

Adapted PE Cheat Sheet with Special Education Terminology, Roles and Supports

Term	Definition	Implications for PE teachers
Adapted Physical Education (APE)	Adapted PE is a modified physical education program designed to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, ensuring their participation and success in physical activities through tailored instruction and support.	In practice, Adapted PE includes tailored activities that accommodate students' abilities, using adaptive equipment and modified rules. Consultation involves specialists guiding teachers in implementing SDI, ensuring individualized instruction and support, while setting goals and evaluating progress for students with disabilities.
Annual meeting	This is another term for the annual IEP meeting.	During this meeting, you need to provide a report of the students' performance according to the goals established on the IEP
Evaluation Team	The district-level team that determines whether a student has a disability. The team typically includes district and building administrator, parents, teachers, and a school psychologist; it can also include an advocate, physical therapist, occupational therapist, speech-language pathologist, or other related service personnel (e.g., nurse).	You will be included as part of this team if you provide PE services to the child.
Consultation Services	<p>Consultation Services in Adapted PE involve expert guidance to support teachers and staff.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Direct Consultation - Specialists work directly with students to address specific needs in PE activities. Indirect Consultation - Specialists collaborate with educators to develop strategies and adaptations for inclusive PE without direct student interaction. <p>Both aim to enhance student participation and success.</p>	In practice, direct consultation involves specialists observing and working alongside students during PE, offering tailored support. Indirect consultation includes specialists meeting with teachers to share strategies, resources, and modifications, ensuring all students can participate effectively and safely in adapted physical education activities.
Consultant teacher	This term is often used to describe a special education teacher or APE teacher who meets with general education teachers (including PE teachers) about students with disabilities who attend general education classes. A consultant teacher helps determine placements and necessary levels of consultancy and provides information and support during class or outside of class. (A consultant teacher is not the same as a co-teacher.	District consultant teachers for physical education. If so, seek out their support for placement decisions, assessments, IEP development, lesson planning, and training of support staff.

Differentiated instruction	Differentiated instruction occurs when the instructor considers every child's learning style and embeds variation in the lesson to meet the various needs of the students in the class.	Develop instructional strategies that meet the needs of all your students (e.g., different skill levels, strengths, types of learners)
504 plans	This is a plan of support that was created through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These plans are provided for students who have disabilities that do not adversely affect educational performance. 504 plans provide reasonable accommodation for specific conditions. For example, a 504 plan could stipulate that a student with diabetes needs to check blood sugar before taking a test and is allowed to postpone the test if blood sugar is low or that a student who has difficulty being organized receives teacher support in gathering materials and homework.	You must follow the 504 plan accommodations and modifications; they are not optional.
Individualized education plan (IEP)	The IEP is the written plan of specific educational needs and appropriate resources for addressing those needs. (To have an IEP, a student must have one of the fourteen disabilities listed in the IDEIA.) The IEP is rewritten each year. The IEP team may also meet during the year to revisit the goals and progress the student has made.	We strongly encourage you to get to know the students with disabilities that you teach and attend their IEP meetings. If that is not possible, request copies of their IEPs so you can effectively provide support and services. The IEP must be followed; it is not optional.
IEP online	This is the web-based computer program we use to write IEPs in KSD.	We use this electronic system for writing IEPs. If so, you may be asked to review and give input for what goes in the goals, accommodations and modifications.
Least restrictive environment (LRE)	This LRE is the environment in which the student learns best. Students with disabilities should be with their typically developing peers to the extent that this is possible. IDEIA requires that all students with disabilities be educated in the LRE	It is imperative that the physical education teacher have a say in the placement of every child with a disability to ensure they are in the LRE for them. This is done through first getting pre-observation data to explore possible supports to aid the child to in their accessing of the instruction, then later a collection of referral data to explore the formal addition of accommodations/modifications, or even goals and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI).
One-to-one para-professional, or program/classroom para-educator	These professionals work with students with disabilities individually or in small groups. They should be part of the PE support team. Their training should take place at the beginning of the year and be ongoing throughout the year	Provide training and descriptions of roles and responsibilities during the PE class. Supervision, feedback, evaluation, and support should be given throughout the year, so the support staff know what they are doing and understand how to improve.

