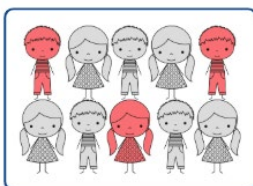


# Challenger Baseball School Program Evaluation

## DID YOU KNOW?



More than **ONE IN 10** youth in Canada have one or more disabilities.

Strong evidence indicates that **children and youth with developmental disabilities** gain numerous **benefits** from participating in **group exercise**, including, **improved gross motor function**, **improved communication skills**, **increased socialization**, and **increased self-control**.



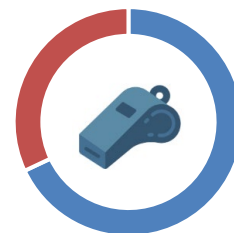
**AND YET**, across Canada, families of children and youth with disabilities report **HIGHER DISTRESS** and **FEWER OPPORTUNITIES** to engage in social and physical activities compared to same-age peers without disabilities.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND DISABILITY

A common challenge for physical education teachers in schools is feeling **INADEQUATELY PREPARED** to **teach** or **adapt** activities for youth with disabilities.

**68%** of our surveyed educators with prior experience teaching students with physical disabilities have **NEVER** received previous training in **ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**.



This was true even for **70%** of those who had **previously taken special education courses or certifications**.

The key to better integrating children and youth with development disabilities into physical education, after-school sports and the overall classroom curriculum is:



### Teacher Training

Lack of competent, knowledgeable staff is one of the most commonly cited barriers preventing children and youth with disabilities from participating in **sport and recreation** programming.



### Modified Equipment

Inadequate or lack of adapted equipment has been highlighted as one of the **major constraining factors** by Canadian teachers looking to implement adaptive physical activities.



### Strength Based Approach

The 2018 *ParticipACTION Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth* calls on educators to personalize physical activity programs for children and youth with disabilities using a **strength-based approach**.

## WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT?

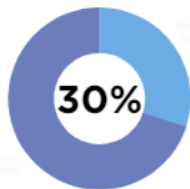
Challenger Baseball School Program (CBSP) provides teachers with hands-on, play based training on inclusive physical education for children and youth with physical and/or cognitive disabilities. Throughout training, educators work with adaptive equipment that their schools then receive post-training and learn how to adapt Challenger Baseball activities from the coaches guide and activity manual to suit their students' unique abilities. Participants leave with new strategies on supporting positive behaviour in their students and are provided an opportunity to network with other educators.



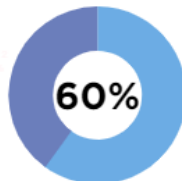
## DOES IT WORK?

### We Found Challenger Baseball Meets Teachers Professional Development Needs

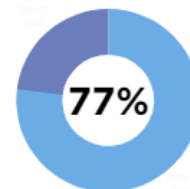
Educators who have received CBSP training reported significant improvements in knowledge of best practices for making adaptations, confidence in making adaptations, ability to support positive behaviours, and understanding of how to create inclusive classrooms for students with disabilities. Including:



Increase in knowledge of how to support positive behaviours



Increase in confidence to adapt activities



Increase in knowledge of best-practices for adaptation

**100%** of educators said that adaptive physical training should be a required part of professional development in schools and that **they would recommend CBSP** to other educators



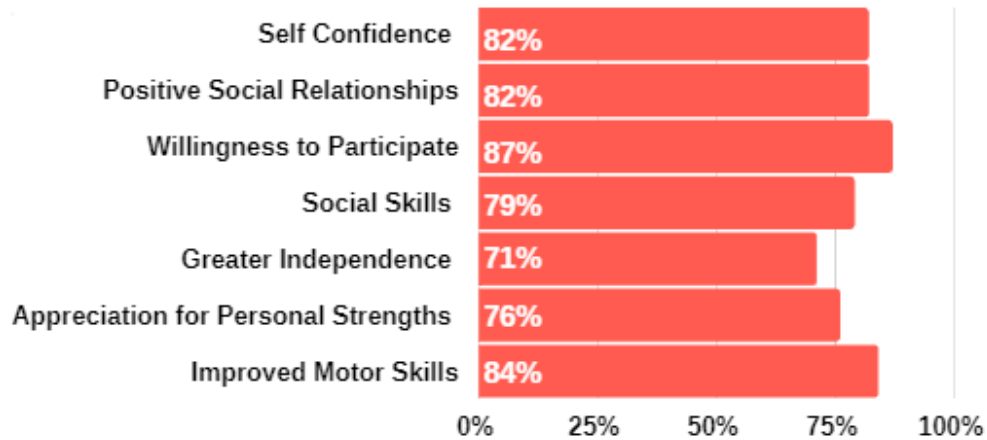
### We Found CBSP Demonstrates Gains for Student Athletes in the Program

Educators reported that CBSP had produced positive gains for many or most participating student athletes in the following areas: self confidence, positive social relationships, willingness to participate in activities, social skills, greater independence, enhanced appreciation for personal strengths, and improved motor skills.

#### **A Success Story:**

*"One of our children who has autism that is non-verbal, used to leave the gym frequently and now she seems somewhat engaged. She really likes the tactile equipment so that, for us, is like wow, you know. We spend more time having her interact with others versus chasing her. It sounds, you know, but it is the reality. Even if you were to take one student, it has made so much of a difference. It really has."*

## % of Educators Who Reported Positive Gains



### We found CBSP Benefits Extend Beyond Physical Education

Educators reported that CBSP benefits reached beyond the student athletes directly participating in the program and significantly or very significantly enhanced their abilities in the classroom:

- **55%** reported it enhanced their adaptability in the classroom
- **63%** reported it provided access to tools and strategies that enhance classroom teaching
- **79%** reported it fostered a culture of learning among teachers
- **74%** reported it promoted an inclusive learning environment
- **82%** reported it fostered a sense of belonging for students living with disabilities in their schools



#### ***A Success Story:***

*"I spread the word as much as I can but, oh my goodness, I wish it was something that school boards knew about and were told. Every school, hey listen, sign up for this. It's free training. It's an amazing program. It's free equipment, and it will make it successful for every student in the school."*

## HOW DO WE KNOW?

In September 2019, Jays Care's Program Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist, Maria Mardirosian, partnered with Dr. Phillip Groff from Creative Development Unlimited to conduct an external evaluation on the short and long-term benefits of Challenger Baseball School (CBSP) Program and the adaptive physical activity training.