Adapted Aquatics
Volunteer Online Training

The Fairfax County Park Authority is committed to equal access in all programs and services.
Accommodations will be provided upon request.
Please call the ADA coordinator at least 10 working days in advance of the date services are needed.
703.324.8727 (Phone) • 703.803.3354 (TTY) • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/ada.htm
Check List – Steps to Become a Volunteer!

**Step 1:** All volunteers must first be registered with [Fairfax County's Volunteer Management System](#).

**Step 2:** Volunteers must APPLY for [current opportunities in the Adapted Aquatics Program](#).

**Step 3:** Volunteer applicants must review and complete the required online training for [Adapted Aquatics](#) (this document!) and [Mandatory Training for All FCPA Volunteers](#) found at [Volunteer Training](#).

**Step 4:** A completed copy of both the [Adapted Aquatics Sign-off](#) and [Mandatory Training Sign-off Sheet](#) documentation must be [Emailed to the volunteer manager](#) when the trainings are complete.

**Step 5:** Schedule a “shadowing shift” for your first day at the pool. Confirm with the volunteer manager when your first available date is. The volunteer manager will confirm the location and time of your shift and provide details about where and when to meet the class instructor.

**Step 6:** Confirm your commitment and begin volunteering weekly.

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[Volunteers who volunteer at a Special Olympics Event will be required to complete Special Olympics Virginia volunteer registration, please see slide 14 for details!]

*Classes are scheduled quarterly with the seasons. The volunteer coordinator may ask you to wait until a new class is beginning before you begin volunteering*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do I need to have experience working with individuals with disabilities?</td>
<td>No, just a desire to help others and have fun. We will provide training for volunteers. If you do have experience, this is a huge bonus for us!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I need good swimming skills to volunteer?</td>
<td>Classes are generally held in the 4 feet area of the pool, volunteers do not have to be expert swimmers but need to be safe and comfortable in the pool. Swim team training and “deep water” programs are held in water depths of more than 6 feet, volunteers in these classes need to be able to swim at least 25 yards and tread water for short periods of time. Volunteers are welcome to use a noodle or other flotation assistance while working.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the minimum age for volunteering?</td>
<td>14, if you are under the age of 16 a parent is required to stay on site with you.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the commitment?</td>
<td>We ask that volunteers commit to an entire session, generally 8-10 weeks long. Each class is 30-55 minutes in length, once a week. Classes are scheduled back to back and typically volunteers stay for two to three hours and volunteer for 3-4 classes. Volunteers must be able to commit to a class series of eight or 10 weeks – consistency is critical for our customers! If you are unable to commit to a class series, you will be removed and recommended to another volunteer opportunity that better fits your schedule.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What if I can’t make a session?</td>
<td>Please let the instructor know in advance if you have to miss a session so alternative plans can be made.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is training provided?</td>
<td>Online training is provided through this PowerPoint and every new volunteer will receive hands-on training on their first day through shadowing an instructor or another experienced volunteer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>How old are the people I’ll work with?</td>
<td>Classes for all ages are available, but not necessarily at all sites. Once you’ve been assigned a volunteer shift the volunteer coordinator can provide specific details about the people you will work with if you’d like to know.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What types of disabilities?</td>
<td>Any and all disabilities are welcome to participate in our programs!</td>
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What to Bring to the Pool

- Swimsuit – for females, a one-piece please!
- Rashguard or moisture wicking material shirt to wear with swimsuit in pool (optional but this is recommended and helps to prevent an anxious swimmer from accidentally scratching you, grabbing onto your swimsuit, and helps to keep you warm)
- Towel(s)
- Water bottle/snack if you'd like
- Flip flops or water shoes
- Goggles if you like them!
- Bag to keep belongings poolside if desired. Leave valuables at home or store in a locker.
- A positive and encouraging attitude!

What to expect at the pool

Please arrive 10 minutes before your volunteer shift begins. There will be a binder at the front desk of the RECenter you will need to sign in each time you volunteer. Sign in sheets are collected monthly to determine volunteer benefits eligibility. The volunteer coordinator will provide details about when and where to meet the class and who to look for on your first day once you have completed all training. The class instructor will direct you as to which swimmer(s) you should work with and what skills you should work on. The instructor will also be able to tell you how to work on that particular skill.