Prompting Hierarchy	The prompting hierarchy is a structured approach in education that uses varying levels of prompts, from least to most intrusive, to guide students in learning new skills while promoting independence and confidence in their abilities.	<p>In practice the prompting hierarchy includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independent Response 2. General Prompt 3. Verbal Prompt 4. Gestural Prompt 5. Modeling Prompt 6. Partial Physical Prompt 7. Full Physical Prompt <p>In practice, instructors start with less intrusive prompts and gradually increase support as needed, aiming for student independence in performing physical skills.</p>
Pull-out	This is the term for a child who is placed in inclusive classes in the general curriculum but benefits from a self-contained PE placement. This should be done as a last resort and can be done during certain portions of the lesson, but not in others.	Ensure an appropriate placement in a modified or self-contained placement when the GPE class is not the LRE.
Push-in	This is the term for a child who is placed in self-contained classes in the general curriculum but benefits from a GPE placement.	Be sure to obtain all information necessary to appropriately include the child who is pushed in. Ensure that there are natural proportions of students with disabilities in your classes (e.g., about 5 percent of the general population has disabilities, so your class should not have a higher percentage than this).
Review meeting	This is the term for any meeting related to the IEP. Review meetings may be called by members of the team, including the family, during the school year to discuss concerns and make changes to the IEP.	You can request a review meeting if you believe the IEP goals identified are too easy or too difficult. Placement decisions can also be discussed during this meeting.
Self-contained class	A self-contained class is typically a small group setting in which all children have disabilities. In our district the acronyms for these are (SC) and (ASC).	A self-contained PE class can be held in a gym, weight room, field, or other location. These classes should not be relegated to inappropriate PE spaces (e.g., hallways, general classrooms) unless determined as appropriate based on student needs.

Special education case manager	This is the person responsible for monitoring the education of a student with a disability. Case managers are typically special education teachers who manage 5 to 15 students. Case management includes monitoring IEP goals, connecting with the family, and supporting the student.	PE teachers and even Adapted PE teachers are not typically case managers, but a PE teacher may have to discuss a student with a case manager.
Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)	SDI (Specially Designed Instruction) in adapted PE involves customizing teaching methods and activities to meet the needs of students with disabilities, ensuring they can participate and succeed in physical education through modifications and tailored supports.	<p>In practice, SDI in adapted PE includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modified Activities - Adjusting games or exercises to match students' abilities, like using lighter balls or simplified rules. 2. Adaptive Equipment - Providing specialized tools, such as larger or softer balls. 3. Individualized Instruction - Offering one-on-one or small group support for specific skills. 4. Visual Supports - Using visual aids or demonstrations for better understanding. 5. Positive Reinforcement - Encouraging students with praise to build confidence. <p>SDI also involves setting specific goals and requires standardized evaluations every three years, particularly for students performing two or more years below their same-age peers, ensuring appropriate support and progress.</p>
Supplementary Aids & Services (SAS)	Supplementary aids and services are additional supports provided to students with disabilities, including assistive technology, modified materials, and instructional assistance, ensuring equal access to education and promoting participation in general education environments.	In practice, supplementary aids and services are tailored supports determined by the IEP team to address individual student needs, enhancing their learning experience without requiring a full-scale evaluation. These decisions ensure students with disabilities can actively participate in general education and receive appropriate accommodations for success.
Test or Grading modifications	Test or Grading modifications are changes to how a student takes a test. These are indicated on a student's IEP.	You must know the test mods when written or other tests are given. Examples of grading Modifications are assigning Pass/Fail Grades.
Triennial evaluation	Students with IEPs have their performance reevaluated at least every three years	Assess your students before this meeting and present new goals (if necessary) that need to be included in the IEP. You can also discuss continuing or ending services. Meeting is led by school psychologist.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	UDL is a teaching approach that eliminates barriers to student learning by designing physical, social, and learning environments that support diverse learners through powerful possibilities for teaching and learning.	Make your curriculum and facilities accessible to all students by providing multiple options for equipment, rules, instruction, and the environment. Every child at every level should have equal access to each lesson.
Communication		
Term	Definition	Implications for PE teachers
Assistive technology (AT)	AT includes a vast range of technological supports to help students in school.	In physical education, AT can include walkers, standers, bowling ramps, switches, tablets, or other equipment that helps students move their bodies and perform physical skills. AT can also be used to help students focus (e.g., whiteboard to list steps of a skill or directions).
Picture exchange communication system (PECS)	A PECS is a form of alternative communication that is used as an aid for children with autism and other specific disabilities. Many districts use the Board-maker program to create individualized PECSs for their students.	PECS can be used as a form of communication in PE settings. Talk to classroom teachers for ideas about how to use this system during PE
Proloquo	This is an alternative communication solution for people who have difficulty speaking or cannot speak. This program can also be adapted to meet the needs of students with other disabilities. Speech is generated by tapping symbols or typing. The photos on the screen are individualized for each student's needs. It can be used for receptive and expressive communication. It is available for iPad, iPhone, and iPod touch.	This communication system should be brought with the child to physical education if they use it in the classroom. Physical education symbols should be included as part of the communication program for both expressive and receptive communication.
Simplified Instructions	Simplified instructions are clear, concise, and easy-to-understand directions that break tasks into smaller, manageable steps. They help students follow directions without confusion or overwhelm.	Use clear, concise, and simplified verbal directions for multi-step cues. Breaking tasks down into smaller, manageable steps can support comprehension and help them successfully follow instructions.
Video modeling	Video modeling allows students to observe different social interactions. Videos often address upcoming activities and demonstrate the behavior that is expected in those settings.	Create videos to teach students appropriate behaviors or prepare them for an activity that will occur soon.
Visual Schedule	A visual schedule is a tool that displays daily activities using images or icons, helping students understand routines, expectations, and transitions in a straightforward way.	Provide a visual schedule for the PE class that outlines the activities planned for the day. This will help R.A. understand transitions and expectations, particularly as they adapt to new tasks.

