



□ POLICY

■ GUIDELINE

GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Children love to play sports, be around other kids, be accepted by team members, and be part of the team. All children benefit from physical activity, social interaction and feeling accepted and accomplishing a task. Children with special needs are no different. The Diocesan Recreation Association believes that children with special needs are entitled to participate in organized sports and recreational programs unless their presence puts them or someone else in danger. Each case will be evaluated individually.

GUIDELINES FOR ATHLETES WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

1. Safety concerns always come first.
2. All children should be offered the opportunity to participate in the Diocesan Recreation Program as long as safety issues are not a concern. Parents of players and coaches need to work collaboratively in an effort to support and challenge children with special needs.
3. Children with special needs can request to participate on the parish athletic teams. The coach will review the request and present it to the parish athletic director. The coach and AD will work together to determine the feasibility of the child's participation.
4. If accommodations are necessary, the strengths of the child and challenges in playing the sport should be outlined along with possible accommodations. The parish should attempt to make all reasonable accommodations. This may include placement in the proper age group. If the athlete should play at a different level than the player's chronological age, permission must be asked of the parish athletic director. This plan must be developed as a team that consists of the parish coach and the parents. In cases with older, mature athletes, they could also be included in the discussion. The written plan must be presented to and approved by the parish athletic director prior to the beginning of the season.
5. The parish athletic director will present the plan of accommodations to the pastor for final approval.
6. All final decisions will take into account the National Federation of High School and Ohio High School Athletic Association procedures and guidelines pertaining to athletes with special needs.
7. In cases of denial of participation at the parish level, the appeal can be directed to the Diocesan Recreation Association Board of Directors.