

Inclusive Sports in Ohio – Pillars of Inclusion

Why did we do a needs assessment?

To learn about inclusive sport, dance, and physical activity options in schools for Ohio youth with disabilities.



How did we get the information?

Sent a survey to athletes with disabilities, family members of athletes with disabilities, and school staff.



Talked to experts in Ohio about inclusive and adaptive sports.



Talked to athletes with disabilities and their families over Zoom about inclusive sports in Ohio.



What are the seven pillars of inclusion?

The seven pillars of inclusion are a guide for sports clubs and organizations to help make sports more inclusive and diverse.

How are things going with the seven pillars of inclusion in school sports?

1. ACCESS



Many athletes with disabilities said coaches and other students do not make students with disabilities feel welcome in school sports.

Participants gave many examples of when school sports were not easy to access and when people were not welcoming or excluded students with disabilities. When we say accessible, we mean buildings and places are easy for people with disabilities to use and people with disabilities should have equal options to participate.

2. ATTITUDE



Unfair beliefs or attitudes were a top barrier for athletes with disabilities to participate in school sports.

Participants said coaches and staff did not know much about athletes with disabilities and expected very little from them on sports teams.

3. CHOICE



Most athletes with disabilities and their families said they do not have the same choices and options to play sports in school as other athletes without disabilities.

"My typical son gets all the emails and notices about sports and clubs. My son with autism gets no notices or emails or invites. So, I can tell right there that kids with special needs are not invited or included." (Person who took the survey)

4. PARTNERSHIPS



There are some inclusive school sports programs that are working very well. We found it is important for these programs to have strong partnerships or work well together with the community, school leaders, teachers, coaches, parents, and other students.

We also found many of these programs have people with disabilities who are in charge of them.

5. COMMUNICATIONS



Most athletes with disabilities and their families said teachers and coaches did not let them know about sports they can be a part of.

We also found that sharing information well with everyone is an important part of inclusive sports programs.

6. POLICY

Most athletes with disabilities and their families felt schools and sports clubs were not serious about making sure that everyone is included in school sports.

7. OPPORTUNITY

Most athletes with disabilities and their families felt schools do not have opportunities for students with disabilities to play sports.



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