Specialists		
Term	Definition	Implications for PE teachers
Adapted PE Specialist	Adapted PE Specialist provides expertise to educators on modifying physical education activities, assessing student needs, and implementing strategies for inclusive practices, ensuring all students can participate effectively in PE.	In practice, a consulting Adapted PE Specialist observes classes, collaborates with teachers, provides training, assesses student needs, and recommends adaptive equipment to enhance inclusive physical education and student participation.
Occupational therapy (OT)	Occupational therapy enhances the student's ability to fully access handwriting or fine motor skills so the child can complete written assignments; the occupational therapist (OT) helps the child organize him-or herself in the environment (including workspace in and around the desk) and works with the teacher to modify the classroom or adapt learning materials to facilitate successful participation.	You can consult with the student OT to help with fine motor goals and objectives, and class modifications.
Paraeducator or Instructional Assistant	<p>Paraeducators are staff who are there to facilitate the participation of students with diverse needs. Their role includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Providing one-on-one or small group assistance 2. Adapting activities and equipment to meet individual needs 3. Ensuring safety and appropriate behavior 4. Encouraging social interaction between all students 5. Reinforcing instructions and demonstrating skills 6. Monitoring progress and communicating with the PE teacher 7. Supporting students' physical and emotional well-being <p>They play a crucial role in bridging the gap between self-contained and general education environments, promoting inclusive practices, and ensuring all students can access and benefit from PE activities regardless of their abilities.</p>	<p>In practice, paraeducators assist students with disabilities during PE activities, adapting exercises, providing physical support, and encouraging participation. They often work one-on-one or with small groups, ensuring safety and promoting social interaction.</p> <p>To maximize their supporting role:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly define responsibilities 2. Communicate regularly with the PE teacher 3. Provide training on specific adaptations and strategies 4. Encourage independence when appropriate 5. Involve them in lesson planning 6. Utilize their observations for student progress monitoring 7. Foster a collaborative team approach

