

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-LA CROSSE

Graduate Studies

PARENT GOALS FOR SCHOOL-SPONSORED ADAPTED SPORT

PARTICIPATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Manuscript Style Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Science in Exercise and Sport Science

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Adapted Physical Education Teaching

August, 2015

PARENT GOALS FOR SCHOOL-SPONSORED ADAPTED SPORT
PARTICIPATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

By Steven K. Holland

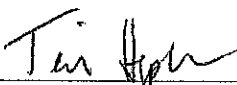
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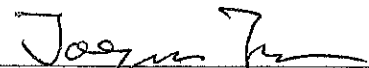
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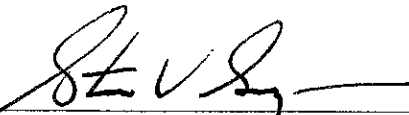
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ABSTRACT

Holland, S. Parent goals for school-sponsored adapted sport participation for students with disabilities. MS in Exercise and Sport Science-Physical Education Teaching, Adapted Physical Education Concentration, August 2015, 70pp. (G. Tymeson)

School-sponsored adapted sport (AS) programs are increasing in school districts. With recent clarifications of legislation regarding extracurricular activities for students with disabilities (SWD), more schools are offering programs for all students. However, limited research exists regarding various aspects of school-sponsored AS. The purpose of this study was to examine parent goals for their child's participation in school-sponsored AS. The study aimed to provide understanding of social, physical activity/fitness, and sport-specific goal themes of participating in AS. A survey was sent to parents to gather information. Paired sample t-tests found significant differences between social skill and sport-specific skill goals and physical activity/fitness and sport-specific skill goals, but no difference between social skill and physical activity/fitness goals. There were no significance differences in goal themes by disability. Paired sample t-tests indicated that current parent goal theme scores were significantly higher than at the beginning of the child's AS career. In addition, there were significantly higher scores for social skill and physical activity/fitness goals for SWD, but significantly higher scores for sport-specific skill goals for children without disabilities. Results indicate that parents may have a holistic view or approach to AS participation. More research is necessary to further analyze parent goals.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my committee chairperson, Dr. Garth Tymeson, for his critical and timely feedback, persistence with deadlines, constant understanding, encouragement, but mostly the light-hearted conversations to take the edge off, without all of which I would not have completed this thesis. I would also like to thank Dr. Teri Hepler and Dr. Jooyeon Jin for serving on my committee for all of their expertise, feedback, and time spent helping me with this study.

I would like to thank the coaches of the Mississippi Valley Conference Adapted Sports League (Holmen, La Crosse, and Onalaska School Districts) for their support, participation, feedback, and willingness to help distribute materials to parents. Their expertise and knowledge in adapted sport were crucial to the development of a meaningful survey. I would also like to thank Jim Muckenhirn, Executive Secretary of the Minnesota Adapted Athletics Association, for his support and willingness to distribute materials to coaches and parents. To the parents who participated in my study, this could not have happened without you, and your support of and investment in your child's extracurricular sport opportunities. Your passion and dedication are truly inspiring.

To my family and friends (new and old), thank you for your support throughout my time in graduate school. Cathy, MacKenzie, Bridget, Tom, and, most importantly, Katie—thank you for keeping me positive, focused, and entertained. I can't imagine this journey without all of you. Casondra and John, Mom and Tim, and Dad and Deonna, thank you for your support, encouragement, and positivity throughout this process. Thank you all.

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INTRODUCTION

Youth sport is an important component of life in the U.S. as more than 44 million youth are involved in sports each year (Dorsch, Smith, Wilson, & McDonough, 2015). Youth sport programs captivate a wide audience that spans all races, genders, ages, and ability levels. Despite the breadth and popularity of these programs, youth with disabilities are significantly underrepresented in youth sport participation (U.S. Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2010). A lack of national data comparing participation of students with disabilities (SWD) to students without disabilities exists. However, in the schools visited for the GAO report, it was found that only 6-25% of SWD participated in sport compared to 18-73% of students without disabilities.

Students with disabilities have less opportunities to be involved in youth sports than their nondisabled peers. A report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2010) revealed that, despite legislation requiring equal opportunities for students with and without disabilities, SWD were provided with inadequate, unequal opportunities for physical activity. The U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights' (OCR) "Dear Colleague" Letter (January 25, 2013) provided a clarification of the requirement for schools to provide equal extracurricular activity, including athletic opportunities for SWD. However, little applicable research is available regarding the appropriate level of activity, types of activity, and goals of participation for SWD. Therefore, very little information can be disseminated to states, schools, parents, and educators to ensure that

SWD are provided with the same, or comparable, extracurricular sport activities as their nondisabled peers. This results in SWD not benefitting from school-sponsored sport programs to the same degree as their nondisabled peers. There are several important aspects of sport that should be considered including physical activity/fitness, social skill, and sport-specific skill goals.

Sport represents an important and common way for students to achieve their daily recommended physical activity needs. The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and youth achieve 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). However, SWD are achieving significantly lower amounts of physical activity. A report by Rimmer (2008) indicated that physical activity levels are much lower for youth with disabilities compared to their nondisabled peers; up to 4.5 times less for students with physical disabilities. School-sponsored sport is an avenue that can offer much needed physical activity opportunities to SWD.

In addition to enhanced physical activity, other findings indicate that sport participation has positive impacts on social and motor skill development. A position statement published by the Society of Health and Physical Educators of America (formerly American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance) in 2013, suggests that social benefits are achieved by students when they have positive, supportive relationships with teammates, coaches, and parents and are given the opportunity to expand their experiences. Alexander and Leather (2013) report on the importance of social skill opportunities through sport for individuals with autism

spectrum disorder. Social skill opportunities obtained via sport participation are important for all SWD due to a lack of opportunities in other natural settings.

As regular participation in sport increases physical activity and social skill development, it may also increase a child's sport-specific skill proficiency. Research by Favazza et al. (2013) found that consistent motor skill development (locomotor and object control skills) may result in sustainable skill gains and influence the development of other skills. For example, the results of the study found that consistent intervention resulted in higher skill acquisition among participants. Additionally, there were positive increases in language and social interactions as a result of the intervention.

Despite a lack of research regarding the design and implementation of extracurricular sport programming for SWD, information gathered from parents can impact programming that may exist, or be created, until meaningful research is conducted. Parents are important components of the educational opportunities for SWD. An and Hodge (2013) indicate that parental involvement influences achievement and performance of children's school success. The authors discuss the requirements of parental involvement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in the planning and decision-making process for their children's education through Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings. In addition, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) states that public entities, including schools, may not discriminate based on disability when determining eligibility for services, programs, and activities. This includes extracurricular activities provided by public school agencies as a part of a free and appropriate public education and should be considered an extension of

the child's education. The results of An and Hodge's study indicate that parents see themselves as advocates for their children and facilitators of the "big picture."

The role that parents assume as advocates and facilitators for their children with disabilities make their interest, investment, and goals for sport participation valuable. Parent goals, level of satisfaction with programming, and perceived level of child's ability can guide the design and implementation of adapted sport programming in public school settings. Gathering information from adapted sport participants is complicated by potential cognitive disabilities among the athletes. In addition, information from the U.S. Department of Education (2011) indicates that there is limited knowledge of how to translate research on children without disabilities to guidance for programming in adapted sport for SWD.

Due to the lack of research regarding extracurricular sport/athletic opportunities for SWD, it is important to continue to study this topic. For example, parents, as advocates and facilitators, may provide an appropriate account of goals in place of their child with a disability. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the importance of social, physical activity/fitness, and sport-specific goals of parents for SWD. The following research questions were investigated:

1. What goals do parents of SWD who participate in school-sponsored adapted sport perceive as the most important?
2. Do disability categories affect the importance of goals as perceived by parents?
3. Do parent perceptions of a child's ability affect the importance of parent goals?
4. Do parent goals change over time (from the beginning of the child's adapted sport career to current participation)?

5. Do differences exist between parent goals for their children with and without disabilities who participate in youth sport/athletics?

METHOD

Participants

The study participants were 40 parents of SWD who played in school-sponsored adapted sport programs in Wisconsin (n = 10) and Minnesota (n = 30). An Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects approved the research prior to distribution of the survey (See Appendix A). Parents in the study had a child who participated in at least one season of indoor soccer, floor hockey, and/or indoor baseball. The students who participated had one of the 13 categories of disability identified in section 602(3) of IDEA including: cognitive/intellectual (formerly mental retardation), hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities (U.S. Department of Education—Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2006).

