

Quality Improvement of an Adaptive Sports Program for Children with Disabilities

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Objective

To create a survey to help inform the Courage League Sports (CLS) Board on feedback from participants and volunteers in order to make decisions to better meet the needs of the community and foster program growth and sustainability. Ultimately, to optimize the adaptive sports service as an intervention.

Methods

To create a survey to capture the most important factors related to adaptive sports, business growth, perceived quality of services, and ease in participating and volunteering, we first reviewed background literature. Based on the research, we then created a survey related to experience, recommendations, and preferences of parents and volunteers. All survey questions were reviewed with the CLS-IC executive director and then distributed to 46 volunteers and 32 families. We received 16 volunteer surveys back and 11 family surveys. Then an analysis of needs, strengths, and weaknesses in the organization was synthesized in order to provide recommendations for optimal and accessible experiences for children with disabilities. These results were presented to the CLS-IC board and the executive director.

Results

The percentage of completed surveys was 30.5% for families and 34.8% for volunteers. Overall, Courage League was rated as *very good* or *excellent* by 100% of families, and 91% reported *adequate* adaptations for their child. Over half of the families reported travelling over 11 miles to get to sessions, and location or distance was listed as a top barrier. Other barriers noted by families were time of day and day of the week. The top benefits for families were socialization for their child, physical activity, and community involvement. For volunteers, 75% *somewhat to strongly agreed* that they felt comfortable providing adaptations to activities. 25% reported that this was their first time working with children with disabilities, and 56% volunteered for over 5 evenings. The top barriers for volunteers were also location and time of day, with lack of knowledge and confidence rated as the third barrier. Top benefits reported were the positive atmosphere and the interaction with the kids. Overall, these results indicated that Courage League Sports is providing a beneficial opportunity for children and volunteers and provided insight for suggestions to improve the program for future sessions.

Conclusions

There are many benefits to adaptive sports for the participants, families, and volunteers. However, there are still some barriers that could be addressed to make the location and time more convenient for everyone. Based on the frequency themes in comments collected, we have proposed some adjustments for consideration. These include changing the location and content of orientation for volunteers to better prepare and equip them to adapt activities to individuals. We also propose that CLS stays active on social media for advertisement and to reach out to Area Education Agencies (AEA) to reach more families who may be interested. We also propose the continuation of providing a variety of activities at CLS and to foster interaction and socialization between the children. Courage League Sports can continue to foster growth in children and as a business by understanding the background research of adaptive sports benefits and by understanding what has been done well thus far and where there is room for improvement.