

**PARENT'S GUIDE:
CHILDREN WITH
SPECIAL NEEDS AND
SPORTS**



WHY ARE SPORTS IMPORTANT?



- SOCIALIZATION
 - AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT
- FRIENDSHIP AND RELATIONSHIPS
 - FOR CHILD, AS WELL AS FAMILIES
- BUILDING MOTOR SKILLS
 - IMPROVES OVER ALL HEALTH
 - HELPS BUILD MUSCLE STRENGTH (FOR EXAMPLE CHILDREN WITH CP OR DOWNS SYNDROME NEED HELP BUILDING MUSCLE AND PARTICIPATING IN WEIGHT BEARING ACTIVITIES)
- CREATING NEW EXPERIENCES
 - HELPS MINIMIZE DE-CONDITIONING

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS CAN BE INVOLVED IN SPORTS REGARDLESS OF DISABILITIES
- SOME OPTIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES:
 - SPECIAL OLYMPICS
WWW.SPECIALOLYMPICS.ORG
 - NATIONAL DISABILITY SPORTS ALLIANCE
 - USA DEAF SPORTS ALLIANCE
 - BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE, ADAPTIVE SPORTS FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES
[HTTP://WWW.BEAUTIFUL-PEOPLE.US/](http://WWW.BEAUTIFUL-PEOPLE.US/)



LOCAL TEAM VS. PRIVATE ORGANIZATION

- LOCAL TEAMS CAN BE A GREAT WAY FOR CHILDREN TO MAKE FRIENDS AND LEARN TO SOCIALIZE
- LOCAL TEAMS CAN HAVE MORE DIFFICULTIES ACCOMMODATING CHILDREN'S SPECIAL NEEDS
- PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS ARE GOING TO BE MAINLY COMPRISED OF CHILDREN WITH VARIED SPECIAL NEEDS
- PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS ARE DESIGNED TO INCORPORATE AND ACCOMMODATE DISABILITIES
- LOCAL TEAMS AND PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO BRING DOWN COST OF SPORT

TYPE OF DISABILITY

- DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF DISABILITY THE CHILD HAS WILL INFLUENCE WHAT TYPE OF SPORT WILL BE THE BEST FIT FOR THE CHILD
- THE MORE SEVERE THE DISABILITY DOES NOT AFFECT THE ABILITY TO FIND A SUITABLE SPORT
- SPORTS CAN BE ADAPTED EASILY FOR CHILDREN WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS, WHEELCHAIRS, AND MANY OTHER DISABILITIES
- EXTRA PRECAUTIONS MAY BE TAKEN FOR CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES, IE HELMETS, PROTECTIVE GLASSES, ADAPTED COMMUNICATION DEVICES (VISUAL RATHER THAN VERBAL)



BENEFITS FOR FAMILY OF A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- HELP MAKE OTHERS AWARE OF DISABILITIES
 - INTRODUCE YOUR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD, AND CREATE A REWARDING EXPERIENCE FOR THEIR FELLOW PEERS
- SUPPORT SYSTEM
 - HAVING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CAN BE STRESSFUL AND GETTING TO KNOW FAMILIES IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS CAN BE COMFORTING



BENEFITS FOR HAVING A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ON A TEAM

- DIVERSITY
 - ALL CHILDREN ARE ACCEPTED
- LEARNING EXPERIENCE
 - FOR ALL TEAM MEMBERS, VALUABLE IN PREPARING THEM FOR THE FUTURE
- BUILDS EMPATHY
- EDUCATIONAL FOR ALL INVOLVED



STIGMA'S OR MYTH'S

- FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS MAY SHY AWAY FROM ACTIVITIES THAT THEIR CHILD WILL STAND OUT
- BEING SEEN AS “WEIRD” OR “DIFFERENT” CAN BE A NEGATIVE
- CHILD WON'T BE AS SUCCESSFUL ATHLETICALLY



GETTING INVOLVED

- INVITING FAMILIES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS TO PARTICIPATE IN LOCAL SPORTS
- FUNDRAISERS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS
- ORGANIZATIONS, SPECIAL OLYMPICS