Development of the Survey

The Parent Survey of School-Sponsored Adapted Sport Participation for Students with Disabilities (See Appendix B) was developed to assess the importance of three categories of goals: social, physical activity/fitness, and sport-specific/skill. These categories were selected because they are important components of youth sport. Each goal theme was comprised of several individual goal items based on findings from

Dorsch et al. (2015), Seefeldt, Ewing, and Walk (1993), and Alexander and Leather (2013). The questionnaire consisted of 15 goal items.

The survey consisted of several independent and dependent variables for data analysis. Independent variables included the parent's/child's state of residence, nondisabled siblings who participate in sport, the parents perception of the child's ability level, the child's primary disability category, and the number of years the child had participated in indoor soccer, floor hockey, and/or indoor baseball as part of school-sponsored adapted sport. The three sports were chosen because they were the common sports offered by both the Minnesota Adapted Athletics Association and La Crosse Area Mississippi Valley Conference Adapted Sport League. The 15 goal items were used as the dependent variables on the survey. Each question regarding goal themes included all 15 goal items in which parents would rate using a 5-point Likert scale or rank based on importance. The 5-points of the Likert scale were: 1 "Not at All Important," 2 "Slightly Important," 3 "Somewhat Important," 4 "Very Important," and 5 "Extremely Important."

Pilot Study

Pilot study participants consisted of four experienced adapted sport coaches and league officials from Minnesota and Wisconsin, three content experts from higher education, and two parents of adapted sport participants with at least 3 years of experience. The pilot study was used to evaluate the content validity of the Parent Survey on School-Sponsored Adapted Sport Participation for Students with Disabilities questionnaire. The evaluation was also used to improve clarity, appropriateness, and completeness of the survey.

The results of the pilot study yielded minor content, formatting, grammatical, and wording edits. One suggestion was made independently by two of the pilot study participants pertaining to one of the 15 goal items used. The goal item was a social skills goal related to the child's "ability to connect with other families", and was replaced by another social skills goal item, "active participation and recognition within the school community," based on the recommendation of the participants. The change was reviewed by the pilot study participants and determined to be appropriate.

Parent Survey of School-Sponsored Adapted Sport Participation for Students with Disabilities

The survey contained 14 questions for the participants to answer. Fifteen goal items were used to represent the three goal themes: social skills goals, physical activity/fitness goals, and sport-specific skill goals. The goal themes were used as subscales for data analysis. Cronbach's alpha tests were used to determine internal consistency of the three subscales, social skills goals ($\alpha = .73$), physical activity/fitness goals ($\alpha = .87$), and sport-specific skill goals ($\alpha = .78$). Each subscale contained a different number of goal items. There were 6 goal items in the social skill goals subscale, 4 in the physical activity/fitness goals subscale, and 5 in the sport-specific skill goals subscale.

Distribution of Surveys

The survey was distributed through adapted sport coaches in Wisconsin and Minnesota. In Wisconsin, the parent e-mail containing the consent process and accompanying survey link (See Appendix C) was sent directly to four coaches of the La Crosse Area Mississippi Valley Conference Adapted Sports League. The coaches

distributed the information to parents and no parent identification was collected. In Minnesota, the parent e-mail containing the consent process and survey link was distributed to coaches by a Minnesota Adapted Athletics Association (MAAA) league official. Coaches were then requested to forward the parent e-mail and survey link to the parents of their athletes. The researcher had no direct contact with parents in either state.

Follow-up e-mails were sent to Wisconsin coaches and the MAAA official to resend the survey e-mail and link two weeks after original distribution and again two weeks later. Due to the method of distribution used, it was impossible to determine response rate, but an initial goal of 150 parent responses was established based on the number of estimated participants in both states.

Statistical Analysis

IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS version 22.0, 2013) was used for statistical analyses of the survey. These analyses were used to ensure all research questions were properly addressed. Statistical significance was determined by $p < .05$ for all analyses.

Before performing statistical analyses, it was important to create goal theme subscales. Subscales were created by adding each goal item in the theme and dividing by the total number of goal items. For example, the social skill goal subscale contained six goal items that were added and divided by six to create a subscale score. In addition, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of each subscale.

Research question one required the use of frequency counts, mean scores, and three paired sample t-tests. Frequency counts and percentages were used to display descriptive information regarding each individual goal item. The three paired sample t-

tests were used to determine statistical significance between the social skill and physical activity/fitness subscales, social skill and sport-specific skill subscales, and physical activity/fitness and sport-specific skill subscales.

Research questions two and three required the use of a MANOVA to determine statistical significance by disability category and perceived ability level, respectively. The goal theme subscales were used as dependent variables and disability category and perceived ability level were used as independent variables. Post-hoc Tukey tests were performed on each MANOVA in order to analyze the differences based disability category and perceived ability level for each goal theme subscale.

Research questions four and five required the use of paired sample t-tests in order to determine change in goal importance over time and differences of goal importance for children with and without disabilities. Themes were developed for open-ended questions through grouping by the researcher. No statistical procedure was performed to create themes. There were 53 surveys started, but 13 surveys had demographic information only and were removed prior to analysis. Forty surveys were completed and used for analyses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

The first research question asked which goals parents perceived to be the most important for their SWD participating in school-sponsored adapted sport. Table 1 illustrates the frequency and percentages of each goal item as well as the mean of each goal theme.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentages of Goal Scores (n = 40)

Goals		Not at All Important 1	2	3	4	Extremely Important 5
Social Skills	Develop social skills			3 (7.5)	17 (42.5)	20 (50.0)
	Play as part of a team				16 (40.0)	24 (60.0)
	Gain experiences that help create communication within the family		1 (2.5)	15 (37.5)	16 (40.0)	8 (20.0)
	Have fun playing sport				12 (30.0)	28 (70.0)
	Develop friendships outside of school setting			2 (5.0)	15 (37.5)	23 (57.5)
	Active participation and recognition within the school community		1 (2.5)	7 (17.5)	18 (45.0)	14 (35.0)
	Total ($M = 4.36, SD = .42$)		2	27	94	117
Physical Activity/Fitness	Gain physical fitness skills for lifelong use	1 (2.5)	1 (2.5)	6 (15.0)	14 (35.0)	18 (45.0)
	Develop passion for physical activity		3 (7.5)	6 (15.0)	16 (40.0)	15 (37.5)
	Engage in exercise		1 (2.5)	6 (15.0)	11 (27.5)	22 (55.0)
	Improve physical fitness		2 (5.0)	8 (20.0)	13 (32.5)	17 (42.5)
	Total ($M = 4.18, SD = .77$)	1	7	26	54	72
Sport-Specific Skills	Develop sport specific skills	2 (5.0)	5 (12.5)	18 (45.0)	10 (25.0)	5 (12.5)
	Gain experience in competition		6 (15.0)	12 (30.0)	12 (30.0)	10 (25.0)
	Develop sportsmanship skills			2 (5.0)	18 (45.0)	20 (50.0)
	Gain confidence			1 (2.5)	14 (35.0)	25 (62.5)
	Learn new sport skills	1 (2.5)	3 (7.5)	14 (35.0)	16 (40.0)	6 (15.0)
	Total ($M = 3.91, SD = .62$)	3	14	47	70	66

Table 1 indicates that social skills had the highest average score ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .42$). Physical activity/fitness had the second highest average ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .77$). Sport-specific skills had the lowest average with a score of 3.91 ($SD = .62$).

Parents were asked to rank the five most important goal items. Table 2 provides the mean rank of each goal item as well as the overall ranking of goal items.

Table 2. Rank of Goals by Priority

Goals	Mean	Rank
Develop social skills (s)	2.40	1
Gain confidence (sp)	2.52	2
Improve physical fitness (p)	2.57	3
Play as part of a team (s)	2.67	4
Gain experiences that help create communication within the family (s)	2.75	T-5
Develop passion for physical activity (p)	2.75	T-5
Develop friendships outside of school setting (s)	3.07	7
Engage in exercise (p)	3.23	8
Have fun playing sport (s)	3.38	9
Develop sportsmanship skills (sp)	3.43	10
Gain physical fitness skills for lifelong use (p)	3.64	11
Active participation and recognition within the school community (s)	3.67	12
Gain experience in competition (sp)	3.80	13
Learn new sport skills (sp)	4.00	14
Develop sport specific skills* (sp)	0.00	15

*Not selected as a top choice, T = tied, (s) = social, (p) = physical activity/fitness, (sp) = sport-specific skills

Table 2 indicates the average rank of each individual goal item. The goal themes are indicated for each item. Social skills goals accounted for three of the five top ranked goals. Physical activity/fitness accounted for two of the five top ranked items and sport-specific skills accounted for one of the five top ranked items. Six items were considered to be in the top five due to a tie between two of the goal items.

