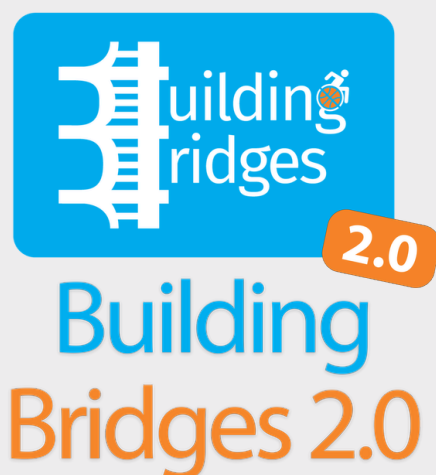


INCLUSIVE BASKETBALL TRAINING GUIDELINES

FOR PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES



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**ABOUT
PROJECT**

The project Building Bridges 2.0: Basketball for People with Intellectual Disabilities was developed as a collaborative initiative of organisations that work closely with young people, community sport environments, and vulnerable groups who often face barriers to participation in physical activity. Across many European countries, individuals with intellectual disabilities continue to experience limited access to structured sport opportunities, despite growing awareness of the social, health, and educational benefits of physical activity. The project therefore emerged from a shared recognition among partner organisations that sport, and particularly basketball, can serve as a powerful tool for inclusion, empowerment, and community participation when appropriate methodologies and supportive environments are in place.

Implemented within the Erasmus+ Sport programme, the project brings together organisations from Spain, Serbia, Romania, and Cyprus, combining expertise from grassroots sport organisations, youth organisations, and civil society actors working with vulnerable communities. The consortium is coordinated by Barcel'hona Sports Events from Spain and includes partners Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM 018) from Serbia, Asociația Ludoku from Romania, and Dikaioma Elpidas from Cyprus. Together, these organisations aim to create practical tools that help sport clubs, coaches, educators, and community organisations better engage people with intellectual disabilities in basketball and sport activities in general. The core objective of the project is to promote social inclusion and equal participation in sport for people with intellectual disabilities by developing innovative training methodologies, educational resources, and practical guidance for inclusive basketball activities. Through cooperation among partners, the project will develop Guidelines and training tools that introduce new methods for adapting basketball training sessions, organising inclusive sport environments, and supporting athletes with intellectual disabilities to actively participate in sport communities. These tools are designed to support both experienced organisations working in disability sport and newcomers seeking to introduce inclusive activities within their local communities.

The project responds to a wider social challenge observed across Europe: individuals with intellectual disabilities often face multiple barriers that limit their participation in everyday community life, including social stigmatization, limited access to recreational activities, and insufficient inclusive infrastructure within sport systems. These barriers frequently result in social isolation and reduced opportunities for physical activity, despite the well-documented benefits of sport for health, confidence, and social interaction. By focusing on inclusive basketball as a structured and widely recognised team sport, the project seeks to create accessible pathways for participation while strengthening cooperation between sport organisations, educators, and civil society actors.

Basketball was selected as the central sport activity because of its strong educational and social characteristics. As a team sport built around cooperation, communication, and shared responsibility, basketball provides a natural platform for building social connections and encouraging participation regardless of ability level. When properly adapted, the sport allows players with intellectual disabilities to develop motor skills, confidence, teamwork abilities, and social interaction while engaging with peers in a supportive environment. Through the development of new training approaches and inclusive sport practices, the project aims to demonstrate how basketball can be used not only as a competitive activity but also as an educational tool that supports personal development and community integration.

Another important aspect of the project is the strengthening of organisational capacities among partner institutions and local stakeholders. By working together across national contexts, partners will exchange experiences, share existing practices, and jointly develop new approaches to inclusive sport. This transnational cooperation allows organisations with different backgrounds, from sport clubs to youth organisations, to learn from one another and develop solutions that can be adapted to diverse local environments. Such cooperation reflects the broader objectives of the Erasmus+ Sport programme, which encourages partnerships that address shared European challenges through collaborative learning and innovation.

Building Bridges 2.0 seeks to demonstrate that inclusive sport is not limited to specialised institutions or elite para-sport structures. With the right methodologies, training tools, and supportive environments, basketball can become an accessible and meaningful activity for people with intellectual disabilities in local communities across Europe. By promoting participation, equality, and cooperation through sport, the project aims to strengthen both individual well-being and social cohesion while contributing to a more inclusive European sport landscape.

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**ABOUT
PARTNERS**

The Building Bridges 2.0 project brings together organisations from Spain, Serbia, Romania, and Cyprus, each contributing complementary expertise in grassroots sport, social inclusion, youth work, and work with vulnerable communities. The consortium reflects a deliberate combination of organisations with experience in sport development and organisations that work directly with people with intellectual disabilities, ensuring that the project's outputs respond both to practical coaching realities and to the social needs of the target group.

The project is coordinated by **Barcel'hona Sports Events** from Spain. The organisation has extensive experience in organising international sport events, grassroots sport activities, and community sport initiatives that aim to increase participation and engagement in physical activity. Through its work with local clubs, sport professionals, and international partners, Barcel'hona Sports Events has developed strong organisational capacities in sport event management, project coordination, and international cooperation. Within the Building Bridges 2.0 project, the organisation provides leadership in overall project coordination, ensuring the effective implementation of activities, communication between partners, and development of project outputs that promote inclusive basketball for people with intellectual disabilities.

From Serbia, the project involves **Club for Youth Empowerment 018 (KOM 018)**, a youth organisation based in Niš with extensive experience in international cooperation projects focused on social inclusion, youth empowerment, and sport-based education. Over the years, KOM 018 has implemented numerous Erasmus+ initiatives that combine sport with non-formal education methods to address social challenges such as discrimination, inequality, and exclusion of vulnerable groups. The organisation contributes strong expertise in designing educational methodologies, working with youth communities, and facilitating cooperation between civil society organisations and sport clubs. Within this project, KOM 018 plays an important role in supporting the development of inclusive training methodologies and promoting awareness of inclusive sport practices in grassroots environments.

The Romanian partner **Asociația Ludoku** brings experience in community engagement and work with vulnerable groups, particularly individuals who face barriers to participation in social and recreational activities. As a civil society organisation, Ludoku focuses on initiatives that encourage creativity, participation, and social inclusion through educational and community-based programmes. Their involvement in the project ensures that the developed basketball methodologies are accessible and relevant to organisations that work directly with people with intellectual disabilities at community level.

Through pilot activities and local engagement, the organisation contributes valuable insight into how inclusive sport initiatives can be introduced in environments where structured adaptive sport programs are still developing.

Another important partner is **Dikaioma Elpidas**, an organisation based in Cyprus that works with people with intellectual disabilities and their families. In their local context, opportunities for organised sport participation among individuals with intellectual disabilities remain limited, particularly outside specialised institutions. Grassroots organisations working with this target group often have restricted resources and limited experience in implementing structured sport activities. Through its involvement in the project, Dikaioma Elpidas contributes direct experience from working with individuals with intellectual disabilities, ensuring that the project's training tools and basketball methodologies respond to real needs of participants and caregivers.

The partnership itself represents an important strength of the project. Some partners bring experience in sport organisation and international project management, while others contribute expertise in disability inclusion and community work. This combination allows the consortium to approach inclusive basketball from multiple perspectives: sport development, social inclusion, education, and community engagement. At the same time, the project provides an opportunity for less experienced organisations to strengthen their capacities in international cooperation and adaptive sport practices through collaboration with more experienced partners.

Through cooperation between these organisations, the Building Bridges 2.0 project aims to develop practical and sustainable approaches for engaging people with intellectual disabilities in basketball and sport activities more broadly. By combining knowledge from different sectors and national contexts, the partnership ensures that the developed Guidelines will be applicable not only within partner organisations but also for a wide range of sport clubs, educators, and community organisations across Europe.

3

INTRODUCTION TO INCLUSIVE SPORTS

3.1 UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVE SPORTS

Inclusive sport is built on the principle that everyone should have the opportunity to participate in physical activity and sport regardless of their abilities, background, or personal circumstances. In recent decades, awareness of the importance of inclusive sport has grown significantly across Europe, supported by policies, educational initiatives, and grassroots programs that promote equal access to sport environments. However, despite this progress, many individuals with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual disabilities, still encounter barriers that limit their participation in sport activities and community life.

Sport has long been recognized as a powerful tool for personal development, social interaction, and community engagement. Participation in sport contributes to improved physical health, psychological well-being, confidence, and social skills. For individuals with intellectual disabilities, these benefits are especially significant. Regular participation in physical activity can improve motor skills, coordination, and overall health while also fostering independence, self-esteem, and a sense of belonging. At the same time, inclusive sport environments allow participants without disabilities to develop empathy, cooperation skills, and a deeper understanding of diversity within their communities.

Inclusive sport differs from traditional sport models in that it emphasises adaptation rather than exclusion. Instead of expecting participants to fit into rigid sport structures, inclusive sport encourages the adaptation of rules, equipment, training methods, and environments so that individuals with different abilities can participate meaningfully. This approach focuses on participation, enjoyment, and development rather than solely on competition and performance outcomes. Adaptations may include simplified rules, modified equipment, flexible team structures, or additional support provided by coaches and facilitators.

Another important element of inclusive sport is the creation of supportive and respectful environments. Coaches, teachers, volunteers, and sport organisations play a crucial role in ensuring that participants feel welcomed, valued, and encouraged to take part in activities at their own pace. Inclusive sport therefore requires not only technical adjustments to the activity itself but also a commitment to inclusive attitudes and practices among those who organise and deliver sport programs. Training and education for sport professionals are

essential in helping them develop the skills and confidence needed to work effectively with participants who have diverse needs.

Across Europe, inclusive sport initiatives increasingly aim to move beyond specialised disability programs and toward integrated sport environments where people with and without disabilities can participate together. Such approaches encourage social interaction and break down stereotypes about disability, demonstrating that sport can be a shared experience rather than a segregated activity. Integrated sport programs have been shown to strengthen community cohesion while providing meaningful opportunities for all participants to learn from one another.

Many communities still face practical challenges when attempting to implement inclusive sport activities. Limited access to adapted equipment, lack of trained coaches, insufficient awareness of inclusive methodologies, and financial constraints often prevent organisations from offering inclusive programs. In some regions, opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities to participate in sport remain restricted to specialised institutions, leaving many individuals without regular access to physical activity or social sport environments. Initiatives that develop practical tools, guidelines, and training resources for inclusive sport are particularly important. By supporting sport organisations, coaches, and community groups in understanding how to adapt activities and engage diverse participants, such initiatives help translate the concept of inclusion into everyday sport practice.

Inclusive sport serves not only as a recreational activity but also as a platform for social participation, empowerment, and equality. When sport environments are designed to be accessible and welcoming, they can help individuals with intellectual disabilities become more active members of their communities while strengthening connections between different social groups. Projects such as Building Bridges 2.0 build upon this understanding, using sport as a pathway toward greater inclusion and equal opportunities for all participants.

3.2 CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES

Across Europe, a number of initiatives have demonstrated how sport, and particularly basketball, can be successfully adapted to support the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities. These initiatives provide practical insight into how inclusive training models, community engagement, and partnership-based approaches can create meaningful opportunities for participation. The following examples highlight real practices implemented in different European contexts and illustrate approaches that can inspire organisations seeking to develop inclusive basketball programs.

MIXED ABILITY BASKETBALL PROGRAMME – SASKI BASKONIA (SPAIN)

An important example of inclusive basketball development at club level can be found in the Mixed Ability Basketball programme implemented by Saski Baskonia in Spain. The initiative was developed in cooperation with local organisations working with people with intellectual disabilities and aims to create an environment where players with and without disabilities can train and play basketball together.

