabilities?
- Are features like automatic doors or bus lifts in place to improve access?
- Are interactive materials (e.g., using food in food experiments, taste tests) available for experiential learning?
- Do you offer adaptive tools (adaptive kitchen tools, adaptive gardening tools, adaptive sport equipment, etc.)?
- Are staff trained to assist with the use of equipment or troubleshoot issues?
- Do you provide a visual schedule of activities or tablets with picture-based instructions?

5. Policy- Organizational and legislative rules that support long-term inclusion.

- Do you have a clear statement in program policies and materials about the inclusion of people with disabilities?
- Do you ask about accommodations in your program registration materials?
- Do you have a policy around a cost modification that applies equally to all program participants?
- Do you require ongoing training on disability education for all staff?
- Do you have policies for individualized accommodations based on participant needs? (ex: allowing caregiver participation)
- Do you ensure that program budgeting includes funds for support staff, adaptive materials, and training?
- Do you have established program evaluation protocols that include feedback from people with disabilities and their caregivers or family members?

Adapting Program Components

Foods of the Month + Community and Home Gardening Curriculum

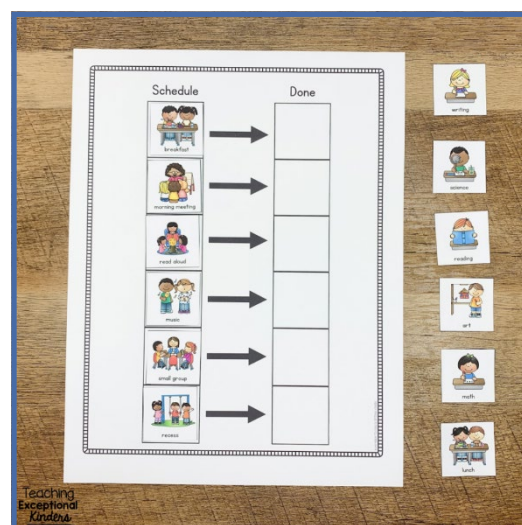
This section of the Addendum applies the inclusive practices mentioned above to the Commit to Health/Foods of the Month program. It includes strategies to adapt program resources and activities. It does not include all lesson plans and activities but provides a few examples and ideas for how to make changes.

Please refer to the [Commit to Health – Nutrition Literacy & Community and Home Gardening Facilitator's Guide](#).

Lesson Plan Guides

Page 10 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Download or print the monthly lesson plan guides, review, and note any needed adaptations. Review materials beforehand and seek feedback from people with disabilities and parents/caregivers.
- When considering an adaptation, ask yourself **“What do I want my participants to get out of this activity or experience?”**. Deciding on the purpose will allow you to plan your program based on the strengths, abilities, and goals of your participants.
- Ensure you have everything needed, like large print materials and adapted kitchen tools, ASL interpreters, closed captions on videos, tactile supplies like food models, measuring cups and spoons, or sectioned plates.
- Allow sufficient time for participants with IDD to complete tasks. Consider shortening the number of tasks required during the lesson.
- Use Visual Schedules or Task Cards which offer step-by-step pictorial instructions to follow.



Examples:

For a lesson on balanced meals, provide tactile, [3D food models](#) or play food toys so children can feel and see different foods.

Use a sectioned plate to visually and physically separate food groups, reinforcing the concept of balanced eating.

Use real plants, produce, and grains in lessons to allow participants to taste, touch, and smell.

Incorporate identification games when discussing making healthy swaps. Ask participants to identify a whole grain from a list and then use materials like coloring sheets or cut out pictures to visually reinforce the concept of a whole grain.



Monthly Posters

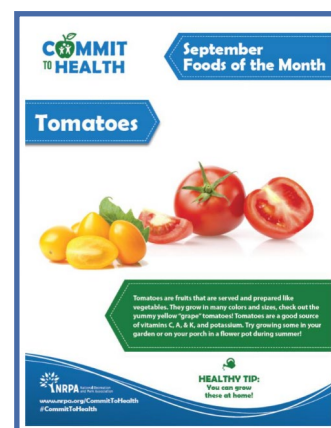
Page 11 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Hang posters at a height and location accessible to all participants
- Consider the height for wheelchair users and ensure clear visibility
- Be prepared to read the content on the poster out loud

Monthly Newsletters

Page 12 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Ask participant's or caregivers/parents if adaptations are needed, like receiving the newsletter in Spanish, large print, high contrast, or an accessible electronic format for use with a screen reader.
- To ensure that you are providing an accessible format, prepare the document using Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, or Adobe PDF. Then, use the program's built-in tools to check for Accessibility.
 - Microsoft Word/PowerPoint Accessibility Checker (Review > Check Accessibility).
 - Adobe Acrobat Pro's Accessibility Checker (Tools > Accessibility > Full Check)
- Offer an easy-to-read version with simple sentences, one idea per line, and visuals for participants with IDD. See an example on the following page.



