

Canadian Disability Participation Project

The CDPP is an alliance of university, public, private and government sector partners working together to enhance community participation among Canadians with physical disabilities. The research team for this project has expertise in health behaviour change and the psychology of physical activity, children with disabilities, and inclusive physical education.



A Quick Guide to Accessibility, Inclusion, and Quality Participation

This guide is a resource for disability sport program builders, including administrators, coaches, and policy makers. It provides concise definitions of accessibility, inclusion, and quality participation, including considerations for the design or evaluation of disability sport programs. The research evidence supporting this guide is summarized in a supplemental report: *Accessibility, Inclusion, and Quality Participation: A Look at the Literature*.

What is accessibility?

The CDPP defines **accessibility** as *information, products, services, and spaces that have the flexibility to accommodate each person's needs and preferences, or that are usable for everyone without the need for adaptation.*

Accessible programs involve a number of considerations, such as:

- Is information about the program provided in a variety of formats (e.g., text, images, and audio)?
- Are volunteers and staff trained to accommodate persons with a disability (e.g., adapt equipment and activities)?
- Can the facilities be safely and easily accessed (e.g., well-lit and free of obstructions for persons with visual impairments; elevators for persons using a mobility device)?
- Are specialized (e.g., sport chairs, beeper balls) or adaptable (e.g., Velcro grips for dumbbells, adjustable nets) forms of equipment available?

What is inclusion?

The CDPP defines **inclusion** as *activities, programs, events, or roles in which everyone can participate and contribute to the fullest extent possible.*

Inclusive programs offer equal opportunities to participate and contribute to one's chosen group. They are developmentally appropriate, individualized, and celebrate individual differences.

For a program to be inclusive, it must first be accessible. However, inclusion goes beyond accessibility to ensure that every individual can participate in similar capacities or roles to their peers. On a sport team, for example, all participants have the opportunity to play every position — no one is relegated to a single position, such as the team manager or goal keeper.

What is quality participation?

The CDPP defines **quality participation** as *an individual's perception that their participation in an activity, program, event, or role has been positive, satisfying, and enjoyable on the whole.*

Quality participation results from an individual's quality experiences, which involve perceptions of autonomy, belongingness, challenge, engagement, mastery, and/or meaning (i.e., the 'building blocks' of quality experience). Conditions in the physical (e.g., accessible facilities), social (e.g., trained coaches and instructors), and program (e.g., inclusive activities) environments support the building blocks, and in some cases, are necessary for participation to occur.

Putting it all together

Accessibility allows for **inclusion**, and in turn, **quality participation**, to occur. While accessibility lays the foundation, inclusion generates the building blocks of quality experiences. When quality experiences are repeated over time, the result is quality participation.



ENDNOTES

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