

USYSA Workshop 2012

Understanding Athletes With Disabilities

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A matter of perception...

“Congress acknowledged that society's accumulated myths and fears about disability and disease are as handicapping as are the physical limitations that flow from actual impairment.”

-- William J. Brennan, Jr.



Person first, disability second...

*Are we coaching an individual with a disability or
a disabled individual?*





LOVE WHAT YOU'RE DOING?

If you have a passion for the game and love teaching it to children, then TOPSoccer holds rewards beyond your wildest dreams.

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Common disabilities...

- Developmental Disabilities
 - Autism/PDD, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, Intellectual Disability
- Muscular Dystrophy
- TBI
- Epilepsy
- Learning Disabilities
- ADHD
- Visual/Hearing Impairment



Typical behavioral responses...

- Running
- Crying
- Avoiding
- Touching
- Hitting
- Screaming
- Non-compliance
- Impulsive
- Spitting
- Aggressive
- Selfish
- Biting



How to deal with it...

- Always expect the unexpected!!
- Be calm, be patient, be direct...not bossy
- Understand the person and the purpose, what is the function of the behavior?
- What is the child communicating?
- Consider what is socially appropriate
- Ask first “what can I change or do differently to elicit a different response” ...



How to deal with it...

- Avoid the “special education sympathy syndrome” ...person first!
- Sometimes ignore, deflect or redirect...
- Do the unexpected...
- Involve the parents only if necessary



Be proactive...

- Create a positive environment that provides opportunity for success.
- Establish
 - Visual cues, boundaries, routine, constant activity, clear limits and expectations
- Establish a relationship, make eye contact. Check for understanding.
- Reward positive behaviors, celebrate success.



Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Significant impairment in social interaction and communication.
- General need for sensory stimulation.
- Can be aggressive or self-injurious
- Obsessive-compulsive
- May lack fear of danger
- Uneven gross/fine motor skills
- May appear unresponsive



Down Syndrome

- Generally very affectionate
- Hearing and vision loss
- Speech/Language delays
- Strong willed and stubborn
- Thrives in routine
- Short attention span, highly distractible
- Don't often know their own strength.



ADHD

- Impulsive and hyperactive
- Significant lack of focus
- May hear but not process directions
- Can be very pushy and loud

- Avoid confrontation and power struggles
- Keep them moving! Stay one step ahead!



Epilepsy

- Also known as seizure disorder
- Nervous system disorder affecting 2.5 million Americans
- Usually will occur without visual warning
- Individual may “feel” it coming
- Often looks worse than it is...
- Dehydration, lighting, fatigue, stress...



Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

- Caused by a significant blow to the head or brain.
- Profound confusion, loss of memory, agitation and combativeness, slurred speech, loss of coordination, seizure...
- May lack a “filter”
- May improve over time...
- May significantly impact personality



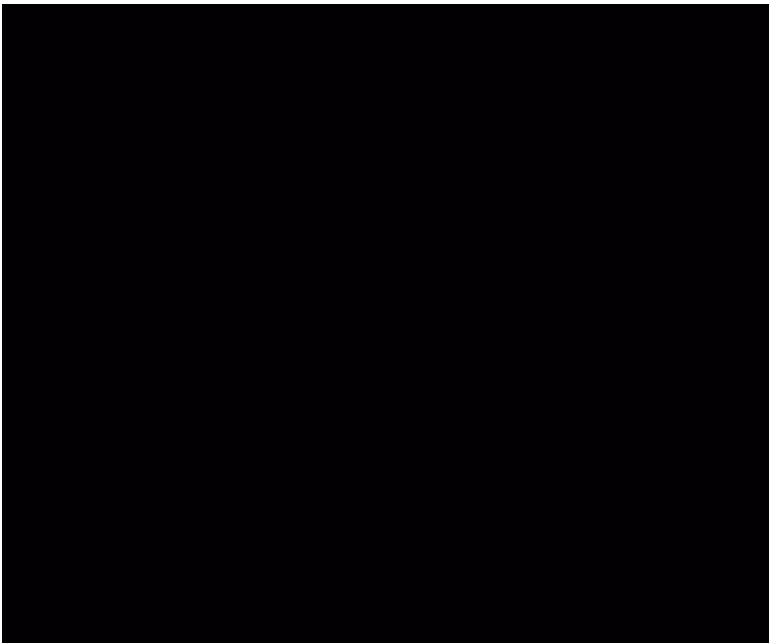
Muscular Dystrophy

- Genetic disorder which weakens muscles and muscle groups.
- Prevalent in boys
- May cause intellectual disability
- Becomes very physically limiting



Questions?





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