Nutrition News – March

Healthy Snacking

This month's newsletter is about healthy snacks.

A snack is something that you eat to give you energy between your meals.

Healthy snack pairings. Have two food groups with every snack:

Apple slices + peanut butter



Cheese stick + whole grain crackers



Yogurt + fruit



Veggies + hummus



Trail mix + dried fruit and nuts



Ants on a Log: Celery stick + nut butter + dark chocolate chips or raisins



Be Active!

- Move your body every day.
- Try dancing, walking, or playing sports.

Family tip:

- Let your child help pick snacks at the store.
- Use pictures to make a snack list.

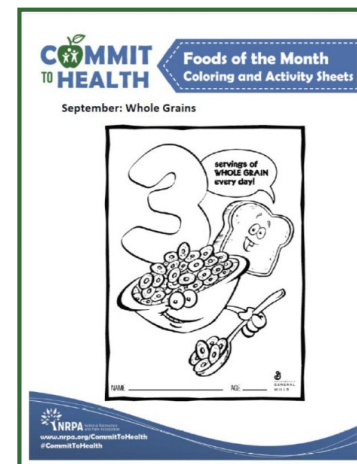
Try new fruits and vegetables together.



Coloring and Activity Sheets

Page 13 in the Facilitator's Guide

- If doing a “Fill the Plate” activity, where participants color or cut out food items, allow extra time and offer a pre-cut option.
- If teaching about portion sizes, replace text-based problems with picture-based math problems (e.g., “Circle the plate that has half vegetables, one-quarter protein, and one-quarter grains”).
- Use visual aids or pictures for word problems and consult professionals like special education teachers or occupational therapists for appropriate academic accommodations.
- Be prepared with alternative formats of the materials such as braille or an audio version.
- Use a visual schedule or step-by-step checklist with pictures to break down tasks.
- As an alternative to written tasks, use rhyming or song-based activities where participants respond to cues. For example: participants clap or raise a hand when they hear the right response rather than writing down an answer on paper.
- Consider alternative ways of teaching using the activity sheets like:
 - Doing activities as a group or with a peer.
 - Use modeling clay or pipe cleaners to do hands on activities.
 - Use picture-based sorting rather than word searches, scrambles, or crossword puzzles.
 - Provide food models or samples of real food for participants to touch, taste, and smell. Ex: Bring in a real tomato plant and allow the children to feel the different parts of the plant.
 - Use a fill-in-the-blank format where children complete sentences with a picture or spoken response.



Experiential Activities

Page 14 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Have participants work with peers or provide an aid for support.
- Ensure all participants have equal access during the activity. For example, an activity that might be done on the floor could be changed to a table so that everyone can reach and participate.
- If leading a hands-on cooking lesson, ensure adapted kitchen tools are available. A list of these options are provided in this Addendum.



- Provide real or 3D food models rather than printed pictures for participants with sensory processing needs.
- Explain the activity clearly and keep a visual schedule or step-by-step checklist visible during the session.
- When making a recipe, break instructions into simple, numbered steps with pictures to help all participants follow along.
- Consider any food allergies for taste testing and don't use that food or provide an alternative.



Fun Being Active

Page 16 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Offer alternative physical activities when needed for participants with mobility limitations. You can access examples from resources like Special Olympics, Lakeshore Foundation, and the National Center for Health, Physical Activity and Disability (NCHPAD).
 - Special Olympics Fit 5 <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5>
 - Special Olympics School of Strength <https://www.specialolympics.org/school-of-strength>
 - NCHPAD Physical Activity <https://www.nchpad.org/resource-categories/physical-activity/page/2/>
 - How to Adapt Activity
 - Article <https://www.lakeshore.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/How-to-Adapt-an-Activity.pdf>
 - Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkSrSJrk4rk>
- Start by adjusting rules (e.g., allowing more time or a larger target in a tossing game) before making larger modifications.
- For a "Move Like Your Food" game, where kids act out different food-related motions (e.g., "wiggle like spaghetti"), include seated motions like rolling arms or bouncing in place.
- Choose activities that allow for use of arms and legs which can be easier to adapt. Additional variety of activity examples are provided in the "Food Activity" section below.
- Modify a balance and coordination game to include both standing and seated options (e.g., tossing bean bags instead of running to a target).
- If doing an obstacle course, allow participants to walk, roll, or crawl based on their ability, and replace physical barriers with task-based challenges (e.g., naming a fruit instead of jumping over a cone).

