

Specialized Adaptive Fitness Services

Understanding a Specialized Adaptive Fitness Service Model

Supporting Cost-Effectiveness, Qualified Provider Review, and Person-Centered Planning

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Publication Version
Version 1.0

Publication Date
July 2026

Publication Classification
Technical Resource Guide

Prepared For

California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

California Regional Centers

Regional Center Service Coordinators

Individual Program Plan (IPP) Planning Teams

Self-Determination Program (SDP) Planning Teams

Publication Information

Publication Identification

Publication Title

Specialized Adaptive Fitness Services
Understanding a Specialized Adaptive Fitness Service Model
Supporting Cost-Effectiveness, Qualified Provider Review, and Person-Centered Planning

Publication Series

Tectonic Fitness Technical Publication Series

Publication Number

TF-001

Edition

First Edition

Version

Version 1.0

Publication Date

July 2026

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Publication Purpose

This publication has been prepared as an informational technical resource describing the operational characteristics of a specialized adaptive fitness service model within the framework established by the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS). It is intended to support consistent understanding during the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Self-Determination Program (SDP) planning processes.

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Document Information

Purpose

This publication has been prepared to provide an objective description of a specialized adaptive fitness service model within the framework of person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness as discussed by the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS).

The publication is intended to support a consistent understanding of the operational characteristics of the recreation service model and its relationship to the Department's cost-effectiveness framework. It has been prepared as a technical resource for planning teams responsible for evaluating community-based recreation services during the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Self-Determination Program (SDP) planning processes.

Primary Audience

This publication has been prepared primarily for:

- California Department of Developmental Services (DDS)
- Regional Center Executive Leadership
- Regional Center Program Managers
- Regional Center Service Coordinators
- Individual Program Plan (IPP) planning teams
- Self-Determination Program (SDP) planning teams

The publication may also serve as a reference for participants, families, Independent Facilitators, Financial Management Services providers, educators, and other members of the participant's planning team.

Scope

This publication describes the operational characteristics of a specialized adaptive fitness service model.

It is intended to support consistent understanding of how an integrated recreation program may be evaluated within the Department of Developmental Services framework for person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness.

This publication does not establish eligibility for services, authorize funding, replace the Individual Program Plan process, recommend specific providers, or provide legal, medical, clinical, therapeutic, or educational guidance.

Intended Use

This publication is intended to serve as a reference during the review of community-based recreation services.

Planning teams may use the information presented to better understand the operational characteristics of a specialized adaptive fitness service model while evaluating appropriateness, qualified providers, reasonable rates, participant needs, and the complete recreation service being proposed.

The publication should be considered together with applicable statutes, regulations, Department guidance, Regional Center policies, and the participant's Individual Program Plan.

Revision Policy

This publication is intended to remain a living technical resource.

Periodic revisions may be made to reflect:

- Changes in California Department of Developmental Services guidance.
- Revisions to applicable statutes or regulations.
- Clarifications issued by DDS.
- Operational changes to the described recreation service model.
- Editorial revisions that improve clarity while preserving the publication's purpose.

Each revision will be documented within the Revision History section of this publication.

Document Purpose

Purpose of This Resource Guide

The California Department of Developmental Services has emphasized the importance of applying a consistent framework when evaluating services funded through the Regional Center system and the Self-Determination Program.

Within that framework, cost-effectiveness is evaluated by considering the participant's assessed needs, person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and the appropriateness of the complete service being provided rather than cost alone.

The purpose of this publication is to describe the operational characteristics of a specialized adaptive fitness service model within that framework.

The publication has been developed to support objective review by documenting how the recreation service functions rather than advocating for a particular provider or requesting a specific funding determination.

Why This Publication Was Developed

Community-based recreation services may differ substantially in their operational design, participant supports, instructional methods, facility organization, and overall approach to service delivery.

Programs that appear similar when viewed only by activity title may differ significantly in how recreation services are delivered and in the level of individualized programming provided.

