

## Mission Statement

The Development of Individuals  
through Recreation

## Vision Statement

Equal Fun for Everyone

## WDSRA Core Values

**Staff** - We recruit, train, nurture and reward the best staff and volunteers our resources will allow.

**Members and participants** - We recognize, respect and respond to the recreational and developmental needs of our participants for our member park districts.

**Innovation** - We explore and implement new procedures, program technologies and opportunities.

**Leadership** - We are the leader in our field and will readily share our knowledge, experience and skills with others.

**Excellence** - We provide the highest quality of service, programs and events possible.



Equal Fun for Everyone

### Western DuPage Special Recreation Association

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## Western DuPage Special Recreation Association

# Inclusion Services

### Guide for Member Park Districts



Equal Fun for Everyone

Serving the park districts of  
Bloomington, Carol Stream,  
Glen Ellyn, Roselle, Naperville,  
Warrenville, West Chicago,  
Wheaton, and Winfield

## Welcome to Inclusion

Together as a team, we can make it happen. WDSRA is committed to assisting you, our member partner, in providing safe and meaningful inclusion experiences for your residents who have special needs. We understand that some participants who have special needs prefer to engage in recreational opportunities with their peers who do not have disabilities. By developing an inclusion plan together, we can facilitate successful experiences.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was enacted into law on July 26, 1990. It enables individuals who have special needs with the ability to utilize and enjoy public recreational opportunities, with or without reasonable accommodations. The law's purpose is to break down social barriers & misconceptions and to deter discriminatory practices, whether intentional or unintentional.

Inclusion provides opportunities for individuals with and without special needs to experience recreation together. Inclusion looks at the needs, interests and abilities of the participants instead of focusing on their special needs. Inclusion supports the process of preparing, learning, experiencing and growing for each participant, each family and each staff member. Inclusion provides a recreational choice.



## WDSRA Inclusion Process

There are two basic ways we learn about a participant who chooses to be included in recreation programs: 1) The participant or guardian contacts WDSRA, or 2) The participant or guardian directly registers for a recreation program at your park district.

### Initial Contact is Made With WDSRA:

- A member of the WDSRA Inclusion team speaks to the participant
- WDSRA staff requests participant to register with the member park district
- WDSRA staff shares information with member district staff regarding the participant
- If the participant is new, WDSRA staff will perform an assessment of the participant and discuss findings with member district staff to determine necessary accommodations
- Based on the assessment necessary accommodations will be made. Possibilities include: adapted equipment or materials, sign language interpreter, training for district staff, behavior management support, observation and evaluation and the provision of a support staff member
- If a support staff member is placed in a program, WDSRA provides that person as well as the member district staff with important information regarding needs and necessary accommodations
- Ongoing observation, evaluation and communication will occur between the participant, support staff member, guardian and member district staff

### Initial Contact is Made With Member Park District:

- Participant registers for program and indicates need for accommodations
- If unsure of the individual's special needs or if support will be needed, member district staff contact the family to verify that the individual does require inclusion services from WDSRA
- Member district staff complete Inclusion Notification form to share program details with WDSRA Inclusion team
- If the participant is new, WDSRA staff will perform an assessment of the participant and discuss findings with member district to determine necessary accommodations
- If provision of a support staff member is deemed a necessary accommodation WDSRA will secure that person and inform both park district staff and the guardian
- WDSRA provides support staff member as well as member district staff with important information regarding needs and necessary accommodations
- Ongoing observation, evaluation and communication will occur between the participant, WDSRA support staff member, guardian and member district staff

## WDSRA Is Here To Help By Assisting You With Various Levels Of Support

No technique can guarantee success in every case. These supports allow for success the majority of the time. The most important variable to remember when including any individual who has special needs is that of independence. Every participant should be allowed to function as independently as he/she can and in the least restrictive environment. Following are ways we can help:

- Inservice training for staff on topics such as ADA guidelines, behavior management strategies, specific disabilities and activity modifications
- Provide adaptive equipment and materials
- Conduct assessments/observations of a participant in the program and make recommendations
- Secure sign language interpreters for participants who are deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Develop behavior accommodation plans
- Provide resources and references for such items as accessible transportation, accessibility standards and guidelines, general ADA requirements and the Illinois Relay Center
- Evaluate the need for a WDSRA support staff member to assist an individual who has special needs, while acting as part of the member district's staff



## Staff Guidelines

### Member District Staff Roles

- Maintain regular communication regarding program activities and schedules with support staff member.
- Remember that the individual who has special needs is registered for your program and should be given the same level of instruction as the other participants.
- Familiarize yourself with the information provided about the participant.
- Instruct individuals who have special needs with disability support from WDSRA.
- Cooperate with support staff members to adapt activities whenever necessary so that all can participate.
- Be an advocate for the participant who has special needs.
- Know the Code of Conduct for your program. All participants must adhere to this code.
- Communicate regularly with parents, support staff members and WDSRA Inclusion team members.



