

FLAGHOUSE Activity Guide

AAALF's Tips for Inclusion Target Activities¹ Middle School Ages: 11 - 13 years



Developmental Background

Target activities such as darts, bowling, shuffleboard, and miniature golf include many different movements that develop over a period of years until the prerequisite skills for these sports are developed. Games and other activities such as tag vest, beanbag games, ring toss, and modified bowling help children learn the concepts of the games and such skills as aiming, concentration, throwing and running or walking to pick up the thrown target instruments. Students with disabilities often have not had the opportunities to develop these skills to age level or, the limits of their disabilities prevent them from performing at age level. Below are some indicators of success appropriate for ALL middle school students:

Indicators of Success²:

1. Student completes appropriate practice of target skills at a level commensurate with his or her ability³.
2. Student completes practice sheet for catching and throwing skills with a partner at least six times a quarter.
3. Six or more practice events are reported with student describing adaptations made to the aiming, concentration, throwing and running, pushing their wheelchair or walking to pick up the thrown target instruments required by the game.
4. Create evaluation criteria to test the level of progress for the sport or activity.
5. Student can adjust to varying weights and sizes of projectiles. This facilitates proprioceptive activity and stimulates finer muscle control.

How Do You Teach?

- Use simpler language—use language that meets the cognitive understanding and ability of the students.
- Give clear examples of things they already know—use concrete visual examples such as “look at the bull’s-eye”.
- Consider the sequence of tasks—if the student doesn’t have the prerequisite skills, back up and teach them.
- Allow time for mastery—once a new skill is learned, give ALL students the opportunity to use it in a variety of ways before moving on to the next.
- Use multiple senses—many students, not just ones with disabilities, can benefit from a variety of sounds, textures, weights, and “feel” of the activity and the equipment used (see the FlagHouse line of sensory stimulation equipment).
- Make sure the demonstration is easy to follow and focuses on basic skills.

Where Do You Teach?

- Reduce the size of the playing area by changing the boundary lines, increasing the number of players, decreasing the height of the net or goal, and using equipment that will reduce the range of play such as sponge or whiffle balls. Remember that net-type games can be played through a hoop.
- Eliminate distractions by playing indoors during the learning phase—cover permanent equipment if necessary to take them out of the field of vision.
- Provide structure and routine—some students who are distractible or emotionally disturbed may become disoriented by frequent changes in the class routine. If this is the case, be consistent in the structure and routine of the class each day. When you do make a change, “walk the students through” the changes so they know what to expect.
- Students with visual impairments should always be re-oriented to new floor plans.
- Vary the class format if all students cannot learn in the same way—for some, one-on-one instruction is needed, so a peer or teacher’s aide can accompany the student; others need multiple forms of stimuli, thus, a station format might be more successful than full class instruction.
- Design the environment so the activity can occur naturally by using equipment that “cues” the student to perform the desired skill.
- Be versatile—a bowling lane can be a hallway or a whole gym. The length of the targets can be shortened or lengthened. DO NOT USE CHILDREN AS TARGETS. This is always inappropriate.

What Do You Teach—Change The Activity Itself!

- Assess the student’s ability to determine the most appropriate areas where they have the highest potential for success. If the student uses a wheelchair or has limited mobility, place the student in a position that doesn’t require much movement, such as closer to the target for throwing and retrieval, or having a mechanism for target retrieval such as the bowling ball return seen in bowling alleys, or having other students help with retrieval.
- Limit the participation time—students with organic health impairments such as sickle cell anemia, heart conditions, or asthma may need to rest more frequently than other students. Provide additional rest periods for all involved to discuss rule infractions, strategy, and team play. Players can be rotated in and out of the game or be active and inactive. The time periods of the game can be reduced as well.

¹ Classification systems for sports and physical activities such as the one endorsed by the State of New York cluster activities in ways that increase the chances of a positive transfer of skills from one activity to the next.