The programme follows the Mixed Ability sport model, which focuses on integration rather than separation. Instead of organising separate activities for athletes with intellectual disabilities, participants train in the same teams and participate in adapted training sessions designed to accommodate different abilities. Coaches modify drills, simplify tactical instructions, and adjust game structures so that all players can meaningfully contribute to gameplay.

Participants include individuals with intellectual disabilities as well as volunteer players without disabilities who participate as teammates rather than assistants. This approach strengthens social interaction and encourages mutual learning among participants. The initiative has also contributed to raising awareness about inclusive sport in the region, demonstrating how professional sport clubs can use their infrastructure and visibility to promote social inclusion within their communities.

The Baskonia programme illustrates how existing basketball environments can be adapted to support inclusive participation without creating separate sport structures.

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EUROPEAN UNIFIED YOUTH BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT – SANSEPOLCRO (ITALY)

Another significant example of inclusive basketball practice is the European Unified Youth Basketball Tournament, organised in Sansepolcro, Italy. The event brought together 24 teams from 16 European countries, with each team composed of players with intellectual disabilities and players without disabilities competing together.

The tournament was designed not only as a sporting competition but also as an educational event promoting social inclusion and intercultural exchange among young participants. Teams participated in training sessions, matches, and workshops where athletes, coaches, and organisers shared experiences and discussed inclusive sport practices.

One of the key outcomes of the event was the demonstration that inclusive basketball competitions can maintain strong sporting engagement while prioritising teamwork and equal participation. Participants reported increased confidence, stronger friendships, and greater motivation to continue participating in sport activities after the event.

The tournament highlights how international sport events can serve as powerful platforms for promoting inclusion, cooperation, and awareness of disability sport across Europe.

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INCLUSIVE SCHOOL BASKETBALL PROGRAMME – ITALY

Inclusive basketball has also been successfully implemented within educational settings. A programme conducted in Italian schools explored how adapted basketball training could support students with special educational needs, including intellectual disabilities.

In the project, students participated in structured basketball sessions where drills and exercises were adapted to ensure participation regardless of ability level. Teachers and coaches worked together to adjust rules, simplify instructions, and provide additional guidance where needed.

The programme involved students with special educational needs participating alongside their peers, creating an environment where cooperation and mutual support were encouraged. Researchers observed improvements in motor coordination, social interaction, and self-confidence among participating students. Teachers also reported that inclusive sport sessions helped students build stronger relationships and increased their willingness to participate in other school activities.

This example demonstrates the potential of school-based sport programmes to promote inclusive values while supporting both physical and social development among students.

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INSPORT ERASMUS+ PROJECT – INCLUSIVE SPORT PARTICIPATION IN EUROPE

The INSPORT project, funded through the Erasmus+ Sport programme, focused on increasing participation of people with disabilities in sport activities across Europe. The project involved several European organisations and aimed to develop tools and training resources that help sport clubs and educators implement inclusive sport practices.

One of the main outcomes of the project was the creation of training materials and guidelines supporting sport professionals in adapting activities to include participants with disabilities. Basketball was frequently used as an example due to its flexibility, strong emphasis on teamwork, and ability to be easily adapted for different ability levels.

The project also included pilot activities in participating countries where inclusive sport sessions were organised with local participants. These sessions demonstrated that with appropriate guidance and training, sport clubs can successfully introduce inclusive activities even in environments with limited previous experience in disability sport.

The INSPORT initiative highlights the importance of capacity building among coaches and sport organisations as a key step in developing sustainable inclusive sport programmes.

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VIRTUS EUROPEAN BASKETBALL COMPETITIONS FOR ATHLETES WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Another important example of inclusive basketball development in Europe is the work of Virtus, the international federation responsible for sport for athletes with intellectual impairments. Virtus organises international competitions and development programmes that promote participation of athletes with intellectual disabilities in high-level sport.

Virtus basketball competitions bring together athletes from different European countries who compete under classification systems designed to ensure fair participation. These competitions also serve as development platforms where athletes can gain international sport experience and where coaches can exchange knowledge on training methodologies adapted for athletes with intellectual disabilities.

Beyond competition, Virtus plays an important role in promoting research, training programmes, and cooperation among sport organisations working in the field of intellectual disability sport. The federation collaborates with national sport bodies and international institutions to strengthen opportunities for athletes with intellectual disabilities within both specialised and mainstream sport environments.

The Virtus example demonstrates how structured international sport systems can support long-term development of inclusive sport while also creating pathways for athletes to progress from grassroots participation to international competition.

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THE SPECIAL OLYMPICS FOUNDATION OF ROMANIA (FSOR)

Established in 2003 as part of the global Special Olympics movement, focuses on promoting the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities through sports, education, and advocacy programs. Its activities aim to improve quality of life, encourage active participation in society, and provide opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities of all ages and ability levels to engage in structured physical and sports activities.

Since its founding, FSOR has continuously expanded its reach, enabling increasing numbers of athletes, unified partners, coaches, volunteers, and family members to take part in training and competitions across multiple levels—local, regional, national, and international. Romania has been actively participating in international Special Olympics events since 2005, regularly achieving strong results and winning medals in various sports, including basketball. At the national level, FSOR organizes annual National Games in different cities, covering sports such as athletics, bocce, swimming, badminton, and basketball. In addition, national championships are held in several disciplines, while regional and local competitions (such as Spring Cups and Regional Games) ensure continuous engagement throughout the year. FSOR also marks important international dates, including the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and European Special Olympics Week, through dedicated sporting events and awareness activities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization adapted by introducing virtual fitness programs and establishing a national fitness championship.

A key component of FSOR's work is its early intervention program for children aged 2 to 8, which supports the development of motor, social, and cognitive skills through play and physical activity. Parents are actively involved through training sessions, enabling them to better support their children's development and well-being. FSOR implements comprehensive health programs that include medical screenings in areas such as cardiology, ophthalmology, dentistry, and nutrition. Initiatives like Healthy Athletes, Strong Minds, and Fit Feet aim to improve both physical and mental health, while also promoting healthy lifestyles among participants and their families.

Educational programs play a central role in raising awareness and fostering inclusion. FSOR collaborates with schools, institutions, and community organizations to promote understanding and acceptance of people with intellectual disabilities. Through projects such as Unified Schools, UNIFY, and Youth Activation, young people with and without disabilities are brought together to learn, play sports, and develop leadership skills, contributing to more inclusive and tolerant communities.

Over the years, FSOR participants, including athletes, coaches, and partners, have received recognition at local, national, and international levels. Campaigns such as Purple Night and Lighting for Inclusion further highlight the achievements and visibility of people with intellectual disabilities, reinforcing their active role within society.

[**LEARN MORE HERE**](#)

4

UNDERSTANDING INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES

Intellectual Disability (ID) is a condition characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior that appear before the age of 18. According to the definitions used in the literature (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities – AAIDD; DSM-5), the diagnosis of ID is based on three main criteria:

- limitations in intellectual functioning (e.g., reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, academic learning);
- limitations in adaptive behavior, which affect the person's ability to function independently in daily life;
- onset of these limitations before the age of 18.

Intellectual functioning is usually assessed by standardized intelligence tests, where IQ scores below approximately 70–75 may indicate significant cognitive limitations. However, the diagnosis is not based solely on the IQ score, but on the overall assessment of the person's adaptive functioning.

PREVALENCE OF ID

ID is one of the most common developmental disabilities. Epidemiological studies indicate that approximately 1–3% of the global population has some form of ID. Prevalence may vary depending on the diagnostic criteria used, access to assessment services, and socio-economic factors in different regions. The majority of individuals diagnosed fall into the category of mild ID.

AREAS OF ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR

Adaptive behavior is the set of skills that a person uses to function effectively in everyday life and to cope with the demands of the social environment. These skills allow the individual to manage their daily activities, interact with others, and participate in community life. In the assessment of ID, adaptive behavior is analyzed in three main areas: conceptual, social, and practical.

CONCEPTUAL SKILLS

Conceptual skills refer to the basic cognitive skills needed to understand and use information in daily activities. These are related to language development, learning abstract concepts, and the ability to organize and plan.

Among the most important conceptual skills are:

- language and literacy, which allow a person to communicate and understand written or verbal information;
- the use of the concepts of time, money, and number, essential for managing daily activities;
- the ability to self-direct, which involves making simple decisions and organizing one's own actions.

These skills contribute to the development of autonomy and active participation in the educational and social environment.

SOCIAL SKILLS

Social skills include the competencies needed to interact with other people and to adapt to the norms and rules of society. These skills are essential for group integration and the development of interpersonal relationships.

This area includes:

- interpersonal skills and effective communication with others;
- social responsibility and the ability to respect community rules and norms;
- development of social relationships and cooperation within the group;
- the ability to solve social problems and avoid situations of risk or victimization.

The development of these skills contributes to increasing the degree of social integration and active participation in the community.

PRACTICAL SKILLS

Practical skills refer to the competencies needed to perform activities of daily living and function independently in society. These skills are directly related to personal autonomy and the ability to manage everyday responsibilities.

This area includes:

- activities of daily living and personal care;
- using transportation and navigating the community;
- organizing daily activities and following routines;
- developing occupational skills and maintaining personal safety.

The level of development of these skills directly influences the person's degree of independence and their ability to participate in social, educational and professional activities.

LEVELS OF ID

Four levels of severity of ID are identified in the literature: mild, moderate, severe, and profound.

- Mild ID – individuals can develop basic academic and social skills and function relatively independently with appropriate support.
- Moderate ID – individuals can learn functional skills and participate in structured activities with ongoing educational and social support.
- Severe ID – individuals need significant support to develop communication skills and to carry out daily activities.
- Profound ID – individuals require ongoing and intensive support for most daily activities.

It is important to emphasize that each person with ID has an individual profile of abilities, needs and development potential.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE LEVEL OF ID FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Level of ID	General features	Implications for physical activity
Mild ID Moderate ID Severe ID Profound ID	Understands simple instructions and can actively participate in a group Limited communication and autonomy skills Significant limitations in autonomy Requires ongoing support	Can practice most adapted sports activities Simplified and highly structured activities Simple, guided motor activities Activities with a therapeutic and sensory stimulation role

FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE THE OCCURRENCE OF ID

The occurrence of ID can be influenced by a variety of factors that act at different stages of an individual's development. These factors can occur before birth, during birth, or after birth and can have biological, social, behavioral, or educational origins. In many cases, the exact cause cannot be identified, and ID may be the result of the interaction of several factors.

BIOMEDICAL FACTORS

Biomedical factors are related to biological or medical processes that can affect the development of the nervous system and brain function. These factors can occur during the prenatal, perinatal, or postnatal period.

Some of the most common biomedical factors include:

- genetic or chromosomal disorders;
- prenatal or perinatal complications that can affect neurological development;
- poor nutrition or other health problems that can influence the child's development.

SOCIAL FACTORS

Social factors are related to the family environment and the context in which the child develops. The quality of social interactions and the level of stimulation provided by the family can significantly influence cognitive and adaptive development.

This category can include:

- the quality of family interaction and emotional support provided to the child;
- the level of cognitive stimulation and learning opportunities in the family environment;
- the socio-economic conditions of the family and access to educational and social resources.

BEHAVIORAL FACTORS

Behavioral factors are related to behaviors or habits that can have negative effects on the development of the child. These factors can act especially in the prenatal period or in the first years of life. These include:

- the use of alcohol, drugs or other substances during pregnancy;
- certain health-risk behaviors that can affect the development of the child.

EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

Educational factors are related to the child's access to educational services and early interventions that can support cognitive and adaptive development.

This category may include:

- access to education and educational support services;
- early intervention programs;
- the existence of educational support adapted to the child's needs.

ID may also coexist with other developmental conditions or associated disorders, such as **autism spectrum disorder (ASD)**, **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**, or **other physical and sensory disabilities**.

