

GUTS Adaptive Fitness Plan

Introduction

The GUTS™ Adaptive Fitness Plan (GAFF) is a collaborative approach to support every GUTS™ participant, and promotes successful involvement within the GUTS™ programs offered. This collaborative approach involves the participants, families, and GUTS™ staff working together to develop a fitness plan that meets the needs of every individual. The GUTS™ team feels that it is important to work together to ensure the participant has the best opportunities for success on their road to physical fitness.

The population of individuals with different abilities often does not receive the same amount, or depth of opportunity to be physically active. The GUTS™ team feels that physical fitness is a necessary part of a happy, healthy life; and that all individuals should have the opportunity to engage in regular physical activity. The goal of the GUTS™ program and the GAFF is to promote physical activity and fitness for those individuals that do not have the opportunity to do so on their own.

Description

The GAFF is an individualized process that develops a personalized plan of fitness that best meets the needs of each individual participant.

Core Beliefs

- Fitness is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle.
- Physical activity has a direct impact on one's quality of life.
- Every child, no matter the complexity of their needs, can engage in physical activity promoting health and fitness.
- Physical activity should be fun and engaging!

The GAFF involves a sequence of phases designed to formulate a personalized plan of fitness for participants. For the plan to be successful, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the participant, along with what support is needed to promote successful participation within the program. This will require involvement of the participant, parents; GUTS™ support staff, and instructors. A collaborative approach is critical to best support the participant and offer the greatest opportunity for success.

This first phase of the process really is about getting to know the participant, the family and the participant's abilities. To make sound decisions on meaningful participation, the GUTS™ team needs to have an understanding of the interests and needs of the participant, along with potential barriers to successful participation within the GUTS™ program. This will allow the GUTS™ team to recommend programs best suited for that individual. The next step is determining the child's Present Level of Physical Activity and Achievement. This will involve systematic observation and assessment of the child's current level of physical fitness. The baseline data collected during phase one will help promote the successful involvement and participation within the GUTS™ program.

First Phase of the Process

Understanding the Child's Interests

Initially it will be important to develop our familiarity with, and understanding of the individual participant. This will involve discussions with the participant and their family. The GUTS™ team believes that to offer the best opportunity for success, it is essential to take a collaborative approach to developing the GAFFP. Parents and participants are an important part of the GUTS™ team, and will be critical to the success of the program. It will be important for our team to understand your child's interests and abilities. There will involve an Interest Inventory for parents or participants to fill out that will provide us with some of this information. The GUTS™ team will also sit down with parents and participants to discuss the questionnaire. This will allow us to dig deeper with some of the responses to better understand the individual participating in the program. Ideally, if child has interests in certain physical activities, then incorporating some of these interests would make for a good starting point for any fitness plan. This is also the opportunity for the GUTS™ team to get a feel for potential challenges in getting a child to cooperate. Of course, new activities in new surroundings can be a challenge for special needs children and, therefore, to establish new habits and participation may take some time.

List of Behaviors

This portion of the GAFFP will allow the GUTS™ team to better anticipate the participant's needs and the level of support required to foster successful participation within the program. A brief questionnaire will be given to parents and participants, and our team will discuss specifics that pertain to the individual's participants anticipated programs. This knowledge will allow the GUTS™ team to know what to expect of a child and to be properly prepared for all circumstances. Of course, the GUTS™ team has training in Special Education and in Adaptive Physical Education, so hands-on professional experience is part of the GUTS™ experience. Typical questions that would be asked are as followed:

1. What is your child's primary means of communication?
2. How does the child generally behave at home, at school, etc?
3. What routines or expectations have been established to support your child at home or school?
4. What is typically most reinforcing for your child?
5. What are the potential triggers that may lead to difficulty (i.e. loud noise, physical contact, etc.)?
6. When the child is upset do they exhibit any physically aggressive behaviors?
7. What is the best way to approach the child when they get upset?
8. What strategies help your child cope with difficult or stressful situations?

The answers to these questions will allow the GUTS™ team to get a clear idea on how to best support the participant when involved in the GUTS™ program. The goal would be to set the stage so every child can have a positive experience at the facility.

Present Level of Physical Achievement

This section of the GAFF allows us to establish a baseline for the participants current level of physical fitness and activity. A short questionnaire along with some baseline assessments will be administered to understand what fitness goals are most appropriate. Typical questions that would be asked are as follows:

1. How much does the child weigh?
2. Where does the child stand in relation to ideal weight for their age, body type, and height?
3. What physical activities does the child presently participate in?
4. How often does the child engage in these physical activities?
5. What type of physical activities does the child enjoy?
6. Which activities does the child not like?
7. Does the child have any physical disabilities that might limit their involvement in any new physical activities?
8. Are there any other physical limitations or special circumstances that are important to be aware of?

Second Phase of the Process

Practical Experience

The second phase of the process involves a trial run where the GUTS™ team would work with the child in a trial visit. This would allow a couple of things to happen.

First of all, it allows the child to experience the facility and the GUTS™ instructor that would be assigned to them, while doing some basic fitness regimens. This opportunity would allow all parties to get a basic feel for how the experience would work. (An important point here is that the GUTS™ team knows that assigning a specific instructor is an essential part of the success; familiarity is key.)

Secondly, it allows the GUTS™ team to start tailoring a basic, get-started, program based on observations and initial performance. (Fitness programs for all children will be dynamic. Progress and growing with the experience will enable the GUTS™ team to constantly develop and alter fitness regimens to make them better. Success can be measured in degrees of fun, enthusiasm and cooperation. Results, on the other hand, are measured against goals. The GUTS™ team will deliver both.)

Third Phase Development of a Plan

Setting Physical & Health Goals

This section of the GAFP will provide fitness goals for the child to work toward during their time in GUTS™. For example:

Goal: John will partake in cardiovascular activity for 10 minutes w/o breaks.

These goals that the parents and the GUTS™ employees decide on will be evaluated throughout the program, and after 4 months the team at GUTS™ will meet with the family to revisit the goals and determine next steps for the participant. At the 4 month reevaluation meeting, the GUTS™ team will re-assess the participant and measure the growth and progress that has been made. This will be presented to parents along with a list of the current activities and exercises the participant is able to perform.

Potential Fitness Skills Demonstrating Fitness

- Walking on the Treadmill: 5 incline for 10 minutes
- Dancing: 10 minutes without breaks.
- Shoulder Press: 10 lbs for 10 reps
- Boxing: Punches on the bag for 30 sec without stopping
- 40 yd Dash: 15 sec
- Jumping Jacks: 15 reps without stopping

This will allow the family to have a clear understanding of what the participant is doing, along with what they are capable of. This information will allow parents and caretakers to reinforce the activities the Participant is engaging in through their time at GUTS™.

The GAFP will develop a trust between the parents and the staff. By having the trust, it will help the parents and the staff to agree on what is best for the child. The goal of GUTS™ is to create success among the people who enter their doors and by developing an GAFP for each student with special needs will ensure that success is reached.