

KEY MESSAGES

ACTIVE ABILITIES CANADA

Active Abilities Canada

Established in 1989, Active Abilities Canada (formerly the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability) supports communities and organizations to ensure that persons with disabilities have access and opportunity to meaningful participation in physical activity, recreation and community sport. We do this by:

- facilitating connection between organizations and communities
- ensuring research and knowledge translates into action
- advocating for changes to reduce barriers

The Definition of Disability

Disabilities can be visible or invisible, permanent, temporary or acquired. They can be physical, mental, intellectual, learning, communication or sensory impairments, and they can impact a person's full and equal participation in society. This includes your parent who experienced a stroke, a student with autism, your co-worker who suffered a brain injury, your neighbour who is hearing impaired, your daughter who has social anxiety, your friend who experiences pain, or the Olympic athlete who won a gold medal in wheelchair basketball.

Why should Canada invest in ensuring individuals living with a disability have the opportunity to be physically active?

*“....we must remain true to Canadian values. Canada is a dynamic country that **celebrates our diversity, cares for the most vulnerable among us**, and strives for a better future for all.”* – Prime Minister Carney's Ministerial Mandate Letter

- Over one quarter (27%) of Canadians, age 15 and older, have one or more disabilities.
- People living with disabilities are less likely to meet physical activity guidelines than people without disabilities, thereby placing them at greater risk of serious health problems associated with inactivity than the general population.
- When people living with a disability are active, it results in improved cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength, and improved physical function; psychosocial and cognitive well-being; reduced mental and physical health care costs; increased productivity and social and economic contributions; and greater independence thus decreasing the demand for social services and community supports.
- An investment in people in Canada living with a disability intersects with an investment in other priority populations (i.e., Indigenous people, older adults, youth, new Canadians, women).
- According to the Government of Canada, all individuals are equal as human beings and entitled to human rights, without discrimination of any kind. Further, all individuals are entitled to active, free, and meaningful participation in, contribution to, and enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural development. All persons have the human right to the benefits of physical activity and to experience well-being (Canadian Human Rights Act).
- “....enabling persons with **disabilities** to **participate on an equal basis** with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities” - *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

For more information about [Active Abilities Canada](#) and how we contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and communities, contact Christa Costas-Bradstreet at christa@activeabilities.ca.