SUPPORT NEEDS

People with ID may need different types of support to function effectively in daily life and to participate in social, educational or professional activities. The level and type of support needed can vary significantly from one person to another and depend on several factors, including the severity of the ID, the level of adaptive functioning, the family and social environment, and the educational or professional opportunities available. For this reason, interventions for people with ID must be individualized and adapted to the specific needs of each person.

The concept of support is used in the literature to describe the types of support needed for people with ID to develop their skills, actively participate in the community, and improve their level of autonomy. Support can be provided in different contexts, such as the family environment, the educational environment, sports activities or the community, and can include educational, therapeutic, social or emotional support.

Four main types of support are identified in the literature:

- intermittent support – provided occasionally or in specific situations, when the person needs temporary help. This type of support usually appears at certain moments in life or in specific situations, such as learning a new activity or adapting to a different context.
- limited support – provided for certain activities or for a specific period of time. This type of support may be necessary, for example, within educational programs or in the process of developing specific skills.
- extensive support – provided regularly and constantly in several areas of life. People who need this type of support may require frequent support to carry out daily activities, to participate in educational activities or to integrate socially.
- pervasive support – represents the highest level of support and involves permanent and high-intensity support in most daily activities. This type of support is necessary for people with more severe levels of ID and often involves ongoing support from family or specialists.

Understanding these levels of support is important for planning educational, therapeutic, and social interventions for people with ID. By correctly identifying support needs, specialists can adapt intervention strategies and create programs that support the development of autonomy, active participation in the community, and improved quality of life. In the context of physical and sports activities, adapting the level of support is essential to ensure the participation of all people involved.

Some people may only need additional explanations or visual demonstrations, while others may require more constant guidance, adaptation of exercises or direct support in carrying out motor activities. By providing appropriate support, physical activities can become accessible and beneficial for people with ID, contributing to their motor, social and emotional development.

PSYCHOMOTOR CHARACTERISTICS OF PEOPLE WITH ID

People with ID may present certain peculiarities in psychomotor development, which may influence their ability to perform motor or sports activities. Psychomotor development is a complex process that involves the interaction between cognitive, emotional and motor functions. In the case of people with ID, this process may evolve at a slower pace or may present certain difficulties related to the coordination of movements, body control or adaptation to motor tasks.

These particularities are often associated with delays in nervous system development and difficulties in integrating sensory and motor information. Consequently, some people may have difficulties in organizing and controlling movements or in adapting them to different situations of physical activity.

Among the most common psychomotor characteristics are:

- delays in the development of motor coordination;
- difficulties in maintaining static and dynamic balance;
- low level of gross and fine motor skills;
- difficulties in controlling and planning movements.

Delays in the development of motor coordination can affect the ability of people with ID to perform precise movements or to perform activities that require the simultaneous coordination of several body segments. Balance difficulties can also affect body stability during walking, running, or performing more complex motor exercises.

Low levels of gross and fine motor skills can be observed in activities that involve moving, manipulating objects, or controlling hand movements. For example, some people may have difficulty performing activities that involve throwing and catching a ball, maintaining a stable position, or coordinating movements during sports games.

Difficulties in controlling and planning movements can affect the person's ability to organize and execute a sequence of motor actions. These difficulties may result in slower execution of movements or the need for additional demonstrations and explanations to understand the exercises.

These particularities can influence participation in physical and sports activities, but it is important to emphasize that the level of motor skills can vary considerably from one person to another. Through adapted physical activity programs, therapeutic interventions and structured exercises, many of these difficulties can be improved. Adapted motor activities can contribute to the development of coordination, balance and body control, as well as to improving the level of autonomy in daily activities. In addition, regular participation in physical activities can have positive effects not only on motor development, but also on cognitive, emotional and social development. By engaging in sports and games, people with ID can gain successful experiences, develop confidence in their own abilities and learn to interact more effectively with others. Thus, physical activity becomes an important tool in supporting the overall development and social inclusion of people with ID.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Cognitive development and motor development are closely interconnected and evolve in parallel throughout childhood and adolescence. In the first years of life, motor experiences play an important role in how a child explores the environment, interacts with objects and develops their learning capacity. Movement, play and physical activities contribute to stimulating the development of the nervous system and the formation of neural connections essential for cognitive processes.

Neuroscience research shows that certain brain structures, such as the cerebellum and the prefrontal cortex, are involved in both the coordination of movements and cognitive processes such as attention, planning, behavioral control and decision-making. The cerebellum, traditionally known for its role in coordinating movements and maintaining balance, is also involved in cognitive processes such as learning, memory and behavioral adaptation. At the same time, the prefrontal cortex has an important role in organizing behavior, regulating attention and planning actions.

From this perspective, the development of motor skills can directly influence the development of cognitive functions. Complex motor activities, which involve coordination, spatial orientation, or solving motor tasks, stimulate cognitive processes such as analyzing situations, anticipating actions, and adapting to changes in the environment.

Motor activity and physical exercise contribute to the stimulation of several important cognitive processes, including:

- developing the ability to concentrate and maintain attention on a task;
- development of spatial and temporal orientation in relation to the environment;
- development of procedural memory, involved in learning through repetition and practice;
- facilitating learning processes and general cognitive development.

In the case of children and young people with ID, this relationship between cognitive and motor development becomes particularly important. Physical activity and motor exercises can represent a favorable context for stimulating cognitive processes, as they involve attention, coordination, spatial orientation, and adaptation of behavior to different game or exercise situations.

Also, participating in physical and sports activities can support the development of important skills such as the ability to follow instructions, respect rules, cooperate with others, and solve simple problems that arise during activities. These experiences contribute not only to motor development, but also to the development of cognitive and social skills.

Therefore, physical activity can play an important role in supporting the overall development of children and young people with ID. Through adapted physical activity programs and structured motor activities, valuable opportunities can be created to stimulate cognitive development, improve the ability to adapt to the educational environment and increase the level of social participation.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity plays an essential role in maintaining health and in the harmonious development of people with ID. Regular physical exercise and participation in sports activities can significantly contribute to improving general health, as well as to developing motor, cognitive and social skills. For people with ID, physical activity represents not only a way of movement and recreation, but also an important context for learning, socialization and personal development.

Participating in physical activities primarily contributes to improving physical health and the overall condition of the body. Regular physical exercise can support the development of cardiovascular fitness, help maintain an appropriate body weight, and reduce the risk of health problems associated with a sedentary lifestyle. In the case of people with ID, who

may have a lower level of physical activity than the general population, promoting movement is particularly important for the prevention of conditions such as obesity, musculoskeletal problems or metabolic disorders.

Another important benefit of physical activity is the development of motor skills and improved coordination of movements. By participating in physical exercise and sports games, people with ID can develop their balance, coordination, spatial orientation and movement control. These motor skills contribute to increasing the ability to perform daily activities and can support the development of autonomy in everyday life.

Physical activity also has a positive impact on the development of autonomy and independence. By engaging in sports activities, people with ID can gain successful experiences, learn to manage their own actions and develop confidence in their own abilities. These experiences contribute to strengthening self-esteem and increasing motivation to participate in social and educational activities.

In addition to the physical and motor benefits, physical activity also positively influences the emotional state of participants. Physical exercise can reduce stress and anxiety levels, improve mood and contribute to the development of a positive self-image. Participation in sports activities in a supportive and motivating environment can play an important role in developing emotional balance and increasing the level of personal satisfaction.

A particularly important aspect is the role of physical activity in facilitating social integration. Sporting activities provide opportunities for interaction, cooperation and the development of social relationships. By participating in group games and exercises, people with ID can learn to communicate more effectively, collaborate with others and respect common rules. At the same time, these activities can contribute to reducing stigma and promoting a positive attitude towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community.

Thus, physical activity and sport are valuable tools for supporting the overall development of people with ID. Through adapted and inclusive programs, these activities can contribute to improving health, developing motor skills and increasing the level of social participation, while also supporting the process of integration and inclusion in the community.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Although physical activity and sport bring numerous benefits for the physical health, motor development and social integration of people with ID, their participation in such activities is often limited by a series of obstacles. These barriers can be of an individual, social or structural nature and can significantly influence access to sports or recreational programs. In many situations, these difficulties are not determined only by the characteristics of the disability, but also by the way in which the social environment and sports infrastructure are organized and adapted.

One of the important barriers is related to the severity of the ID and the person's level of adaptive functioning. Depending on the degree of disability, some people may experience difficulties in understanding the rules of the game, coordinating movements or maintaining attention during physical activities. These difficulties can reduce confidence in their own abilities and may lead to avoidance of participation in sports activities.

The existence of associated diagnoses or other health problems can also influence participation in physical activities. Some people with ID may have co-morbid conditions, such as autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cardiovascular problems, or musculoskeletal difficulties. These conditions may limit physical activity capacity or require additional adaptations to sports activities.

A person's age and developmental level may also be factors that influence participation in physical activities. Studies show that as people with ID age, their physical activity levels tend to decline. Adolescents and adults may become less physically active, especially in the absence of organized programs or adequate opportunities to practice sports

The family's socio-economic conditions can represent another important barrier. Access to sports programs, equipment, or transportation may be limited for families with limited financial resources. In addition, a lack of information about adapted sports programs or the benefits of physical activity can reduce the participation of people with ID in such activities.

A common obstacle is the lack of adapted sports infrastructure. Many sports facilities, gyms or physical activity fields are not organized in a way that allows for optimal participation by people with disabilities. The lack of adapted equipment, accessible spaces or programs specially designed for these people can significantly limit the possibility of involvement in sports activities.

At the same time, the lack of inclusive programs and specialists trained to work with people with ID can represent an important barrier. Instructors or coaches who do not have specific training may encounter difficulties in adapting exercises, communicating effectively with participants or managing specific situations that may arise during sports activities.

Identifying and understanding these barriers is an important step in developing accessible and inclusive sports programs. By adapting the infrastructure, training specialists and developing programs dedicated to people with ID, more opportunities for participation in physical activities can be created, thus contributing to improving health, autonomy and social inclusion.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH ID

In organizing and carrying out physical activities for people with ID, it is important to respect certain pedagogical and methodological principles that facilitate the learning process, active participation and the development of motor skills. These principles contribute to creating an educational framework adapted to the needs of the participants and allow instructors or teachers to organize the activities in an accessible, efficient and motivating way.

A first important principle is the use of simple and clear language, easy to understand. People with ID may have difficulty understanding complex or abstract explanations, which is why instructions should be formulated in a direct way, using short sentences and familiar words. Message clarity is essential to ensure correct understanding of the tasks and to reduce participant confusion or anxiety.

It is also recommended to provide short and well-structured instructions. Activities should be presented step by step, so that participants can more easily understand what they have to do. Clear structuring of exercises and activity sequences contributes to a more efficient organization of the learning process and to an increase in the degree of involvement of the participants.

Visual demonstrations are another important element in working with people with ID. Direct observation of movements allows learning by imitation and facilitates understanding of the exercises. In many situations, a demonstration by the instructor or another participant can be more effective than a verbal explanation. Therefore, the use of visual demonstrations, accompanied by simple explanations, can support the motor learning process.

Repetition of exercises is also essential for consolidating motor skills. Through repetition, participants can develop their coordination of movements and gain more confidence in performing the activities. At the same time, repetition contributes to the development of procedural memory and the formation of motor automatisms necessary in sports activities.

Another important principle is to provide positive feedback and encourage progress. People with ID may need constant support and validation to maintain their motivation and self-confidence. Appreciating effort, encouraging participation and recognizing progress contribute to creating a positive atmosphere and developing motivation for movement.

