

Fusion Fitness Videos

Children with special needs may benefit tremendously from physical activity, but participation and availability of activities can be challenging due to:

- Limited mobility
- Fatigue, weight challenges, medication side effects
- Sensory and social skill issues can make team sports difficult
- Lack of affordable individual fitness opportunities

Variety Children's Charity of Kansas City (Variety KC), in conjunction with Fusion Fitness and physicians and therapists from Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City, Missouri, have produced a series of four inclusive exercise videos for all kids. Everyone benefits from regular physical activity, especially children with special needs. Most disabilities can be accommodated with adaptive equipment or technique adjustments – the benefits are many:

- Improvement in muscle strength, coordination, and flexibility.
- Improved exercise endurance, cardiovascular efficiency
- Better balance, motor skills and body awareness
- Improved behavior, academics, focus, self-confidence
- Experiences a sense of accomplishment and personal satisfaction
- Can increase appetite, improve quality of sleep
- Decrease in secondary health complications like obesity, high blood pressure, low HDL ("good") cholesterol and diabetes
- Provides outlet for physical energy, helps them cope with anxiety, stress and depression
- Offers opportunities to engage with "typical" friends and family members

To truly be inclusive, Variety KC Executive Director, Deborah Wiebrecht, felt it was essential the videos were offered to the public for free. The series is available through www.varietykc.org or YouTube (link). It was produced in Overland Park, Kansas, and features Variety KC kids, representing a variety of special needs challenges.

There are two unique aspects of the video. First, it is clear everyone performs the activities at a different level of skill – acceptance and personal effort are encouraged. Second, it is fun! Interaction with the kids clearly demonstrates their enthusiasm and excitement.

Variety KC hopes that schools will consider the use of this series. Even though the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires physical education for children and youth with special needs, programs are frequently without resources to provide realistic activity.

- [The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\)](#), Public Law 108-466 (2004), states that physical education is a required service for children and youth

between the ages of 3-21 who qualify for special education services because of a specific disability or developmental delay. A personally designed program will be outlined in the child's Individual Education Program/Plan (IEP).

As with any physical exercise effort, parents are encouraged to consult their child's doctor before exercising.

Available for interviews:

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Doctors at Children's Mercy Hospital,

Fusion Fitness