- For a relay race, omit any tagging challenges and allow participants to pass an object on a tray instead of running.
- If a group warm-up game involves fast movements, allow participants to choose between standing, seated, or slow-motion versions before redesigning the activity entirely.



Modified Activities for Food and Activity Cards

Food	Original Activity	Suggested Activity
Carrots	Jump	Arms Circles Forward
Whole wheat bread	Skip	Arms Circles Backward
Peaches	Crab walk	Arms Jacks or Jumping Jacks
Milk	Gallop	Freestyle dance
Grilled chicken	Tip-toe	Side crunches
Egg	Crawl	Arm raises
Spinach	Spin	Torso Twist
Grapes	Hop on two feet	The wave
Cheese	Hop on one foot	Punches
Eggplant	Dance	Disco dance
Squash	Sway	Sway
Sunflower seeds	Roll	Roll backwards
Whole wheat pasta	Walk	Move slow (walk or push a wheelchair)
Watermelon	Run	Move fast (run or push a wheelchair)
Peanut butter	Walk-heel-to-toe	Shrug your shoulders
Low-fat yogurt	Walk backwards	Move backward
Red pepper	Take giant steps	High five a friend
Sweet potato	Grape vine walk	Dribble a pretend basketball
Brown rice	Duck walk	Raise the roof
Fish	Wheel barrow walk	Row a boat

Resources for the Home

Page 17 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Offer resources in alternate formats, more pictures, large print or in other languages.

Inclusive Gardening Tips






Refer to page 18 in the Facilitator's Guide

- Raised garden beds, vertical gardening, and container gardening are more accessible options to ensure access for wheelchair users and individuals with limited mobility.
- Use tables to raise the height of surfaces when using containers for gardening activities.
- If an activity is done on the ground, offer seating options or kneeling pads for rest and stability.
- If an activity is done outside or in a garden, ensure that you have a wide, clear pathway for all participants to get there.
- Adaptive gardening tools are available that provide padded, ergonomic and lightweight gardening options for individuals with limited mobility. Examples are pictured below.
- To adapt an activity, it can be shortened, or a different tool can be used, depending on the ability of the participant. For example, if the activity includes shoveling dirt, if a participant is having a hard time using the shovel, that person can use a small bucket.
- Offer sensory garden experiences for those who may not be able to physically garden but can still engage through touch, smell, and observation.
- Schedule outdoor sessions during cooler times of the day and provide shade structures like canopies or umbrellas to reduce the risk of overheating.
- Encourage storytelling or art activities using garden produce so that participants who prefer not to dig or be hands-on with gardening activities can still be involved.



A container gardening class is being held outside with tables to raise the height of the surface.

Adapted Gardening Tools

<u>Long reach gardening tools</u>	This tool would be ideal for someone using a wheelchair or a scooter as they can maneuver the tools from a seated position.	
<u>Easi grip garden tools</u>	This tool helps individuals with limited muscle control in their hands and wrist. They can also be used with straps.	
<u>Foldable water can</u>	A foldable water can has a lightweight design making it easier to use. The angle of the spout can also be adjusted.	
<u>Container gardening</u>	A great option for indoor gardening and hands-on activities using containers.	
<u>Raised garden bed</u>	A raised garden bed is accessible to all and can be placed on an accessible surface for easy access by individuals who use a wheelchair.	

Additional Resources for Inclusive Gardening:

- https://www.nchpad.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Adapted-Gardening-Tools_A.pdf
- <https://www.nchpad.org/resources/getting-started-with-accessible-gardening/>
- Video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EclP3R0eUOY>
- An Introduction to Including Individuals with Disabilities in the Garden: What Extension Professionals Need to Know About Accessibility, Safety and Educational Programming <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/WC403>

Adapted Nutrition Tools





Nutrition related activities are discussed throughout the Facilitator's Guide.