Adapting activities to the developmental level of participants is also essential. Exercises and games must be appropriate to the motor and cognitive capacities of participants, so that they are achievable and provide experiences of success. Activities that are too difficult can generate frustration and demotivation, while adapted activities can stimulate engagement and progress.

Finally, it is important that activities are carried out in a safe, predictable and motivating environment. Clearly organizing the workspace, establishing simple rules and maintaining a positive atmosphere contribute to creating a climate conducive to learning. A structured and secure environment allows participants to feel comfortable and actively engage in the proposed activities.

The application of these pedagogical and methodological principles contributes to increasing the level of involvement of participants and to the development of motor, cognitive and social skills of people with ID. At the same time, these principles facilitate the process of inclusion and active participation in physical and sports activities.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS PROGRAMS

To ensure the effective participation of people with ID in sports activities, it is essential that instructors, teachers and coaches adapt teaching methods, activity structure and the way exercises are organised to the needs and level of functioning of the participants. People with ID may exhibit significant differences in their learning pace, ability to concentrate, understanding instructions, or motor coordination. For this reason, physical activities should be planned in a flexible and accessible way, so that each participant can understand the task and actively participate in the exercises.

An important role is played by the way instructions and explanations are presented. Instructors should use simple, clear and concrete language, avoiding complex or abstract formulations. Visual demonstrations are particularly useful, as many people with ID learn more easily by observing and imitating movements. Therefore, presenting exercises through repeated demonstrations and performing them together with participants can facilitate the learning process and increase their confidence in their own abilities.

Repetition of activities is another essential element in the motor learning process. Through repetition, participants can consolidate their motor skills and develop better coordination of movements. At the same time, repetition contributes to the development of procedural memory, which plays an important role in learning physical and sports activities.

In organizing physical activity programs, it is recommended to use multisensory learning strategies, which simultaneously involve several perception channels, such as visual, auditory and kinesthetic. These strategies can include visual demonstrations, simple verbal explanations, the use of teaching materials or physical guidance of movements when necessary. By involving several learning modalities, participants can more easily understand the exercises and develop their motor skills more effectively.

Physical activity programs should also encourage cooperation and social interaction between participants. Activities carried out in pairs or groups can contribute to the development of social skills, increase the sense of belonging and stimulate motivation for participation. Through sports activities organized in a positive and supportive environment, participants can experience success, learn to collaborate with others and develop self-confidence.

Another important detail is the creation of a safe and motivating environment for carrying out physical activities. Instructors must ensure that the work space is organized in a way that reduces the risks of injury and facilitates the participation of all people involved. Adapting sports equipment, simplifying the rules of the game and clearly structuring activities can contribute to increasing accessibility and improving the experience of participants.

By applying these principles and by constantly adapting activities to the needs of participants, physical activity and sports programs can significantly contribute to the motor, cognitive and social development of people with ID. At the same time, such programs can support the process of social inclusion and promote the active participation of these people in community life.

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PARTICIPATION OF PEOPLE WITH ID IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

PARTICIPAREA LA ACTIVITATE FIZICĂ		
<i>Personal factors</i>	<i>Social factors</i>	<i>Environmental factors</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- cognitive level- motor level- motivation- health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- family support- friends- teachers- community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- access to facilities- sports infrastructure- adapted programs- public policies

These factors interact and can facilitate or limit the participation of people with ID in physical and sports activities.

CONCLUSION

Understanding ID and the associated psychomotor characteristics is an essential part of developing inclusive and effective educational and sports programs. Knowing the cognitive, social and motor characteristics of people with ID allows teachers, coaches and therapists to adapt activities so that they are accessible, safe and motivating for participants.

Physical activity and sport can play an important role in supporting the overall development of people with ID. Regular physical exercise contributes to improving physical health, developing motor skills and increasing the level of autonomy in everyday life. At the same time, participation in sports activities promotes the development of self-confidence, motivation for movement and the ability to cooperate with others.

Physical activity also represents a valuable context for developing social relationships and facilitating inclusion in the community. By participating in organized sports activities, people with ID have the opportunity to interact with others, work in teams, and experience success and belonging to a group.

Therefore, the development and implementation of adapted and inclusive physical activity programs is an important direction for improving the quality of life of people with ID. Such programs can contribute not only to the development of motor skills and physical health, but also to increasing the level of social participation and promoting a more inclusive society.

4.1 STRATEGIES ON PROMOTING AND RECRUITING PEOPLE WITH ID

The participation of people with ID in physical and sports activities is an important factor for the development of physical health, motor skills and social integration. Physical activity contributes to increasing the level of autonomy, improving well-being, and developing social relationships.

However, access for people with ID to organized sports activities is often limited by various barriers: lack of information, reduced opportunities for participation, family fears, or lack of adapted programs. For this reason, promotion and recruitment of participants must be achieved through specific strategies, involving the community, educational institutions, families and local organizations.

INCREASING INFORMATION AND AWARENESS

A first step in promoting participation in physical activities is to increase the level of information at the community level. Many parents, educators or community members are not sufficiently informed about the benefits of physical activity for people with ID.

Information activities can include:

- organizing presentations and seminars in schools or educational centers;
- producing informational materials (brochures, posters, guides);
- promoting activities through social networks and online platforms;
- organizing demonstrative sports events.

Promotional messages must be clear, accessible and highlight the benefits of participation: improving health, developing motor skills, increasing self-confidence and facilitating social relationships.

COLLABORATION WITH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Educational institutions are an essential partner in the process of recruiting participants. Collaboration with special schools, inclusive schools or educational centers allows the identification of students who can benefit from participating in adapted sports activities.

Teachers, therapists and school counselors can contribute to:

- identifying potential participants;
- informing families about available programs;
- supporting students in the process of integrating into sports activities.

Organizing demonstration activities or sports days in schools can facilitate students' familiarization with different types of physical activities.

INVOLVING FAMILIES AND CAREGIVERS

Families play a key role in recruiting and maintaining participation in sports activities for people with ID. The support and encouragement provided by family can significantly influence the motivation of participants.

To facilitate family involvement, it is recommended to:

- organize informational meetings for parents;
- present the benefits of physical activity;
- provide information about safety and adaptation of activities;
- maintain constant communication between instructors and families.

Parental participation in certain activities or events can contribute to strengthening the relationship between instructors, participants and families.

CREATING ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

To attract and maintain the participation of people with ID, sports programs must be adapted to the developmental level and capabilities of the participants.

In this regard, it is important to:

- adapt exercises and rules of activities;
- use appropriate materials and equipment;
- organize activities in a safe and friendly environment;
- promote participation and cooperation, not sports performance.

Practical aspects such as the accessibility of sports facilities, the schedule of activities or transport possibilities should also be considered.

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with local organizations, sports clubs, NGOs or community centers can help expand participation opportunities for people with ID.

These collaborations can include:

- organizing inclusive sports events;
- sharing sports infrastructure;
- developing joint physical activity programs;
- training instructors in adapted activities.

Local authorities can support these initiatives through public policies and funding programs dedicated to inclusive sports.

MOTIVATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR PARTICIPATION

Promoting physical activities should create a positive and motivating climate for participants. The focus should be on the joy of movement, socialization and the development of self-confidence.

To increase motivation, the following can be used:

- interactive activities and motor games;
- positive feedback and encouragement;
- valorization of individual progress;
- presentation of successful examples.

A positive learning environment contributes to the development of motivation and the maintenance of participation in the long term.

MONITORING AND MAINTAINING PARTICIPATION

Recruiting participants is only the first step in developing inclusive sports programs. In order to maintain participation, it is necessary to monitor progress and adapt activities according to the needs of participants.

Constant communication with families and collaboration with specialists in the field of education and therapy contribute to improving the quality of programs and developing positive sports experiences for participants.

PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

When you start working on different physical and sports activities with people with ID, regardless of the educational environment (school or leisure), you should consider setting goals in different directions:

- for the development of the level of physical health, it aims at indicators such as: educating body posture, increasing muscle tone, increasing aerobic capacity, educating breathing, educating body weight control
- for the formation of locomotor skills (walking, running, jumping, etc.) and object control (throwing and catching, hitting with the hand and foot, dribbling, etc.)
- for the education of simple and complex psychomotor skills: body scheme, laterality, static and dynamic balance, coordination of general and segmental dynamic movement, spatial-temporal orientation, manual dexterity, etc.
- for the learning of knowledge and rules from different sports (for example, basketball)
- for the development of the level of psychosocial health, it aims at: educating motivation for movement, facilitating integration and social inclusion, facilitating social interactions and relationships with others, reducing the level of negative behaviors (depressive states, isolation, anxiety, etc.).

HOW TO SUCCEED WHEN WORKING ON PHYSICAL AND SPORTS ACTIVITIES WITH PEOPLE WITH ID

- Do an initial assessment: level of cognitive functionality, contraindications/limitations, previous experiences, etc.!
- Learn the person's name and use it!
- Establish and maintain constant eye contact.
- In the case of a person with ASD and ADHD, encourage them to make eye contact during the explanation and demonstration.
- Use short, simple explanations and use words they know. Repeat the information presented, especially if it is a new concept.

- Demonstrate the exercise. Repeat the demonstration if necessary.
- Uses multisensory learning strategies (if the first movements are performed with help, by leading through movement, in the end, they must perform alone, even without demonstration, in order to become aware and coordinate segmentally and generally).
- Work in the mirror, at the same time as him/her.
- Consider learning gross motor skills that ensure balance/stability of the body in motion (movement skills - walking, running, jumping).
- Use larger objects (balls) in learning when practicing object control skills (throwing and catching, manipulating objects, etc.).
- Technical details are less important, at most 1-2 technical elements.
- Use safe equipment and materials that cannot cause injuries.
- Make sure the area is safe and does not have access to materials and equipment that can cause injuries or those that you are not using.
- Limit and signal the work space (highlighted lines drawn on the ground, placement of cones, etc., reduce the distance between the teacher and the athlete)
- Establish simple rules. Make sure they respect them!
- Use simplified rules (e.g. in basketball, no steps are sanctioned, double-dribbling, long time with the ball in hand without passing, etc.).
- Uses adapted rules (for example, rules regarding technical execution, "double-dribble", ball rolled instead of dribbling, etc. are not taken into account).
- Allow them time to familiarize themselves with the work area/equipment used.
- Make sure they understand what they have to do, what they should/should not do.
- Provide help and support in the execution of the movement, if necessary, to prevent injuries.
- Adapt the equipment and materials, the workspace to the needs, interests and level of psycho-motor development of the individual with intellectual disabilities.
- Use intuitive materials (boards, drawings, etc.)
- Use equipment that sets the rhythm of movement (whistle, clapping, drums, counting, etc.)
- Choose exercises and games that involve him/her constantly, without being removed from the game if they make a mistake.
- Encourage and praise any response (intention or execution of the requested movement).
- Encourage and praise independent work.
- Reinforce successful executions by giving them the opportunity to practice more.
- Share with other professionals (teachers, therapists, coaches), parents the experiences and knowledge gained with people with ID.

For effective promotion and sustainable recruitment of people with ID, it is recommended to:

- use clear and accessible language in promotional materials;
- collaborating with schools and organizations working with people with disabilities;
- involving families in the information and participation process;
- organizing demonstration activities to familiarize participants;
- creating a safe, friendly and inclusive environment.

CONCLUSION

Promoting and recruiting people with ID into physical activity and sport programs requires a coordinated approach involving educational institutions, families, community organizations, and sports professionals. By developing effective strategies for information, collaboration and adaptation of activities, real opportunities can be created for the active participation of people with ID in community life.

Physical activity and sport contribute not only to improving physical health, but also to developing autonomy, self-confidence and social integration, representing an important element in building an inclusive society.

