

FACT SHEET: LEISURE

Q. What Is The Definition Of Leisure?

A. Leisure can be defined as available free choice time and those individually selected activities that characteristically are not related to work or other obligatory forms of activity, and which are expected to promote feelings of pleasure, affiliation, happiness, spontaneity, fantasy or imagination, fulfillment, creativity, self-expression, and self-development. Leisure is a major domain of life activity and is essential for lifelong development and personal well-being.

Q. What Do Typical Leisure Experiences Include?

A. Typical leisure experiences include play behavior, recreation activities, diversion and amusement, art and creative activities, adventure challenges activities, sports and games, travel and vacations, holiday celebrations, to name just a few examples.

Q. What Are Typical Leisure Skills?

A. Leisure skills include choosing and self-initiating interests, using and enjoying home and community leisure and recreational activities alone and with others, playing socially with others, taking turns, terminating or refusing leisure or recreational activities, extending one's duration of participation and expanding one's repertoire of interests, awareness, and skills.

Q. How Is A Leisure Repertoire Constructed?

A. A personal leisure repertoire is constructed from the following: (a) a range of activity experiences sufficient enough to develop personal preferences and interests; (b) opportunities to engage in personal choice-making behavior; and (c) the depth of experience necessary to have perceived feelings of pleasure, fulfillment, creativity, happiness, and other feelings commonly associated with having an optimal leisure experience.

People with mental retardation will develop leisure skills and a leisure repertoire if provided with meaningful and structured leisure education opportunities, as well as a supportive environment (social and physical).

AAMR Policy

People with mental retardation have the right to pursue self-determined recreation activities and to experience a leisure-oriented lifestyle. Some people with mental retardation may need supports and services to assist in developing independence skills that support their leisure and recreation. AAMR calls for active consideration by local, state, national, and international organizations in recognizing that leisure and recreation are fundamental attributes of a healthy lifestyle and are associated with a high quality of life for people with mental retardation.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

AAMR Leisure and Recreation Division Newsletter. Volume V, No. 2, Leisure as an adaptive skill area, p. 2-4. Washington, DC: American Association on Mental Retardation.

AAMR (1992). Mental retardation: Definition. classification. and systems of supports. Washington, DC: American Association on Mental Retardation.

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