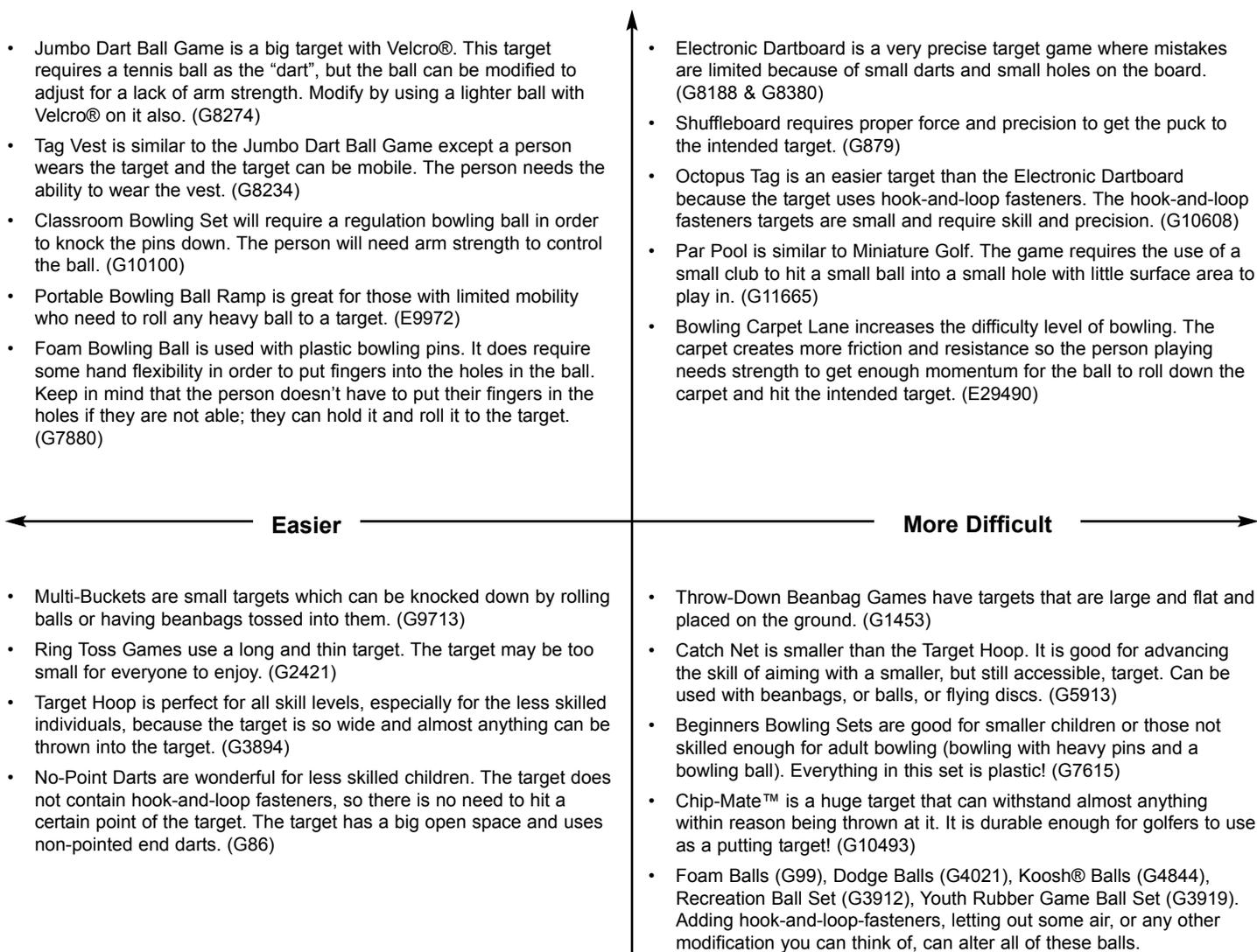
² Adapted from Fairfax County Public Schools, (2002). *On the Move: A Roadmap to Fitness & Wellness. Physical Education Program of Studies, Grades: 6-8.* Fairfax, VA: Instructional Services Department.

³ Fulfill requirements of national standards for physical education developed by NASPE, 1995.

- Adapt the skills according to the students' abilities—to slow down the moving object, change the throwing style to underhand; throw the ball with one bounce; roll the ball; increase the size of the ball; decrease the weight of the ball; or decrease the air pressure.
- Modify the equipment—manufactured equipment is available for some modifications such as a portable bowling ball ramp and a bowling carpet. Unique modifications are still likely to be needed. Have ace bandages, easy-off adhesive tape, stick-on hook-and-loop fasteners, and masking tape on hand to secure the implement to their hands, or a handle to the crutch or a glove worn by the student. Any number of other options are available depending on the situation. Equipment with handles can also be shortened using tools commonly available in wood shop—so get creative! Use lighter equipment such as whiffle balls, GrabBalls™, Koosh® balls, Spiderballs™, and styrofoam balls.
- Rule changes will be needed to accommodate any number of the previous modifications—if possible, try to align rule changes with disability sport organizations such as the National Wheelchair Softball Association or National Beep Baseball Association. For rules governing school-aged students participating with mixed disabilities contact the American Association of Adapted Sports Programs.
- Modify the rules for playtime—participants can sit down or lie down instead of standing, walk rather than run, kick rather than strike, throw or strike rather than kick. Additional trials may be permitted for strikes, throws, and jumps. Allow for substitutions, reduce time periods of the game, or reduce the number of points required to win a contest.
- Level the playing field by having some students without disabilities wear blindfolds, bat left-handed if they are “rightys”, etc. Sometimes the students like to see if they can execute effective movement skills by doing things differently, which could make for a fun class. How do you think Tiger Woods learned to bounce a golf ball on the face of a club?

DEVELOPING SKILLS FOR TARGET GAMES

Advanced – More Skills



Novice – Less Skilled

The Solutions You Need

The matrix can be used to identify where, on a two-dimensional continuum, students in your class fit so you can provide the most suitable equipment and supports for their success. The matrix is arranged so that the easier, novice-level activities/skills are identified in the lower left-hand quadrant of the matrix. There you can see, to some extent, a developmental sequence of target movements with recommended equipment appropriate at each level. You can see in the upper, right-hand quadrant, implications for the most difficult and advanced skills featuring the standard equipment used in any physical education class. You would be surprised that, if given an option, many students will choose to use the equipment which gives them a greater chance for success. If the environment in the class is such that these choices are "okay", ALL students will learn, find success and perhaps learn to enjoy an activity they can incorporate into an active lifestyle throughout their life span.

Resources

American Association of Adapted Sports Programs

P.O. Box 538
Pine Lake, GA 30072
404-294-0070
<http://www.aaasp.org/>

American Association for Active Lifestyles and Fitness (AALF/AAHPERD)

Adapted Physical Activity Council
1900 Association Drive
Reston, VA 20191
800-213-7193 x430
<http://www.aahperd.org/aaalf/>

Wheelchair Sports, USA

3595 E. Fountain Blvd., Suite L-1
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80910
719-574-1150 Fax 719-574-9840
<http://www.wsusa.org>

Special Olympics

1325 G Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-628-3630 Fax: 202-824-0200
<http://www.specialolympics.org>

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