5

**TRAINING
SESSIONS**

SESSION NAME: “LEARNING THROUGH GAME IN BASKETBALL TRAINING”

TOPIC: “Adapting games and playful exercises for athletes with intellectual disabilities”

DURATION: 45 minutes

Time distribution:

- Presentation activity of the participants – 5 minutes
- Importance of the game in sports training – 10 minutes
- Adapting games to the level of the participants – 10 minutes
- Games and playful exercises in basketball training – 15 minutes
- Conclusion – 5 minutes

OVERVIEW

The use of games as an educational method in sports training is an effective strategy for involving people with intellectual disabilities in physical and sports activities. This session will present methods by which technical basketball exercises can be transformed into playful activities, which facilitate learning, maintain the motivation of the participants and contribute to the development of motor and social skills.

OBJECTIVES

- To highlight the role of play in the learning of sports skills.
- To provide coaches with examples of adapting technical exercises into games.
- To facilitate increased motivation and participation of athletes with intellectual disabilities.
- To develop cooperation and social interaction in sports activities.
- To encourage the use of play activities to develop motor skills.

MATERIALS

To successfully deliver an inclusive basketball training session, a set of basic resources and equipment is required. These materials help organize the activities, support the learning process and ensure that the training is conducted in a safe and comfortable environment for all participants.

The following resources can be used during the session:

Sports equipment

- basketballs used for drills, passing exercises and shooting practice (ideally one ball per player);
- cones or floor markers to organize movement paths and activity stations;
- colored bibs or vests to help distinguish teams during small-sided games.

Training space

- access to a basketball court or another suitable sports area where the training activities can be carried out safely.

Poor participant

- comfortable sports clothing appropriate for physical activity;
- sports shoes that provide stability and protect the ankle during movement.

Safety and session management

- a whistle used by the coach to coordinate the activities and give signals during the session;
- a basic first aid kit available to manage minor injuries if necessary.

These materials support the creation of an organized and inclusive training environment, allowing all participants to take part actively in the session.

GROUP SIZE

15 – 20 people

TRAINING

To implement this methodology effectively, facilitators must follow the following training steps:

- Communication skills are essential for transmitting knowledge to coaches. It should be noted that approximately 70% of the message is transmitted through non-verbal language, and 30% through verbal language.
- The facilitator/coach's enthusiasm is crucial in motivating and inspiring participants. Facilitators should mentally prepare for the session and create a positive and motivating atmosphere.
- The facilitator/coach should establish in advance the play activities that will be used in the session and how they contribute to the development of sports skills.

INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT 1: Participant introduction activity (5 minutes)

Introductory explanation

We will start the session with a short participant introduction activity and by introducing the concept of learning through play in sports training. Participants will be invited to share their experiences in working with athletes with disabilities and how they use games in sports activities.

Sample speech

"Hello everyone! In today's session we will explore how games and play activities can make basketball training a more engaging and motivating experience for athletes with intellectual disabilities."

"Are you ready?"

Tips for facilitators

- *Create a relaxed environment that encourages participation and good humor.*
- *Encourage participants to share ideas and experiences.*
- *Break the ice!*

CONTENT 2: The importance of games in sports training (10 minutes)

Introductory explanation

Games are one of the most effective learning methods for people with intellectual disabilities. Through games, participants learn exercises more easily, develop their motor skills and maintain their motivation during sports activities.

The use of games in training contributes to:

- increasing the level of involvement of participants
- developing coordination and control of movements
- stimulating cooperation between team members
- reducing anxiety and creating a positive environment

Example of speech

"When we use games in training, we transform technical exercises into enjoyable and motivating activities. Thus, participants learn without perceiving the exercises as an obligation."

CONTENT 3: Adapting games to the level of participants (10 minutes)

Introductory explanation

For playful activities to be effective, they must be adapted to the level of skills of the participants. Differences in level can be addressed by changing the rules of the game, the space for the game, or the difficulty of the exercises.

Examples of adaptations

- simplifying the rules of the game
- using a smaller number of players
- reducing the size of the court
- allowing more time for the execution of actions
- gradually introducing technical elements

Tips for facilitators

- Activities should be adapted so that all participants can take part in the game.
- It is important to create successful situations for each participant.

CONTENT 4: Games and playful exercises in basketball training (15 minutes)

Introductory explanation

In this part of the session, examples of games and playful exercises that can be used to develop basic basketball skills will be presented.

Alternating technical exercises with games helps to maintain the attention of participants and facilitates the learning process.

Sample Games

Game 1: Dribbling Relay

Participants are divided into teams and must dribble the ball through the cones to the end line and back.

Game 2: "Protect the Ball" Game

Participants dribble in a designated area and try to protect their ball while trying to touch other players' balls.

Game 3: 3x3 Mini Games

Participants play short 3x3 matches with simplified rules.

Game 4: Shooting Game

Participants try to score from different distances or positions.

Sample Speech

"We will present some examples of games that can be integrated into basketball training. These activities help athletes develop their technical skills in a fun and motivating way."

Tips for facilitators

- Alternate technical exercises with games to maintain the interest of the participants.
- Adapt the difficulty of the activities according to the level of the participants.
- Encourage cooperation and support between team members.

CONTENT 5: Conclusion (5 minutes)

Introductory explanation

At the end of the activity, we will make a brief recap of the main ideas discussed and we will emphasize the importance of using games in sports training for people with intellectual disabilities.

Sample speech

"Thank you very much for your involvement and active participation in this session. I hope that the ideas presented today will help you transform basketball training into a more attractive and motivating experience for athletes with intellectual disabilities."

"By using games and playful activities we can contribute to the development of sports skills, increasing self-confidence and social integration of the participants."

SESSION NAME: “PLAY TOGETHER, GROW TOGETHER”

THEME: *"Inclusive basketball session focused on collaboration, participation and social interaction"*

TIME: 60 minutes

Time allocation:

- Warm up – Team activation (15 minutes)
- Main Part – Cooperative court exercises (20 minutes)
- Cooperative games (20 minutes)
- Back to calm (5 minutes)

OVERVIEW

Plan a complete inclusive basketball training session focused on cooperation, participation and social interaction among players with different levels of ability.

This session aims to promote teamwork and equal participation while improving basic basketball skills. The activities are designed so that every participant can contribute to the team's success, regardless of their level of ability.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve basic basketball skills: dribbling, passing and shooting.
- Promote cooperation and teamwork among players.
- Encourage social interaction and communication during training.
- Increase self-confidence and participation of players with intellectual disabilities.
- Maintain a fun, inclusive and motivating training environment.

MATERIALS

In order to organize an inclusive basketball training session, several types of equipment and resources are needed to support both the learning process and the safety of the participants. The materials help facilitators structure the activities, create clear practice areas and ensure that all players can participate comfortably.

The following resources are recommended:

Sports equipment

- basketballs to be used during the exercises and drills (ideally one ball for each participant);
- cones or training markers to organize movement routes and different practice stations;
- colored training bibs that allow players to easily recognize their teammates during small-sided games.

Training environment

- access to a basketball playing area, which may be an indoor court or an outdoor sports field adapted for basketball activities.

Participant equipment

- comfortable sportswear suitable for physical activity;
- sports shoes designed for basketball or indoor training that provide stability and ankle support.

Safety and session management

- a whistle used by the coach to manage activities and attract players' attention;
- a basic first aid kit available in case of minor injuries during the session.

These materials contribute to creating a structured, safe and inclusive environment in which all participants can actively engage in the training activities.

GROUP SIZE

12 players

PREPARATION

In order to implement this training session effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

- Communication is essential to guide and motivate participants. Coaches should remember that a large part of communication is transmitted through non-verbal language such as gestures, demonstrations and body language.
- The enthusiasm and positive attitude of the coach are crucial for creating a welcoming and motivating environment.
- The coach must clearly plan the objectives of the session and prepare the activities in advance.
- The necessary equipment and materials should be prepared on the court before the session begins.

INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT 1: Warm up – Team activation (15 minutes)

Intro explanation

The objectives of this first part are:

- to activate the body and prepare participants for physical activity
- to encourage interaction and cooperation between players
- to develop basic ball control through fun activities

To achieve these objectives, the warm-up will consist of three cooperative games.

Game 1: Partner Dribbling Challenge

Half court. Players work in pairs.

Duration: 6 minutes.

Each pair has one basketball. One player dribbles while the other moves next to them and gives verbal instructions such as "left", "right", "slow", or "fast".

After one minute, the players switch roles.

Variation:

- both players dribble while trying to keep the same rhythm.

Purpose:

- improve coordination
- encourage communication between players

Game 2: Passing Circle

Players stand in a circle with one or two basketballs.

Duration: 4 minutes.

Players pass the ball around the circle using chest passes. The coach gradually increases the difficulty by adding a second ball or asking players to change direction.

Purpose:

- improve passing skills
- promote teamwork and attention

Game 3: Cooperative Dribbling Race

Players form small teams.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Players dribble through a line of cones and return to their team before the next teammate starts.

Purpose:

- develop dribbling control
- encourage team cooperation

CONTENT 2: Main Part – Cooperative Court Exercises (20 minutes)

Intro explanation

The objectives of this part of the training session are:

- improving dribbling and passing skills
- encouraging collaboration between players
- adapting activities to different levels of ability

Players will work in two groups according to their level of ability.

Group 1 – Higher skill level

Exercise: Pass – move – shoot.

Players pass the ball to a teammate, move to a new position, receive the ball again and shoot.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group 2 – Lower skill level

Exercise: Dribbling between cones.

Players dribble slowly through a zigzag line of cones.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group 1 – Higher skill level

Exercise: Passing and moving in triangle formation.

Three players pass the ball and rotate positions.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Group 2 – Lower skill level

Exercise: Passing in pairs.

Players practice chest passes and bounce passes while standing or walking slowly.

Duration: 5 minutes.

Cooperative Activity (Both groups)

Exercise: Team passing challenge.

Teams must complete a certain number of consecutive passes without dropping the ball.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Purpose:

- teamwork
- communication
- concentration

CONTENT 3: Cooperative Games (20 minutes)

Intro explanation

Three balanced teams of four players are formed.

They play cooperative basketball games where teamwork is more important than scoring.

The objective is to allow all players to apply the skills practiced during the session while encouraging collaboration.

Game 1: Everybody Touches the Ball

Teams must ensure that every player touches the ball before a shot can be taken.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Purpose:

- encourage inclusion
- ensure participation of all players

Game 2: Pass Before Dribble

Players must pass the ball at least once before dribbling.

Duration: 10 minutes.

Purpose:

- improve teamwork
- develop passing skills

Tips for facilitators

- Use small teams so everyone can participate.
- Avoid stopping the game too often unless necessary.
- Encourage players to communicate and support each other.
- Praise teamwork and cooperation.

CONTENT 4: Back to calm (5 minutes)

Intro explanation

To gradually reduce the heart rate after the games, players perform light shooting exercises from different positions on the court.

Players take turns shooting while teammates encourage them.

This activity creates a relaxed and positive atmosphere at the end of the training session.

It can also be organized as a *friendly team competition*, where players try to score as many baskets as possible while supporting each other.

SESSION NAME: “TRAIN THE TRAINER”

TOPIC: *“Adapting exercises for different ability levels”*

DURATION: 45 minutes

Time allocation:

- Participant introduction activity – 5 minutes
- Understanding players’ ability levels – 15 minutes
- Adapting exercises and organizing training – 10 minutes
- Practical strategies for adapting exercises – 10 minutes
- Wrap-up – 5 minutes

OVERVIEW

This training session aims to develop the skills of coaches and instructors in adapting sports exercises for athletes with different ability levels, especially for people with intellectual disabilities. By using flexible teaching methods and adapted exercises, coaches can facilitate the participation of all athletes and create an inclusive, motivating and accessible sports environment.

