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Copy Editor  
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*Improving Montreal's Metro accessibility*

On October 11th, 2016, Montreal announced that it would improve Montreal Metro's accessibility. The STM plans to invest a hefty sum of 213 million dollars, funds provided by the provincial and federal governments.

At the moment "only 10 of Montreal's 68 Metro stations are wheelchair accessible, and they all are on the orange line." Another nine stations are presently having elevators installed. The STM aims to "outfit an average of two stations per year with elevators by 2038" and assures us that 31 fully accessible stations will be available by 2022.

In the past, Montreal Mayors have been criticized by many activists in the past concerning the lack of accessibility. Although they have to pay the same fees as everyone else, they don't benefit from the same services. The lack of accessibility clearly violates the "rights of people with reduced mobility."

The news of having more stations made accessible in the coming years is a start, but what is being asked by users with reduced mobility is to have full access to all stations.

"*Le Regroupement des activistes pour l'inclusion au Québec* is [still] seeking authorization from the courts to launch a class action lawsuit against the STM over the Metro's lack of accessibility."

Another controversy is the lack of consultation made with people with disabilities. The 14 Metro stations that were chosen to get elevators installed were based on how easy it will be to install them and not on how useful it will be for people using them. Some stations that will be made accessible will not benefit people with reduced mobility because most of the stores and streets aren't accessible. So, they can get there, but can't freely circulate in the surrounding area due to the lack of accessibility in the vicinity.

At the moment, the city of Montreal remains difficult to get around when you live with reduced mobility.

Source: "Montreal makes bid to improve Metro accessibility - 14 more stations to get elevators by 2022." <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/accessibility-montreal-metro-elevators-1.3799571>. Accessed October 11th, 2016

## Schools can help in reducing health disparities between individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals without disabilities

by Kymberley Morin

This year, many teachers and professionals are familiar with the new CASP Educational Program (Competency-based Approach to Social Participation) for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities. For some, this will be the first year of implementation, and for many, the second.

The aim of the program is to "prepare these students to participate in community life to the best of their ability." CASP p. 4 But to engage actively in one's community, students need skills and abilities that will enable them to navigate successfully in everyday life situations. So, where does one begin when planning learning situations that will focus on the development of these skills and abilities for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities?

Having a good understanding of the student's learning profile and his/her needs provides teachers, professionals, and paraprofessionals with a starting point. Teachers also need to be aware of the risk factors that hinder students from developing necessary skills that aid them to participate in their community and, moreover, be mindful of the fact that these students, due to the nature of their disability, risk having disproportionately poorer health than students without a disability. Because, if one is not well, it becomes quite difficult to participate in community life, let alone actively.

### Knowing our student and his/her needs

The student learning profile is an integrated

and a collaborative procedure where teachers collect data: by observing the student in class during routine activities and different school settings, from professional reports, from previous paraprofessional and teacher reports, by meeting with and maintaining an open dialogue with parents.

It is the treatment and compilation of all of the available information which enables teachers to have a comprehensive understanding of the student's strengths, needs, preferences, interests, and developmental stage. Taking into consideration the complex learning profile

of a student with an intellectual disability and his/her needs is an unavoidable step before one can develop lesson plans, learning situations and activities.

*To engage actively in one's community, students need skills and abilities that will enable them to navigate successfully in everyday life situations.*

### Risk Factors

Drawing up a list of the risk factors that prevent or could potentially prevent the acquisition of the necessary skills and abilities that enable students to participate in their community can be a daunting task. However, recognizing that

there are personal factors (age, gender, cultural identity, organic systems) and environmental factors (social context), and life habits that can influence the quality of social participation of an individual with an intellectual disability allow teachers to select the ones that can be addressed by the school body.

Figure 1. explains: “The Disability Creation Process is an adaptation of the human development model in the area of disability. It uses the central notion of social participation as resulting from an interaction between personal factors and environmental factors.