Three paired sample t-tests were performed to determine if there were significant differences between the goal themes. There was no significant difference found between social skill and physical activity/fitness goals, $t(39) = 1.59, p = .121$. Significant differences were found between social skills and sport-specific skill goals, $t(39) = 5.71, p = .000$, and physical activity/fitness and sport-specific skill goals, $t(39) = 2.76, p = .009$.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked whether or not disability categories had an effect on goal importance. Table 3 provides the mean score of goal themes by disability category.

Table 3. Mean Scores of Goal Themes by Disability

Disability Category	Social Skills	Physical Activity/Fitness	Sport-Specific Skills
Autism Spectrum Disorder (n = 8)	4.29 (.42)	4.13 (.53)	3.78 (.45)
Orthopedic Impairment (n = 5)	4.23 (.51)	3.90 (.76)	3.92 (.54)
Intellectual/Cognitive Disability (n = 15)	4.50 (.33)	4.38 (.82)	4.04 (.59)
Other Health Impairments (n = 4)	4.38 (.50)	3.81 (1.31)	3.75 (.97)
Multiple Disabilities (n = 6)	4.19 (.51)	4.13 (.65)	3.80 (.85)
Speech or Language Impairment (n = 2)	4.33 (.42)	4.50 (.71)	4.10 (.71)

(SD), Note: Excluded from the table were disability categories not represented by participants including: deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, specific learning disability, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment (including blindness).

The results in Table 3 indicate that parents of children with intellectual/cognitive disability provided the highest score among all parents for social skills ($M = 4.50$).

Parents of children with speech or language impairment provided the highest score for physical activity/fitness ($M = 4.50$) as well as sport-specific skills ($M = 4.10$).

A MANOVA was performed using the three goal themes as dependent variables with disability categories as the independent variable. The analysis determined that there

were no significant differences between the three goal themes based on disability category, $F(15, 88.74) = .41, p = .972$.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked whether or not the parent's perception of their child's ability level impacted the importance of goals. Table 4 presents the average score of goal themes based on the perceived ability level of the student.

Table 4. Mean Scores of Goal Themes by Perceived Ability

Perceived Ability	Social Skills	Physical Activity/Fitness	Sport-Specific Skills
Higher than Other Players (n = 12)	4.29 (.38)	4.10 (.68)	3.98 (.54)
Same as Other Players (n = 13)	4.56 (.42)	4.56 (.40)	4.26 (.57)
Lower than Other Players (n = 15)	4.23 (.41)	3.92 (.98)	3.55 (.55)
Mean (SD)			

Parents who perceived their child to have a higher level of ability recorded the highest score for social skills goals ($M = 4.29, SD = .38$). Parents who perceived their child to have the same or similar level of ability as their peers reported an average score of 4.56 for both social skills ($SD = .42$) and physical activity/fitness ($SD = .40$) goal themes. Parents who perceived their child to have a lower level of ability than the majority of their peers provided the highest score for social skills goals ($M = 4.23, SD = .41$).

A MANOVA was performed with the goal themes as dependent variables and perceived ability as the independent variable. Results of the MANOVA indicated that there was marginal significance, $F(6, 70) = 2.17, p = .056$. A significant difference was determined regarding the sport-specific skill goals, $F(2) = 5.98, p = .006$. A post-hoc Tukey test was used to determine that the significant difference exists between parents who perceived their child to have a lower level of ability and parents who perceived their

child to have the same or similar level of ability as their peers, $p = .004$. Parents who perceived their child to have the same or similar level of ability as their peers had a higher average score of 4.26 ($SD = .57$) than parents who perceived their child to have a lower level of ability ($M = 3.55$, $SD = .55$).

Research Question 4

The fourth research question determined if parent goals changed over time, or how the goals have changed from the beginning of the child's adapted sport participation to current participation. Table 5 illustrates the mean scores of goal themes for current and beginning participation in adapted sport.

Table 5. Mean Scores of Goal Themes (Current vs. Beginning of Career)

Goal Themes	Current	Beginning	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Skills	4.36 (.42)	4.10 (.50)	39	3.466	0.001
Physical Activity/Fitness	4.18 (.77)	3.76 (.83)	39	4.278	0.000
Sport-Specific Skills	3.91 (.62)	3.59 (.74)	39	3.439	0.001
Mean (SD)					

A paired sample t-test was used to determine if there were any significant differences between the current score of goal themes and the score of goal themes at the beginning of the child's career. Significant differences were found for all three goal themes from beginning to current participation. The average score ($M = 4.36$, $SD = .42$) for current social skills goals was significantly higher than the beginning social skills goals score ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .50$), $t(39) = 3.47$, $p = .001$. Current physical activity/fitness scores ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .77$) were significantly higher than beginning physical activity/fitness scores ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .83$), $t(39) = 4.28$, $p = .000$. Current sport-specific skill goal scores ($M = 3.91$, $SD = .62$) were significantly higher than beginning sport-specific skill goal scores ($M = 3.59$, $SD = .74$), $t(39) = 3.44$, $p = .001$.

Research Question 5

The final research question asked how parent goals differ between their children with and without disabilities who participate in sport/athletics. Table 6 presents the average goal theme scores for children with and without disabilities.

Table 6. Mean Scores of Goal Themes (Children with Disabilities vs. Children without Disabilities)

Goal Themes	With Disabilities	Without Disabilities	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Social Skills	4.38 (.34)	4.06 (.58)	18	2.423	0.026
Physical Activity/Fitness	4.39 (.73)	4.26 (.64)	18	0.745	0.466
Sport-Specific Skills	3.83 (.62)	4.09 (.49)	18	-2.120	0.048
Mean (SD), <i>n</i> = 19					

Three paired sample *t*-tests were used to determine if there were significant differences between parent rankings of goals for children with and without disabilities. The results indicate that there was no significant difference between physical activity/fitness scores, $t(18) = .75$, $p = .466$, but that there were significant differences between social skills, $t(18) = 2.42$, $p = .026$, and sport-specific skills, $t(18) = -2.12$, $p = .048$. The mean score for social skills was higher for children with disabilities ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .34$) than for children without disabilities ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .58$). Sport-specific mean scores were higher for children without disabilities ($M = 4.09$, $SD = .49$) than children with disabilities ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .62$).

Themes Developed from Open-Ended Questions

The survey included two open-ended questions. The first asked parents for goals they had for their child's participation that were not included in one of the three goal themes provided by the researcher. The second question asked parents to explain what

factors, if any, caused their change in perception of goal importance from the beginning of their child's adapted sport career to their current, or most recent, participation.

After analyzing the answers from the open-ended question regarding additional goals for adapted sport participation, it was determined that the majority of the responses were similar to the goals already established in the study. However, one different goal theme developed from the parent responses was the "development of mature and acceptable behavior patterns." The parents indicated that the child "listens to his teammates and coaches when they tell him he is acting silly, or to stay focused, [which] has been a big benefit." Other examples of mature behavior included "independence from the family and familiar surroundings," "putting the team first," and "to develop patience."

The second open-ended question asked parents to explain why their rating of goal importance had changed over time. The common theme from parents was that their child and/or the adapted sport program their child was involved with had exceeded their initial expectations. Some examples of this include "seeing the impact it has had on his life, it has been a great experience all around," "previous goals had been met," "my child has developed and improved their skills," and "participating has been beneficial on so many surprising levels."

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine which goals parents believe are most important as a result of their SWD participating in school-sponsored adapted sport. In addition, the study examined what factors affect the level of importance of parent goals including disability type, years of experience, and nondisabled siblings who also participate in athletics. Three themes were used to determine what goals are most important to parents—social skills, physical activity/fitness, and sport-specific skills.