These adapted tools can be purchased online or checked out with your State Assistive Technology Program (<https://catada.info/state.html>).

Swivel Utensils	Helps keep food on a fork or spoon.	
Lipped plates	Makes it easier to eat food off a plate with larger edges for scooping.	
Rocker knife	Cuts by rocking back and forth.	
Cutting board with spikes	Holds food still while you cut.	

Bowls that don't slip	Easier to hold.	
Big handle spoons and forks	Helps to hold the spoon or fork.	
Grip straps	Easier to eat with.	
Forks and Spoons that Bend	Automatic or mounted ones help to open food without hurting your hands.	
Jar and can openers	Help move hot pans safely.	

Silicone oven pulls	Help move hot pans safely.	
Food choppers	Chop food safely without having to use a knife.	
Small blender	Easier to use and clean to chop and mix food.	
Bump dots	Stickers that help you find buttons and controls.	

<p>Colored Measuring Cups</p>	<p>Shape and color help you with the size.</p>	
<p>Colored Measuring Spoons</p>	<p>Shape and color help you with the size.</p>	
<p>Automatic Mixer</p>	<p>Will mix or stir for you.</p>	
<p>Bowl Cozy</p>	<p>Microwave safe holder to help with holding hot bowls.</p>	

Resources

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4. Ross SM, Smit E, Yun J, Bogart K, Hatfield B, Logan SW. Updated National Estimates of Disparities in Physical Activity and Sports Participation Experienced by Children and Adolescents With Disabilities: NSCH 2016-2017. *J Phys Act Health*. 2020 Apr 1;17(4):443-455. doi: 10.1123/jpah.2019-0421. PMID: 32150728.
5. Liu, X., Han, H., Li, Z., Huang, S., Zhao, Y., Xiao, Q., & Sun, J. (2025). Barriers and facilitators to participation in physical activity for students with disabilities in an integrated school setting: a meta-synthesis of qualitative research evidence. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 13, 1496631.
6. Cogswell ME, Coil E, Tian LH, et al. Health Needs and Use of Services Among Children with Developmental Disabilities — United States, 2014–2018. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2022;71:453–458. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7112a3>.
7. Dhuliawala S, Payakachat N, Painter JT, Swindle T, Li C. Food Insecurity and Health Outcomes of Children With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the United States. *Am J Intellect Dev Disabil*. 2023 Nov 1;128(6):462-480. doi: 10.1352/1944-7558-128.6.462. PMID: 37875275.



Site Accessibility Survey

It is important that the site or location that you are offering your program is accessible to people with disabilities. The questions below are designed to help you prepare your accessible space. It is recommended that you include a person with a disability to join you in your site selection surveying process. To answer the questions below you will need a tape measure, particularly for the restrooms and interior of your program's facility. If you cannot answer "yes" to all questions on this survey, identify which items need to be addressed and start to plan for how you will address them. Add additional communication around any potential trouble areas to program participants so that they are aware and can plan ahead.

NOTE: Compliance with the questions below does not guarantee compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act or other accessibility laws.

Site Staff

Has the facility staff where you plan to host the program received training on supporting people with disabilities? (An example resource to use is the [Special Olympics Inclusive Health Fundamentals online training](#)).

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Does the facility have volunteers or staff available to greet people as they arrive and help them find the class space?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Parking, Transportation and Safety

Is the program site connected to a public transportation route?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you identified accessible transportation options and provided this information to participants in advance of the first session (check all that apply?)

___ Accessible Bus, Light Rail or Rail Service

___ Paratransit (a complementary service that is designed to supplement fixed-route public transportation, providing an alternative for those who cannot independently use the regular system)

___ Ride sharing Apps

___ Taxi

___ Volunteer Transportation Service

Is there an accessible bus stop at the site?

