

TOP Sportsability

Elements: the STEP
adaptation tool



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Definition

It's often necessary to adapt or modify physical activities in order to ensure that young people who have profound, multiple or complex needs can participate in ways appropriate to their requirements

Using the STEP adaptation tool to support participation

The STEP principles can be used to adapt and modify activities to provide more opportunities to develop skills and have fun.

STEP means: **S**pace, **T**ask, **E**quipment and **P**eople. Changes within any of these areas can create possibilities for more people to participate. For example:

- delivering the activity at the right level to ensure some success or maintain interest and motivation;
- providing a structure enabling changes to be made to any activity in order to promote involvement and inclusion.



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STEP stands for:

	Examples
Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Changing the space to improve control; for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- keeping items within reach, on a lap tray or table-top;- moving items slightly further away to stimulate movement, such as stretching and reaching.● Playing a ball activity in a corner or near to a wall to contain deflections and maintain focus by reducing distraction.
Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Flexible interpretation, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 'balancing' could be interpreted as balancing an object on part of the body;- 'moving' can apply to a specific body part.- 'sending and receiving' need not involve throwing and catching; for example, releasing a ball down a ramp (send) or trapping a soft ball or small cushion with the whole body (receiving).
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use balls, toys and other materials to stimulate movement; for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- interesting items can motivate young people in collecting games;- noisy targets, like plastic skittles or empty water bottles can excite interest.● Use alternatives, for example:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- floating scarves or soft material instead of balls or balloons;- sound balls can encourage visual tracking.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Human resources<ul style="list-style-type: none">- play assistants can assist movement by supporting a limb or hand;- verbal encouragement, along with positive facial expressions and gestures, provides stimulus and reinforcement;- interaction with non-disabled peers creates social contact and supports inclusion.● Young people can have a specific role within a group activity; eg starting every play.● Collaborative activities focus on cooperation and integration.



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The **STEP** adaptation tool provides a simple structure for modification enabling staff and volunteers supporting young people who have profound and complex needs to develop innovative ideas and strategies around each of the four areas.

The key to its successful use is in identifying the part of the activity or game that is creating the biggest barrier.

The **space** in which a young person participates influences the way in which they engage with an activity; a larger space promotes movement and mobility, a smaller space increases interaction.

Or the way in which a young person participates may be the key factor. For example, a young person may find that a large racket or bat is difficult to manipulate or control, even if a slow-moving balloon ball or beach ball is being used. The **task** can be adjusted by using only the hands or fingers initially to control a ball or balloon.

The solution may lie in the **equipment** employed. By suspending balloons, balloon balls or beach balls from above, young people can create a reaction by pushing or striking the targets but without losing complete control as they always return again within reach.

Or a young person may be easily distracted or lose focus. By considering the **people** aspect, the introduction of an enthusiastic partner, calling or clapping, or by holding target balls where they can be reached, can provide motivation.

Resource cards

The TOP Sportsability games resource cards all contain suggestions based on the STEP adaptation tool and provide a source of ideas.