Importance of Parent Goals for Adapted Sport Participation

The most important aspect of this study was to determine which goals parents perceived as the most important for their SWD participating in school-sponsored adapted sport. The results indicated that social skills goals and physical activity/fitness goals are significantly more important than sport-specific goals. While there was not a statistically significant difference between social skills goals and physical activity/fitness goals, social skills goals had the highest average score. These findings were consistent with research from Alexander and Leather (2013) that found parents believed the development of social skills was one of the most important goals of sport participation among students with autism spectrum disorder. They also noted that “sports are an ideal venue to provide social skills instruction and practice for newly acquired social skills because many social interactions occur naturally” (p. 20). In addition, several of the most highly rated goal items used in the survey from Weinberg et al. (2008) and Seefeldt et al. (1993) fall within

the social skills goals subscale. For example, “have fun playing sport” is reported as the number one reason why youth without disabilities participate in sports. Social skills are an important aspect of sport participation for all students, but especially SWD who may not have as many opportunities to engage in social interactions. The present results indicate that parents are aware of the need for social interaction and have a desire for those interactions to be addressed through school-sponsored adapted sport participation. Parents may see adapted sport as an opportunity for their SWD to not only practice social skills but also engage in social interactions that are otherwise unavailable.

While social skills are an expected priority for parents due to the lack of social opportunities for SWD, physical activity/fitness skills may be a surprising goal priority of parents. Physical activity/fitness is often overlooked as a component of sport because it is inherent that students are being active. However, parents of SWD may realize that adapted sport provides their child with an opportunity to be active that they would not have otherwise. Inactivity and obesity are major concerns for SWD and need to be addressed when possible (Rimmer, 2008). While most parents may overlook the physical activity/fitness benefits of sport, it appears that parents of SWD have made it a conscious part of their reasoning for involving their child in adapted sport programs. It is likely that these parents consider physical activity/fitness goals to be important as a result of adapted sport so that their child continues to participate in sport opportunities after school. While the sport-specific skills may not be important, increasing their child’s self-concept and desire to be active may result in a better overall quality of life. These goals may be easier to address as a fundamental part of sport participation, but should not be overlooked.

Parent Goals by Disability Category

This study also examined differences in goal importance based on the child's disability category. There were no significant differences found. This is an interesting finding as unique needs vary by disability. However, social skill goals had a higher average score for students with intellectual/cognitive disability. Alexander and Leather (2013) discuss how social skills and interactions are a major deficit in individuals with autism spectrum disorder. It would be expected that parents of students with autism spectrum disorder would have the highest average score for social skills goals. Orthopedic impairments, by nature, are associated with physical needs. These unique needs lead an individual to believe that parents would find different goal themes to be of the utmost importance. This may not be the case due to the parents desire to see their child from a typical teenage perspective. In the open-ended questions, parents expressed how important it is for their children to interact with other students "like them" or to "be a part of something meaningful." These desires for their child to have a typical teenage lifestyle may influence their goal orientation.

Goal Importance by Perceived Ability

While there were no statistically significant results from the MANOVA for goal importance based on perceived ability level, the test was approaching significance. After examining the post-hoc tests, it was determined that there was a difference between sport-specific skill goals for parents who perceived their child to have the same or similar ability level of their peers and parents who perceived their child to have a lower ability level. Parents who perceived their child to have the same ability level scored sport-specific skill goals significantly higher than parents who perceived their child to have a

lower ability level. This may be a result of the fact that parents who perceive their child to have the same ability as their peers believe that their child has the ability to improve or become more skilled in sport. Parents who perceive their child to have a lower ability level may believe that their child may never cognitively understand skills or physically be able to perform certain skills. These factors may cause the parent to focus their goals and efforts on other areas where they think their child could benefit such as social or physical goals.

Change in Goal Importance over Time

The results indicated that current goal themes were rated significantly higher than goal themes at the beginning of the child's adapted sport career. This increase in goal importance may be a result of the child and/or the adapted sport experience exceeding parent expectations. A common trend from conversations with parents of adapted sport athletes is that they never imagined their child could participate at a high skill level with their peers with disabilities. To support this idea, open-ended responses determined that some parents had changed their goals due to the improved performance and participation of their child. They stated things such as "my goals changed because they were met" as well as other statements that indicated their expectations were exceeded. In addition to goals being exceeded, parents may have added more goals as a result of their child's participation. For example, a parent may have wanted their child to engage in social interaction with a teammate, but over time expanded the goal to include appropriateness of the interaction and body language.

Differences in Goal Importance for Children with and without Disabilities

There were significant differences between social skills and sport-specific skill goal themes for children with and without disabilities. Parents rated social skills significantly higher for their children with disabilities and sport-specific skills significantly higher for their children without disabilities. These findings seem to be consistent with others in this study. Parents may value social skills goals as more important for SWD during sport due to the lack of opportunities for each in most other natural settings. This is not the case for their children without disabilities who may have many opportunities to engage in more social activities. However, parents want to see their children without disabilities improve more of their sport-specific skills. Parents may feel that there are more opportunities available to their children without disabilities in sport than for their SWD. These opportunities may be related to high-level competitive opportunities, scholarship/college potential, and/or high-level varsity competition that they feel is not appropriate or accessible for their SWD.

Implications

This study has several implications for adapted physical educators, adapted sport coaches, special education personnel, school administrators, athletic directors, officials/referees, and parents. First and foremost, is the importance of the opportunity for socialization and physical activity for SWD. The two most important goal themes for parents were social skills goals and physical activity/fitness goals. While physical activity is an essential part of any sport practice or game, it should still be considered and planned for to ensure that SWD are receiving an adequate amount of activity. Coaches may not realize that parents rely on adapted sport as a major outlet for physical activity.

Promoting an increase in physical activity may prove beneficial for SWD in decreasing inactivity and the risk of obesity. In addition, providing more opportunities for social interactions or facilitating appropriate interactions is a beneficial outcome as a result of adapted sport participation. The more opportunities SWD receive to engage in social interactions, the better their interactions will become. This may prove to be beneficial at home, in school, and, even, during adapted sport. An increase in social skills may result in more friends, a decrease in depression, and increased teamwork in group settings.

Parents, teachers, coaches, and administrators should seek the guidance of programs in Minnesota and Wisconsin when planning to implement school-sponsored adapted sport programs. The Minnesota Adapted Athletics Association has developed rules, a governing body, and sanction within the Minnesota State High School League. Schools in the Mississippi Valley Conference Adapted Sport League in western Wisconsin have an established adapted sport program that can also be replicated. Additionally, several resources exist such as a position statement by the National Consortium for Physical Education for Individuals with Disabilities (www.ncpeid.org).

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that must be recognized and could be used to further research adapted sport. First, there were a limited number of participants. Due to the small sample size, it is difficult to make general inferences. The method of survey distribution resulted in very little contact and exposure to parents. It was difficult to determine how many parents had received the survey, or if they received follow-up reminders to complete the survey. Survey distribution could be modified to allow for

face-to-face efforts. An iPad or other technology could allow parents to complete the survey while at an adapted sport game or tournament.

Another way to increase participation would be to expand the geographic area and sports involved in the survey. By offering the survey to parents in more areas and states, numbers may increase and provide a better representation of the population. Determining appropriate sport options for SWD as well as how goals change by sport could be an outcome of expanding the sports offered on the survey.

The survey did not include demographic information related to parent and/or adapted sport participant gender. Research in youth sport suggests that fathers have a higher tendency to have performance-related goals while mothers tend to value the process of sport (Dorsch et al, 2015). Reexamining and expanding the goal themes may prove to be beneficial in determining whether gender plays a role in goal importance.

While the survey had good internal consistency, further examining the goal items may provide improved internal consistency and more complete goal themes. Finally, a longitudinal study may be more appropriate to determine how goals change over time as well as the factors that caused those changes. A retrospective account of goal change is difficult for participants to recall.

Suggestions for Future Research

There are several areas that need further study in adapted sport. Future research should seek to gain the perspective of goal importance of the coaches and athletes. In addition, the current research could be expanded to determine how parent goals change, what factors cause these changes, and how parents display and reinforce these goals.

There are other areas of adapted sport that could be researched. Topics such as physical activity levels for SWD during adapted sport practice/games, the correlation between adapted sport participation and academic progress, the correlation between adapted sport participation and a transition to adulthood physical activity, and the correlation between adapted sport programming and physical education/adapted physical education performance are important research questions.

In addition to research regarding the outcomes and benefits of adapted sport participation, further research is needed to determine appropriate adapted sport programming. Researchers should continue to explore the desired and/or appropriate types of sport used in adapted sport leagues. Indoor soccer, floor hockey, and indoor baseball provide a framework for appropriate adapted sport options, but further sport options should be explored. Research could include team versus individual sport options, length of sport seasons, qualifications of sport coaches, and eligibility criteria.

