

We all know how important sport is for bringing people together, staying healthy and having fun. But for people with disabilities, it's not always easy to join in. That's where you come in!

## What's this all about?

We want to make sure everyone in Queensland has the chance to play, learn, develop and progress through sport, starting in their local community. This guide is here to help you make your organisation or school more welcoming and accessible for everyone.

Sporting pathways should be designed to create more inclusive and accessible opportunities for people with disabilities across Queensland. The following information aims to guide stakeholders in building sustainable pathways that support the participation, development and progression of people with a disability at all levels. This will help to create a system that breaks down barriers and is equitable and welcoming for all.

## Who's this for?

This guide and supporting resources are for:

- **Sport organisations** – You provide a place where everyone can come together to connect, play the activity of choice, stay active, build friendships and develop skills.
- **Schools** – You're at the heart of community and have the chance to introduce kids to sport early and create positive experiences to help them stay active for life.



## Guiding principles for disability sport pathways

When creating opportunities for people with disabilities to get involved in sport, here are some key principles to keep in mind. These will help you build a more inclusive, supportive and successful environment for everyone.

### Make sport accessible for everyone

Everyone deserves the chance to play, no matter their abilities. Think about how you can adapt your activities and programs to suit the needs of participants within the local community.

### Create clear pathways and shine a light on them

People with disabilities need the same opportunities to participate and develop in sport and, just as importantly, need clear awareness of both participation and competitive pathways.

This is strengthened when pathways are visibly represented through promotional material and tangible examples, including images of athletes with a variety of disabilities and real stories of athletes who have progressed through the pathway.

### Build knowledge and resources

Sport organisations and schools need the right tools, knowledge and equipment to support athletes with disabilities.

### Spot and support talent

Keep an eye out for athletes with passion and potential and help them shine, by asking "how" and "what" support they might need to take part or progress to the next level.

### Work together

Collaboration is key! Schools, government bodies, disability organisations and sport organisations all have a role to play. We grow when we share successes and learnings - helping others replicate what works and building a stronger, more inclusive sport community together.

### Train your team

Coaches, referees and volunteers are a big part of an athlete's journey. Make sure your team has the training they need to support and include athletes with disabilities.

By keeping these principles in mind, you'll be helping to create a sporting environment that's fair, inclusive and full of opportunities for everyone.

# What can organisations do?

Here are some simple ways you can help make sport more inclusive:

## 1. Get everyone involved

- Work with state sporting organisations, schools, other sports organisations and Councils to deliver beginner-friendly sports programs.
- Offer activities that suit different types of disabilities, including intellectual, physical or sensory challenges.
- Talk to participants, guardians and carers to see what's working and what could be better.
- Support families in getting kids active and register your sport organisation as a Play On! Sports Voucher activity provider.

## 2. Team up – school and club links

- Schools are a great place to get kids started and interested in sport, and clubs can help them stay involved for life.
- Schools can offer targeted sport programs delivered before, during or after school. Connect with local clubs for delivery assistance and help make the transition from school to community sport smoother for students.
- Clubs can offer volunteer and training opportunities for guardians and school alumni, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility for student development.
- Don't be afraid to ask for help! There are organisations out there that specialise in helping make sport more inclusive.

## 3. Recognise and grow potential

- Keep an eye out for athletes who show potential and help them grow their skills. Link with state sporting organisations to deliver talent days to find athletes with potential.
- Work with experts to create programs for developing skills in areas such as coaching or mentoring.
- Use tools like adaptive equipment and technology to help athletes participate, develop and improve.
- Engage with specialised [disability sport classifiers](#) to enable athletes to be eligible for higher level competitions.

## 4. Strengthen your team

- Educate your coaches, referees and volunteers on how to work with athletes with disabilities. Provide information on workshops or courses for inclusive coaching and adaptive techniques or work with a disability organisation to host your own.
- Identify a key leader within your organisation to drive and champion inclusion.
- Partner with disability organisations or training groups to learn more.
- Encourage people from disability networks to volunteer and get involved.