OBJECTIVES

- To teach coaches how to adapt sports exercises for players with different skill levels.
- To develop the capacity of coaches to organize inclusive sports activities.
- To provide strategies for maintaining motivation and involvement of all participants.
- To promote equal participation and the development of physical and social skills of athletes.

MATERIALS

To organize this training session, it is necessary to use resources that support both the theoretical part of the training and the practical demonstration of sports exercises. The activity can be carried out in a training room or in a sports space, depending on how the facilitator wants to combine explanations with practical activities.

The following types of materials can be used during the session:

Resources for organizing sports activities

- basketballs used to demonstrate exercises and to simulate training situations;
- cones or other sports signaling materials, useful for marking routes and exercise areas;
- tapes or field markings that help to delimit the work spaces for different types of activities.

Tools for presenting information

- digital presentation equipment (video projector or monitor) to illustrate concepts and methodological examples;
- whiteboard or flipchart that allows explaining the stages of the exercises and creating activity organization schemes.

Support materials for participants

- workbooks or electronic devices (tablets or laptops) to note the main ideas and examples discussed during the session.

The use of these materials allows facilitating an interactive learning process, in which participants can observe and experience different ways of adapting sports exercises for athletes with different levels of abilities.

The use of these materials allows combining theoretical explanations with practical examples, facilitating understanding of how sports exercises can be adapted for athletes with different levels of abilities.

GROUP SIZE

15 – 20 people

PREPARATION

To effectively implement this methodology, facilitators must follow a few preparation steps:

- Communication skills are essential for transmitting information to the trainers. In the communication process, it must be taken into account that approximately 70% of the message is transmitted through non-verbal language and 30% through verbal language.
- The enthusiasm of the facilitator/trainer is very important for motivating participants. Facilitators must mentally prepare for the session and create a positive climate that encourages participation.
- The facilitator/trainer must establish the objectives and content of the session in advance and prepare the activities in a structured manner.
- Preparing the materials and organizing the workspace are essential for the efficient conduct of the activities.

INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT 1: Participant Introduction Activity (5 minutes)

Introductory Explanation

In this first part of the session, we will get to know the participants and introduce the topic of the training, explaining the importance of adapting sports exercises for athletes with different levels of ability.

The aim of this activity is to create an open and friendly environment that facilitates participation and the exchange of ideas between coaches.

Sample speech

“Hello everyone! In today’s session we will discuss how we can adapt exercises for athletes with different levels of ability. In inclusive sports activities, each participant has their own learning pace and capabilities, and our role as coaches is to create activities that allow everyone to participate.”

“Are you ready to discover together some practical methods of adapting exercises?”

Tips for facilitators

- Create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere.
- Encourage participants to introduce themselves and share their experiences.

CONTENT 2: Understanding the skill levels of players (15 minutes)

Introductory explanation

In this part of the training, we will discuss the differences in level between athletes and how these differences influence the organization of sports activities.

In inclusive sports groups, participants may have different levels of physical, cognitive, and social abilities. Coaches must be able to identify these differences and adapt the activities so that all participants feel involved and motivated.

Examples of differences between athletes

- Level of motor coordination
- Concentration ability
- Understanding instructions
- Learning pace

Tips for facilitators

- Observe the behavior and level of each athlete.
- Adjust the difficulty level of the exercises according to the abilities of the participants.

CONTENT 3: Adapting exercises and organizing training (10 minutes)

Introductory explanation

Adapting exercises is essential to allow participation by all athletes, regardless of their level of development. This may involve changing the rules, the playing space or the way exercises are organized.

Examples of adaptations

Adapting rules

- Simplifying the rules of the game
- Introducing rules progressively

Adapting the playing space

- Reducing the size of the field
- Using delimited areas for exercises

Adapting equipment

- Using lighter balls
- Using cones and visual markers

CONTENT 4: Practical Strategies for Adapting Exercises (10 minutes)

Introductory Explanation

In this part we will present some practical strategies that can help coaches adapt exercises for groups with different skill levels.

Strategy 1: Differentiating exercises

The same exercise can be performed at different levels of difficulty.

Example – shooting drill:

Level 1: shooting close to the basket without opposition

Level 2: shooting from a greater distance

Level 3: shooting after dribbling

Strategy 2: Different working groups

- Groups according to skill level
- Mixed groups for cooperative activities

Strategy 3: Peer support

More advanced athletes can help those who need support.

Examples:

- demonstrating exercises
- explaining the rules
- encouraging colleagues

CONTENT 5: Closing (5 minutes)

Introductory explanation

At the end of the session, we will recap the main ideas discussed and emphasize the importance of adapting exercises to create an inclusive sports environment.

Sample speech

"Thank you for your participation and involvement. Adapting sports exercises is essential to give all athletes the chance to participate and enjoy sports activities. The role of coaches is very important in creating an environment where each participant feels valued and motivated."

"I encourage you to apply these methods in your training sessions and continue to promote inclusive sport."

SESSION NAME: “WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT, WE ARE ALL THE SAME”

TOPIC: *“Adaptations for Basketball training”*

DURATION: 45 minutes

Time allocation:

- Participant introduction activity - 5 minutes
- Adapting the regulations to the needs - 10 minutes
- Degrees of disability of the players - 10 minutes
- Analytical exercises + games - 15 minutes
- Closure - 5 minutes

OVERVIEW

Factors to consider when scheduling training sessions for an inclusive Basketball Team - Special Olympics (Intellectual disability).

OBJECTIVES

- To make the practice of basketball more accessible, understandable and motivating for players.
- Adapt the training session according to the different levels of disability of the participants.
- Schedule the session to achieve improvement in individual learning without "neglecting" the team spirit.
- Promote integration and solidarity within the team.
- Design the training session by alternating analytical exercises with games.

MATERIALS

In order to carry out this training for the coaches who help us in the training sessions, we will need a room of adequate size to accommodate the group of between 15 and 20 people, well-lit and ventilated.

Regarding the materials needed for training, these would be the following:

- 1 Screen or big white wall (If we are going to use a computer to support a presentation to show the training content)
- A whiteboard or easel with large sheets of paper for making notes large enough to be seen by the training participants.
- Participants should have a notebook or device such as a computer/tablet for taking notes.

GROUP SIZE

15 – 20 people

PREPARATION

In order to implement this methodology effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

- Knowing how to communicate is key to transmitting everything we know to the trainers. When communicating, we must keep in mind that 70% of the message is received through non-verbal language, while the remaining 30% is communicated via verbal language.
- The enthusiasm of the facilitator/coach will be decisive in motivating and inspiring their participants. Facilitators must prepare themselves mentally for the session and try to find the words and the gestures which will encourage the trainers to participate and enjoy the activity.
- The facilitator/coach must know what he/she wants to work on in the session (objectives and contents) and put them on paper (preparation of the activity).

INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT 1: Participant Introduction Activity (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We are going to welcome everyone and explain that today's session is essential to make the sporting activity accessible to all members of their team.

Script example:

"..Hello everyone, In today's training session, We are going to learn how we can involve all our players regardless of the differences in the degree of intellectual disability they may have, all this while working as a team.." "..Are you ready??.."

Tips for facilitators:

- It is important to focus on creating a relaxed environment that encourages participants to want to participate and have fun. Break the ice!

CONTENT 2: Adapting the regulations to the needs (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: It is important to make basketball accessible without requiring the application of all its rules, as these can be complicated for an athlete with an intellectual disability. Therefore, the aim of this section is to reduce the complexity of these rules.

Below are some examples of these adaptations.

- Do not penalize travelling or double passes at beginner levels.
- Shorter matches or matches with more frequent breaks.
- Fewer players per team (3x3 or 4x4 instead of 5x5).
- Allow more possession time to think and execute the action.
- Reduce the size of the track to avoid fatigue and improve orientation.
- Introduce progressive rules according to the level of the players.

Script example:

"..When we talk about adapting basketball practice, we mean facilitating its implementation for our players, gradually increasing the difficulty. To do this, we must progressively help players enjoy the activity without the rules becoming an obstacle. Let's look at some suggestions for players to gradually improve their skills..."

CONTENT 3: Degrees of disability of the players (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this third installment, we discuss one of the main challenges we face with basketball teams for people with intellectual disabilities: the varying degrees of disability. The main goal is for everyone to participate, learn, and feel competent, regardless of their individual paces and abilities.

Very often, within the same group we observe a great deal of difference in the level of disability, which greatly influences the selection of tasks that can be adapted to these different levels. Next, we will address this situation from different angles:

Task differentiation

Propose the same exercise but with different levels of difficulty. Let's look at an example of a shooting exercise:

1. Level 1: Shoot near the basket without opposition.
2. Level 2: Shoot from a longer distance.
3. Level 3: Shoot after bouncing or with defense.

Tips for facilitators:

- This way everyone does the same activity but adapted to their ability.

Flexible groupings

This allows for more specific technical work and also the development of social skills.

1. Form small groups according to skill level for certain exercises.
2. In other activities, create mixed groups to encourage cooperation.

Peer tutoring

Pairing more skilled players with those who need more support. This fosters the value of teamwork and solidarity.

1. Some players can help teammates who have more difficulty remember the rules.
2. Some players can demonstrate the exercise to teammates who have more difficulty.
3. Some players can offer emotional support to their colleagues who need it.

Tips for facilitators:

- The coach must create an environment where the difference in skill levels is not a problem, but an opportunity to cooperate and learn together.

CONTENT 4: Analytical exercises + games (15 minutes)

Intro explanation: The aim of this alternation of exercises is to combine technical learning with motivation and fun, a perfect strategy to maintain the level of motivation of the participants while they improve their technical skills.

This structure of exercises is important for people with intellectual disabilities because it maintains attention for longer, avoids monotony, allows them to immediately apply what they have learned, and facilitates their understanding of the game.

Analytical exercises

These exercises allow us to learn the technique step by step and facilitate the repetition necessary to consolidate the movements. Among the analytical exercises we can find the following:

1. Zigzag dribble between cones to improve ball control.
2. Paired passes (chest or lob).
3. Shots near the basket to practice shooting mechanics.

Games

These are activities where the player applies skills within a game situation, usually with simple rules. We can find the following:

1. 3x3 mini games.
2. Stealing the ball game in a zone.
3. Relay races bouncing the ball.
4. Basketball games from different positions.

Script example:

“..We will show an example of a training session where we will alternate analytical exercises with games:”

“..We will start with the warm-up, here we will plan a game, game of catching a player while bouncing the ball..”

“..The second one will be an analytical exercise; we will work on the ball between cones.... Now, to practice the previous exercise, we will do a relay race bouncing the ball...”

“..Now it's time to work on passing technique, practicing passes in pairs....And finally, we'll play a mini 3x3 match so we can practice passing...”

Tips for facilitators:

- Analytical exercises teach how to perform the technique, while games allow you to use that technique in real basketball situations.

CONTENT 5: Closure (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We should end the activity by thanking all the participants for their efforts, sending a positive message about how they have provided a good environment for working on the content, and encouraging them taking into account everything we have discussed in this training, the importance of adapting the training dynamics to the needs of our players.

Script example:

“..Thank you so much, guys, for your effort. You did a great job. I hope you had a great time. I had a great time with you. I encourage you to continue being involved in this beautiful and rewarding activity and that you can help your players enjoy basketball and be happier as members of our society...”

SESSION NAME: “READY, SET, PLAY!”

TOPIC: *“Inclusive training session”*

DURATION: 60 minutes

Time allocation:

- Warm up - Activation - 15 minutes
- Main Part - Court - 20 minutes
- Games 4x4 - 20 minutes
- Back to calm - 5 minutes

OVERVIEW

Plan a complete training session that meets the team's needs based on the different levels of disability.

OBJECTIVES

- Improve basic skills: dribbling, passing, and shooting.
- Promote participation, self-esteem, and socialization.
- Maintain a fun and inclusive environment.
- Make coaches aware of the need for participants to have fun while learning in order to achieve the project's objective.