Picture for reference.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is the pathway from the bus stop to the site door smooth, wide, and level?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are there designated accessible parking spaces near the site entrance?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is the entrance to the site barrier-free with no curbs or obstructions?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is there an automatic door at the entrance of the building?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



If the door is not automatic, is it light enough to open manually?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are there street lights at the site?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Site Accessibility and Navigation

Is there clear signage at the site directing participants on how to enter the building?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Once participants have entered the site, do you have clear signage directing participants to the class space?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is the program space on the ground floor or accessible by an elevator?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are there accessible restrooms on the same floor as the program space?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do the accessible restrooms have at least one stall or a space around the toilet that is 5-foot by-5-foot in area?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Does the accessible toilet stall have a grab bar along the side and behind the toilet?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



Program Space

Is there a minimum 3-foot-wide pathway through the classroom/program space?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Are there enough clear areas for any participants who use a wheelchair, scooter, walker or crutches that is a minimum of 30-inches-by-48-inches? Remember to allow individuals choice of where to sit.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Is there a microphone in the classroom or an assistive listening device available for participants with hearing loss?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

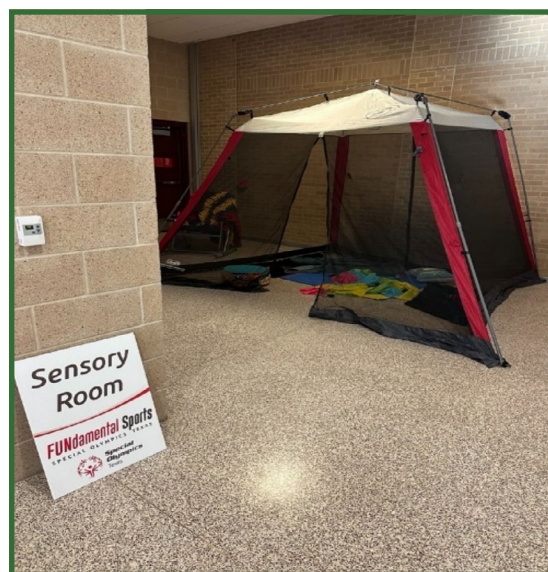
Is the program or classroom space sensory friendly with soft or natural lighting, no loud noise, flexible seating options, and no strong scents?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

In addition to the program space being sensory friendly, is there another space for individuals who may occasionally feel overstimulated to go during the class?

Example: a sensory room or tent.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No



Sample Adaptations for June Foods of the Month

Below are examples of inclusive posters, newsletters, and activities to use for the month of June. Please refer to the original curriculum content for [June Foods of the Month](#).

Poster: Use plain language.

June Foods of the Month: Berries



<p>(original)</p> <p>Nutritious, yummy berries, such as blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, and blackberries, come in many fun shapes and colors! Blueberries are an especially nutritious powerhouse and taste great! All berries are a great source of fiber, antioxidants like vitamin C, and water.</p>	<p>(adapted to plain language)</p> <p>Berries like blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, cranberries, and blackberries are tasty and come in lots of fun colors and shapes! Blueberries are extra healthy and really yummy. All berries have fiber, vitamin C, and water to help keep your body strong and feeling good.</p>
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June Foods of the Month: Peppers



<p>(original)</p> <p>Peppers make your favorite foods healthier because they are a great source of vitamins A and C, as well as fiber. Full of color and flavor, and some with awesome hotness, add them to your favorite salads, pastas, whole grain crust pizzas, and more!</p>	<p>(adapted to plain language)</p> <p>Peppers help make your food healthier. They have vitamins A and C and fiber to help your body stay strong. Peppers come in bright colors, have lots of flavor, and some are spicy! You can add them to salads, pasta, pizza, and other foods you like.</p>
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Newsletter: Use a what, why, how method.

Foods of the Month Newsletter

June: Berries

What Are Berries?

Berries are small fruits that are sweet or a little sour. They come in many colors like red, blue, purple, and black. Examples of berries are:

Blueberries	Strawberries	Raspberries	Cranberries	Blackberries
				

Why are Berries good for you?

Berries are good for your body. They help your heart stay healthy, help you go to the bathroom, keep you from getting sick, and they keep you cool and hydrated!

How to eat more berries

You can eat berries:





Fresh – just wash and eat	Frozen – great for smoothies	Dried – sweet treat with nuts
		

As a topper- to pancakes, cereal, or yogurt	In a salad
	

Berry Recipes

Berry Yogurt Cup

You will need:	4oz individual cup vanilla yogurt	Handful of washed berries	Granola
			
	Bowl	Spoon	
			

Steps:	1. Put the yogurt in a bowl.	2. Add berries on top of the yogurt.
		
	3. Sprinkle granola on top.	4. Eat with a spoon!
		

Berry Ice Pops

You will need:	1 banana 	1 cup of berries (any kind) 	½ cup of yogurt 
	Ice pop molds 	Or small cups and popsicle sticks 	Blender 
Steps:	1. Put everything in a blender and mix until smooth. 	2. Pour into ice pop molds or small cups. 	3. Add a stick to each one. 
	4. Put in a freezer for a few hours until hard. 	5. Enjoy! 	

