Addressing Physical Disabilities

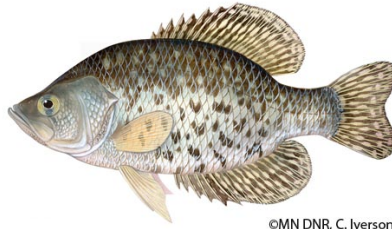©MN DNR, C. Iverson

The *MinnAqua Leader's Guide* was developed to provide equal opportunity for all participants to learn about Minnesota's fishing and aquatic resources and to develop angling and environmental stewardship skills. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) intends to provide equal access to all aspects of work and life for people with disabilities. As a result, program and teaching professionals are obligated to provide equal access to programs unless undue hardship can be proven.

A little forethought and planning will help anyone feel more comfortable adapting lessons from the *MinnAqua Leader's Guide* to work for people with physical disabilities. This process includes the following steps.

Needs Assessment

The Needs Assessment helps gather information about an individual's abilities.

The best way to find information about an individual's abilities is to talk to the person or their parent or guardian. A personal care attendant or teacher may also be helpful, but privacy laws may limit information sharing. Fill out the Needs Assessment as completely as possible.

If someone with a physical disability comes to a program unannounced, as may be the case in nonformal programs or events, talk to the person about the abilities required for the activities planned. Establishing early rapport will make everyone more comfortable if the need arises to solve an issue about access or involvement. Requests for advance contact can also be made on public announcements and planning information. The MinnAqua Program requests this information on their participant release form.

Lesson Analysis

Use the Lesson Analysis as a guide. Read through the lesson and check off the physical tasks required in each step of the activity. Add tasks that may not be noted on the record.

Adaptation Guide

Use the Adaptation Guide to compare an individual's abilities with the tasks and abilities needed for the lesson. Changing the lesson is not always necessary. Sometimes just a clear understanding of how an individual might be involved is all that is needed.

Start by laying the completed Needs Assessment and Lesson Analysis record side by side. Look for the individual's abilities that match the activity's abilities and tasks. Record the matches on the Adaptation Guide.

Next, analyze procedures, location, or delivery style by filling out the Adaptation Guide. Review the completed Adaptation Guide before the activity and keep a copy with the lesson plan. Have fun and enjoy the program!

The ADA intends to protect people with a broad range of disabilities. Neither the author of this Appendix nor the Minnesota DNR make the claim that this process will meet the requirements of the ADA. This Appendix is merely meant as a guide, not legal process. The responsibility of meeting the ADA is the responsibility of the institution and professional offering the program. For more information on the ADA, search the Internet for the Americans with Disabilities Act, and refer to the home page.

Needs Assessment

Date of Program _____ Group Name _____

Participant's Name _____ Total Number in Group _____

Description of Disabling Condition _____

Please describe the physical abilities and limitations.

Gross Motor (Ability to perform large muscle movements)
Does _____ perform large muscle movements such as sit, walk, run, hop, jump, bend, throw, cast?

Pace and Endurance (Speed and distance limitations)
Does _____ keep up with a group at a typical walking pace?
Can _____ run short distances?
Can _____ walk a half-mile?

Stability (Surface location and terrain limitations)
Do uneven or soft surfaces present a problem?

Fine Motor (Ability to manipulate objects)
Does _____ perform fine motor skills such as grasp, cut, write, tie a shoelace?

Vision
Does _____ have any vision impairment?
If yes, what does _____ have the ability to see? Light? Shape? Color?

Hearing
Does _____ have any hearing loss? If yes, what percent loss?

Sensory
Does _____ have any other sensory impairments?

Personal Care Attendant
Will a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) or other assistant be accompanying? _____

Equipment (Wheelchair, hearing devices, etc.)
Will _____ bring any adaptive equipment? If yes, what types of equipment?

Final Suggestions
What suggestions do you have for us that will enable _____ to be more effectively involved, engaged, or learn more easily?

Lesson Analysis

Date of Program _____ Lesson Title _____

Make a check mark next to the physical tasks used in the activity.

Gross Motor (What large muscle movements are required in this lesson?)

Sitting _____   Hopping _____   Throwing _____

Walking _____   Jumping _____   Casting _____

Running _____   Bending _____

Other, please list: _____

Pace and Endurance (How fast and how far are participants required to travel/move in this lesson?)
Pace:
Walking Slow _____   Walking Fast _____   Running _____

Distance:
25 yards or less _____   50 yards _____   100 yards _____

How far will the participants have to walk to the lesson or fishing site? _____

Stability (Where will this lesson take place and on what type of terrain?)
Location:
Inside _____   Outside _____

Terrain:
Hard Surface (gymnasium, asphalt) _____   Lawn _____

Soft (sand, soft dirt) _____   Uneven Ground _____

Fine Motor (What fine motor movements are required in this lesson?)

Grasping _____   Cutting _____   Other (please list)

Writing _____   Knot-tying _____

_____

_____

Sensory (What senses are used in this lesson?)

Sight _____   Taste _____   Touch _____

Hearing _____   Smell _____

Adaptation Guide

Date of Program _____ Group Name _____

Participant's Name _____ Total Number in Group _____

Description of Disabling Condition _____

Task and Ability Matches
Compare the individual's abilities (Needs Assessment) to the tasks and abilities needed to do the lesson (Lesson Analysis). Note the matches in the space below.

Gross Motor
What procedures can be modified to minimize ability differences among participants? For example, change running to walking.

Pace, Endurance, and Stability
Can the activity location be moved to address concerns about pace, endurance, or terrain?

Fine Motor
What procedures can be changed or adapted to accommodate a particular ability or avoid a disability?

Sensory (Especially vision and hearing)
Where can tactile, auditory, or olfactory items be added to accommodate someone with a sight impairment?

Where can visual aids be added to accommodate someone with a hearing loss?

Personal Care Attendant
How or when might a helper assist the participant?

Comments/Additions