

Fairfax County Park Authority: Adapted Aquatics Volunteer Training



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY
ACCESS & INCLUSION

Welcome to Adapted Aquatics

- Welcome! We are excited you want to support our award-winning Adapted Aquatics Program.
- This training will provide program information and a road map to being a successful and competent Adapted Aquatics Volunteer.
- Our team will support you through every step of your volunteer journey.
- This training will help ensure the safety and success for all involved in our program.
- **Thank you for your time and dedication to our program! We would not be able to run our classes without YOU!**



Volunteer Training & Assessment

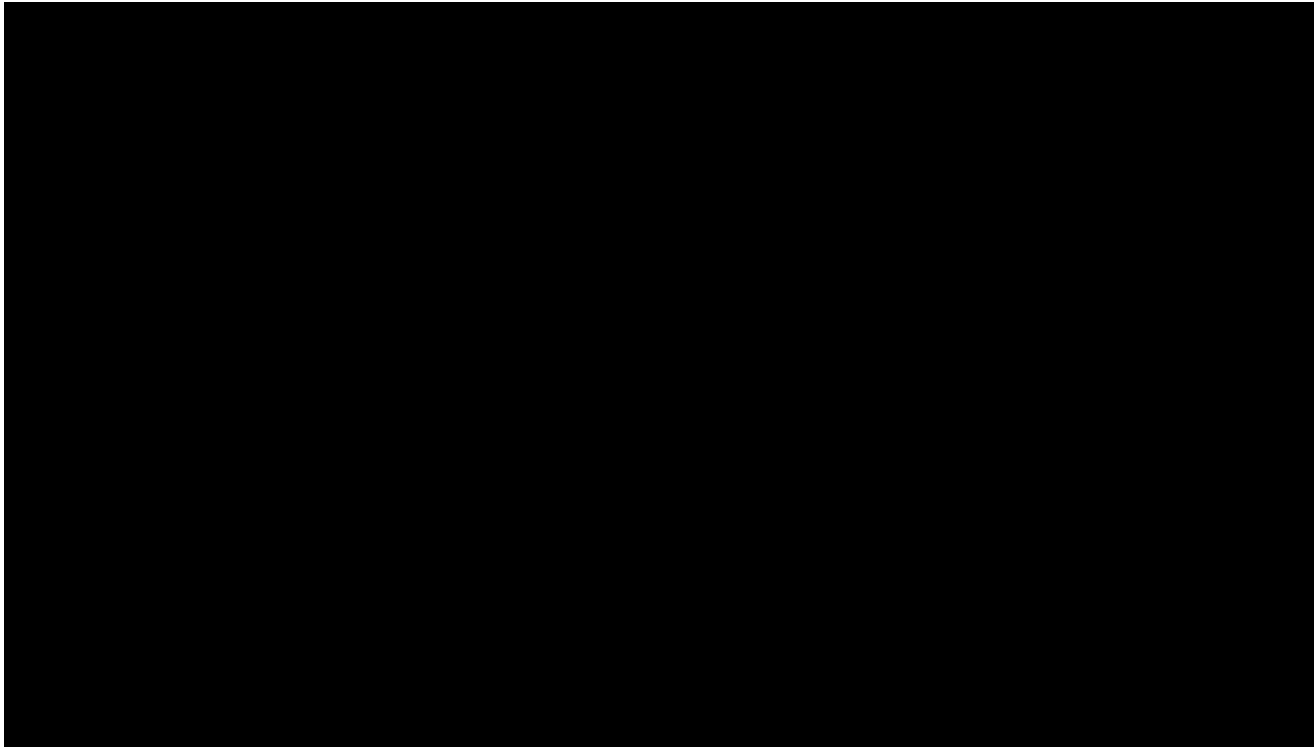
- In order to become a fully trained volunteer, you will complete the following steps:
 - Step 1: Review this training, complete online training form, and submit to volunteer coordinator
 - Step 2: Complete knowledge check, submit to the volunteer coordinator, and achieve a score of at least 90%
 - Step 3: Attend first class, shadow instructor or volunteer mentor, demonstrate competencies learned from this training, and submit to volunteer coordinator
- Additional information on these steps can be found at the end of this training