The instructor will lead the group through swimming activities, supervise at all times, and be available to answer questions and provide support throughout the class.

You WILL be getting in the pool and you WILL be getting wet!!
A look into one of the adapted aquatics classes:

If video does not begin playing automatically please [CLICK HERE](http://www.ebmcdn.net/fairfax/fairfax-cable-viewer.php?w=768&h=432&viewnode=parksplus_adaptive_aquatics_Feb_16_V2) to view online, or copy and paste this URL into your internet browser:
There are a variety of different classes within the Adapted Aquatics program.

Classes range from 30 to 55 minutes long. Adapted Aquatics classes are scheduled with five to 10 minutes breaks in between.

A typical volunteer shift is two hours long and includes more than one of these types of classes.
Progression of Adapted Aquatics Classes

Aqua Fitness for Individuals with Physical Disabilities

Paralympic Swim Team Training *

Multiple Sclerosis Water Exercise Class

Adapted Swimming Level 1 for Children

Adapted Swimming Level 2 for Children

Adapted Swimming Level 3 for Children

Intro to Basic Strokes

Intermediate Swim Team

Deep Water Aqua Fitness for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Advanced Swim Team Training

Adapted Teens and Adults Learn to Swim

*Paralympic swim team training is for individuals w/physical disabilities only (amputations, visual impairments, paralysis, etc.)

**‘Intermediate’ and ‘Advanced’ swim team training is for Special Olympics and individuals w/developmental disabilities (Down syndrome, autism, cerebral palsy, etc.)
If video does not begin playing please CLICK HERE to view online, or copy and paste this web address into your internet browser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFLXq8
Tips for Including Kids with Disabilities

- Get down to their eye level to talk to them.
- Praise, Praise, Praise – celebrate small successes.
- Use positive statements such as, “Good job!” “I’m so proud of you!” “You did awesome!” “Look how good you did!” (Use their name when possible!).
- High fives are great! Encourage them to challenge themselves!
- Keep directions simple and 1-2 steps, and then check for understanding (have them repeat instructions back to you).
- Provide boundaries and communicate rules and expectations.
- Try and communicate in as few words as possible.
- Be consistent.
- Use direct commands: “I need you to……” statements.
- Patience is key.
- Be creative!
- Adapt/modify only as needed, assume ability.
- Remember that non-verbal only means they communicate differently; continue to talk to them as you would a child who is verbal.
- Keep statements positive, e.g., instead of “Don’t Run!” use “Please walk.”
- When appropriate, ignore negative behaviors. Sometimes kids are just looking for attention – as long as the child is not hurting himself or others and is with the group.
- Redirect the behavior. Try to get the participant to focus on something else. Change discussion or just start talking about something else.
- Use “First, Then” language, e.g., “First, we will use the kickboard, and then, we will take a break;” or, “First, we need to line up, and then, we will take our turn swimming through the hoop.”
- When communicating, make sure that participant is looking directly at you. You may need to provide verbal cue for this -- “eyes on me” (this will ensure they are listening).
- Anytime you catch the child doing good, use positive reinforcement. Make sure you include the behavior you liked (e.g., “I liked that you were listening to directions”). You should make the biggest deal when you see the desired behavior. Have them give you a high-five. [This is the most important tip – kids need to hear when they are doing a great job!]
- Give time warnings when transitioning from one activity to the next.
- If child is having difficulty participating in game, ask him/her if you can do activity with them.
- Model behavior – lead by example.
- Ensure activities have limited down time and hold their attention.

Remember that success is different for every child. For some, success might be participating in the entire practice, while for others, success might simply be joining the group. This is okay. Each time a child has a small success, celebrate it and then build upon it. Challenge them to get to the next level; for example, participating in one activity for three minutes, etc.
Behavior Management Techniques

**Provide specific and positive feedback:** “Great job kicking!” “I like how you blew bubbles!” “Good arm extension,” “It makes me happy when you have a calm body,” “Keep hands to self,” “only bubbles, no splashing”

**Using 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?”

**Using 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 Activity:** “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.