## 5. Make your facilities accessible

- Check your facilities to make sure they're easy to use for everyone. This could mean adding signage, ramps, accessible bathrooms or other upgrades. See the best practice design principles guide to create a facility that accommodates more people.
- Work with your local Council or government to seek funding for new or inclusive facilities.
- Share information about your facility online so prospective participants can 'know before they go' helping to reduce possible anxiety.

## 6. Spread the word

- Share stories about athletes with disabilities and their achievements to encourage others.
- Participate in events like sports festivals or community days to raise awareness of your programs.
- Get local role models or ambassadors involved to promote all your offerings for people with disability.
- Promote your inclusive options to highlight your organisation is for all community members.

## Keep improving

It's important to keep track of how you're doing and make changes as needed. Here's how:

- Set goals, like increasing participation opportunities for people with disability.
- Review your progress every year with feedback from athletes, coaches and volunteers.
- Use what you learn, adapt and make your programs even better.

## Let's get started!

If you're not sure where to begin, start small:

- Learn about modified sport programs and how to make your organisation more welcoming. Disability Sport Australia's [Accessibility Champion Course](#) is a perfect place to start. It teaches the basics of accessibility and making your organisation more welcoming for people with disability.
- Talk to your state sporting organisation, local disability groups or other clubs for advice.
- Start simple with a small and single program and then build with confidence.
- Research grant funding opportunities to start new inclusive programs or improve facility access.

## Helpful resources

- [Play On! Sports Voucher](#) activity providers is a list of registered activity providers who can accept Play On! Sports Vouchers. If eligible, ensure your organisation is listed as providing services for children and young people with a disability.
- [Sport HQ](#) provides free, easy-to-use resources for sporting organisations to help committees and volunteers deliver quality services to their communities.
- [Play by the Rules](#) provides a variety of templates and resources for activity providers.
- [Queensland Academy of Sport's](#) Para Sport Unit, delivered in partnership with the Australian Institute of Sport and Paralympics Australia, will reduce barriers for participation and talent identification, enhance performance pathways and develop world-class Para-sport coaches.
- The [Australian Sports Commission](#) provides a wide range of strategies and resources championing diversity, equity and inclusion, including a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Self-Assessment module in [Game Plan](#).
- Your relevant [state sporting organisation](#) may provide a range of resources and programs to help welcome people with disability.
- [Sporting Wheelies](#) has a vision that every Queenslanders with a disability will have opportunities to live a more active and healthy life.
- [Deaf Sports and Recreation Queensland](#) provides opportunities for and encourages deaf and hard of hearing people in sports and recreation.
- [LifeStream Australia](#) facilitates the development of skills and independence of people with disabilities, particularly intellectual disabilities, in schools, community-based environments and participation in sport, recreation, leisure and vocational activities.
- [Riding for Disabled Association of Queensland](#) works to remove barriers facing many children and adults living with a disability in actively participating in equestrian sports available to other members of the community.
- [Special Olympics Australia](#) brings sport, joy and inclusion to people with intellectual disability/autism.
- [Paralympics Australia](#) helps Australians with disabilities participate in sport and compete at the Paralympic Games through partnerships with governments, business, sporting bodies and the community.
- [Disability Sports Australia](#) works across all levels of sport, from local clubs and schools through to national sporting organisations and Councils to build capability, remove barriers and create inclusive environments where everybody can participate, belong and thrive. Check out their [Accessibility Champion Course](#) teaching the basics of accessibility and making your organisation more welcoming for people with disability.
- [Sport Inclusion Australia](#) is a national sporting organisation established to assist the inclusion of people with an intellectual impairment into the mainstream community using sport as the medium.
- [Australian Sporting Alliance for People with a Disability](#) collaborates, advocates and facilitates inclusive sport and active recreation for people with a disability, impairment or limitation.
- [Sport4All](#) is a multi-award-winning program with national recognition, dedicated to enhancing inclusivity in sports by working with and supporting local sporting organisations, schools and communities to embrace diversity and create opportunities for people with disability.