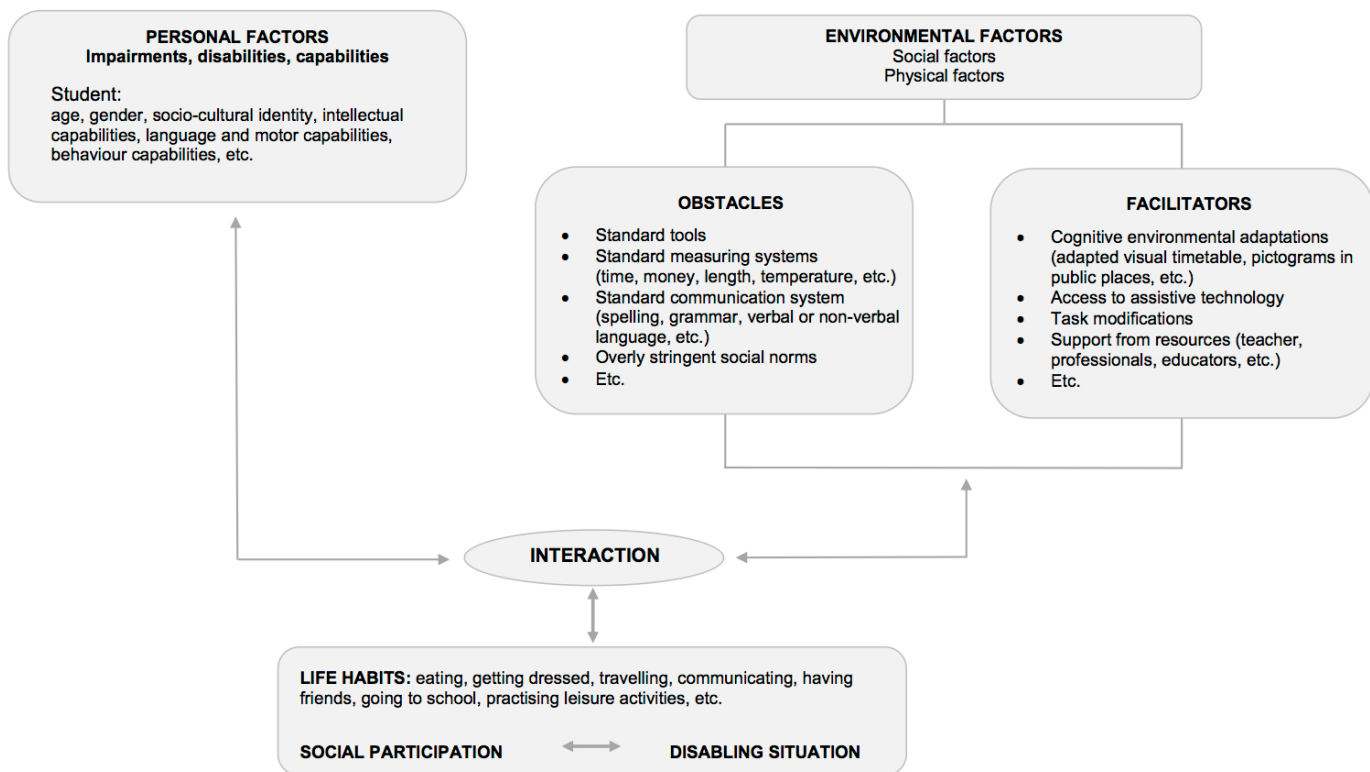
Personal factors, which are internal, are the result of the combination of organic systems (for example, the muscular system) and aptitudes (for example, motor activity capabilities). Organic systems can vary in degrees, from integrity to organic impairment (or deficiency). An individual’s aptitudes can also vary from capacity to inability (or functional impairment).

Environmental factors constitute either facilitators or obstacles regarding an individual’s life habits. Environmental factors enable social participation or, on the contrary, worsen a disabling situation.”<sup>1</sup>

To have a better understanding of how this model can help you in your decision making process, visit [http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap\\_Developpement/www/en\\_page32.html](http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap_Developpement/www/en_page32.html)

1) “Disability and Development - Handicap International” [http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap\\_Developpement/www/en\\_page32.html](http://www.hiproweb.org/fileadmin/cdroms/Handicap_Developpement/www/en_page32.html). Accessed Oct. 25th, 2016

## APPENDIX 2: Disability Creation Process: Application to Students With Moderate to Severe Intellectual Disabilities



Based on Patrick Fougeyrollas (Québec, RIPPH, 2007).

## Encouraging a healthy lifestyle

It is well documented that people with intellectual disabilities are more susceptible to poorer health. The lack of physical activities and higher obesity rates have a direct impact on their health and consequently can become a "social economic burden as a result of increased lifetime medical care costs." (Hsieh, K., Heller, T., & Al., 2015)

Schools can considerably influence the level of physical activity students with disabilities participate in, by giving them access to a variety of in-school and community events. Physical education specialists in collaboration with special education teachers and technicians can examine all factors that could prevent students from participating in physical activities and provide material and human support that would increase the possibility for them to participate to the fullest of their capacity.

There are several after-school activities as well as planned community events that could be considered perfect opportunities for these students to participate in that would increase their level of physical activity. Not only would these events or activities give them the possibility of taking part in physical activities, but would have the added benefit of increasing their social network.

Emphasizing the importance of making healthy choices can reduce the risk of becoming overweight. The challenge for educators is to ensure that the information and programs available to students take into consideration the level of comprehension of students with intellectual disabilities. Educating students on the importance of a healthy diet should begin once they enter pre-k and be an ongoing

yearly educational goal. Many of our students are encouraged to make choices and are given opportunities to practice this skill. It is also important to educate them on the benefits of choosing a healthy snack over junk food. We all know that having a poor diet is not a specific problem associated to persons with intellectual disabilities, but to all persons. The difference lies in the fact that the health risks of having a poor diet can have significant consequences on persons with disabilities and can directly impact their level of social participation.

*The health risks of having a poor diet can have significant consequences on persons with disabilities and can directly impact their level of social participation.*

Schools do play a significant role in promoting healthy lifestyles by ensuring that students have access to a variety of physical activities, community organizations that offer activities and services, extra-curricular activities, and opportunities that increase his/her social network. When it comes to students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, having access to these opportunities increase their chances of social participation and the possibility of developing healthy lifestyle choices.

