

Inclusion Services

Making the Right Choice

What is Inclusion?

Inclusion within Frederick County Parks and Recreation means that individuals with disabilities are welcome to participate in the same recreation programs and activities as their non-disabled peers. Reasonable accommodations are provided to enable an individual's successful participation in a program. Some minimum eligibility requirements (age, level of participation) must be met in order to participate.

What are some examples of reasonable accommodations available to promote successful participation in a program?

- Staff training on creative adaptations to program activities.
- An enhanced staff/participant ratio (two weeks advance notice).
- Sign interpretation for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- Adaptive activity equipment.
- Assistance in administering health services which do not require medical training.

What are the minimum requirements for successful inclusion?

The same minimum requirements which apply to a person without a disability also apply to a person with a disability. These include:

- Meeting the age and registration requirements of the program.
- Following the rules of conduct (with or without reasonable accommodation).
- Voluntary participation: recreation programs and activities are voluntary in nature. Participation will be encouraged and aided but will not be forced.
- Level of participation: with or without reasonable accommodations, the participant will engage in scheduled program activities at least 75% of the time. This means that 45 minutes of every hour, the participant will be engaged in program activities.
- Ability to use a consistent form of communication to indicate basic needs and follow simple directions.
- Ability to tolerate and function, with assistance, as a member of a larger social group (12 or more people).

What services are not part of an inclusive program?

Inclusion services **do not** include the following:

- Provision of a separate area or alternate activities for a significant portion (more than 25%) of the scheduled program.
- Exception to minimum compliance with the program's rules and regulations, with or without accommodations, established for the safety of all program participants and staff.
- Hiring, selection, or guaranteed assignment of a specific staff member.
- Individualized therapy within a program.
- Provision and/or purchase of personal custom devices.

However, Inclusion support staff are provided to enhance the existing recreation program by providing adaptations, behavioral interventions, and some personal assistance which program leaders are unable to offer.

Is an inclusive recreation program the right choice and/or experience for me?

Observe the program first-hand and ask yourself these questions...

- If school-aged, does your child's current classroom activities or goals prepare him/her for the inclusive recreation experience?
- Has the individual shown an interest in the program activity or subject matter?
- Is he/she comfortable and able to function appropriately, with or without assistance, in inclusive environments (malls, restaurants, parks, etc.).