This publication was developed to provide planning teams with objective information describing the complete recreation service model so that evaluation may be based upon a comprehensive understanding of the service rather than isolated program characteristics.

Relationship to the DDS Cost-Effectiveness Framework

The California Department of Developmental Services has clarified that cost-effectiveness should be evaluated through a structured, person-centered process that considers multiple factors together.

Those factors include:

- Participant needs.
- Individual Program Plan (IPP) goals.
- Person-centered planning.
- Qualified providers.
- Reasonable rates.
- The appropriateness of the complete service being provided.

This publication has been organized to correspond with those principles by describing how the recreation service functions as an integrated program whose operational characteristics work together to support meaningful participation.

Guiding Principles

Several principles remain consistent throughout this publication.

Objectivity: The publication documents the operational characteristics of the recreation service without comparing providers or advocating funding decisions.

Person-Centered Planning: Discussion of the recreation service begins with the participant's assessed needs rather than the characteristics of a provider.

Consistency: Terminology and concepts have been aligned with the framework presented by the California Department of Developmental Services to support consistent understanding during service review.

Community-Based Recreation: The service described throughout this publication remains recreational in nature and is intended to support meaningful participation in community-based fitness and recreation.

Evaluation of the Complete Service: The recreation program should be understood as an integrated service model whose components function together to support participant participation. Evaluation should therefore consider the complete service being provided rather than individual program elements viewed independently.

Executive Summary

The California Department of Developmental Services has emphasized that cost-effectiveness should not be interpreted solely as selecting the lowest-cost available service.

Instead, evaluation should consider participant needs, person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and the appropriateness of the complete service being proposed.

This publication provides an objective description of a specialized adaptive fitness service model within that framework.

The recreation program described throughout this Resource Guide integrates individualized instruction, adaptive programming, intentional facility design, structured participant supports, and wellness resources into one coordinated community-based recreation service.

The purpose of this publication is not to advocate for a particular provider or funding decision. Rather, it is intended to provide planning teams with a common understanding of how the recreation service operates so that evaluation may be based upon the complete service model and the participant's individualized needs.

The sections that follow examine the recreation service from four complementary perspectives:

- Understanding Specialized Adaptive Fitness Services.
- Understanding the Specialized Adaptive Fitness Service Model.
- Understanding Cost-Effectiveness Within the California Department of Developmental Services Framework.
- Supporting Person-Centered Planning.

Collectively, these sections provide a technical description of the recreation service while maintaining an objective focus consistent with the California Department of Developmental Services framework for community-based recreation services.

Section 1

Understanding Specialized Adaptive Fitness Services

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to establish a common understanding of specialized adaptive fitness services within the context of community-based recreation. Before a recreation service can be evaluated for appropriateness, qualified providers, reasonable rates, or cost-effectiveness, it is important to understand the characteristics of the service being provided.

This section describes the operational characteristics of specialized adaptive fitness services and establishes the foundation for the discussions presented throughout this publication.

Specialized Adaptive Fitness as Community-Based Recreation

Specialized adaptive fitness is a community-based recreation service designed to support meaningful participation in physical activity for individuals whose assessed needs may require individualized programming, adaptive instruction, environmental accommodations, or additional participant supports.

The service remains recreational in nature while recognizing that participants may require varying levels of assistance to participate successfully within a community recreation setting.

Its purpose is not to replace medical, educational, behavioral, or other publicly funded services. Rather, it provides recreation opportunities that are individualized according to the participant's identified goals, preferences, abilities, and support needs.

Individualized Recreation Programming

Person-centered planning recognizes that participants do not enter recreation programs with identical abilities or support requirements.

Accordingly, specialized adaptive fitness emphasizes individualized recreation programming rather than standardized instruction.

Programming is developed according to the participant's assessed needs and may vary with respect to instructional methods, activity selection, communication strategies, pacing, progression, environmental supports, and the level of participant assistance required during recreation activities.

This individualized approach allows recreation programming to remain responsive to the participant while supporting continued engagement as needs and goals evolve over time.

