



ADAPTIVE LACROSSE OPERATING GUIDE



OPERATING TIPS

The following suggestions have been provided by leading disability sport organizations as well as experienced adaptive lacrosse coaches and program leaders:

Program Structure

- Strive to have at least one (1) coach for every four (4) players in a session.
- Recognize that some players may require one-on-one support while others will not.
- Utilize teammates or partners to help assist players and provide support when needed.
- Consider organizing stations based on age and/or skill level.
- Allow players to self-select their level of participation with some guidance.
- Modify activities as needed, with the understanding that some players may require different modifications than others to participate in the same activity.

Communication

- Be proactive and ask open-ended questions during your registration process, such as:
 - What accommodations does the player need to participate?
 - Is there anything important that you would like us to know about the player?
- Publish flyers and other materials which clearly welcome players with disabilities.
- Provide clear directions about your program to parents and caregivers, including what to wear, what to bring, and what to expect.
- Create opportunities for interaction between players before, during, and after sessions.
- Recognize specific players for achievement, sportsmanship, or leadership.
- Offer a variety of ways for participants to ask questions and provide feedback.

Terminology

- Use language that portrays people with disabilities in a respectful and balanced way.
- Emphasize abilities rather than limitations. For example, using the phrase “player who uses a wheelchair” is generally more appropriate, empowering, and accurate than using phrases like “wheelchair-bound” or “confined to a wheelchair”.
- Avoid using offensive language, condescending euphemisms, or overly emotional terms such as “suffering” or “afflicted” which may perpetuate negative stereotypes.
- See here for more helpful tips: [Guidelines for Writing About People With Disabilities](#)

Scheduling

- Establish a consistent routine with practices scheduled at the same time each week.
- Provide frequent water breaks, rest periods, and feedback opportunities.

Physical Space

- Examine the accessibility of the facility, playing surface, and restrooms.
- Consider how players will travel to and enter the site.
- Mark positions on the field where specific stations or activities will take place.
- Ensure all players are aware of any boundaries or safety concerns.
- Consider hosting sessions indoors to reduce distractions which may cause anxiety.

Sensory Space

- Let players know ahead of time when loud noises may be expected.
- Use headphones to filter out extraneous sound.
- Provide breaks from noise, light, or other sensory triggers.
- Allow players to take breaks if the stimulation of the group is too intense.
- Reduce harsh fluorescent lighting, loud fans, scoreboards, and buzzers.

Equipment

- Experiment with different colors, textures, and types of equipment.
- Utilize any type of lacrosse stick that helps create success for the player, including a men's lacrosse stick, women's lacrosse stick, soft stick, or fiddle stick.
- Add grip tape to the stick to help players learn where to place their hands. Some players may be engaged by bright colors or unique textures.
- Use a soft foam practice ball or tennis ball when not wearing protective equipment.

Transitions

- Make a visual schedule with pictures or icons to indicate what is coming next.
- Waiting in line may be difficult for some players. Consider using group activities that engage everyone and minimize lines and lectures.
- Use a transition countdown to indicate when it is time to transition from one activity to another. Use gestures or pictures for children who need more than just speech.
- Allow many opportunities for repetition and practice.

FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE

This checklist was compiled by [Move United](#) to help sports organizations ensure that players with disabilities can access their programming. Please use this resource as a guide and modify as needed for your particular program or facility:

Parking

- **Location:** Accessible spaces relatively close to an accessible entrance.
- **Quantity:** Enough spaces to accommodate players.
- **Accessible Parking Spaces:**
 - Spaces that are 8 feet wide with a 5-foot-wide aisle.
 - Spaces that are 8 feet wide with an 8-foot-wide aisle and 98 inches of clearance for vans with lifts.

Travel Routes

- **Primary routes:** Check for steep curbs, stairs, grass, gravel, etc.
- **Width of hallways:** Check the width of facility hallways and other areas to ensure wheelchair access (at least 36 inches wide).
- **Elevators:** Confirm that any elevators are in working order.
- **Surfaces:** Stable, firm & slip resistant.