Fun Experiential Activities

Already inclusive activities:

- **Blueberries in a basket** – paint stamping
 - This hands-on activity engages multiple senses and can be easily adapted to varying skills
- **Rainy day indoor blueberry picking hide and seek**
 - This movement-based game can be tailored to individual abilities, allowing all children to participate at their own pace.
- **Picked a Strawberry song**
 - The repetitive and familiar melody makes it accessible, and incorporating gestures can enhance understanding.
- **Matching games, identification, and coloring sheets**
 - All students can participate in these activities. Offer one-on-one assistance or peer support during the activity.




Activities to adapt:

1) Make your own berry ink

Simplify the process by premeasuring ingredients, assisting the participant with mashing and straining. Allow them to stir. Using ink for stamping is an inclusive activity, but allow them to use the ink as finger paint rather than with quill pens.

Adapted Example - Make your own berry ink:

You will need (adults can prep these in advance):	½ cup ripe, edible berries 	½ tsp vinegar 	½ tsp salt 	A large bowl 
	A strainer 	A wooden spoon 	Measuring cups and spoons 	A small jar or container with a lid 

Steps (with support):	<p>1. Adult help: Pre-measure the ingredients. Place berries in a strainer over the bowl.</p> 	<p>2. Help mash berries using a spoon (hand-over-hand if needed).</p> 	<p>3. Adult help: Strain juice and stir in vinegar and salt.</p>
	<p>4. Let the child stir the mixture. Add a little water if it's too thick.</p>	<p>5. Together: Pour the juice into a container with a lid.</p>	<p>6. Use as finger paint or stamp with the berry ink.</p> 

2) Strawberry Toss Game

Allow for variation of the rules so that all children can participate.

Examples:

- **Use different sizes & colors** - Offer bigger or brighter beanbags for easier gripping and visibility—kids can choose what they like best.
- **Let everyone pick their spot** - Place tape lines at different distances. Kids pick the one that feels fun or “just right” for them.
- **Add a catchy chant** - Say something silly like “1-2-3, toss the berry!” Together before each turn. It adds rhythm and helps with focus.
- **Make it cooperative** - Instead of keeping score, set a team goal like “let’s get 10 berries in the basket together!” Everyone celebrates when the team reaches it.
- **Offer tossing options** - Let kids roll, drop, or toss—standing, sitting, or kneeling. Everyone gets to participate in a way that feels comfortable.

Adapted Example - Strawberry Toss Game:

Explain: Strawberries are picked from a field where they grow. After the strawberries are picked they are put into small crates/baskets and then sent to the store for us to buy. We are going to play a game to practice and see how fast we can get our strawberries into the basket.

Materials needed:

- 1–3 “strawberry” beanbags (made from red felt or socks, filled with rice or beans; black dots drawn on, green felt leaf tops)
- Baskets (mix sizes for different challenge levels)
- Tape to mark throwing lines at different distances
- Timer or phone for optional time challenge or play as a group relay (one team or two competing; the first team to sink “X” number of berries in a basket, wins). If only one team, time how long it takes to finish.
- Celebrate everyone’s participation, not just speed!

Set up:

- Create a play area indoors or outdoors.
- Place baskets in a line. Turn some baskets on their side for the option to roll a “strawberry”.
- Tape down 2–3 tossing lines at different distances.
- Students line up behind the start area, opposite the baskets.

How to play:

- Each child picks a toss line that feels fun for them (closer or farther).
- One at a time, children toss, roll, or drop a “strawberry” into the basket.
- After tossing, they run (or walk/roll) to retrieve it and bring it back for the next player.
- Continue until everyone has a turn

Coloring Sheets and Activity Pages

- All coloring sheets are inclusive. Offer one-on-one assistance or peer support during the activity.

USDA MyPlate and Other Fun Activities!

Already inclusive activities:

- **Fruit and Vegetable Taste Test**
 - A sensory activity that allows children to explore different fruits and vegetables. It’s adaptable to individual comfort levels and encourages participation.

Be aware of any food allergies with participants.

- **Food Group Sorting Game**

- Using real or toy foods to sort into food groups is a tactile and visual activity that supports learning through play.

- **Grocery Store Treasure Hunt**

- Encourages kids to understand food groups and where they are in the grocery store. Utilizes identification strategies.