Reducing Barriers to Participation

One objective of specialized adaptive fitness is reducing barriers that may interfere with successful participation in community-based recreation.

Barriers vary among participants and may include communication differences, sensory processing considerations, executive functioning needs, motor planning challenges, environmental distractions, difficulty with transitions, or limited prior recreation experience.

Rather than requiring participants to adapt to a standardized recreation program, the service model adapts instruction, programming, and the recreation environment to improve opportunities for meaningful participation.

Reducing barriers does not eliminate individual challenges. Instead, it supports greater access to recreation through individualized programming and structured participant support.

Community Participation

Participation in community recreation extends beyond physical activity alone.

Meaningful recreation participation may include opportunities to develop physical confidence, improve coordination, participate in structured recreation activities, interact appropriately within small-group settings, and establish lifelong habits that encourage continued engagement in community fitness and recreation.

The specific activities selected for each participant are determined through individualized planning and are intended to support the participant's identified recreation goals.

A Structured Recreation Environment

The environment in which recreation services are delivered is an important operational characteristic of the service model.

Facility organization, participant capacity, activity flow, and instructional structure are intentionally planned to support individualized programming while reducing barriers that may interfere with successful participation.

The objective is to create an environment that supports participant engagement through consistency, organization, and flexibility rather than expecting participants to adapt to a traditional recreation setting.

These environmental characteristics should be understood as part of the recreation service itself rather than as independent operational features.

Relationship to the Service Model

The characteristics described in this section should not be viewed independently.

Individualized programming, participant supports, structured recreation environments, and adaptive instruction function together as components of a single integrated recreation service.

Understanding these operational characteristics provides the foundation for evaluating the complete service model discussed in the following sections of this publication.

Planning Considerations

When considering specialized adaptive fitness services during the Individual Program Plan (IPP) or Self-Determination Program (SDP) planning process, planning teams may wish to consider the following questions:

- Does the participant require individualized recreation programming to support meaningful participation?
- Have barriers to participation been identified and considered during planning?
- Does the proposed recreation service provide accommodations appropriate to the participant's assessed needs?
- Does the recreation environment support successful participation?
- Has the recreation service been evaluated according to its complete operational characteristics rather than by activity title alone?

These considerations are intended to support objective discussion during person-centered planning and consistent application of the Department of Developmental Services framework.

Section Summary

Specialized adaptive fitness is an individualized community-based recreation service designed to reduce barriers to participation while supporting meaningful engagement in physical activity and recreation.

Understanding the operational characteristics of the service establishes the context necessary for evaluating the complete recreation service model within the Department of Developmental Services framework for person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness.

Section 2

Understanding the Specialized Adaptive Fitness Service Model

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe how the specialized adaptive fitness service model functions as an integrated recreation program. While the previous section introduced the characteristics of specialized adaptive fitness services, this section explains how those characteristics operate together to support meaningful participation in community-based recreation.

The California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has emphasized that services should be evaluated according to the complete service being provided. Accordingly, the recreation program described throughout this publication should be understood as an integrated service model whose individual components function together to support participant success.

An Integrated Recreation Program

The recreation program is designed as an integrated service rather than a collection of independent activities or amenities.

Individualized instruction, adaptive programming, intentional facility design, structured participant supports, and wellness resources are coordinated to create one recreation experience that is responsive to the participant's assessed needs and identified goals.

Each component contributes to the overall operation of the program. While individual elements may be identified separately for purposes of explanation, they are intended to function collectively as part of one integrated recreation service.

Evaluation of the recreation program should therefore consider the complete service model rather than isolated characteristics viewed independently.

Individualized Instruction

Individualized instruction serves as the operational foundation of the recreation program.

Participants present with varying physical abilities, communication methods, learning preferences, sensory considerations, executive functioning needs, and support requirements. Instruction is adapted accordingly so that recreation activities remain accessible, meaningful, and appropriate for each participant.

Individualization may include adjustments to:

- Teaching strategies.
- Communication methods.
- Activity selection.
- Session pacing.
- Progression of activities.
- Levels of participant support.
- Environmental accommodations.
- Small-group or individual instruction.