New Volunteer FAQ

Question	Answer
Do I need to have experience working with individuals with disabilities?	No, just a desire to help others and have fun. You will learn everything you need to know during this training and through shadowing instructors or experienced volunteers.
Do I need to be a good swimmer to volunteer?	Classes are generally held in 4 feet area of the pool, so volunteers do not have to be expert swimmers. However, it is important that volunteers feel safe and comfortable in the water. Swim team training and deep-water classes are held in depths of 6 feet or more. Volunteers in these classes need to be able to swim at least 25 yards and tread water for short periods of time.
What is the minimum age for volunteering?	14, however at age 13, you may volunteer with a parent/guardian present.
What is the commitment?	Volunteers must be able to commit to a class series of six to 10 weeks – consistency is critical for our customers! If you are unable to commit to a class series, FCPA may have another volunteer option that fits your schedule. More information can be found on page 7.
What if I can't make a session? Is there an inclement weather policy?	Please let the instructor know in advance if you must miss a session so alternative plans can be made. Inclement weather policy can be found on page 20.
Is training provided?	Yes, you are about to start step 1 of your training process.
How old are the people I'll be working with?	Class information, disability population served, and age of participants can be found on page 7.
What types of disabilities participate in this program?	Class information, disability population served, and age of participants can be found on page 7.

FCPA Adapted Programs Overview



This video can also be viewed at: <https://youtu.be/Tf6rf7CuJcA>



Adapted Aquatics at Spring Hill Rec Center

This video can also be viewed at: [Channel 16 Video on Demand - Fairfax County, Virginia \(ebmcdn.net\)](https://www.ebmc.net/channel-16-video-on-demand-fairfax-county-virginia)

Adapted Aquatics Classes

- Adapted Aquatics Program offerings include learn-to-swim, aquatics exercise, and training for Special Olympics swim team competitions.
- Classes range from 30 to 55 minutes long and are scheduled with 5 to 10 minute breaks between each class.
- A typical volunteer shift is at least two hours long and includes more than one of our classes.

Class Title	Population Served	Age of Participants
Adapted Swimming - Preschoolers	Children with intellectual, development, learning, physical, or other disabilities	3-5 yrs
Adapted Swimming 1, 2, and 3	Children with intellectual, development, learning, physical, or other disabilities	6-12 yrs
Learn to Swim Teens/Adults with Disabilities	Individuals with developmental disabilities (intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, language and learning disorders, cerebral palsy)	13-Adult
Adapted Intro to Basic Strokes	Children with intellectual, development, learning, physical, or other disabilities	8-Adult
Swim Team Training Intermediate and Advanced	Individuals with developmental disabilities (intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, language and learning disorders, cerebral palsy)	8-Adult
Adapted Deep Water Aqua Fitness	Individuals with developmental disabilities (intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, Down syndrome, language and learning disorders, cerebral palsy)	13-Adult
Aqua Fitness for Individuals with Physical Disabilities	Individuals with only physical disabilities (limb amputations, physical impairments, muscular dystrophy, blindness, spina bifida, paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia, traumatic brain injury, etc..)	13-Adult

Rules and Expectations

DO

- Maintain a positive attitude
- Sign in at the front desk every time you volunteer
- Maintain your commitment - if you will not be there, please let the instructor and volunteer coordinator know as soon as possible
- Arrive 15 minutes early and be prepared to swim
- Be patient
- Follow directions at all times
- Stay in the designated pool space for the class
- Communicate any questions or concerns with the instructor and/or volunteer coordinator
- Be respectful and courteous of all FCPA staff, customers, and volunteers
- Have fun!

DON'T

- Have a swimmer enter the pool without the instructors permission
- Force a swimmer to go underwater
- Perform a wheelchair transfer if you have not been trained
- Use punishment or negative reinforcement for challenging behaviors - instead, inform the instructor immediately so they can support you in working with your swimmer
- Leave the assigned pool area with a swimmer during their lesson
- Leave a swimmer unattended in the pool



What to Expect at the Pool

- Arrive 15 minutes before class begins
- Ask the front desk for the Adapted Aquatics Volunteer sign-in sheet and mark the number of hours you volunteer. If sheet isn't available, contact the volunteer coordinator.
- Locate class instructor in the pool area, which was provided in an email from the volunteer coordinator
- Class instructor will identify swimmer(s) you should work with and provide specific instruction on what skills to cover
- Class instructor will lead the class through various activities, supervise all volunteers and customers, be available for questions, and provide support



What to Bring to the Pool

- Swimsuit – One piece swimsuit or swim trunks
- Flip flops or water shoes
- Bag to keep belongings poolside
- Leave valuables at home or store in a locker
- A positive and encouraging attitude
- Optional Items
 - Rashguard or moisture wicking shirt
 - Water bottle and snacks
 - Goggles

Disability and Our Program



- We welcome all disabilities in our adapted aquatics programs.
- We do not require customers to provide us with their medical diagnoses for confidentiality reasons. We do ask if there are any precautions we should be made aware of for safety reasons.
- Disabilities present themselves in different ways, not everyone who has autism, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, or any other condition is alike.
- The best way to serve a customer is to focus on their abilities and strengths, what they can do, and ask the customer or their parent/caregiver on how you can best support them.
- If you are interested in learning more about any certain medical conditions or disability category, we recommend this resource:
<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html>

Disability Etiquette and Sensitivity



This video can also be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8>

Don't refer to a person's disability unless it is relevant.