Activities to Adapt:

- **Healthy Plate Art Project**

- Provide pre-cut images or stickers of foods.
- Use templates with outlined sections for each food group.
- Offer one-on-one assistance or peer support during the activity.

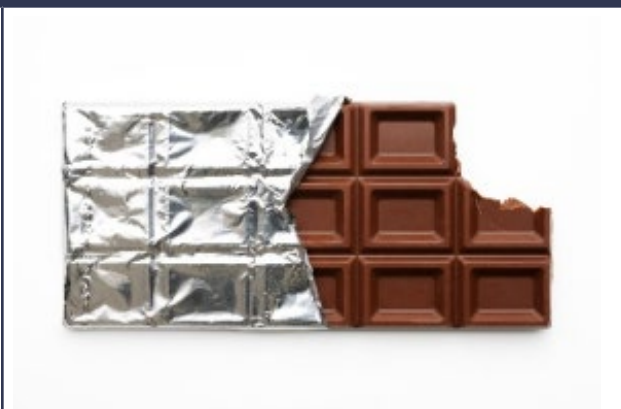
- **Nutrition Label Detective**

- Use simplified labels with larger fonts and visuals.
- Focus on identifying one or two key elements, like sugar or fiber content. Emphasize these with icons or cut outs of sugar cubes, strong arm for protein, salt shaker for sodium, etc. Match the symbol with foods that are high in these ingredients. (sodium and chips, protein and meat, sugar and donuts, fiber and broccoli).

			
Sodium	Protein	Sugar	Fiber

- Incorporate matching games with labels and corresponding food items.
- Use laminated cards and let kids sort if something is high in sugar, healthy choice or a treat, vegetable or fruit, etc.
- Cut out flash card examples:

Healthy choice or treat?





Meal Planning Activity

- Provide visual meal planning charts with pictures of foods.
- Use color-coded sections for each food group.
- Allow for group work or guided planning with one-on-one assistance.
- Consider removing:
 - Word searches
 - Mazes
 - Flash cards with definitions

Fun Being Active! Adapting the movements.

This game has been adapted to include movements that all students can participate in.

Be Physically Active Your Way

Directions:

Begin by listing several activities like walking, swimming, gardening, jumping, skipping, etc. and ask the students what those things are examples of (physical activity). Explain to the students that physical activity is a very important part of staying healthy. The energy we get from food is used when we are active.

Most children and adolescents need 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Ask the students to share their favorite ways to be physically active. Then have them list some ways that families can be active together.

Activity: MyPlate Relay

You will need:

- ☐ One set of food and activity cards cut out for each relay line
- ☐ One bowl or basket per relay line
- ☐ One MyPlate printout per line

Directions:

- Print out the number of food and activity card sets you need. (1 per team)
- Divide the students into even teams (at least 2) and have them line up behind a starting line. Place one basket at the starting line for each team. The cards should be placed in the starting line basket. The MyPlate printout should be placed at the finish line for each team.
- Students line up single file behind the basket. The first child draws a card and does the activity listed on it (running, walking, skipping, crab walking, etc.) to get to the finish line. He or she then places the card on the corresponding part of the plate (i.e. grilled chicken on purple)

protein section). The child moves back to the starting line and tags the next player. The team that finishes first and has their cards on the right parts of the plate wins.

Food	Original Activity	Suggested Activity
Carrots	Jump	Arms Circles Forward
Whole wheat bread	Skip	Arms Circles Backward
Peaches	Crab walk	Arms Jacks or Jumping Jacks
Milk	Gallop	Freestyle dance
Grilled chicken	Tip-toe	Side crunches
Egg	Crawl	Arm raises
Spinach	Spin	Torso Twist
Grapes	Hop on two feet	The wave
Cheese	Hop on one foot	Punches
Eggplant	Dance	Disco dance
Squash	Sway	Sway
Sunflower seeds	Roll	Roll backwards
Whole wheat pasta	Walk	Move slow (walk or push a wheelchair)
Watermelon	Run	Move fast (run or push a wheelchair)
Peanut butter	Walk-heel-to-toe	Shrug your shoulders
Low-fat yogurt	Walk backwards	Move backward
Red pepper	Take giant steps	High five a friend
Sweet potato	Grape vine walk	Dribble a pretend basketball
Brown rice	Duck walk	Raise the roof
Fish	Wheel barrow walk	Row a boat

