

TOP 10 THINGS TO KNOW

WHEN TEACHING PE TO STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- 1) Understand the student's disability and what you can do to be a better teacher for that student (aka autism: less talking, straight forward cues, avoid excess stimuli, be sensitive to sensory needs).
- 2) Be in communication with your student's Ed Specialists or instructional aides to see what strategies are being used in the classroom that you can use to keep them safe and engaged during PE.
- 3) Scaffold games and activities to various skill levels (competitive vs noncompetitive, low, medium, high skilled, etc.). Offering this option to all students can help avoid singling out students with disabilities.
- 4) Be mindful when pairing/grouping students. Take the time to plan out which students will work together best. Mix up "clicks" especially when introducing a new skill/game/activity.
- 5) Vary your equipment (different types of balls, lower nets, smaller court/field sizes etc.).
- 6) It's ok if students with special needs have to do things differently (shorter warm up, modified skill practice). Promote movement and learning vs competitive game play.
- 7) Instructional assistants want to help however, they often are unfamiliar with teaching PE skills. Give IA's specific directions on what their student should be doing during the activity. The more responsibility you give IA's, the less they are standing around.
- 8) Focus, emphasize, and build upon your student's strengths, rather than their challenges.
- 9) Be a contributing member when participating in your student's IEP. Share two things that the student has improved on or is doing well at (could be as simple as dressing out faster, or remembering their lock combination), and share one thing you are working on with them (improving mile time, or correcting push-up form).
- 10) Keep an open mind, don't underestimate student's ability because they have a disability.