### References:

Harrington, C., & Kang T. (2016). Disparities in Service Use and Expenditures for People With Intellectual and Development Disabilities in California in 2005 and 2013. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, Vol. 54 No. 1, 1-18. doi: 10.1352/1934-9556-54.1.1

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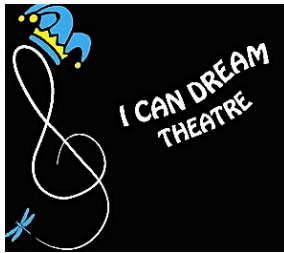
The Importance of physical education. <http://www.naspeinfo.org/the-importance-of-physical-education-in-schools/>. Accessed Oct. 17th. 2016

## Organizations that promote healthy life styles for students with significant disabilities



Although this organization is in the process to become recognized as a non-profit organization, and is temporarily not offering any workshops, "Projet RAD's" mission is to "provide people with various disabilities the opportunity to take inclusive urban dance classes in a warm and safe environment adapted to their needs. Guided by specialized teachers, they can share the fun of dancing with a group and blossom on stage."

<http://www.projetrad.com/en/about-us/>



**I Can Dream Theatre Inc. (ICDT)** is a not for profit community organization based in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. It's primary purpose is to provide adults with special needs opportunities to develop their talents in the performing arts, specifically the areas of acting, singing, dancing and playing musical instruments. It was created as a for profit organization in September 2011 and obtained non-profit status in August 2015.

<http://www.icandreamtheatre.com>



"The goal of 'The Children's Theatre' is to give each child the space in which to realize their potential. For some this means building the self-confidence to "come out of one's shell," For everyone it is a place where they can express themselves, learn about emotions and build understanding of themselves, others, and the world around them. We do this through character

work, body movement and vocal work. We want each child to realize their individual strengths and learn about how to work with others in a team, by listening and interacting in a way only theatre can teach."

<http://www.childrens-theatre.ca/home>

FYI Registration is open for their 12-week courses beginning in January 2017



"Viomax is a very dynamic nonprofit organization that offers a very wide programming of physical activities for persons with a physical disability. Viomax is the only organization in the metropolitan area to have a gym that is fully accessible to wheelchair users and mobility-impaired persons.

The organization is distinguished by the unique expertise of its staff, by its programming which is very adapted to the specific needs of its members, and by its adapted equipment that enables its members to enjoy the benefits of physical activity."

<http://viomax.ca/en.php?lang=EN>





**Special Olympics**  
Québec

“The Special Olympics movement is active in 170 countries. Its mission is **to enrich the lives of individuals with an intellectual disability (ID) through sport**. More than 4.2 millions special athletes of all ages are registered worldwide and over 34,000 in Canada, with more than 6,250 taking part in the recreational or competition programs offered throughout Québec. SOQ's network of annual competitions includes 80 events for all skill levels and in each of its 17 official sports.

In addition to programs specifically designed for people living with an intellectual disability, the Special Olympics movement encourages and facilitates their access to regular sports programs offered in their community in specific sports. It also has technical training and professional development opportunities for its members and volunteers.

Furthermore, the movement supports the establishment and development of local committees with the task of linking its activities and programs with those of existing sports clubs and associations in their communities. At the heart of our mission, the integration into society of athletes living with an intellectual disability is an increasingly topical issue. Special athletes take part in the Montreal Games, in the regional and provincial finals of the Québec Games and in the Canada Games.

Finally, SOQ provides tools and organizes promotional activities to raise public awareness of the benefits of sports in the development and inclusion of people of all ages living with an intellectual disability.”

<http://www.olympiquesspeciaux.qc.ca/en/index.sn>

### Website of Note

#### Seven ways to include a Student with Special Needs in Physical Education

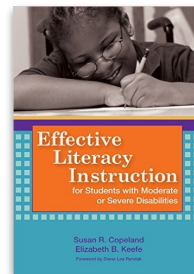
<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/11/12/7-ways-to-include-a-student-with-special-needs-in-physical-education/>

### Books of Interest!

#### **Effective Literary Instruction for Students with Moderate or Severe Disabilities**

by Susan Copeland & Elizabeth Keefe

“With this practical guidebook, teachers will help students with disabilities meet academic standards for literacy. Appropriate for use in all settings, including inclusive classrooms, this book is the lifeline every K&12 teacher needs to



- Teach every key literacy component
- Implement proven strategies.
- Plan better lessons that get results
- Teach students with a wide range of disabilities
- Understand the research.

A must-have resource on one of today's hottest topics, this easy-to-use book will help educators raise expectations for all students and teach those with disabilities the crucial literacy skills they'll use for the rest of their lives.”

#### Who are we?

Our Centre is one of 6 Centres of Excellence mandated by MELS to provide support, professional development, research activities and provincial expertise to the English sector. We service students who are physically, intellectually or multi-challenged in a school setting. Our team consists of our coordinator, Kimberley Morin and our secretary, Robin Colyer.

#### Centre of Excellence for the Physically, Intellectually and Multi-Challenged

Kimberley Morin , Coordinator  
Robin Colyer, Secretary

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