



Fostering Quality Participation for Athletes with a Disability

A Quick Guide for Program Leaders - STEP 2

Quality participation is built from an athlete’s positive experiences.
The **building blocks** of quality participation are:

AUTONOMY
Having independence,
choice, control

BELONGINGNESS
Feeling included, accepted,
respected, part of the group

CHALLENGE
Feeling appropriately tested

ENGAGEMENT
Being in-the-moment, focused,
absorbed, fascinated

MASTERY
Feeling a sense of achievement,
accomplishment, competence

MEANING
Contributing toward obtaining a
personal or socially meaningful
goal; feeling a sense of responsibility
to others

These six building blocks must be supported with a proper foundation consisting of physical, program and social environments that are safe, welcoming, and inclusive.



To foster quality participation in your next program or event, first identify the **building blocks** that are most important to participants (**see STEP 1**), then complete the following checklist:

If you do this...	...you will be fostering these building blocks...						What are you planning to do?
	<div></div> Autonomy	<div></div> Belongingness	<div></div> Challenge	<div></div> Engagement	<div></div> Mastery	<div></div> Meaning	
Physical Environment							
• Do the facilities meet the appropriate standards for physical accessibility and safety?	✓	✓		✓			
• Is equipment available, affordable, and safe for all abilities and activities?	✓		✓	✓	✓		
• Is transportation (e.g., public transit) to the facilities available, affordable, and accessible?	✓	✓		✓			





If you do this...	...you will be fostering these building blocks...						What are you planning to do?
	Autonomy	Belongingness	Challenge	Engagement	Mastery	Meaning	
Program Environment							
• Are measures in place to ensure that activities are physically and psychologically safe?			✓	✓	✓		
• Can activities be adapted to meet the needs of all participants?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
• Do activities provide an appropriate level of challenge for all participants?			✓		✓	✓	
• Are a variety of options (e.g., opportunities to choose between different activities) available for participants?	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
• Do programs offer disability-specific activities AND activities that allow for integration with able-bodied peers, including friends and family members?		✓			✓		
• Are there enough participants in the program for activities to be implemented as planned?		✓				✓	
• Is funding available to sustain the program at a manageable cost to participants?	✓			✓			
• Does the classification process ensure that competition is equal and fair (if applicable)?	✓	✓	✓				





If you do this...	...you will be fostering these building blocks...						What are you planning to do?
	Autonomy	Belongingness	Challenge	Engagement	Mastery	Meaning	
Social Environment							
• Does the coach or instructor have an appropriate level of knowledge (e.g., training or certification)?			✓	✓	✓		
• Does the coach or instructor provide participants with choice or control when making plans and decisions?	✓			✓	✓		
• Does the coach or instructor track or monitor participants' progress?			✓		✓		
• Does the coach or instructor provide participants with opportunities to take on new or unique roles?		✓			✓	✓	
• Does the coach or instructor foster positive relationships with participants?		✓	✓		✓	✓	
• Are participants working together to achieve a common goal?		✓		✓	✓		
• Do participants have opportunities to be mentored, or to provide mentorship to other participants?		✓				✓	
• Do participants' family members have opportunities to watch and learn about the sport?		✓		✓		✓	
• Do participants' family members have opportunities to get involved (e.g., as a volunteer)?		✓		✓		✓	
• Are able-bodied participants and participants with a disability treated as equals?		✓				✓	
• Are supports in place to ensure that participants are protected from harassment and discrimination?		✓		✓			
• Are resources available to encourage awareness of and positive attitudes toward persons with a disability?		✓					
• Are volunteers and staff trained to provide an appropriate level of support for participants with a disability?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		



Key Considerations

Reflecting on your program's values, athlete's participation needs, and how you are supporting the building blocks will help you identify strategies to prioritize.

- Implementing one strategy could influence numerous building blocks of quality participation.
- It may not be possible or necessary to use all the strategies, however, implementing more strategies will likely increase the potential for creating a quality experience.

Build a Plan to Enhance Program Quality:

Are there **strategies that you are not currently planning to use, but could adopt**, fostering the building blocks of quality participation identified as most important for your program or event?

Are the **strategies that you are planning to use** fostering the building blocks of quality participation identified as most important for your program or event?



ENDNOTES

Authors

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No endorsements to declare.

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