MATERIALS

To play basketball, it is essential to have the appropriate equipment and materials to ensure optimal and safe play. The main elements required are detailed below:

- Basketball court: Can be indoor (parquet, rubber) or outdoor (concrete, asphalt).
- Size 7 basketball for boys/men (preferably 1 ball per participant).
- Size 6 basketball for girls/women (preferably 1 ball per participant).
- Clothing: Sportswear, comfortable, preferably breathable shirt and shorts.
- Basketball shoes (advisable): Should offer good cushioning and support to prevent ankle injuries.
- Cones and markers: To mark off zones and perform dribbling or agility drills.
- Whistle: For the coach, facilitating communication during the activity.
- First Aid Kit: To treat minor injuries such as scrapes or sprains.

GROUP SIZE

12 people

PREPARATION

In order to implement this methodology effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

- Knowing how to communicate is key to transmitting everything we know to the trainers. When communicating, we must keep in mind that 70% of the message is received through non-verbal language, while the remaining 30% is communicated via verbal language.
- The enthusiasm of the facilitator/coach will be decisive in motivating and inspiring their participants. Facilitators must prepare themselves mentally for the session and try to find the words and the gestures which will encourage the trainers to participate and enjoy the activity.
- The facilitator/coach must know what he/she wants to work on in the session (objectives and contents) and put them on paper (preparation of the activity).
- Preparing the necessary material on the court to be able to carry out the activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT 1: Warm up - Activation (15 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this first part of the training, the objectives are to activate the body and prepare it for moderate physical activity, have a first contact with the ball in motion, and improve spatial orientation.

To achieve these initial objectives, we will divide the warm-up into 3 games.

Game 1: Chasing game while bouncing the ball

Half court: everyone has a ball except one. Duration 6 minutes.

Everyone dribbles the ball and is chased by the person without the ball. When the person without the ball touches someone, they pass the ball to that person, who then becomes the chaser.

- Variation (2 chasers without a ball)

Game 2: The Thief - Ball handling skill game

Everyone dribbles the ball inside the 6.25m semicircle. Duration 4 minutes.
Four players without the ball try to steal it from the dribbler and then switch roles.

Game 3: The Spider - Advance ball dribbling skill game

One player dribbling the ball only moves along the center line. (SPIDER). Duration 5 minutes.

The rest of the players with a ball start from one end and have to dribble across to the other end without being touched by the spider. Those touched become spiders.

CONTENT 2: Main Part - Court (20 minutes)

Intro explanation: The objectives set for this part of the training session are mainly 2: Dribbling (protection and advance with the ball), and passing (static and movement, with and without opposition).

We will take into account the different levels of disability of our players, so we will separate the team into 2 working groups (one with greater ability and one with lesser ability).

- **Group 1: More skill**

Pass and return wheel with 2 steps lay up.
Duration 5 minutes.

- **Group 2: Less skill**

Zig-zag dribbling cones.

Place cones in a line forming a zigzag. The players pass one by one.
Duration 5 minutes.

- **Group 1: More skill**

Passing and returning drill with shot.

Receive a pass from a teammate and shoot. Then recover the ball and return to the line.
Duration 5 minutes.

- **Group 2: Less skill**

Passing and Receiving Static:

1. Chest -One-handed
2. Overhead - Bounce

Duration 5 minutes.

- **Group 1: More skill**

10-Pass Game

Two teams, on half a court, must complete 10 consecutive passes while being challenged by the other team.

Duration 10 minutes.

- **Group 2: Less skill**

Pass and receive while moving:

1. Chest - 1 hand

Duration 10 minutes.

CONTENT 3: Games 4x4 (20 minutes)

Intro explanation: Three teams of four players, balanced by disability level. They play 4v4 and change opponents every 7 minutes.

The objective of this exercise is for all players to be able to put into practice what they have worked on during the session (dribbling and passing) in real game situations.

Tips for facilitators:

- Small teams so that everyone can participate.
- Do not penalize excessive traveling.
- Stop the game to explain situations.
- Frequent player changes.

CONTENT 4: Back to calm (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We will work on static shooting, varying positions. This will allow us to reduce the heart rate from the 4v4 game played earlier.

We can use this exercise to create a small competition between the players with the aim of creating a fun atmosphere.

SESSION NAME: “COACHING COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE SPORT”

TOPIC: *“Coaching techniques for athletes with intellectual disabilities”*

DURATION: 45 minutes

Time allocation:

- Participant introduction activity - 5 minutes
- Communication with the player - 15 minutes
- Training dynamics - 10 minutes
- Training Objectives - 10 minutes
- Closure - 5 minutes

OVERVIEW

Develop a non formal educational methodology to introduce basketball/physical activity among players with intellectual disabilities.

OBJECTIVES

- To teach coaches how to facilitate their players' understanding of the exercises.
- Learn techniques to maintain participant motivation.
- Learn techniques to help develop participants' physical and social skills.
- Make coaches aware of the need for participants to have fun while Learning in order to achieve the project's objective.

MATERIALS

In order to carry out this training for the coaches who help us in the training sessions, we will need a room of adequate size to accommodate the group of between 15 and 20 people, well-lit and ventilated. Another option could be a basketball court to teach the content in a more realistic way, like in a training session. Regarding the materials needed for training, these would be the following:

- 1 Screen or big white wall (If we are going to use a computer to support a presentation to show the training content)
- A whiteboard or easel with large sheets of paper for making notes large enough to be seen by the training participants.
- Participants should have a notebook or device such as a computer/tablet for taking notes.
- Colored cones.

GROUP SIZE

15 - 20 people

PREPARATION

In order to implement this methodology effectively, facilitators should follow these preparation steps:

- Knowing how to communicate is key to transmitting everything we know to the trainers. When communicating, we must keep in mind that 70% of the message is received through non-verbal language, while the remaining 30% is communicated via verbal language.
- The enthusiasm of the facilitator/coach will be decisive in motivating and inspiring their participants. Facilitators must prepare themselves mentally for the session and try to find the words and the gestures which will encourage the trainers to participate and enjoy the activity.
- The facilitator/coach must know what he/she wants to work on in the session (objectives and contents) and put them on paper (preparation of the activity).
- Preparing the necessary material on the court to be able to carry out the activity (if required).

INSTRUCTIONS

CONTENT 1: Participant introduction activity (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this first session, we will train the coaches who will be leading the training sessions to develop effective communication with the players on the basketball court, facilitating their understanding. We will also work on session elements and/or dynamics to improve the coaches' understanding of the sessions and their overall objectives.

Script example:

"..Hello everyone, In today's training session, we'll learn how to communicate effectively with our players so they enjoy a great training session. To achieve this, we'll work on communication techniques and concepts that will allow the players to understand us and learn the material in a way that's tailored to their individual needs before we put it into practice on the basketball court..." ..Are you ready??.."

Tips for facilitators:

- It is important to focus on creating a relaxed environment that encourages participants to want to participate and have fun. Break the ice!

CONTENT 2: Communication with the player (15 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this section we will work on up to 6 communication techniques with the player to achieve a better understanding of the contents of the training session.

Script example:

"..We now delve into the most important part of this training: communication with our players. To achieve effective communication, we will work on up to six techniques that will allow our players to gradually acquire the knowledge and put the movements we are working on into practice, in a way that is tailored to their individual needs.."

Technique 1: Simple and clear instructions

When explaining an exercise or addressing the players, we must:

1. Use short and concise sentences.
2. Explain one task at a time.
3. Avoid complex or multi-step instructions.

Tips for facilitators:

- Instead of explaining an entire exercise, break it down.

Script example:

"..Run to the cone..." " ..Pass the ball there..."

Technique 2: Visual demonstration

Show the exercise before doing it.

1. The coach demonstrates the movement.
2. Another colleague can do it too.

Tips for facilitators:

- People with intellectual disabilities learn better by seeing than by listening.

Technique 3: Repetition learning

Repeating the exercises several times helps to consolidate the skill.

1. Similar routines each workout.
2. Frequent repetitions of the same technical gesture.

Technique 4: Task breakdown (analytical method)

Let's take as an example working on a basket throw, we will divide it into small parts:

1. Foot position.
2. Arm movement.
3. Complete basket shot.

Technique 5: positive reinforcement

We must constantly motivate the player through different stimuli.

1. Verbal congratulations.
2. Applause.
3. Symbolic rewards.

Technique 6: Use of visual cues

It is highly recommended to use materials that facilitate the player's understanding of the exercises.

1. Colored cones.
2. Posters with drawings
3. Lines on the ground.
4. Pictograms.

CONTENT 3: Training dynamics (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: In this second part of the training, we will talk about more general concepts regarding the routines and structure of training sessions and how this affects the player's experience during sports practice.

Structured routines

Maintaining a fixed structure in training helps players feel more confident and familiar with the exercises to be performed. For that reason, the sessions should always have the same structure, for example:

1. Warm up.
2. Technical exercise.
3. Game.
4. Back to calm

Tips for facilitators:

- Repeating the structure reduces anxiety and improves learning.

Adapted games

Learning through games improves participation.

1. Chase games.
2. Obstacle courses.
3. Cooperative activities.

Small groups

Working with a small number of athletes per coach makes it easier to:

1. Greater individual attention.
2. Clearer technical correction.
3. Better group control.

Immediate feedback

It is very important to correct or reinforce right after the exercise.

Script example:

"..Nice jump, now try to land on both feet.." "..Good shot, now with one hand only..."

CONTENT 4: Training objectives (10 minutes)

Intro explanation: Once we've worked on communication with the players and designed and structured our training sessions, it's time to discuss the overall objectives of the sessions—what we want to achieve with the content we've covered. This phase of the training is a good opportunity for coaches to debate and share their ideas about the objectives and how they think they can achieve them.

Script example:

“..Let's now talk about the objectives we pursue with our training. All the planning, structure, and communication with our players are aimed at specific goals, achievements that we want to see reflected in our work with them and, therefore, in their response and behavior both on and off the basketball court..”

“..What goals do you think we should set for ourselves?...”

Tips for facilitators:

We must guide the debate or conversation towards the following key objectives:

1. Improve coordination and physical condition.
2. Develop sports skills.
3. Promote autonomy.
4. Promote social inclusion.

CONTENT 5: Closure (5 minutes)

Intro explanation: We should end the activity by thanking all the participants for their efforts, sending a positive message about how they have provided a good environment for working on the content, and encouraging them to continue coaching basketball with their players.

Script example:

“..Thank you so much, guys, for your effort. You did a great job. I hope you had a great time. I had a great time with you. I encourage you to continue being involved in this beautiful and rewarding activity and that you can help your players enjoy basketball and be happier as members of our society...”

6

SOCIAL INTEGRATION

6.1 UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN SPORT

Social integration in sport refers to the meaningful participation of individuals within shared social environments where interaction, cooperation, and mutual engagement occur. In inclusive basketball, true social integration happens primarily when people with and without intellectual disabilities are brought together in the same teams and activities. It is not enough for participants with disabilities to be active only among themselves; instead, sport should serve as a vehicle for building understanding, communication, and relationships across abilities. By participating together, athletes learn to recognize and appreciate each other's strengths, break down stereotypes, and experience collaboration as equals.

The goal is not to create exclusive events solely for people with disabilities, as such segregation can unintentionally isolate participants from the broader community. Instead, mixed, inclusive programs foster interaction, shared experiences, and social connection, allowing basketball to become a platform for inclusion and for promoting positive attitudes toward disability in society.