CONCLUSION

School-sponsored adapted sport programming for SWD continues to grow. As more information about school requirements is provided by the federal government and meaningful program guidance by sport governing bodies is increased, there will be growth across the nation. Adapted sport offers many social, physical, and sport-specific skill benefits for SWD. Due to the unique needs and characteristics of SWD, it is important to consider their goals, and, as an extension of their child, the parent's goals for sport participation.

As data in this study suggests, parents of students with disabilities want their children to have fun. Parents also express a desire for their child to develop social skills and physical activity/fitness. These are the benefits of participation in extracurricular activities that SWD need. Sport can provide opportunities that other extracurricular activities may not provide, or encompass more goals and outcomes than other opportunities. It is recommended that coaches and league officials consider parental goals in order to develop a successful and beneficial program for SWD.

Through continued research and development of quality school-sponsored extracurricular opportunities, adapted sport programs will continue to grow. As these programs grow and become "the new norm" for SWD, it is important to ensure that the programs continue to set the bar high and challenge students to achieve a variety of goals. Further research will provide a guideline for school-sponsored adapted sport goals.

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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
LA CROSSE

To: Steve Holland

From: Bart Van Voorhis, Coordinator
Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the
Protection of Human Subjects
bvanvoorhis@uwla.edu
5-6892

Date: January 30, 2015

Re: RESEARCH PROTOCOL SUBMITTED TO IRB

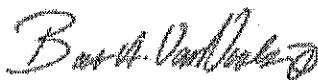
The IRB Committee has reviewed your proposed research project entitled: *"Parental Goals for Adapted Sport Participation of Children with Disabilities."*

The Committee has determined that your research protocol will not place human subjects at risk. The attached protocol has been approved and is exempt from further review per 45CFR46, 46.101(b)(2).

However, it is strongly suggested that Informed Consent always be used. Remember to provide participants a copy of the consent form and to keep a copy for your records. Consent documentation and IRB records should be retained for at least 3 years after completion of the project.

Since you are not seeking federal funding for this research, the review process is complete and you may proceed with your project.

Good luck with your project.



cc: IRB File
Garth Tymeson, Faculty Advisor

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APPENDIX B
ONLINE SURVEY:
PARENT SURVEY ON SCHOOL-SPONSORED ADAPTED SPORT
PARTICIPATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Consent Information & Introduction

Parent Survey on School-Sponsored Adapted Sport Participation for Children with Disabilities

Parent insights and desired goals are important to consider as more school-sponsored adapted sport programs are created to benefit students with disabilities. Information gathered from this project will assist teachers and coaches to learn more about parent goals for these sport programs.

When completing this survey, YMCA, Special Olympics, parks and recreation, and other community-based sport programs should not be considered. The focus of this survey is solely on school-sponsored adapted sport programs - those conducted by the public school your son/daughter attends. Questions will relate to past and present participation.

Participation in this project is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. All responses will be anonymous and your identity will never be revealed. Completion and submission of this survey indicates your informed consent.

Thank you for your time and participation.

Demographic Information

1. What is your state of residence?

- ☐ Minnesota
- ☐ Wisconsin

2. In how many years of each of the following school-sponsored adapted sports has your child participated?

	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 or more years	Never participated
Indoor Soccer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Floor Hockey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Indoor Baseball	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Based on school district categories of disabilities listed on a student's IEP, what is your child's primary disability?

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Autism Spectrum Disorder | ☐ Visual Impairment (including blindness) |
| ☐ Deaf-Blindness | ☐ Multiple Disabilities |
| ☐ Deafness | ☐ Other Health Impairments |
| ☐ Hearing Impairment | ☐ Traumatic Brain Injury |
| ☐ Emotional Disturbance | ☐ Specific Learning Disability |

☐ Orthopedic Impairment

☐ Speech or Language Impairment

☐ Intellectual Disability/Cognitive Disability

3a. Has your child been diagnosed with Down syndrome?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Important Vs. Not Important/Additional Goals and Outcomes

4. Using the scale below, please select how important the following goals are in regard to your child's participation in school-sponsored adapted sport.

Importance of goals of school-sponsored adapted sport participation

	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Develop social skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain experience in competition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Play as part of a team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop sportsmanship skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain confidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Gain physical fitness skills for lifelong use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop sport specific skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain experiences that help create communication within the family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have fun playing sport	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop passion for physical activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Develop friendships outside of school setting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Engage in exercise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improve physical fitness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learn new sport skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Active participation and recognition within the school community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. In addition to the goals listed above in question 4, what other desired goals do you have for your child participating in school-sponsored adapted sport? Please type any additional desired goals that you have for your son/daughter.

Rank of Goals/Outcomes (Now-Beginning)

6. Using your mouse, please click and drag the items on the left to the appropriate rank in the box on the right side of the screen to indicate your current priorities of desired goals for your child's participation in school-sponsored adapted sport. (Please only rank your top 5.)

Items

- Develop social skills
- Gain experience in competition
- Play as part of a team
- Develop sportsmanship skills
- Gain confidence
- Gain physical fitness skills for lifelong use
- Develop sport specific skills
- Gain experiences that help create communication within the family
- Have fun playing sport
- Develop passion for physical activity
- Develop friendships outside of school setting
- Engage in exercise
- Improve physical fitness
- Learn new sport skills
- Active participation and recognition within the school community

#1 (Top priority) to #5

7. Now, think back to when your child first began school-sponsored adapted sports. How would you have ranked your desired goals at that time?

Using the scale below, please select how important the following goals were in regard to your child's participation in school-sponsored adapted sport at the **beginning of their sport career**.

Importance of goals of school-sponsored adapted sport participation

	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Develop social skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Gain experience in competition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Play as part of a team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop sportsmanship skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain confidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Gain physical fitness skills for lifelong use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop sport specific skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain experiences that help create communication within the family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have fun playing sport	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop passion for physical activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Develop friendships outside of school setting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Engage in exercise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improve physical fitness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learn new sport skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Active participation and recognition within the school community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

8. If your desired goals for your child's adapted sport participation have changed over time, what factors have contributed most to this change of goals? Please list all factors that have changed your priorities.

Perceived Ability of Child

9. Using the scale below, please rank your perceptions about your child's ability level in adapted sport for each item.

My child is able to...

	None of the Time	A Little of the Time	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time
Understand the rules of sports	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Strategize and plan during the game	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Keep score and understand the difference between winning and losing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Play without physical	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

assistance from coaches

	None of the Time	A Little of the Time	Some of the Time	Most of the Time	All of the Time
Play without verbal instructions from coaches	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Play and understand the roles of multiple positions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Communicate with teammates during the game to improve team performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

10. In comparison to other players with disabilities on his/her team, please rank your perceptions about your child's overall ability level in adapted sport.

- ☐ Higher than other players
☐ Same as other players
☐ Lower than other players

Beliefs Regarding Adapted Sport

School-Sponsored Adapted Sport Implementation

The following question seeks your satisfaction level with your child's current adapted sport program.

11. In the past year, how well have your goals been satisfied by your child's school-sponsored adapted sport programs?

	Not at all Satisfied	Slightly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied
Social Goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Physical Activity and Fitness Goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sport-Specific Skill Goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Nondisabled Child Participation

12. In addition to your child who participates in school-sponsored adapted sport, do you have any other children without disabilities who currently participate or have in the past participated in general school-sponsored sport?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

12a. Using the scale below, please select how important the following goals are regarding school-sponsored sport participation for your children without disabilities.

Importance of goals of school-sponsored adapted sport participation

	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Develop social skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain experience in competition	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Play as part of a team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop sportsmanship skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain confidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Gain physical fitness skills for lifelong use	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop sport specific skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Gain experiences that help create communication within the family	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Have fun playing sport	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Develop passion for physical activity	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Not at All Important	Slightly Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
Develop friendships outside of school setting	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Engage in exercise	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Improve physical fitness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Learn new sport skills	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Active participation and recognition within the school community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER AND EMAIL MEMORANDUM TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Parents,

Parent insights and desired goals are important to consider as more school-sponsored adapted sport programs are created to benefit students with disabilities. The purpose of this study is to gather anticipated and expected goals that you, as a parent, have for your child's participation in school-sponsored adapted sport. Information gathered in this project will assist teachers and coaches about parent goals for these sport programs.

When completing this survey, YMCA, Special Olympics, parks and recreation, and other community-based sport programs should not be considered. The focus of this project is solely on school-sponsored adapted sport programs - those conducted by the public school your son/daughter attends. Questions will relate to past and present participation.

Participation in this project is voluntary. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. All responses will be anonymous and your identity will never be revealed. Completion and submission of this survey indicates your informed consent.