Physical therapy (PT)	Physical therapy is a related service for students whose disabilities hinder educational performance. Physical therapists (PTs) facilitate access to education, preparing students for further education, employment, and independent living while promoting motor development and participation in daily routines.	You can consult with the student PT to help with gross motor goals and objectives, positioning, and class modifications. If you are providing services for a student, you should be responsible for writing the IEP goals for that student.
SLP (Speech-Language Pathologist)	An SLP (Speech-Language Pathologist) is a licensed professional who assesses, diagnoses, and treats communication and swallowing disorders. SLPs work with individuals to improve speech, language, voice, and fluency, often collaborating with educators and families to support communication needs in various settings.	An SLP can assist a PE teacher in adapted PE by providing strategies to support students' communication skills, enhancing social interactions, and developing appropriate language for following instructions, participating in games, and improving teamwork among students with speech or language challenges.
BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT		
Term	Definition	Implications for PE teachers
Breaks (sensory too...) and Movement Opportunities	Breaks and movement opportunities" refer to designated times during activities when students can take short breaks or engage in physical movement. These breaks help students reset, refocus, and maintain engagement, especially when they feel overwhelmed or fatigued.	Allowing brief breaks during activities if they show signs of frustration or fatigue. Incorporating short movement breaks can help maintain engagement and focus, especially during more complex tasks. --Best practice are these breaks happen within a designated area and for short periods of time before reengaging the student.
Fading	Fading is an educational strategy that gradually removes learning support as students become more proficient. It involves: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incremental reduction of assistance 2. Customization to individual needs 3. Promoting learner independence 4. Applying to various support types (verbal, visual, physical) 5. Ongoing assessment of student progress 6. Flexibility to reintroduce support if needed 	In practice fading might look like this when teaching basic catching skills: The teacher starts by using large, soft balls and standing close to students. They demonstrate proper hand positioning and verbally guide students. As children improve, the teacher gradually increases distance, uses smaller balls, and reduces verbal cues. Eventually, students catch during games with minimal instruction. If a child struggles, the teacher temporarily returns to closer distances or larger balls. This approach is applied to various skills like throwing and kicking, fostering independence in young learner

Functional behavioral assessment (FBA)	Functional behavioral assessment is a problem-solving process for addressing a student's problem behavior. It relies on a variety of techniques and strategies to identify the purposes of specific behavior and to help IEP teams select interventions to directly address the problem behavior.	Assist in this process by providing feedback about the student's behavior during class. Once the intervention is created, you should implement the behavioral intervention strategies provided by the IEP team.
Low Work Tolerance	<p>Low work tolerance refers to a student's reduced ability to sustain physical activity or exercise for extended periods. In the context of PE, this can manifest as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quickly becoming fatigued during activities 2. Difficulty maintaining focus or engagement in physical tasks 3. Needing more frequent breaks than peers 4. Struggling to complete full participation in PE activity. 	<p>In Practice these strategies may prove helpful when seeking to include students with low work tolerance.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group 3-4 students: Ensures ongoing activity if one rests 2. Varied intensity stations: Students choose based on ability 3. Interval training: Short activity bursts with rest periods 4. Modified equipment: Lighter gear, smaller areas 5. Role rotation: Include non-physical tasks 6. Personal goals: Set individual targets, celebrate progress 7. Active rest: Low-intensity options during breaks 8. Visual cues: Students signal rest needs 9. Buddy system: Pair different stamina levels 10. Cool-down zones: Areas for brief breaks or low-impact activities
Low Attention to Task	<p>Definition: Student's difficulty maintaining focus on PE activities or instructions.</p> <p>Signs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Easily distracted 2. Trouble following instructions 3. Frequent activity switching 4. Low engagement 5. Needs constant reminders 	<p>In practice strategies may include,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Visual schedules: Picture-based activity sequence 2. Routine: Consistent class structure 3. Sensory breaks: Quiet spaces for overstimulation 4. Task analysis: Break skills into small steps 5. Peer buddies: Partner with supportive classmates 6. Concrete language: Clear, literal instructions 7. Adaptive equipment: Modified gear for success 8. Social stories: Prepare for new activities 9. Choice boards: Offer limited activity options 10. Positive reinforcement: Immediate, specific praise

