



COMMUNITY-ENGAGED LEARNING

Adaptive Gymnastics

PATHWAY: NUTRITION AND EXERCISE

Facilitators

- Deborah Damon, PhD

The Need

- The cost of early intervention programs can be a barrier to entry for many families, providing these classes as a service eliminates the cost of an additional therapy session for our participants.
- Fostering friendships amongst young people with disabilities can improve overall well-being, help them learn important norms and values, and contribute to improved outcomes as they enter adulthood.
- Learning how to effectively communicate and develop relationships with individuals with varying levels of intellectual and speech disabilities is a vital skill for healthcare providers. This program provides an optimal opportunity for developing those communication skills.

Annual Student Activities

- 12 students per cohort across 2 cohorts.
- Students will be assigned 1-2 class participant(s) and work with the participant's guardians and outside therapists to define specific goals for that participant.
- Students will develop specific lesson plans for weekly classes with the participant's goals in mind.
- Students will volunteer at weekly gymnastics classes helping to guide participants through class

Project Description

- Students lead weekly, hour-long gymnastics classes for children with varying disabilities throughout the community.
- Classes are structured around meeting individual developmental goals for each participant.
- Students will become comfortable interacting with children with varying language and communication skills.
- Students will become advocates for children with disabilities throughout the local community and seek opportunities to promote inclusion and grow the program to include new sports and recreational activities.

Community Outcomes/Results

- ↑ Promotion of inclusion of individuals with disabilities in sports and recreational activities.
- ↑ Improved physical abilities and social skills for participants.
- ↑ Improved self-esteem, resiliency, and determination in our participants.

Community Partners

- Excalibur Gymnastics
- Eliza Hope Foundation
- Jump Start Social Skills Program
- Special Olympics Virginia
- Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters Developmental Clinic



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