This individualized approach allows the recreation program to remain responsive to the participant while maintaining consistency with identified planning goals.

Adaptive Recreation Programming

Adaptive programming provides flexibility within a structured recreation environment.

Programming is developed according to the participant's assessed needs and may include individualized fitness instruction, structured small-group participation, cardiovascular conditioning, strength development, balance activities, coordination exercises, reaction-based activities, and other recreation opportunities appropriate to the participant's identified goals.

Activities are not selected according to a predetermined curriculum. Rather, programming is individualized and may change as participant needs, abilities, and planning objectives evolve.

This flexibility supports continued participation while maintaining consistency within the overall recreation program.

Intentional Facility Design

The physical environment is an operational component of the recreation program.

Facility organization, room configuration, participant capacity, equipment placement, and activity flow are intentionally planned to support individualized programming and reduce barriers that may interfere with meaningful participation.

Examples of intentional facility design include:

- Activity spaces that support individualized instruction.
- Smaller recreation environments that reduce unnecessary distractions.
- Organized transitions between recreation activities.
- Flexible spaces capable of supporting both individual and small-group programming.
- Equipment arrangements that promote safety, supervision, and efficient program delivery.

These operational characteristics are intended to support the recreation service itself and should be considered as part of the complete service model being evaluated.

Wellness Resources

The recreation program may incorporate wellness resources that complement participation in physical activity.

These resources are intended to support participant comfort, relaxation, recovery following recreation activities, and continued participation within the recreation program.

Examples may include:

- Red light wellness resources.
- Pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) wellness resources.
- Relaxation resources.
- Other supportive wellness modalities incorporated into the recreation experience.

These resources are not presented as medical treatment, clinical intervention, rehabilitation, or therapeutic services.

Their purpose is to complement recreation participation when appropriate through individualized programming developed in collaboration with the participant and, when appropriate, parents, caregivers, Regional Center representatives, Independent Facilitators, educators, and other members of the participant's planning team.

Collaboration

Successful implementation of the recreation program may include appropriate communication among members of the participant's planning team.

Information provided by participants, parents, caregivers, Regional Center Service Coordinators, Independent Facilitators, educators, and other support providers may assist in understanding participant preferences, communication methods, identified goals, and support needs.

This exchange of information supports continuity between recreation programming and the participant's broader planning objectives while recognizing that each member of the planning team maintains distinct responsibilities.

Evaluating the Complete Service

One of the guiding principles discussed by the Department of Developmental Services is evaluation of the complete service being provided.

Within the recreation program described in this publication, individualized instruction, adaptive programming, intentional facility design, participant supports, and wellness resources function together as one coordinated recreation service.

Accordingly, evaluation of appropriateness, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness should consider the integrated nature of the recreation program rather than individual components viewed independently.

Understanding the complete service model provides a more accurate representation of the recreation service being evaluated during the Individual Program Plan and Self-Determination Program planning processes.

Planning Considerations

Planning teams may wish to consider the following questions when evaluating the recreation service:

- Does the integrated recreation program address the participant's identified needs and goals?
- Are instructional methods individualized according to assessed needs?
- Does the recreation environment reduce barriers that may interfere with meaningful participation?
- Are wellness resources incorporated appropriately as supportive elements of the recreation program?
- Has the recreation service been evaluated according to the complete service model rather than individual program components?

These considerations are intended to support consistent application of person-centered planning and the DDS cost-effectiveness framework.

Section Summary

The specialized adaptive fitness service model functions as an integrated recreation program in which individualized instruction, adaptive programming, intentional facility design, participant supports, and wellness resources operate together to support meaningful participation.

Understanding the integrated nature of the recreation program provides important context for evaluating appropriateness, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness within the framework established by the California Department of Developmental Services.

Section 3

Understanding Cost-Effectiveness Within the California Department of Developmental Services Framework

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe how a specialized adaptive fitness service model may be evaluated within the cost-effectiveness framework established by the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS). The information presented is intended to support a consistent understanding of the evaluation process and is not intended to establish funding decisions or recommend services for any individual participant.

