Active Start and Fundamentals Program

The Active Start and Fundamentals Programs are Special Olympics programs for young athletes, 2-6 years and 7-14 years respectively. They work on beginning movements and sports activities like jumping, running, throwing and catching a ball, kicking (all in the Active Start program) and move up to sports skills like hitting a baseball, throwing a basketball in the hoop or throwing a bowling ball at the pins (in the Fundamentals program) to prepare kids for further sport participation. While Red Deer has a thriving Special Olympics program, it has not had these programs for young athletes until now. Robyn Bagley and Brandi Robinson have brought this programming to children with special needs through the use of Community Service Learning and the Adapted Physical Education Diploma Specialization. Brandi Robinson has developed the Service Learning Opportunity through her course and bases each week's learning on the Activity Plans constructed by and taught by students Mentored by professionals in the community. Both Brandi and Robyn use their expert knowledge to benefit the broader community or to solve specific community-based problems like the absence of this developmental programming in the Central Alberta Community. We bridge theory and practice – by including the Adapted Physical Education students in the development of lessons for the program.

The course work in KNSS 340 Pedagogies in Adapted Physical Education is built upon real life learning and the development of video sessions based on the lessons designed by students for the program. Each week we look in-depth at the fundamental skill and adaptations in class, and review video from the Active Start program the week before. Students work to critique their own methodology and are able to see how their planning is reflected in the children’s physical literacy.