Don't assume a person with a disability needs assistance as soon as they walk in the room. They will either tell you ahead of time or ask for your help when needed.

Work with the person with a disability or their family to discover their needs and goals for the class.

Avoid asking personal questions about someone's disability. Let them mention their disability first. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect. Avoid negative or sensational descriptions of a person's disability with anyone.

Use person first language when addressing a person with a disability. I.e., it is better to say "person with a disability" rather than "a disabled person."

Avoid the word handicapped. A handicap is what a person with a disability cannot do, keep the focus on ability and what they can do.

General Tips for Working with Individuals with Disabilities

Working with People with Cognitive Disabilities

If the person who you are working with is having trouble understanding you, repeat yourself, using different words, without getting frustrated.

Patience is a key

Break up your ideas into small manageable bits that can be easily remembered. Keep it simple.

Be considerate without being patronizing. Keep all conversations at an age-appropriate level.

Always assume, even if the participant is non-verbal, that they can understand what you are saying.

Always avoid speaking about the participant to another volunteer or the instructor as if the participant was not there.

Working with People who Use Aids to Move

- Always ask the person who uses a wheelchair, or other aid, if they would like assistance before you jump in to help. Your help may not be needed or wanted.
- Don't hang things from or lean on a person's wheelchair.
- Take steps to ensure that all materials that may be needed are within the reach of someone that uses a wheelchair.
- Position yourself at the same eye level by sitting down if engaged in a long conversation with someone who uses a chair.



Tips for Supporting People with Disabilities

Use visual aids and provide hands-on activities/instructions	Keep directions simple and check for understanding	Praise and celebrate all successes	Supports should be focused on the individual and their needs/strengths
Don't feel pressured to have everything perfect for every class	Use the instructor, parents/caregivers, and other volunteers as resources	Provide opportunities to take breaks when needed	Keep statements and feedback positive
Model appropriate behavior	Give time warnings for transitions and use schedules/timers when possible	Use positive reinforcement	Use redirection for challenging or inappropriate behaviors

Behavior Management Techniques



Provide Specific and Positive Feedback: “Great job kicking!” “I like how you blew bubbles!” “Good arm extension.”

Use Rewards: “We will go under water five times, then you can play with the toy for one minute.”

Use a Story: Working through a sequence of activities may be hard. Use a social story to help students transition from one activity to another. “First the scuba diver puts his face in the water, then the scuba diver blows bubbles with the fish, then the scuba diver kicks his legs and swims out into the ocean, etc...”

Building Skills: “First, we will put our ears in the water; next we will try our nose, and then our eyes,” “First we will swim with a kickboard, then we will swim with a noodle.”

Use Choices: “Good job getting your face wet! Do you want to kick with a noodle or kickboard next?” “Do you want to use the yellow kickboard or the blue kickboard?”

Use Counting: “I understand you don’t want to float on your back... let’s count to 10 and then you will be all done.”

Retry Activities: “You didn’t kick this time. Let’s try again and this time use/move/splash your feet and legs.” Be creative and try to find a new way to describe the same skill or activity.

Techniques to Communicate and Teach Skills

	Visual Prompts	Verbal Prompts	Gesture Prompts	Model Prompts	Physical Prompts
Explanation	Visual prompts include pictures, photographs, or objects that provide the individual with information about how to perform the skill or behavior	Verbal prompts (direct or indirect) are additional spoken directions given to the individual to complete a task	Gesture prompts involve motioning or pointing toward an object or location that is part of the next step in a task	Model prompts include either performing the target skill for the individual or showing them what to do	Physical prompts (partial or full) include physically guiding or touching the individual to help them learn a skill
Example	Provide pictures of each phase of the freestyle stroke	"It's time to clean up the water toys." Or "Don't forget to say, Thank you."	Point to the side of the pool where all the swim toys should go at the end of class	Demonstrate how to blow bubbles in the water	Guide their hands through the water to show them proper form for a swim skill