If you would take 10-15 minutes to complete this survey, we would greatly appreciate it. Please follow this link to the survey.

If the above link does not work, please copy and paste the following web address into your browser: https://uwlacrosse.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_dgyjclafVozztJi

If you have any questions about this project, please contact: Steve Holland at (765-398-1972; holland.stev@uwlax.edu), or Dr. Garth Tymeson (608-785-5415; gtymeson@uwlax.edu).

Thank you for your time and participation.

Sincerely,

Steve Holland

APPENDIX D
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Youth sport participation is a major component of life in the U.S. More than 44 million youth are involved with youth sports each year (Dorsch, Smith, Wilson, & McDonough, 2015). Among youth who participate, gender, ethnicity, age, ability level, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, and disability classification are all represented. Youth sport programs captivate a wide audience unlike any other outlet.

While youth sport participation is often seen as an opportunity to learn motor and social skills, the need to engage in sports for physical activity and fitness is ever-increasing. According to Obrusnikova and Miccinello (2012), physical activity plays an important role in preventing childhood obesity. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2008) recommend that children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily and in doing so may “improve [their] cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, blood pressure, and decrease depressive symptoms” (p. 64). Youth sports play an important role in providing health-enhancing physical activity.

Parents are a major factor in allowing children to participate in youth sport programs. Parents play an important role in the development of children, whether it be school- or athletic-based. An and Hodge (2013) reviewed several studies that report parental involvement influences achievement and performance of children’s school

success. The authors continue that parental involvement in academics “has been highlighted with the rapid growth of evidence supporting the positive impact on students’ performances in the U.S.” (p.148). These principles and ideologies can also be applied to the context of sport participation. Dorsch et al. (2015) argue that parents are the primary providers of sport experiences and that “youth sport is an important context for family communication” (p.19).

Due to the health and societal implications of sport participation, it is important to understand parental goals and perceptions of youth sports programs for children. This includes children with disabilities who are otherwise underserved in the community, and can benefit from youth sport programming. The Office for Civil Rights release of the “Dear Colleague” Letter (January 25, 2013), and the subsequent responses, provide the framework for equal extracurricular sport/athletic opportunities for students with disabilities (SWD). One of the primary purposes of adapted sports is for SWD to have the opportunity to participate in sports that are comparable to varsity interscholastic sports. Parental involvement, roles, and desired goals are important considerations for adapted sport participation due to the increased involvement, assistance, and supervision of SWD. Understanding the intended goals of sport participation by parents can facilitate appropriate goal achieving programming within the desired context. Youth sport programs should consider the goals of parents for their youth as the primary caregiver and advocate for their child’s best interests, especially parents of SWD.

In some locales, school-sponsored adapted sports are a new and rising phenomena that have yet to be fully examined. However, information taken from youth sport research for the nondisabled can be applied to disability sport and create opportunity for

more in-depth research of disability sports. The following review of literature includes topics of parental roles and behaviors related to youth sport participation, reasons for participation in youth sport, and parent perspectives, expectations, and goals provide insight into the desired goals of sport participation for disabled and nondisabled athletes.

Parental Roles and Behaviors Related to Youth Sport Participation

It is important to understand the roles parents play in their child's sport participation before reviewing the desired goals of these parents. Parents are important factors in the socialization, enjoyment, and burnout of sport participation for their children. The perceived roles of involvement of parents versus their children provides information regarding the child's desire to participate.

The purpose of a study by Omli and Wiese-Bjornstal (2011) was to analyze what behaviors sport participants witnessed from parents and what behaviors they wanted parents to exhibit during sport participation. The researchers explained that parental behavior can be a major source of support or stress for youth sport participants depending on the types of behaviors exhibited. The behaviors exhibited by parents can be linked to increased participation in sport or an increased risk of dropping out of sports. State anxiety is a major factor that contributes to whether or not children participate and can be directly linked to parent behavior and pressure (p.702).

The study included 28 boys and 29 girls between the ages of 7 and 14 years who were enrolled in a beginning tennis camp. Data were gathered through interviews that consisted of forced-choice and two open-ended questions such as "how do parents usually act during your youth sport events" and "how would you like parents to act during your youth sport events" (p.704). Probes were used following open-ended

questions to provide clarification and prevent ambiguity. The open-ended questions were used to prevent limiting responses; themes were developed based on the transcribed results of the interviews.

The results revealed three roles played by parents during youth sport participation as the desire for or against each role by the child. The three roles were (1) supportive parent characterized by attentive silence, cheering, encouragement, praise, empathy, and protective intervention; (2) demanding, coach-like parent characterized by instruction, advice, and critical encouragement; and (3) crazed fan characterized by arguing, blaming, derogation, disruption, yelling, and fanatical cheering (p.704-705). Children indicated that they preferred parents to play the supportive parent role.

The results indicated that “if children and parents can discuss sideline behavior openly, sportsmanship might improve for some parents” (p.708). The research provides insight as to how parent behaviors may not always emulate their intended goals. Parent sideline behavior can sometimes be irrational or detrimental to child performance. The research presented is important for the development of this study due to the inappropriate view some parents may have of their desired goals in relation to their observable behavior. For the purpose of this study regarding parent goals of adapted sport participation for SWD, it is important to consider that parents intended goals may not always match their behaviors, attitudes, and actions during gameplay.

The study by Omli and Weise-Bjornstal provided insight into the child’s perception and desire for parent behaviors. A study by Kanters and Casper (2008) takes the research a step further by reviewing the level of agreement between children and

parents. The authors reiterated the idea that parent behavior and actions can impact children's stress, performance, and willingness to participate in youth sport.

Subjects were from a select hockey league and consisted of 108 children and parents (64 fathers and 44 mothers). Research was conducted through an online survey and each child-parent pair were grouped through the use of a secret password that matched the surveys. The same questions were used for the child and parent with the wording changed to match each role. The data were gathered using questions that assessed parental support, pressure from parents, the child's general feelings about their participation, and child's skill level using Likert scales.

Results revealed several implications that can be used for future research. Kanters and Casper (2008) found that "pressure from fathers but not mothers was negatively correlated with general feelings about hockey" (p.70). Additionally, parent results indicated significantly higher perceptions of support whereas child results indicated significantly higher levels of pressure from both father and mother subgroups. Parents also reported slightly higher scores regarding the child's general feelings about hockey than child participants (p.72). There were no significant differences in the results reported for perceived hockey skill.

One implication from this study is that parent gender should be determined through demographic questions to perform further analyses in regard to the different perceptions and goals of parent subgroups. For the purpose of this study regarding adapted sport participation, the research by Kastens and Casper can be used to determine parents' levels of involvement and how this involvement affects their desired goals. Both of these studies assess the role parents' play and the level of involvement they use that

may enhance or deter their child's participation in sport. Both are important factors when considering the desired goals by parents for their children's participation in sport. It is not known whether these same factors apply to parents of SWD.

Reasons for Participation in Youth Sport

Parent goals and behavior have a significant impact on the motivation and reasons for participation of children in youth sport. As the aforementioned research studies indicated, children desire more positive involvement from parents that is presented in a supportive manner. Parents impact the goal and motivation orientations of participants as well as the reasons that children choose to participate in sport.

A meta-analysis was performed to analyze achievement goal orientations in physical activity and the influence of significant others on participation in physical activity. The authors limited their meta-analysis to research that used either the Task and Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire (TEOSQ) or the Perception of Success Questionnaire (Biddle, Wang, Kavassanu, & Spray, 2005). The researchers used all forms of physical activity to increase the generalizations of the findings. Several categories were developed for the results. For the purpose of this study regarding SWD, motivation for participation and perceptions of significant other's goal orientations will be reported.

The motivation for participation was analyzed using achievement goal orientations. Two independent samples were used with a total of 647 participants that were cross-sectional and used the TEOSQ and Participation Motivation Questionnaire (Biddle et al, 2003). The results indicated that task orientation was positively related to

skill development and team membership in both studies. Ego orientation was positively related to status recognition in both studies (p.8).

The authors used six published studies, totaling 741 participants, to analyze perceptions of significant other's goal orientations. The results indicated that a positive relationship existed between participants goal orientation and the significant others' goal orientation for both task and ego orientations (one study indicated a positive relationship with task orientation only) (p.11). Biddle et al. (2003) acknowledge that there was limited research conducted in this area and that further research is required. While this study regarding SWD does not explicitly address these connections, it is an opportunity for further research after establishing parent goal orientations.