Signage and Communications

- **Signage:** Clear and prominent signage for accessible routes/entrances.
- **Accessible and legible:** Braille, color contrast that is easy to read, etc.

Accommodations

- **Equipment:** Access to alternative equipment available where needed.
- **Restrooms:** Accessible restrooms are in close proximity.
- **Hydration:** Water fountains are in close proximity.

SENSORY-FRIENDLY SPACES

Creating a sensory-friendly space can provide a vital retreat for individuals needing a sensory break during a lacrosse tournament or event. These spaces benefit everyone—from children and adults with sensory sensitivities to those who simply prefer a calmer setting. Here are some suggestions to ensure an effective and welcoming space:

Location and Setup

- **Location:** Choose a quiet area away from the main tournament activities to minimize noise and distractions.
- **Closed Tent:** If outdoors, consider using a tent with sides that can be closed to create a more secluded and controlled environment.
- **Weather Considerations:** Ensure the space is weatherproof. If it's hot, use a fan or portable air conditioner. If it's cold, consider using portable heaters.

Environmental Control

- **Lighting:** Use soft, adjustable lighting such as battery-operated lanterns or string lights to create a calming atmosphere. Avoid harsh, bright lights.
- **Calming Music:** Play soft, instrumental music or nature sounds at a low volume to create a soothing environment. Consider providing noise-canceling headphones for those who prefer silence.

Comfort and Seating

- **Cozy Chairs:** Provide comfortable seating options like bean bags, cushioned chairs, or floor mats.
- **Blankets and Pillows:** Offer soft blankets and pillows to enhance comfort and provide a sense of security.

Sensory Tools and Activities

- **Fidgets:** Stock the space with a variety of fidget toys, such as stress balls, textured items, and squishy toys.
- **Sensory Bins:** Create sensory bins filled with items like kinetic sand, rice, or water beads.
- **Weighted Items:** Provide weighted blankets or lap pads for those who find deep pressure calming.

Visual and Tactile Elements

- **Visual Aids:** Hang calming, visually appealing decorations like nature posters or tapestries.
- **Tactile Wall:** Set up a tactile wall with different textures for individuals to touch and explore.

Quiet Activities

- **Books and Magazines:** Offer a selection of calming books, magazines, or picture books.
- **Coloring Supplies:** Provide coloring books and crayons or colored pencils for a relaxing, creative activity.
- **Puzzles and Games:** Include simple puzzles or quiet games to engage the mind without overstimulation.

Health and Safety

- **Hygiene Supplies:** Provide hand sanitizer, wipes, and tissues.
- **First Aid Kit:** Keep a basic first aid kit on hand for any minor injuries or needs.

Staff and Volunteers

- **Trained Personnel:** Ensure that staff or volunteers are trained in sensory processing issues and can provide support and assistance.
- **Clear Signage:** Use clear, friendly signage to direct individuals to the sensory friendly area.

Feedback and Adjustment

- **Adaptability:** Be prepared to adjust the setup based on the feedback and needs of the individuals using the area.

By incorporating these elements, you can ensure that individuals needing a sensory break during a lacrosse event have a positive and inclusive experience. Let's make sure all participants and spectators feel included and valued!

SUPPORT NEEDS FORM

Here are some suggested questions to include in your Adaptive Lacrosse program registration to help you meet the support needs of players with disabilities. Please use this resource as a guide and modify as needed for your particular program:

- **What is the best way for us to communicate with the player?**
- **What are your goals and aspirations for this program?**
- **What supports will the player need to fully participate?**
- **Does the player need any specific or modified equipment to fully participate?**
- **What do the coaches need to know about the player to ensure they can participate safely?**
- **What else do we need to know to help the player participate fully and achieve their goals?**