As discussed by DDS, cost-effectiveness should not be interpreted solely as selecting the lowest-cost available service. Rather, it is a structured evaluation that considers the participant's individualized needs together with the appropriateness of the complete service being provided.

Understanding Cost-Effectiveness

The California Department of Developmental Services has clarified that cost-effectiveness is determined by considering multiple factors together rather than by evaluating cost alone.

Those factors include:

- The participant's assessed needs.
- Individual Program Plan (IPP) goals.
- Person-centered planning.
- Qualified providers.
- Reasonable rates.
- The appropriateness of the proposed service.
- Compliance with applicable statutes, regulations, and Department guidance.

Each of these considerations contributes to the overall evaluation. No single factor is intended to determine whether a service is appropriate or cost-effective.

Accordingly, services that differ in operational structure, instructional methods, participant supports, or program design should not be assumed to be equivalent based solely upon the activity being provided or the associated cost.

Evaluating the Complete Service

Throughout this publication, the recreation program has been described as an integrated service model.

Individualized instruction, adaptive programming, intentional facility design, structured participant supports, and wellness resources are coordinated to function as one recreation service.

Evaluation of cost-effectiveness should therefore consider the complete recreation program rather than individual operational features viewed independently.

This approach recognizes that the characteristics of the overall service contribute to its appropriateness for an individual participant.

The objective is not to compare isolated components of recreation programming, but to evaluate the integrated service being proposed within the context of the participant's identified needs and planning goals.

Participant Need

Evaluation begins with the participant.

Planning teams first identify the participant's assessed needs, strengths, interests, communication methods, support requirements, and identified goals.

Only after those considerations have been established can the appropriateness of a recreation service be evaluated.

This sequence reflects the principles of person-centered planning and supports individualized decision-making throughout the Individual Program Plan process.

Qualified Providers

The Department of Developmental Services identifies qualified providers as one component of the cost-effectiveness framework.

When evaluating specialized adaptive fitness services, planning teams may consider whether the provider possesses the knowledge, experience, operational structure, and ability necessary to deliver the recreation service being proposed.

Examples of relevant considerations may include:

- Experience providing adaptive recreation programming.
- Ability to individualize instruction.
- Understanding of participant communication and support needs.
- Experience implementing structured recreation environments.
- Ability to adapt programming according to participant goals.
- Capacity to collaborate appropriately with members of the planning team.

Provider qualifications should always be evaluated in relation to the recreation service being proposed and the participant's individualized needs.

Reasonable Rates

Reasonable rates should be considered within the context of the complete recreation service.

As discussed by DDS, rate review should recognize both the appropriateness of the proposed service and the operational characteristics of the program being evaluated.

When considering a specialized adaptive fitness service model, planning teams should evaluate the integrated recreation program rather than comparing individual program elements independently.

This publication intentionally excludes pricing information.

Rates are maintained separately so they may be revised as operational needs or Department guidance change without requiring revision of this publication.

Consistency in Service Review

One objective identified by the Department of Developmental Services is greater consistency in service review throughout California.

Providing planning teams with a common understanding of specialized adaptive fitness services supports that objective.

When participants, families, Independent Facilitators, Service Coordinators, Financial Management Services providers, Regional Centers, and providers share a consistent understanding of the operational characteristics of the recreation service, discussions may focus upon participant needs and service appropriateness rather than assumptions regarding program structure.

Consistent understanding promotes more uniform application of the Department's cost-effectiveness framework while preserving individualized planning and participant choice.

Relationship to Participant Choice

Participant choice remains an essential principle of both the Individual Program Plan process and the Self-Determination Program.

Providing objective information regarding the characteristics of a recreation service supports informed decision-making by allowing planning teams to evaluate the appropriateness of the service within the participant's individualized planning process.

This publication is intended to contribute to that understanding by describing the service model objectively without advocating for a specific provider or funding outcome.