Stuntz and Weiss (2009) continued the work on achievement goal orientations of participants in sport. They acknowledged the importance of determining achievement goal orientations in sport due to the fact that students who participate in sport benefit from "enhanced self-perception, moral development, and emotion management, [...] better school behavior and achievement, reduced health problems, and lower rates of dropout and pregnancy" (p.255). Thus, the main purpose of their study was to determine the links between participant goal orientations.

The researchers used a sample of 202 middle school students aged 11-14 years who had participated in organized sport. Stuntz and Weiss (2009) used the TEOSQ like Biddle et al (2003), and an additional 15 items to assess social orientation. The survey also contained items from the Self-Perception Profile for Children and Motivational Orientation in Sport Scale.

The results were analyzed using a variable-centered approach and indicated a significant relationship between motivational outcomes and social goal orientations. Students who defined success in terms of friendships, being accepted by a peer group, and receiving praise from a coach had a positive perception of physical competence, enjoyment, and preference of challenging tasks. Students who reported a lower ego-orientation indicated a higher level of enjoyment, competence, and challenge motivation (p.260). The researchers indicated that further research needed to be conducted to determine the relationship between motivation orientations and social indicators for sport participation. For the purpose of this study regarding SWD, the research indicates a need to demonstrate several social skill goals as an outcome of adapted sport participation.

While Stuntz and Weiss (2009) examined the correlation of social indicators and motivation orientations, Ryska (1995) studied the role of competition levels to determine the desired outcomes of sport participation. According to Ryska, research in the past has indicated that individuals with high ego-orientation are more likely to focus on the competitiveness of the sport while task-oriented participants focus on mastery and their own competence. Ryska (1995) hypothesized that hyper competitiveness would be linked to ego-oriented goals while personal development competitiveness would be linked to task-oriented goals (p.195)

The author used a sample of 250 university students who were members of recreational sports teams. The Hypercompetitive Attitude Scale and Personal Development Competitive Attitude Scale as well as the TEOSQ and Purpose of Sport Questionnaire were used to assess the competitiveness, motivation orientation, and values

of each participant. The Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale was used to determine response bias based on socially desirable outcomes.

Results indicated that personal development competitive levels were positively related to mastery/cooperation outcomes as well as a task orientation. A positive relationship was found between hypercompetitive levels, ego orientation, and a competitive purpose of sport. The results generally supported the hypotheses of the study. It was found that ego and task orientation have strong correlations with the level of competitiveness a participant exhibits.

The research presented by Biddle et al, Stuntz and Weiss, and Ryska indicate that ego and task orientation are the major contributors for motivational outcomes and goals. An individual who has a high task orientation is likely to indicate more intrinsic motivators while an ego oriented individual will be motivated by extrinsic factors. These are important considerations in the development of a survey. Both types of outcomes or results should be included. The survey used in this study regarding parent goals of adapted sport participation was developed with both task and ego orientations goals incorporated, but does not consider task or ego orientation in the analysis.

Research by Weinberg et al. (2000) examined the reasons why youth participate in competitive sports. The researchers also examined why youth participate in regular physical activity and compared the difference and similarities between competitive sports. The researchers used a sample of 13-18 year old students totaling 1,472 individuals (p. 326). Questionnaires were used to gather data, one regarding the participation in youth sport and the other concerned with general physical activity. A third questionnaire was conducted regarding participation frequency.

The results indicated that the reasons for participating in competitive sports among youth were intrinsic and task-oriented. The ranking of the top five factors were: (1) to have fun, (2) to improve my skills, (3) to stay in shape, (4) like the excitement, and (5) like the status/recognition (p. 331). The authors hypothesized that the results would be more closely related to extrinsic, ego-oriented outcomes. The results reported for physical activity were more closely aligned to the hypothesis of the researchers and previous research. The researchers believed that physical activity would have a high intrinsic and task orientation. The top five ranking of physical activity goals were: (1) to stay in shape, (2) to be physically fit, (3) to have fun, (4) like to get exercise, and (5) like the challenge (p. 331). The results were used to help create the goal outcomes used in this study regarding SWD.

Similar to the findings of Weinberg et al. (2000), the findings of Seefeldt, Ewing, and Walk (1993) were consistent about why students participate in school-sponsored sport programs. The findings were part of a larger study in which the authors provided an overview of youth sport programs in the U.S. The research findings gathered were from surveys administered to 26,000 youth across the country.

The results of why children participate in school-sponsored sport programs were ranked by gender, race, and age. The results showed that the top five reasons why boys participated in school-sponsored sport programs were: (1) to have fun, (2) to improve my skills, (3) for the excitement of competition, (4) to do something I'm good at, and (5) to stay in shape. The top five reasons listed for girls were: (1) to have fun, (2) to stay in shape, (3) to improve my skills, (4) to get exercise, and (5) to do something I'm good at (Seefeldt et al., 1993, p. 59). There were no significant differences between race, gender,

and age groups. In addition to the goals recorded above, these goals were used to help create the survey for this study regarding SWD participating in adapted sport programs.

The research presented above shows that motivation for participation and involvement of sport programs can be directly linked to achievement goal orientations. Themes have been developed from research that indicates that goals are either task or ego oriented. For the purpose of this study regarding parent goals of adapted sport participation for their SWD, a survey must be constructed that includes a variety of factors that are both task and ego oriented in order to gain appropriate results. Further analyses may be conducted to determine the prevalence of task or ego orientation among parent respondents. Parent behavior and participant goal orientations have been discussed, the two can be combined to determine parent goals and association with behavior. However, more important than task- or ego-oriented goals are the goals themselves. Using the goals for participation in sport found in Seefeldt, Ewing, and Walk are most appropriate for the focus of this study.

Parent Perspectives, Expectations, and Goals

Parent perspectives, expectations, and goals are important when considering sport participation of children. As previous research has shown, parents are a major factor in the socialization of children. Sports are very common outlets for such socialization. Parent goals, expectations, and perspectives are especially important for SWD who, often times, cannot verbalize or express their own goals and expectations. Parents, as the primary caregivers and advocates for their children, become the voice and focal point of participation.

Socialization begins in the educational setting and extends to extracurricular activities. To understand what role a parent plays in extracurricular activities, it is important to understand what role they play in the context of education. An and Hodge (2013) investigated the perspectives of parents of SWD and their involvement in their child's physical education. The researchers stated how important parent involvement and influence is on the academic success of students. This is especially true for students in special education. "Parents are required to be involved in planning and decision-making process for their children's education through Individualized Education Program meetings under IDEA" (An & Hodge, 2013, p. 140).

The researchers used Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory to explain how student development is influenced through home, school, community, and society. The theory is comprised of four systems: (a) microsystem, biological, and social behaviors that influence parent's behavior, (b) mesosystem, connection of microsystems, (c) exosystem, environmental influences that the child is not a part of, and (d) macrosystem, the laws, economic circumstances, and cultural and societal expectations. The theory "suggests that a child's development is affected by the roles parents play in their educational experiences across environmental contexts" (An & Hodge, 2013, p.150). Therefore, the intent was to examine the meaning of parental involvement in physical education from the perspective of parents of students with developmental disabilities.

The researchers used hermeneutic phenomenology to describe the phenomena presented by the parents as well as provide an understanding of the written word of the parents. Eight parents of children with developmental disabilities (elementary or secondary) were purposefully selected as participants in the study. These parents were

active members in their child's educational process and were recruited through an adapted recreational sports league. Children in elementary physical education participated twice a week and children in secondary physical education participated five days a week. Interviews, artifacts, and a researcher's journal were used to gather data. All eight parents completed a series of three interviews over a 3-week period that lasted approximately 60-90 minute each. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the results.

The findings of the thematic analysis were broken down into three major themes: "(a) being an advocate for my child, (b) understanding the big picture, and (c) collaborative partnerships undeveloped in general physical education (GPE)" (p. 154). Parents saw themselves as an agent or representative of their child's best interest in educational settings in order to communicate their child's needs and desires. Parents also saw themselves as facilitators of the "big picture" of educational goals and outcomes for their child. This was accomplished through constant communication and networking. Interestingly, parents did not see collaborative partnerships with physical educators as a major component of their involvement in the education process. Parents recognized the value of physical activity, but showed more interest in extracurricular activities than building relationships with general physical education teachers and gaining an understanding of the physical education program. The need for extracurricular programming is evident by parent responses, but, even more evident, is the need to develop communication between program facilitators and parents. Facilitating communication would improve program implementation and parent satisfaction.

