

ABSTRACT

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Title: A STUDY EXAMINING HIGH SCHOOL COACHES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF ATHLETES WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE DISABILITIES

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While research has been conducted on the benefits of increased inclusion and the benefits of participating on an athletics team, this study aims to begin the conversation between coaches and educators regarding inclusion's role on high school athletic teams. Ten high school coaches were selected from various sports to participate in an in-depth interview regarding the possibility of including athletes with moderate to severe disabilities on their sports teams. Potential barriers, as well as possible solutions for those identified barriers, were discussed with coaches. Coaches were also asked to describe any possible accommodations or modifications that would be feasible to implement on their given sports teams. This study aims to provide realistic ways coaches can include more athletes with disabilities on their teams, as well as steps special educators can take to support their students as they join a sports team. Since coaches can be considered the general educator of their given sport, it is important to include coaches in the conversation regarding inclusion's role within athletics.