INTRODUCTION
• Physical activity professionals serve as key change agents in promoting the health and wellness of individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD).
• In order to promote physical activity among this population, physical activity service providers must set up individuals with ASD for success during physical activities, whether for exercise or recreation.

OBJECTIVE
The purpose of this study was to survey physical activity providers (e.g., adapted/physical educators, parks and recreation employees, therapeutic recreation specialists, personal trainers, coaches) across one state regarding physical activity programming for individuals with ASD and the providers’ personal beliefs and professional development relative to serving this population.

METHODS
Survey Design: Cross-sectional survey design presented through anonymous web-based survey.

Participants: 22 Physical activity providers.

Data collected:
• Population and age range served
• Years experience with individuals with ASD
• Related professional development
• Aspects of programs in which individuals with ASD participate
• Frequency of participation by individuals with ASD
• Needs for accommodation
• Barriers to success
• Providers’ perceptions of the benefits of physical activity for the ASD population
• Providers’ perceptions of comfort in working with the ASD population

RESULTS
• Providers averaged 13.7 years of experience working with individuals with ASD.
• Providers indicated individuals with ASD participated in most of the offered programs, albeit with individual accommodations across curriculum, personnel, and equipment (Table 2).
• Providers demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of the physical and physiological needs of children with ASD.
• Providers noted gaps in their professional training and the need for more hands-on training opportunities, particularly related to successful integration of individuals with ASD in inclusive activities, activity modifications, and ways to motivate individuals with ASD to be more physically active.
• Primary barriers to success were large group size and a need for additional personnel.

CONCLUSIONS
• Most respondents were teachers/coaches who indicated individuals with ASD frequently participate in their programs.
• Most respondents indicated they need more professional development to help meet the participants’ needs.
• Respondents identified barriers to success that were also identified in previous APA research (Crollick, Mancil, & Stopka, 2006; Obrusnikova & Dillon, 2011).
• Respondents indicated individuals with ASD have slightly more potential for success in recreational activities and individual competitive sports than in dual or team sports.

REFERENCES