



Multi-Class

Guidelines for Inclusion and Participation at Centre Level

PREFACE

Little Athletics Australia (LAA) is the national governing body for the sport of Little Athletics in Australia. LAA operations are underpinned by our organisational values of inclusion, integrity, innovation, and excellence.

LAA aims to provide high quality, accessible, opportunities through sport and physical activity to all children of all abilities, improving health, confidence, and skills, increasing positive behaviors' and bringing enjoyment and connection.

These multi-class guidelines aim to empower and enhance opportunities and pathways of young people with additional needs through athletics, ensuring children who seek to, can take part in athletics, including competition anywhere in Australia.

Whilst many Centres around Australia already cater for and include multi-class athletes, offering some guidance on how to incorporate multi-class athletes will assist those who haven't yet embarked on this process for whatever reason.

At Centre level we have the opportunity to provide the very best experience for all athletes through guaranteeing a warm welcome, understanding the athlete's needs, continued communication with both athletes and parents and respecting and encouraging the athlete in participating in everything they can and want to do.

We should also be highlighting that there is still a competition element and that athletes should be encouraged to pursue this if they would like to.

The most important part of fully including, is knowing and adjusting to what the athlete needs and wants, so they can appreciate the best possible experience!

CENTRE LEVEL PARTICIPATION

1. Children with a disability should be able to access regular activities at a Little Athletics Centre whether in the traditional or modified form without classification being required.
2. Parents know their children best and should be strongly encouraged to assist where needed. Parents should be allowed onto the track/field to assist with children and participate with the child if required. E.g., If a child in a wheelchair wishes to compete in track events and your Centre competes on a grass track, allow the parent or guardian to push the child.
3. Children with a disability can and should participate in the same events (where capable) as all other children. Modifications to the event may need to occur to allow the child to participate, taking in to consideration the requirements for the activity, the child's level of impairment and safety of the event being undertaken.
 - a) A modification can be by way of a head start, shorter distances or in the form of equipment specifications such as: lower or foam/PVC hurdles, lighter throwing weights, soft shot put/bean bag, no bar or flexi bar on high jump, help in jumping, more attempts at a field event, or similar adjustments.

Note: Event officials should simply ask the athlete/parent what they require.

4. Depending on numbers, children with a disability should be integrated into the existing program and not segregated from the mainstream. When doing so, it is desirable to make such adjustments as is required to ensure the experience is enjoyable.
5. If there is a significant number of children with a disability, and dependent upon the disability, the Centre may run a multi-class group parallel to the mainstream groups at the same venue and during the same session. This can be across age groups, but there should be consideration of the social aspect to Little Athletics Centre competitions, and consider children being in groups of similar age or social level.
6. Where participating as a separate group, modifications to the program for groups with a disability can and should be made, to allow a child with a disability to feel comfortable in participating. e.g., start times of groups with disability starting after mainstream groups have started (so they are not the focus) and weekly repetition of events where required for better familiarity or understanding.
7. Modifications for children with disability may also be made with the view of changing them over time if the child's need for adaption alters.
8. Children with a disability should be encouraged to participate, with rules not being enforced in a prohibitive way, but taught in an empowering manner so as to allow development and learning of the rules as appropriate.

9. Where children are being recognised in their achievements, such as 'levels' or for age champion etc, it can and should be considered that a child with disability may not be in a position to compete for those awards, and alternate awards, such as Personal Bests, most improved, or most dedicated etc being the award categories.
10. If a child with a disability wishes not to be segregated, the Centre should accept this decision and should allow the choice to be awarded as against all other children, or awarded according to their ability. e.g., Multi-Class category, PB's, attendance, most improved, or most dedicated or alike.
11. Each Centre shall encourage all children to continue with their participation and for children with disability, advise parents of the classification and competition pathway for children with a disability or refer the parent back to the Member Association for advice.

Note: Where parents and athletes choose to embark on a competition pathway beyond that of Centre level, a classification process may be required (Contact your State/Territory Member Association for requirements).

