



The Inclusive Fitness Coalition (IFC) is a national coalition of over 170 organizations dedicated to addressing the policy, environmental, and societal issues associated with the lack of inclusion and access to physical activity among people with disabilities. As part of this work, the IFC will be launching a policy working group to oversee a comprehensive initiative to advance systemic change for individuals with disabilities through a coordination of policy, advocacy and education efforts.

The overall strategy for this group will be built upon three main tactics to create a national advocacy movement for the inclusion of people with disabilities in all areas of physical activity:

1. To encourage relevant advocacy organizations to build an IFC agenda into their efforts.
2. To target key areas that can be influenced by persuading professional and trade associations to encourage their individual members to take action.
3. To adopt existing Calls to Action that are “unfinished business.”

#### **Long-Term Policy Goals:**

- To advance federal and state policy to expand physical activity and athletic opportunities for individuals with disabilities.
- To educate policymakers about the importance of healthy lifestyles for individuals with disabilities and the need to adopt an inclusive approach to policy reform.
- To increase Coalition membership to include more national, state and local organizations, experts and advocates that can serve as referral systems and networks to connect people with disabilities to physical activity opportunities in their local community.
- To advance the policy initiatives of the other IFC workgroups.

To learn more, or join the group, please contact Terri Lakowski at [TLakowski@ActivePolicySolutions.com](mailto:TLakowski@ActivePolicySolutions.com), call IFC at 312-996-5486, or submit your information to <http://incfit.org/contact>.

## **IFC Policy Work Group 2011 Strategy**

The Policy Workgroup's core issue for 2011 will be to address the barriers inhibiting children and youth with disabilities from participating in sport and physical activity programs.

For youth to develop into self-aware, civically engaged, contributing members of society, they require equal access to resources that will enable them to feel safe, healthy and included. Youth with disabilities, however, are consistently excluded from participating in mainstream society and fully accessing these resources. Many individuals with disabilities would tell you that their exclusion is due to:

- physical and attitudinal barriers
- stigma and stereotypes
- a chronic lack of opportunity

Although society has significantly improved the treatment and inclusion of individuals with disabilities since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, people with disabilities are still facing pervasive inequities in physical activity programs and sports programs, particularly in our educational institutions. Comprehensive change is needed to address the systemic exclusion and discrimination students with disabilities face specifically in regards to physical activity opportunities and resources for sports participation.

### **2011 Policy Objectives:**

- To educate parents, students, and coaches on the rights of people with disabilities pertaining to physical activity, physical education, and sport so that they can become local advocates for inclusion.
- To provide technical assistance to pre- and post-secondary administrators and leaders as well as non-school sport and physical activity providers so that they can develop internal policies and practices to improve compliance with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act.
- To develop a national resource center of resources, trainings, model best practices, and technical assistance for increasing the participation of youth with disabilities (ages 8 – 22) in physical activity and sports.

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