A central element of social integration is the development of genuine interaction and mutual recognition between all participants. When people with and without intellectual disabilities play, train, and solve challenges together, they engage in repeated social exchanges that help them understand each other as teammates rather than as "different" individuals. Simple acts such as passing the ball, communicating during plays, or supporting a teammate in a drill create opportunities for connection, trust, and shared achievement. Over time, these interactions foster a sense of belonging, where each participant feels valued for their contribution to the team, regardless of ability level.

Belonging is more than just being part of a team; it is the experience of being accepted, respected, and recognized within a social group. Inclusive basketball provides this environment by structuring activities so that collaboration is necessary and every player's involvement is meaningful. In this way, sport becomes a practical tool for social integration: it encourages participants to form relationships across differences, challenges assumptions about disability, and creates a shared space where all players feel connected to one another.

6.2 SPORT AS A PLATFORM FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Team sports naturally create environments that encourage interaction, cooperation, and shared problem-solving, making them ideal platforms for social integration. Unlike solitary activities, team sports require players to communicate, coordinate, and respond to one another in real time. This interaction is not incidental; it is essential for the team to function successfully. By participating in team-based activities, individuals are placed in situations where collaboration and mutual support are necessary, which encourages meaningful social engagement and relationship-building.

Basketball, in particular, is a highly cooperative and communicative sport. The fast-paced nature of the game requires players to constantly signal, call for passes, position themselves strategically, and adapt to the movements of teammates and opponents. These dynamic interactions create frequent opportunities for social connection, both on and off the court. Communication in basketball is not limited to verbal exchanges; nonverbal cues, gestures, and shared understanding all contribute to building relationships and trust among players.

Structured practices, games, and events provide repeated opportunities for social interaction over time. During practice drills, players work together to achieve shared goals, such as completing passing sequences or coordinated offensive plays. In games, collaboration is further reinforced as success depends on the collective effort of all team members. Beyond formal play, social interaction continues through team discussions, pre-game preparations, post-game celebrations, and informal social activities around events. These repeated and varied opportunities make sport a powerful medium for promoting social integration, particularly when participants with and without intellectual disabilities are intentionally brought together.

By using basketball as a platform in this way, programs can foster environments where participants develop mutual understanding, respect, and a sense of belonging. Mixed participation ensures that social integration is not only possible but becomes a central outcome of the sport itself, turning basketball into a tool for breaking down social barriers and promoting inclusion within the wider community.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERACTION DURING PRACTICE, GAMES, AND EVENTS

Social integration in basketball is most effective when opportunities for interaction are intentionally built into every aspect of the program. During practice sessions, structured drills such as passing exercises, shooting challenges, or small-sided games can be designed to require collaboration between all participants. Pairing or grouping athletes with and without intellectual disabilities encourages communication, cooperation, and peer support. By rotating groups or partners regularly, programs ensure that players interact with a variety of teammates, fostering broader social connections and reducing the likelihood of isolation.

Games provide a different but equally important context for social interaction. In team competitions, success depends on each player contributing to collective goals, which naturally encourages communication, encouragement, and mutual support. Coaches can further promote social integration by designing game formats that emphasize teamwork over individual performance, such as mixed-ability teams or small-sided games where every player is actively involved. Celebrating team achievements, regardless of skill level, reinforces a sense of belonging and recognition among all participants.

Inclusive events and tournaments extend these opportunities beyond regular practice. By bringing together athletes with and without disabilities in a shared environment, these events create spaces for informal social interaction, such as pre-game warm-ups, post-game celebrations, or social breaks. Shared experiences in these contexts—whether cheering for a teammate, collaborating on a team challenge, or simply spending time together—strengthen social bonds and build understanding between participants.

When these opportunities are intentionally structured and consistently applied, basketball becomes more than a physical activity; it becomes a platform for meaningful social integration. The repeated interaction, cooperation, and shared experiences foster relationships that extend beyond the court, helping participants appreciate differences, build mutual respect, and feel a genuine sense of belonging within the team and the wider community.

6.3 KEY CONDITIONS FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION IN BASKETBALL PROGRAMS

Creating meaningful social integration in basketball requires careful attention to the conditions under which participants interact. Simply placing players with and without intellectual disabilities in the same environment is not enough; programs must intentionally structure experiences to foster collaboration, communication, and mutual respect. The following key conditions are essential for promoting social integration in inclusive basketball programs.

Equal Participation

A foundational principle of social integration is ensuring that all participants have equal opportunities to engage in practice, games, and team activities. This means designing drills and games in a way that every athlete contributes actively, regardless of their skill or experience level. For example, in passing drills or small-sided games, coaches can structure the activity so that each player has a defined role, such as ball handler, defender, or rebounder, and rotate roles regularly.

Equal participation also involves monitoring engagement throughout sessions and encouraging shy or less experienced players to contribute. By preventing passive observation, programs maximize the chances for social interaction, peer learning, and shared problem-solving. When all participants are actively involved, they experience the team as a collaborative space rather than a hierarchy of ability, which is crucial for fostering both confidence and meaningful social connections.

Shared Goals

Social integration is strengthened when participants work together toward common objectives rather than competing solely as individuals. In basketball, shared goals can include completing a team drill successfully, scoring a target number of points collectively, or coordinating defensive rotations effectively. When success depends on collaboration, athletes are naturally encouraged to communicate, support one another, and recognize each other's contributions.

Shared goals also help participants focus on teamwork rather than individual performance. For example, a drill that requires consecutive passes among all team members before a shot can be taken encourages collaboration, attention to teammates, and recognition of everyone's role. Celebrating these collective achievements—regardless of individual skill—reinforces the sense that each participant is a valuable contributor to the group. This emphasis on common objectives helps break down social and perceptual barriers between athletes with and without disabilities.

Opportunities for Interaction

Creating multiple and varied opportunities for interaction is essential for meaningful integration. Training sessions should be designed to encourage communication, cooperation, and problem-solving among all participants. This can be achieved through structured drills like paired passing exercises, small-group shooting challenges, or team-based obstacle courses that require coordination.

Rotation of partners and small groups ensures that athletes interact with a variety of teammates over time. This prevents social isolation and promotes the development of broader peer relationships. Informal opportunities, such as warm-ups, cool-downs, and post-session discussions, are equally important, as they allow athletes to socialize in less structured settings. Inclusive events and tournaments should incorporate social breaks, group celebrations, and team-building activities outside of formal competition, reinforcing the relationships developed during practice.

Respect and Mutual Recognition

Mutual respect is a core condition for social integration. Participants must feel that their efforts are valued and that their presence contributes meaningfully to the team. Coaches play a critical role in modeling inclusive behavior, setting clear expectations for communication, and reinforcing positive social interactions.

Respect and recognition can be promoted through strategies such as giving each player a chance to lead a drill, encouraging teammates to provide positive feedback, or celebrating small successes during practice and games. Addressing negative behaviors promptly, such as teasing or exclusion, is essential to maintain a safe and welcoming environment. When athletes experience respect and acknowledgment, they are more likely to engage socially, build trust, and develop friendships, which strengthens both team cohesion and individual feelings of belonging.

6.4 STRUCTURING MIXED GROUPS TO ENCOURAGE INTERACTION

One of the most effective ways to promote social integration in basketball is through the intentional structuring of mixed groups. Simply placing athletes with and without intellectual disabilities in the same environment does not guarantee meaningful interaction; programs must design team composition, drills, and activities to ensure collaboration, communication, and peer support. The following strategies provide practical ways to structure mixed groups for social integration.

Mixed Teams

Creating mixed teams—where athletes with and without disabilities play together—is central to social integration. Teams should be balanced to ensure that all participants can contribute meaningfully to the game. For example, in a 5-on-5 game, each team can include a mix of skill levels and abilities so that success depends on collaboration rather than individual dominance. Coaches can rotate players regularly to avoid fixed groupings, giving participants opportunities to interact with different teammates over time. Mixed teams encourage peer learning, foster understanding across abilities, and create a shared sense of purpose within the group.

Small Mixed Training Groups

During practice, dividing athletes into smaller mixed groups can create a more manageable environment for interaction. Small-group drills—such as 2–3 player passing sequences, shooting challenges, or defensive rotations—allow each athlete to be actively engaged and communicate more frequently with teammates. Rotating participants between groups ensures exposure to a variety of social partners, helping to prevent social isolation and fostering broader relationships. Small groups also allow coaches to provide more individualized support while reinforcing inclusive behaviors and collaboration.

Buddy Systems

Pairing athletes through a buddy system is another effective way to promote social integration. In this approach, each athlete with a disability is paired with a teammate without a disability to provide support, encouragement, and guidance during drills or games. Buddies can help each other understand instructions, provide feedback, and celebrate successes together. This one-to-one interaction strengthens social bonds, increases confidence, and creates accountability for inclusive behavior.

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Rotating buddies periodically ensures that all participants develop connections across the team rather than forming exclusive partnerships.

Rotating Social Interaction

Rotation is a key strategy for ensuring that all participants interact with a variety of teammates. Coaches can rotate players in small groups, pairs, or full teams during practice sessions and games. This prevents cliques or social silos from forming and ensures that athletes have the

opportunity to build relationships across ability levels. Rotation can also apply to roles within drills and games, allowing participants to experience different responsibilities, communicate with different teammates, and develop mutual understanding of each other's strengths.

Peer Learning and Mentoring

Mixed groups naturally create opportunities for peer learning, where athletes can teach, guide, and support one another. Participants without disabilities can act as informal mentors, demonstrating skills or providing encouragement, while athletes with disabilities contribute unique perspectives and strengths. Peer learning emphasizes interdependence and collaboration, helping participants recognize each other's value and fostering respect, trust, and social cohesion.

By intentionally structuring mixed teams, small groups, buddy systems, and rotating partners, basketball programs can create a rich environment for social interaction. These strategies ensure that athletes with and without intellectual disabilities engage meaningfully with one another, forming connections, learning from each other, and developing a shared sense of belonging. Structured mixed participation transforms basketball from a physical activity into a practical tool for social integration, where interaction, understanding, and collaboration are central outcomes.

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**ABOUT
ERASMUS+
SPORT**

The aim of Erasmus+, as a program, is to support the educational, professional and personal development of people in education, training, youth and sport, to contribute to sustainable growth, quality jobs and social cohesion, to drive innovation and to strengthen European identity and active citizenship.

Erasmus+ actions in the field of sport promote participation in sport, physical activity, and voluntary activities. They are designed to tackle societal and sport-related challenges. Opportunities are available for organizations under 3 Calls which address these challenges. A specific call on Capacity Building in the field of sport is also available as of 2022. It targets EU Member States and third countries associated to the Program (previously called Program countries) and the Western Balkans.

The actions:

Cooperation partnerships

Designed for organizations to develop and implement joint activities to promote (among others) sport and physical activity, as well as deal with threats to the integrity of sport (such as doping or match-fixing), promote dual careers for athletes, improve good governance, and foster tolerance and social inclusion.

Small-scale partnerships

For grassroots organizations, less experienced organizations and newcomers to the Program. Small-Scale Partnerships have simpler administration, smaller grants and shorter durations than Cooperation Partnerships.

Not-for-profit European sport events

Designed to encourage sporting activity, implement EU strategies for social inclusion through sport, foster volunteering in sport, fight against discrimination and encourage participation in sport and physical activity.

Capacity Building in the field of sport

Capacity-building projects are international cooperation projects based on multilateral partnerships between organizations active in the field of sport in EU Member States and third countries associated to the Program (previously called Program countries) and the Western Balkans. They aim to support sport activities and policies in as a vehicle to promote values as well as an educational tool to promote the personal and social development of individuals and build more cohesive communities.



The logo features a blue rounded rectangle containing a white stylized bridge graphic on the left and the text "uilding bridges" in white on the right. The letter "i" in "uilding" has a small orange and white patterned circle above it. To the right of the blue rectangle is an orange rounded rectangle containing the text "2.0" in white.

Building Bridges 2.0



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