12. It should be noted that there are a variety of different ways a child might be considered to have a disability. Not all disability types or severity are recognised in the formal classification pathway in athletics. That does NOT mean that adjustments cannot be made at Centre level. Adjustments can and should be made where appropriate for any child with a disability at Centre level. Children and their parents should be made aware that at this stage, those adjustments may not be available beyond Centre level.
13. Children and their parents should be made aware that the Classification process will require formal processes, and that they may need support in that process. If the athlete has difficulty being classified, they should be referred to their MA for advice in the first instance.
14. Children and their parents who have difficulty with Classification should be made aware that the Classification process is under continuous review, and that they are invited to provide their details to the National body to be considered.

CLASSIFICATION INFORMATION

1. The classification system exists to attempt to provide a fair and equitable competition for athletes with a disability. It provides a way of grouping athletes of similar function or ability for the purpose of competition. Where available, classification is required when an athlete competes in the multi-class competition pathway.
2. The minimum age for classification is from 8yrs (U9)
3. Provisional (temporary) classification is an application process. This is to allow those athletes who do not have access to a full classification panel to gain a 'temporary' permit to compete in competition and only applies to athletes with a physical impairment.
4. Provisional is only valid for 12 months. In which during that time it is expected that the athlete goes in front of a classification panel to gain full classification.
5. For all other impairments, athletes gain full classification by means of an application form along with medical documents to their relevant organisation. See below point 7. The relevant organisation will then forward all approved classification onto Athletics Australia to be placed on the Master list.
6. The Member Association must check all classifications against the [Athletics Australia Master list](#). If a competitor is not on the Master list the Member Associations shall check with Athletics Australia if paperwork has been received. If the competitor is a T/F20 or T/F21 classification the Member Association can check against the Master list found on the [Sport Inclusion Australia](#) website (Sport Inclusion Australia have a separate listing that is at times not forwarded to Athletics Australia).
7. The following disabilities can be classified for athletics and therefore be eligible to compete in multi-class events (Note - T for Track & F for Field):
 - *T/F01 – Hearing Impairment (Deaf Sports Australia)*
 - *T/F11-13 – Visual Impairment (Australian Paralympic Committee)*
 - *T/F20-21 – Intellectual Impairment (Sport Inclusion Australia)*
 - *T32-54; F31-57 – Physical Impairment (Athletics Australia/Australian Paralympic Committee)*
 - *T/F60 – Transplant (Transplant Australia)*
 - *T/F61-64 – Physical Impairment (Athletics Australia/Australian Paralympic Committee)*
 - *RR1-3 – Co-ordination Impairment (Athletics Australia)*

CLASSIFICATION EXPLANATION

Class Explanations
Athletes with a Hearing Impairment (<i>compete standing</i>) T/F01
Athletes with a Vision Impairment (<i>compete standing</i>) T/F11, T/F12, T/F13 NB - T/F11 class must use a guide; T/F12 class may elect to use a guide; T/F13 not eligible for a guide
Athletes with an Intellectual Impairment (<i>compete standing</i>) T/F20, T/F21
Athletes with Hypertonia, Ataxia or Athetosis (<i>compete seated</i>) F31, T/F32, T/F33 T/F34
Athletes with Hypertonia, Ataxia or Athetosis (<i>compete standing</i>) T/F35, T/F36, T/F37, T/F38
Athletes with Short Stature (<i>compete standing</i>) T/F40, T/F41
Athletes with Limb Deficiency, Muscle Weakness or Joint Restrictions (<i>compete standing</i>) T/F42, T/F43, T/F44, T/F45, T/F46, T/F47
Athletes with Limb Deficiency, Muscle Weakness or Joint Restrictions (<i>compete seated</i>) T/F51, T/F52, T/F53, T/F54, F/55, F/56, F/57
Athletes with a Transplant Impairment T/F60
Athletes with Limb Deficiency/Leg Length Difference (<i>compete with a Prosthesis/Protheses</i>) T/F61, T/F62, T/F63, T/F64
Athletes with Co-ordination Impairment RR1, RR2, RR3