

APE & SBPT

Collaborating for Student Success

Adapted Physical Education (APE) & School-based Physical Therapy (SBPT): Collaborating for Student Success

IDEA The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was enacted “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.” (IDEA §300.1)

➔ **APE (IDEA §300 A 300.39 a 1 ii)** Adapted physical education or specially designed instruction in physical education is a direct instructional service which individualizes the physical education curriculum according to a student’s unique need. It is the only direct, instructional service specified in IDEA legislation. “(1) Special education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including—(i) Instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions and in other settings; and (ii) **Instruction in physical education.**”

➔ **SBPT (IDEA §300.32)** Physical therapy, as a related service, is provided “to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.” Since physical therapy services is delivered in a variety of settings (hospitals, clinics, home, school, etc.), questions often arise as to the role physical therapists (PTs) play in the school setting. In public schools, Physical therapists assist students to access school environments, participate throughout the school day & benefit from their educational program.

This fact sheet aims to clarify the roles of adapted physical education and physical therapy services for educational benefit under IDEA. Similarities and differences between these disciplines are discussed to serve as a guide for school administrators, teachers of general and special education, related service providers, students, parents and guardians. Please note that these are general guidelines; readers should familiarize themselves with the policies of each state or local education agency (LEA), as requirements and regulations may vary.

APE and SBPT:

- There is confusion with administrators, students, parents/families, GenEd & SpEd instructional staff and related service providers due to overlapping areas of practice & expertise
- Related services (PT) support Special education (APE)
- PT & APE provide different perspectives on similar areas of student development
- Not interchangeable, APE cannot supplant SBPT or vice versa
- Sometimes improvements in motor development cannot be attained by a physical educator using the usual time allotments, methods or activities associated with PE
- Sometimes fitness or endurance improvements cannot be attained by a physical therapy related service using the customary service delivery, dosing and interventions.

(adapted from Winnick, 2010)

Similarities and Differences Between Physical Therapy and Adapted Physical Education Services

Purpose:

Develop & implement a specially designed physical education instructional program (developing physical & motor fitness; fundamental motor skills & patterns; skills in aquatics, dance, individual & group games & sports) for an individual with a disability, based on a comprehensive assessment and unique student need.

APE Specialists

SBPTs

Diagnose & manage movement dysfunction. PTs work to restore, maintain & promote physical function, wellness and fitness. PT interventions prevent the onset, symptoms, and progression of impairments, functional limitations & disabilities resulting from diseases, disorders, conditions, or injuries

Both APE and SBPT:

Both work to improve student participation and motor development.

Both address fitness and promote healthy behaviors.

Work:

Educators licensed in the PE curriculum who may also have certification in Adapted PE (CAPE). APE specialists use differentiated **instructional techniques** to improve student's movement performance/fitness and ensure progress through the PE curriculum.

APE Specialists

School Based Physical Therapist's are licensed, medical professionals who use **therapeutic techniques**

to correct, facilitate, or adapt the student's participation & movement/motoric performance within and access to the educational setting.

Both APE and SBPT:

- Help Students increase activity and participation
- Work collaboratively with teams, set goals, & monitor progress with regular reporting
- Adhere to state policies, licensure laws & professional standards
- Educate and empower students, teams, & families with community activity suggestions, health promotion & wellness
- Provide services based on student needs, not administrative convenience.

Similarities and Differences Between Physical Therapy and Adapted Physical Education Services

Areas Addressed:

- PE Curriculum
- Student Engagement
- Social Skills
- Specific Motor Patterns
- Sensorimotor Integration
- Aquatic Skills
- Dance Skills
- Skills for individual & group games (including intramural & lifetime sports)

Both APE and SBPT:

- Participation
- Safety
- Object Control Skills
- Functional Skills
- Play
- Sport & Game Skills
- Use of Equipment & Assistive Technology
- Leisure/Recreation Activities
- Motor Development, Skills & Coordination
- Fitness (e.g. strength, endurance)
- Sensorimotor Coordination

SBPTs

- Environmental Adaptations/accessibility
- Access (to campus, programs & activities)
- Body Function (e.g. pain, CV capacity, efficiency)

- Pre-vocational/ Work Hardening
- Postural Balance and Stability
- Functional Mobility/Transfer
- Motor Planning
- Selection & management of equipment/assistive technology

APE Specialists

Qualifications, Roles, & Responsibilities

- Therapist in education
- Related service

Both APE and SBPT:

- Itinerant
- Poorly understood
- Experts in gross motor development & movement
- Possible specialty certification (CAPE for APE; PCS for SBPT)
- Varied professional degrees (BS, MS, DPT, PhD)
- Supervision usually from outside discipline
- High requirement for collaboration
- Provide continuum of services/ Implementing in LRE

- Educator
- Direct, educational service
- Licensed in physical education by SEA
- APE services may be provided by General Education PE teacher (varies by state)

SBPTs

- Certified by Board (state) examination
- Licensed by the state
- Services can be reimbursed by Medicaid

APE Specialists

Collaboration between APE & SBPT

Appropriate

- Integrated student goal(s)
- Provide SBPT within PE or APE class routines
- Individual Transition Plan, especially identifying and/or developing community options for life-long fitness, recreation, & leisure
- Problem solving difficult, challenging, & complex issues with participation, engagement, and physical activity.
- Special projects, programs, or initiatives

Inappropriate

- SBPT provides APE assessment to IEP team
- SBPT provides APE recommendations to IEP team
- SBPT develops student goal(s) addressing PE curriculum
- SBPT provides APE services

Appropriate if NO APE specialist or APE provided by PE teacher

- SBPT collaborates with PE teacher on APE assessment for IEP team
- SBPT collaborates with PE teacher to provide APE recommendations to IEP team
- PE teacher consults, as needed with SBPT or other IEP team members to develop student goal(s) addressing PE curriculum
- PE teacher consults, as needed with SBPT or other IEP team members, to provides APE services

Take Home Messages:

While the areas addressed by adapted physical education and school-based physical therapy overlap; they are distinctly different disciplines.

SBPTs, unless they possess a valid/related teaching credential, should not provide physical education (Adapted or General) evaluation or instruction.

References:

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	SBPT	APE
What is the focus of the service?	Work to achieve student goals developed by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team	Ensure student progress through and participation in the physical education curriculum
	Promote access to academic curriculum, campus/school environment, programs and participation in all school activities	Individualize instruction for physical education
	Address post-secondary transition goals	
Who is eligible?	Any student who meets the criteria for 1 or more of the disability classifications identified by IDEA (or under additional classification criteria defined by state) who requires the expertise of a PT to benefit from his/her IEP.	Any student who meets the criteria for 1 or more of the disability classifications identified by IDEA (or under additional classification criteria defined by state) who requires specially designed instruction to safely participate in her/his physical education and progress through the state established curriculum
What is the evaluation procedure?	PT evaluation includes observation in the school environment and use of appropriate tests and measures to obtain appropriate and authentic student performance data to analyze student function throughout the school day.	APE evaluation includes observation in General Education PE and uses standardized and/or informal tests and measures to obtain appropriate and authentic student performance data for analysis in regard to physical education curriculum.
	IEP team utilizes the SBPT's and APE Specialist's respective reports and recommendations together with reports gathered by other team members to make decisions.	
Who provides the service?	A licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant.	An educator licensed in physical education (at the appropriate grade level) or an APE specialist/CAPE certified
Who decides need & service delivery?	IEP team decides by consensus, with consideration to the SBPT's or APE specialist's recommendation.	
	IEP team prioritizes to create discipline-free IEP goals	
	IEP team decides which related services are necessary to achieve goals.	IEP team decides if student is eligible for APE/Specially Designed Instruction in PE

	SBPT	APE
Where are services provided?	In least restrictive environment in the school where student is expected to perform the task (e.g., classrooms, hallways, stairs, lunchroom, bathroom, playground). Worksites, buses, community, or other instructional settings.	In the least restrictive environment, usually the gym or playing field. Every effort is made for student to receive PE with peers. However, services are provided on a continuum to meet each student's unique needs.
How are services delivered?	<p>Integration of physical therapy into the student's actual classroom or school activities.</p> <p>Consultation and collaboration with school staff and parent/guardian.</p> <p>Direct intervention in groups or individually, when necessary.</p>	<p>Integration of APE instruction into the student's PE class.</p> <p>Consultation and collaboration with student, school staff and parent/guardian.</p> <p>Direct instruction in groups or individually, where necessary.</p>
How are services documented?	<p>Related to student's progress towards his/her IEP goals.</p> <p>Written in language understandable to parents and other educational team members.</p> <p>In compliance with federal, state, and local education agency guidelines.</p>	