**Planned Ignoring:** If a behavior is not harming self or others, ignore them! Attention will reinforce the behavior. If negative behaviors are harmful, immediately ask instructor or parent to enforce consequences.
Techniques to Communicate and Teach Skills

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Verbal Prompts</th>
<th>Modeling</th>
<th>Manual Prompts</th>
<th>Gestural Prompts</th>
<th>Photographs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This includes words and instructions. Questions that might facilitate a desired response.</td>
<td>Using physical demonstration to complete a task in proximity of students: Often paired with Verbal Prompts</td>
<td>Physically assisting a student in accomplishing a task, hand over hand to complete objective</td>
<td>Pointing finger ssshh nodding shaking head no</td>
<td>Pictures, line diagrams, or photographs that show or correlate to a specific action or task</td>
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</table>

| Example     | Teacher say the following things: “It’s to clean up to blocks.” Or “Say, Thank you” | Teacher has one student “complete a problem in front of the group” | Teacher puts hands on top of students to write name | Teacher points to desk to indicate the students would transition to a new area | Teacher uses checklist of task or assignments for each student |

It’s important to keep age appropriateness in mind when working with swimmers. Speak to adults as adults and kids as kids regardless of presumed developmental age may be. Also keep in mind what toys, equipment, and activities a swimmer uses to learn a skill. Songs, games, and pool toys are good tools to teach young swimmers however toy farm animals, Barbie’s, and Ring around the Rosie are not age appropriate instructional tools for teens and adults!
# Rules & Expectations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DON’T</th>
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| • 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 know as soon as possible.  
• Arrive on time and be prepared to swim  
• Be patient  
• Follow instructors directions at all times  
• Stay in the classes designated pool space  
• Communicate any questions or concerns with the instructor and volunteer coordinator asap.  
• Be respectful and courteous of all FCPA staff and customers, represent FCPA well!  
• Have fun! | • Have a swimmer enter the pool without the instructors permission.  
• Force a swimmer to go underwater. Instead verbally encourage them or model going under.  
• Perform a wheelchair transfer if you have not been trained.  
• Punish swimmers. Instead, inform the instructor immediately if you feel your swimmer needs to take a break. Swimmers parent’s are required to stay on site and swimmers can take a break with their parent or caretaker.  
• Take swimmers elsewhere in the pool during their lesson.  
• Leave a swimmer unattended in the pool |
Class Schedules

To find the most up-to-date class schedule, please visit our website: https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/adapted-programs

Inclement Weather Cancellations

In case of inclement weather updates are posted on this website: http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/weatherclosures.htm

Inclement Weather Line 703-324-8661

[when in doubt, contact the RECenter front desk directly]
Volunteering with Special Olympics

Spring Hill Saturdays, Lee District Saturdays, Oak Marr Sundays, and Audrey Moore Saturdays Adapted Aquatics program are all partnered with Special Olympics Virginia. These classes are used as training for Special Olympics competition and swimmers in these classes have the option to sign up for swim meet events. FCPA volunteers can assist with practices at the RECenters however, in order to volunteer and assist at Special Olympics Swim Meets (held April-June each year at local pools but not RECenter pools) a volunteer would also need to complete Special Olympics forms.

Special Olympics Volunteer resources can be found online here:

http://specialolympicsva.org/volunteer/volunteer-resources

If you are unsure if this applies to you or would like to learn more about this opportunity, contact the volunteer coordinator!
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.
We welcome any and 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 need to be aware of for safety.

Disabilities present themselves in different ways, not everyone who has autism, or 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 how you can best support them!

If you are interested in learning more about any certain medical condition or disability category we recommend this resource:

[https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability.html)
Once you’ve read and reviewed the material in this PowerPoint please complete the training and safety sign off found on the website https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/sites/parks/files/assets/documents/volunteer/signoff-adapted-aquatics.pdf and send it to linda.crone2@fairfaxcounty.gov.
Thank you for volunteering!!!!!!