Planning Considerations

When evaluating cost-effectiveness, planning teams may wish to consider the following questions:

- Have the participant's assessed needs been clearly identified?
- Does the proposed recreation service support the participant's identified goals?
- Has the complete recreation service been evaluated rather than individual program elements?
- Are provider qualifications appropriate to the recreation service being proposed?
- Are reasonable rates being considered within the context of the complete integrated recreation program?
- Does the proposed recreation service support meaningful participation while remaining consistent with person-centered planning principles?

These considerations are intended to support objective and consistent evaluation while recognizing that each participant's circumstances remain unique.

Section Summary

The Department of Developmental Services framework recognizes that cost-effectiveness extends beyond consideration of cost alone.

Evaluation includes participant needs, person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and the appropriateness of the complete recreation service.

Understanding the operational characteristics of the integrated recreation program supports consistent application of these principles during the Individual Program Plan and Self-Determination Program planning processes.

Section 4

Supporting Person-Centered Planning

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to describe how a specialized adaptive fitness service model supports the principles of person-centered planning throughout the Individual Program Plan (IPP) and Self-Determination Program (SDP) planning processes. The discussion focuses on the role of community-based recreation as one component of an individualized plan and explains how the recreation program may support identified goals while preserving participant choice.

Person-Centered Planning

Person-centered planning serves as the foundation for the development of Regional Center services.

Planning begins by identifying the participant's strengths, interests, preferences, assessed needs, communication methods, support requirements, and desired outcomes. Recreation services are then considered according to their ability to support those individualized goals.

Within this framework, a specialized adaptive fitness service is not intended to define the participant's objectives. Rather, it serves as one community-based recreation option that may be considered when individualized fitness and recreation programming are appropriate to support the participant's identified goals.

This approach is consistent with the principles discussed by the California Department of Developmental Services and reinforces that service selection begins with the participant, not with the provider.

Individualized Recreation Planning

Because every participant presents with unique abilities and support needs, recreation programming should remain individualized.

Programming is developed according to the participant's:

- Assessed needs.
- Identified recreation goals.
- Physical abilities.
- Communication methods.
- Learning preferences.
- Sensory considerations.
- Support requirements.
- Interests and motivation.

As participants develop new skills or their planning goals change, recreation programming should be adjusted accordingly.

This flexibility supports continued participation while maintaining consistency with the participant's Individual Program Plan and overall recreation objectives.

Supporting Participant Choice

Participant choice remains a fundamental principle of both the Individual Program Plan process and the Self-Determination Program.

Meaningful choice depends upon access to accurate, objective information regarding the characteristics of the recreation service being considered.

The purpose of this publication is to contribute to that understanding by documenting the operational characteristics of the recreation program without promoting a particular provider or recommending funding decisions.

Providing objective information supports informed discussion among members of the planning team while preserving the participant's right to make individualized choices regarding recreation services.

Collaboration

Successful implementation of recreation programming often benefits from appropriate collaboration among members of the participant's planning team.

When appropriate, communication may occur with:

- Participants.
- Parents and caregivers.
- Regional Center Service Coordinators.
- Independent Facilitators.
- Financial Management Services providers, when relevant to implementation.
- Educators.
- Other individuals supporting the participant's identified recreation goals.

The purpose of collaboration is to promote continuity between recreation programming and broader planning objectives while recognizing that each member of the planning team maintains distinct responsibilities within the planning process.

Meaningful Community Participation

The primary objective of recreation programming is meaningful participation within the community.

Meaningful participation extends beyond physical activity alone and includes opportunities to:

- Participate successfully in community-based recreation.
- Develop confidence through individualized instruction.
- Engage appropriately within structured recreation environments.
- Participate in small-group recreation experiences when appropriate.
- Develop lifelong habits that encourage continued participation in fitness and recreation.

The recreation program is intended to reduce barriers that may interfere with participation while maintaining its recreational purpose.

Relationship to Cost-Effectiveness

Person-centered planning and cost-effectiveness are complementary principles within the Department of Developmental Services framework.