Peer Buddy system	A Peer Buddy System pairs students to foster social connections, support learning, and enhance inclusion. It encourages collaboration, empathy, and teamwork by allowing peers to help each other in academic and social situations.	To implement a Peer Buddy System, identify empathetic students, provide training on support strategies, assign clear roles, and create structured activities that encourage collaboration, ensuring all participants feel comfortable and included in the process.
Positive behavior support (PBS)/ positive behavioral intervention support (PBIS)	Positive behavior support is a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school. It is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, buses, and restrooms). Positive behavior support is an application of a behaviorally based systems approach to enhance the capacity of schools, families, and communities.	Be aware of these strategies utilized throughout your school so you can assist and reinforce them during the PE class.
Pre-Teach or additional practice time.	<p>Pre-teaching in PE is a strategy to prepare students for inclusive physical activities. It involves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introducing fundamental movements or game rules before the main lesson 2. Focusing on the basic techniques, or specific motor skills 3. Adapting physical tasks to individual student abilities and fitness levels 4. Building confidence in students with diverse physical capabilities 5. Reducing anxiety about new sports or challenging activities 6. Enhancing and normalizing participation in lesson 	<p>In PE, pre-teaching might look like this:</p> <p>Before introducing a new game like soccer to the whole class, the PE teacher works with a small pullout group of students who need extra support. They practice basic skills like dribbling and passing, learn game rules, and discuss key terms. This additional practice time helps these students build confidence and foundational skills. When the full class learns soccer, the pre-taught students are better prepared to participate, enhancing their inclusion and engagement in the main PE lessons.</p>
Social story	A social story is a written or a visual guide that describes different social interactions, situations, behaviors, skills, or concepts. Social stories are often used to address upcoming events that may be stressful or hard for students so they can be better prepared. They are often used with students with autism.	Create social stories to teach students appropriate behaviors or prepare them for an activity that will occur soon
Structured Group Activities	Structured group activities are organized games or tasks that provide clear roles and guidelines for participants, promoting teamwork, communication, and cooperation while ensuring all members actively engage in the activity.	Design structured, low-organized games with clear roles and responsibilities for each participant. This can encourage students to practice cooperative skills, improve teamwork, and gradually build confidence in group settings. (Relays, parachute, shuttle work, etc..)

Visual Timers	Visual timers help children understand time limits, promoting self-regulation and smooth transitions after behavioral adjustments.	Using visual timers or iPhone timers, especially when activated by students, significantly enhances their effectiveness. Having a para present provides additional support, making transitions smoother and helping students take responsibility for their behavior.
----------------------	--	--

PHYSICAL EDUCATION ASSESSMENTS Plus PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Term	Definition	Implications for PE teachers
Competency Test in Adapted Physical Education (CTAPE)	This is a curriculum-based assessment that is used in several states. It has six testing levels and is appropriate for students aged 6 years and older.	The CTAPE can be used as a screening and placement tool as well as an assessment to determine progress on IEP goals.
National Consortium for Physical Education and Recreation for Individuals with Disabilities (NCPERID)	The mission of the NCPERID is to promote research, professional preparation, service delivery, and advocacy of physical education and recreation for individuals with disabilities	Join the Consortium if you can and be aware of the advocacy efforts undertaken by the organization and how legislature effects physical education.
SHAPE America (Society of Health and Physical Educa-tors)	The national governing body for the field of physical education	You should attend the SHAPE America conference to learn advocacy skills that will benefit your students.
Test of Gross Motor Development III (TGMD-3) (Ulrich, 2017)	This is a gross motor test of object control and locomotor skills. It is norm referenced and criterion referenced. It is validated for typically developing children aged 3 through 11 years and children with visual impairments aged 6 through 12 years.	The TGMD-3 can be used as a screening and placement tool as well as an assessment to determine progress on IEP goal
Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS)	<i>The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales is a standardized assessment tool that measures communication, daily living, socialization, and motor skills</i>	The TGMD-3 can be used as one of the screening and placement tools during the evaluation or reevaluation process for students. This assessment is one of the assessments open for the psychologist to use as part of their assessments.

This document is based on and expands on work found in:

J. L. L. (2017). Strategies for Inclusion: Physical Education for Everyone (3rd ed.). Human Kinetics.