

Inclusion in Recreation and Leisure

Value of Recreation and Inclusion

Recreation is a valuable aspect of everyone's life. It helps people to keep healthy, identify interests, meet new people, reconnect with old friends and have fun.

Without some form of recreational opportunity, inclusion is harder to achieve. Inclusion happens when we are all actively taking part in an activity. This is when everyone feels important, has equal opportunity, and is valued for their contribution.

Often the times that inclusion occurs most naturally, is when everyone gathers together to do something they are all interested in.

Benefits of Inclusion in Recreation and Leisure Activities

- Increase of self-esteem.
- Develop and maintain friendships with others in the neighbourhood.
- Develop and enhance skills.
- Increase in acceptance by peers.
- Introduction of new options and opportunities for recreation.
- Greater recognition of capabilities, skills and successes.
- Increase in opportunities for peer mentoring.
- Greater, more valued role as a member of the community.
- Ability for siblings to utilize one community centre.

Tips to Promote Inclusion in Recreation and Leisure Activities

- Believe that your son or daughter can and should participate in programs and activities in the community
- Model for your son or daughter and others. Demonstrate, through your actions, that you expect that he or she will participate, and offer suggestions for success. Show your son or daughter how to interact with others then fade out as he or she starts to engage.
- Promote independence as much as possible. Offer your son or daughter opportunities to try new things and encourage him or her to make choices.

Community Living

M I S S I S S A U G A

- Know your son or daughter's rights. They are the same as any other person's!
- Discover your son or daughter's strengths and interests and look for connections in the community based on those strengths. For example, if your daughter loves to help you bake, investigate a cooking class; if your son enjoys baseball then investigate a baseball league. We are more likely to make a social connection with those we have a common interest in. Social connections are an important part of inclusion.
- Find inclusive places in your community – try using www.cultureonthemap.ca.
- Attend and be actively involved in community events i.e. Bread and Honey Festival, Carassauga
- Connect with the people in the community who are the “Gate Keepers” – the people who can help to make the connection between your son or daughter and others in the activity or group
- Forget past negative experiences and focus on potential and future successes! If something doesn't work, try something different or someplace new. Sometimes it takes a while to find your niche!