While An and Hodge studied parent involvement in physical education, Obrusnikova and Miccinello (2012) assessed "parental perceptions of the benefits of

physical activity and the factors that influence participation [...] in physical activity after school” (p. 63). This study was delimited to children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), but provides implications for students of varying disabilities as obesity is a growing concern for all students. Obesity is even more common in SWD who have limited access to living active lifestyles. The purposes of the study were to identify perceived benefits and disadvantages of physical activity as well as facilitators and barriers to participating in physical activity after school.

The research was conducted through a convenience sample of 103 parents in the tristate area of Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania using an online questionnaire. The criteria for participation were “(a) be a biological parent, stepparent, or have lawfully adopted a child with ASD and (b) live in the tristate area” (p. 66). Using the data from the online questionnaire, 11 participants were selected to be part of a focus group interview. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were used to analyze the data. The results of the research indicated that the most important benefits of physical activity were physical, psychosocial, and cognitive and disadvantages were psychosocial and physical. The results for facilitators and barriers of physical activity elicited similar responses in that the most common for both were intrapersonal factors.

The results of the study indicate that parents have mixed perceptions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of physical activity participation. Parents expressed the importance of monitoring screen time for their children in order to increase the possibility of extracurricular participation. Parents stated that positive relationships and modeling behaviors enhanced the likelihood of physical activity participation in their children with ASD. Other information that parents noted include the need for “programs, segregated or

integrated, in their community that provide necessary supports needed to meet the unique needs of their children with ASD” and that physical education “should strive to engage students with ASD in developmentally appropriate practices, integrated or segregated and offer opportunities to participate in additional PA during and immediately after school” (Obrusnikova & Miccinello, 2012, p. 76).

The desire for more after school programming options for students with ASD and other disabilities to be physically active presents an opportunity for adapted sports programming to be offered. Alexander and Leather (2013) sought to find what sports programs parents felt were appropriate for students with ASD. Like the findings of Obrusnikova and Miccinello, Alexander and Leather began with the notion that “sports are an ideal venue to provide social skill instruction and practice for newly acquired social skills because many social interactions occur naturally” (2013, p. 20). However, the authors noted that if parents do not feel comfortable with the program, these goals may not matter.

The study included 54 parents of children with ASD who were recruited through two schools as a convenience sample. The researchers used a questionnaire consisting of 20 multiple-choice questions that took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The questions included demographic information, types of sports programs desired, goals of sports programs, and characteristics of sports programs (p. 21). The results were analyzed for counts and percentiles using Microsoft Excel. The majority of parents indicated that they wanted their student to be involved in sports for 2 to 4 hours per week. Parents chose swimming, basketball, baseball, soccer, and gymnastics as the most common sport programs they would like offered to their children. Parents’ goals and focus of

participation were centered on development of social skills, physical activity and fitness, and recreation with development of other life skills and a source of family networking.

The study gives teachers and coaches insights into what parents' value in sport participation for their child with a disability. It is important to consider the unique circumstances of families with SWD, and the specific disability, when planning and implementing adapted sport programs. Families of SWD often have several time commitments that are not characteristic of families of nondisabled children due to therapy and related services that the child may require.

While parents with SWD have unique considerations and needs when creating and planning adapted sports programming, it is important to consider parent goals to understand the context of youth sports in the development of children. Youth sport participation can have significant impacts on the physical, social, and emotional development of youth and as Dorsch, Smith, Wilson, and McDonough (2015) point out "is an important context for family communication" (p. 1). Research by Dorsch et al. examined the goals of parents for child participation in youth sport programs and how those goals are shown during competition.

The research was conducted as a "longitudinal collective case study design employed to capture parent goals and verbal sideline behavior over the initial 15 months of organized youth sport participation" (Dorsch et al., 2015, p. 2). The research included four first time youth sport parents who were recruited from a youth soccer program. Qualitative data were collected over the 15 month period, which included interviews, parent journals, and observations of verbal sideline behavior. The analysis was a three-step procedure that included parent goals, verbal sideline behavior analysis, and case

narratives. The findings showed that goals were split into three categories: instrumental, identity, and relational. Parents often pursued multiple goals as relevant to the immediate context of participation and changed their goals based on their child's participation and ability over the course of a sports season. Overall, "Parenting practices are typically enacted to achieve personal goals and values" (Dorsch et al., 2015, p. 13).

According to the authors, the findings indicate a definitive need for further research on parental involvement in youth sports. The study suggests that parental goals are often times as focused on themselves as they are the participation of their child. Identity goals are focused on others not having negative perceptions of the child. This would be of particular value for SWD. Parents may be reluctant to enroll their SWD in sport programming if they believe that doing so would result in negative feelings or attitudes toward their student/family. For example, parents may perceive their child to have a lower ability level due to their disability, which could cause them to choose not to enroll their student in the program for fear of ridicule. It is an important topic to consider. This study regarding parent goals of adapted sport participation for their SWD aims to understand how parent goals change over time and what the factors for those changes may be.

Research by Gutierrez, Caus, and Ruiz (2011) examined the influence of parents on motivation for sport in athletes with and without physical disabilities. The authors summarized previous research which indicates that differing results exist between goal orientation and motivation for participation among athletes with and without disabilities. Athletes with disabilities are more likely to have ego-oriented goals that result in external satisfaction as a result of social acceptance and praise. The focus of their research was on

task- and ego-orientations of the athletes as well as the athlete's perspective of their parents orientations.

The results of the study were similar to previous research that states that athletes have similar goal orientations to those of their parents or significant others. However, the results revealed that athletes with disabilities place a greater level of importance on their parents' goal orientations than their own. The findings indicate that athletes with disabilities related parent goals directly to their personal interest/enjoyment and effort/importance (p.371). The authors explained that parents may not be the only major influence of goal orientations, coaches and teachers may also play an important role in a SWD goal orientation development.

Through the research presented, it is evident that parent goal orientations play a major role in the development of a child's goal orientation development. However, findings by Gutierrez, Caus, and Ruiz indicate that parents may play a more important role in the goal orientation development of SWD due to the level of support and care given by parents. For the purpose of this study regarding goals of adapted sport participation for SWD, parents are an appropriate indicator of the major goals and outcomes.

Summary and Conclusions

Research in youth sport is increasingly important as the obesity rate of the U.S. continues to skyrocket. While more and more children continue to be involved in youth sport, more than 44 million presently according to Dorsch et al. (2015), the obesity rate is not affected or limited. Likewise, there continues to be a need for adapted sports programming for SWD as the prevalence of disabilities continues to rise and their

physical activity levels are down. According to Obrusnikova and Miccinello, “the number of children diagnosed with ASD has been steadily increasing. In 2009, approximately 1 in every 110 children, aged 3-17 years, in the U.S. was diagnosed with ASD” (p. 63). When considering the plethora of other disability classifications, the numbers are astounding. These children need physical activity just like all other children, and adapted sport can offer many opportunities. In addition, reports (GAO and OCR “Dear Colleague” Letter) indicate a lack of programs and staff.

Parental involvement is important for children participating in youth sports especially SWD. Considering the unique needs and circumstances of families with children with disabilities, and the specific disability, is important when considering the type of programming offered. Families with children with disabilities often have greater financial burdens, stressors, and time constraints than the family of a typically developing child who participates in sports. Alexander and Leather (2013) found that parents of children with disabilities preferred less of a time commitment when considering sports programming for their children.

It is also important to understand the goals of sport participation of families. Alexander and Leather (2013), Dorsch et al. (2015), and Obrusnikova and Miccinello (2012) all found that parents desired goals revolved around physical and psychosocial outcomes. The consideration of these goals in adapted and nonadapted realms of sport indicate that parents have similar goals for their child’s participation in sports programs.

The questions that remains are “What school-sponsored adapted sport goals do parents of children with disabilities have?” The research presented fails to address

school-sponsored adapted sport. Further research is necessary to determine the desired goals of parents of school-sponsored adapted sport participants.

Further research could address several areas of youth sport. While youth sport is a heavily analyzed field, integrating school-sponsored adapted sports programming into the research could prove beneficial as a continued push for equal sports opportunities occurs. Research questions in this study include the following: “What goals do parents of children with disabilities who participate in school-sponsored sport indicate as the most important?” “How do disability categories affect the importance of goals?” “How do parent perceptions of child’s ability level affect the importance of parent goals?” “How do parent goals change over time (beginning of child’s adapted sport career to current participation)?” “What differences exist between a parents goals for their children with and without disabilities who participate in youth sport/athletics?”

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