### WDSRA Support Staff Roles

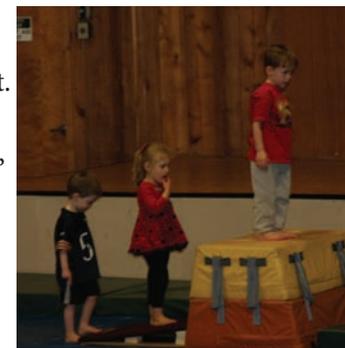
- Maintain constant communication with member district staff.
- Become part of the program staff. Take an active role in all meetings, activities and events.
- Share information regarding the participant.
- Work cooperatively with member district staff to adapt activities when necessary so that all can participate.
- Assist in the process of training district staff regarding how to work with those who have special needs.
- Adhere to the park district policies and guidelines.
- Serve as an advocate for those who have special needs. Provide opportunities for social acceptance by peers.
- Serve as a resource for all staff and participants. Accurately inform others about one's special need.
- Encourage and foster the participant's independence. Incorporate the individual into the group and work with the group as a whole.

## At What Point Can Someone Be Denied Services?

It is important for everyone to know if and when it is legally appropriate to say "no" to an inclusion placement. While safety for the individual or other participants is most important,

there are three reasons which can be supported for denying access to a participant who has special needs. They are: 1) the participant's inability to abide by a reasonable Code of Conduct in a program setting (even with the provision of a support staff member); 2) it places an undue financial or administrative burden on the agency; and 3) the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the nature of the service.

Before denying an individual the right to participate, it is recommended that legal consultation be sought, or that you contact WDSRA. WDSRA also requests that you contact them for guidance and assistance before removing a participant who has special needs from a program.



## Suggestions To Encourage Inclusion At Your Agency

### Registration Form

We encourage you to use language on your registration form which welcomes all to participate and to provide information regarding one's needs. You may want to include a statement such as: "Does the participant have any special needs? If so, please describe any accommodation needed for the enjoyment of the program."

### Code Of Conduct

Your agency's brochure should include your required Code of Conduct for all programs. If you choose not to list the entire Code in your brochure, you may state that your agency adheres to a Code of Conduct and then post it at your administrative office.

### Support Staff

When hiring part-time staff, it would be helpful if your agency would seek applicants who meet the requirements of the job and who also have healthy attitudes and/or experience working with individuals who have special needs.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How do I notify WDSRA of the need for Inclusion Support?

To request inclusion assistance from WDSRA, you will need to complete an Inclusion Notification form. Please go to [www.wdsra.com/inclusion.htm](http://www.wdsra.com/inclusion.htm) to submit your request electronically.

### How far in advance do Inclusion Notifications need to be submitted?

Advance planning and preparation help to increase the likelihood of success. Please submit notifications as quickly as possible after an individual registers. WDSRA does request a minimum of two weeks advance notice to arrange accommodations. A member of the WDSRA Inclusion team will forward roster information to you once necessary accommodations have been secured. Untimely or incomplete notice to the park district and/or WDSRA may result in temporarily suspending participation pending the ability to assess and address inclusion needs.

### What should I do with the rosters I receive?

Rosters contain information regarding the participant, program details and inclusion support staff. Please review information you receive and then forward rosters to program instructors. Providing this information will help all team members best meet the participant's needs. If a support staff member is deemed a necessary accommodation, the name and telephone number will be included in the instructor portion of the activity roster. We ask that you add the staff member's name and telephone number to your phone tree for that specific program. Participant information is confidential and HIPAA guidelines must be followed. At the conclusion of a program, please collect and shred rosters or return them to WDSRA.

### What can we do to better prepare for participation in the inclusion process?

Adequate preparation and training are the key to success. WDSRA staff members welcome the ability to train all who will be involved. Training can cover a variety of topics and can be tailored to meet the needs of any staff members.

### What should I do if we have a WDSRA support staff member assisting in a program but the participant does not attend?

If a participant does not attend a scheduled program, WDSRA support staff members are provided with a choice of working or taking the time off. WDSRA support staff members choosing to work are asked to contact the WDSRA office as soon as they are aware that the participant they assist will be absent. If possible, staff members will be re-assigned to support another individual. If an alternate assignment is not available through WDSRA, staff members should be provided with the opportunity to work the assigned program and are expected to assist member district staff with implementing the selected activities and supervising all who are enrolled.