Evaluation of cost-effectiveness occurs only after the participant's individualized needs have been identified through the planning process.

Planning teams may then consider whether the proposed recreation service is appropriate, whether qualified providers are available, whether reasonable rates are applicable, and whether the complete service model supports the participant's identified goals.

This sequence reinforces that cost-effectiveness should be evaluated within the context of individualized planning rather than independently from it.

Supporting Consistent Decision-Making

One objective identified by the California Department of Developmental Services is greater consistency in the evaluation of services throughout the Regional Center system.

Providing objective information describing the operational characteristics of a specialized adaptive fitness service supports that objective by promoting a common understanding of the recreation program.

This publication is intended to contribute to consistent application of the Department's framework while preserving individualized planning, participant choice, and the responsibilities assigned to Regional Centers and planning teams.

Planning Considerations

During development of Individual Program Plans and Self-Determination Program spending plans, planning teams may wish to consider the following questions:

- Does the proposed recreation service reflect the participant's identified goals and preferences?
- Does the recreation program provide an appropriate level of individualized instruction and participant support?
- Does the recreation environment reduce barriers that may interfere with meaningful participation?
- Has participant choice been preserved throughout the planning process?
- Does the recreation service complement other supports identified within the participant's Individual Program Plan?
- Has the complete recreation service been evaluated according to both person-centered planning principles and the Department's cost-effectiveness framework?

These considerations are intended to support individualized decision-making while recognizing that every participant's circumstances remain unique.

Section Summary

Person-centered planning provides the framework through which specialized adaptive fitness services should be considered.

By beginning with the participant's assessed needs, identified goals, preferences, interests, and support requirements, planning teams are able to evaluate whether an individualized recreation service is appropriate before considering qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness.

This approach is consistent with the principles established by the California Department of Developmental Services and supports thoughtful, individualized decision-making throughout the Individual Program Plan and Self-Determination Program planning processes.

Conclusion

The California Department of Developmental Services has established a framework for evaluating cost-effectiveness that considers participant needs, person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and the appropriateness of the proposed service.

This publication has been prepared to support that framework by providing an objective description of a specialized adaptive fitness service model.

Throughout this Resource Guide, the recreation program has been presented as an integrated community-based service that combines individualized instruction, adaptive programming, intentional facility design, structured participant supports, and wellness resources into one coordinated recreation experience.

Evaluation of the program should consider the complete recreation service rather than individual operational characteristics viewed independently.

This publication recognizes that no single recreation service is appropriate for every participant. Individual Program Plans and Self-Determination Program spending plans should continue to be developed through individualized planning that considers the participant's strengths, interests, preferences, support needs, and identified goals.

It is the intent of this publication to support consistent understanding of specialized adaptive fitness services and to assist planning teams in applying the California Department of Developmental Services framework during evaluation of community-based recreation services.

Funding decisions, service authorizations, and Individual Program Plan determinations remain the responsibility of the planning team and should always be based upon the participant's individual circumstances together with applicable laws, regulations, and Department guidance.

Publication Statement

This Resource Guide has been prepared as an informational publication describing the operational characteristics of a specialized adaptive fitness service model within the framework established by the California Department of Developmental Services.

The publication is intended to support consistent understanding of the recreation service and may be revised periodically to reflect changes in Department guidance, applicable regulations, or operational practices.

Nothing contained within this publication should be interpreted as establishing funding decisions, recommending specific providers, replacing the Individual Program Plan process, or providing medical, clinical, therapeutic, educational, or legal advice.

References

The following resources informed the preparation of this publication:

- California Department of Developmental Services - Cost-Effectiveness Webinar and Guidance (2026)
- California Department of Developmental Services - Self-Determination Program Guidance
- California Code of Regulations, Title 17
- California Welfare and Institutions Code applicable to Regional Center services and the Self-Determination Program
- Publicly available guidance issued by the California Department of Developmental Services relating to person-centered planning, qualified providers, reasonable rates, and cost-effectiveness

Revision History

Version	Date	Description
1.0	July 2026	Initial publication.