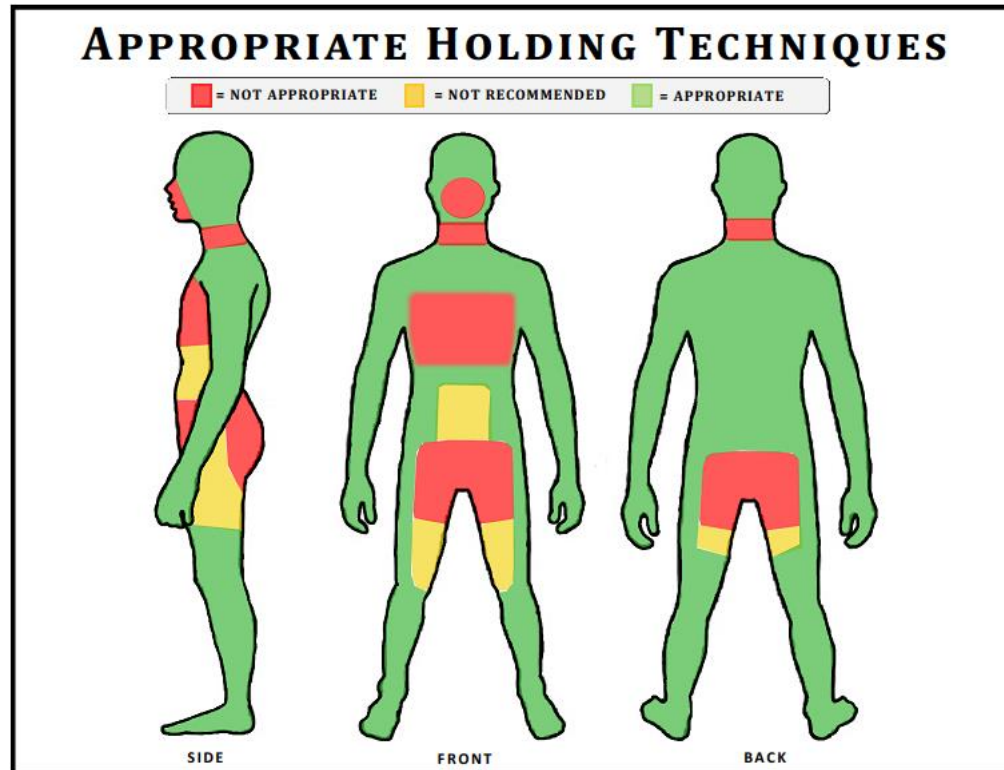
Least Restrictive & Independent



Most Restrictive & Dependent

Techniques to Communicate and Teach Skills

Appropriate Holding Techniques



- Always ask before touching.
- Appropriate holding techniques are useful and beneficial when chosen correctly for the skill being taught or practiced.
- When used properly during the skill, it can provide comfort and reassurance to the individual.
- Not all individuals carry the same touch zones sensitivities and, therefore, are not all equally comfortable with unfamiliar touches.

Helpful Information



Class Schedules

An up-to-date class schedule can be found at [Adapted Recreation Programs for Customers with Disabilities | Park Authority \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks-recreation/adapted-recreation-programs-for-customers-with-disabilities)



Inclement Weather Cancellations

Website – [Weather-Related Closures | Park Authority \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks-recreation/weather-related-closures)

Inclement Weather Line – 703-324-8661

Volunteer Matching

Your employer may be among the 15,000 companies that match volunteer hours with cash donations to an organization. Some local employers that have provided matching contributions include BAH, Microsoft, ExxonMobil, Verizon, IBM, BAE Systems, Oracle, Freddie Mac, Hallmark, Gannett, Starbucks, and Kaiser Permanente.


Many companies offer monetary contributions based on volunteer hours completed by employees and retirees. Check your company website or call the human resources department to request required forms. Name the Fairfax County Park Foundation (Tax ID #54-2019179), as the recipient of these programs.



Training Step 1

- Complete trainings that are required for all Fairfax County Volunteers
- Read and Review all materials from this PowerPoint
- Complete the Online Training form found at [Volunteer Training Documentation \(fairfaxcounty.gov\)](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov)
- Send completed form to linda.crone2@fairfaxcounty.gov



 Fairfax County Park Authority
Adapted Aquatics Training
Documentation

Adapted Aquatics Online Training

I have read and reviewed the training document provided and will adhere to the designated policies.

Volunteer Name

Date

Parent/Guardian Name – Required if the volunteer is under 18 years of age.

Date

Training Step 2

- Take the knowledge check
- Send completed knowledge check to linda.crone2@fairfaxcounty.gov
- Score of 90% or above → Move to Training Step 3
- Score of 89% or below → Review this training and re-take the online knowledge check



Training Step 3

- Attend first class
- Shadow instructor or volunteer mentor
- Complete Demonstration Competencies Checklist with the instructor or volunteer mentor
- Send completed Demonstration Competencies Checklist to linda.crone2@fairfaxcounty.gov



Thank You for
Volunteering with FCPA
Adapted Aquatics!