



USA
ARTISTIC
SWIMMING®

Our Inclusive Journey

How to Open an AWD Artistic Swimming Program

Partnering with the
Community to
Empower Every Athlete

“Every athlete deserves
to shine.”



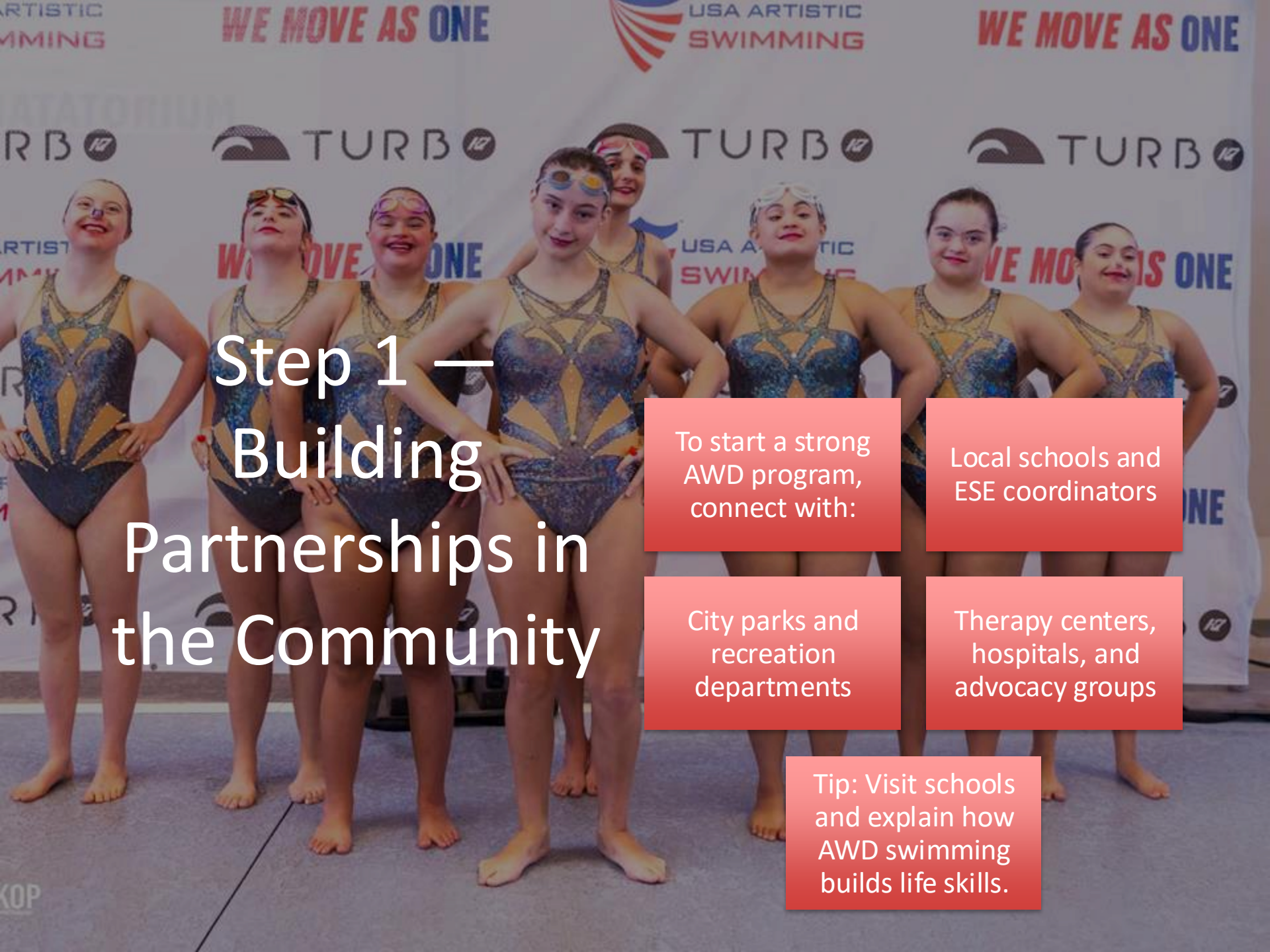
Why Inclusion Matters

A group of approximately 20 people, mostly young women, are posing for a group photo on a pool deck. They are arranged in several rows, some standing and some kneeling. Many of them are wearing white or black athletic shirts, blue sashes, and medals around their necks. Some are also wearing tiaras. The background shows a blue sky, palm trees, and a building with a blue awning. The overall atmosphere is celebratory and joyful.

Artistic swimming helps build confidence, teamwork, and joy.

AWD athletes bring unique strengths and perspectives.

Inclusion promotes compassion and growth for all swimmers.



Step 1 — Building Partnerships in the Community

To start a strong
AWD program,
connect with:

Local schools and
ESE coordinators

City parks and
recreation
departments

Therapy centers,
hospitals, and
advocacy groups

Tip: Visit schools
and explain how
AWD swimming
builds life skills.



Step 2 — Identifying Athletes

Work with ESE coordinators to find students who love the water.

Include both cognitive and physical disabilities.

Focus on ability, not limitation — every athlete can grow.

Step 3 — Selecting the Right Coach - Coach Profile



Certified in artistic
swimming



Passionate about
inclusion and adaptive
coaching



Background as teacher,
therapist, or adaptive
PE coach



Patience, creativity, and
heart 💙



Step 4 — Program Design

Dedicated AWD practice time weekly

1 day per week of integration with regular team

Focus on unity — same gear, same cheers!



Step 5 — Understanding Disabilities

Meet parents and organizations to understand each athlete's needs.

Adapt drills and routines for safety and success.

Remember:
They are athletes first —
celebrate effort
and progress.



Partner Organizations



*Special
Olympics*

More Helpful Resources



USA Artistic Swimming

AWD Rules

AWD category open to athletes with physical and/or cognitive disabilities

Competitors perform Figures and Free Routines

Divided by Tier levels (not age)

Coaches may assist during routines

Adaptations allowed for safety and fairness



AWD Tier Levels (Simplified)

Tiers 1–2

Introductory, comfort & fun

Tiers 3–4

Skill growth

Tiers 5–6

Advanced performance

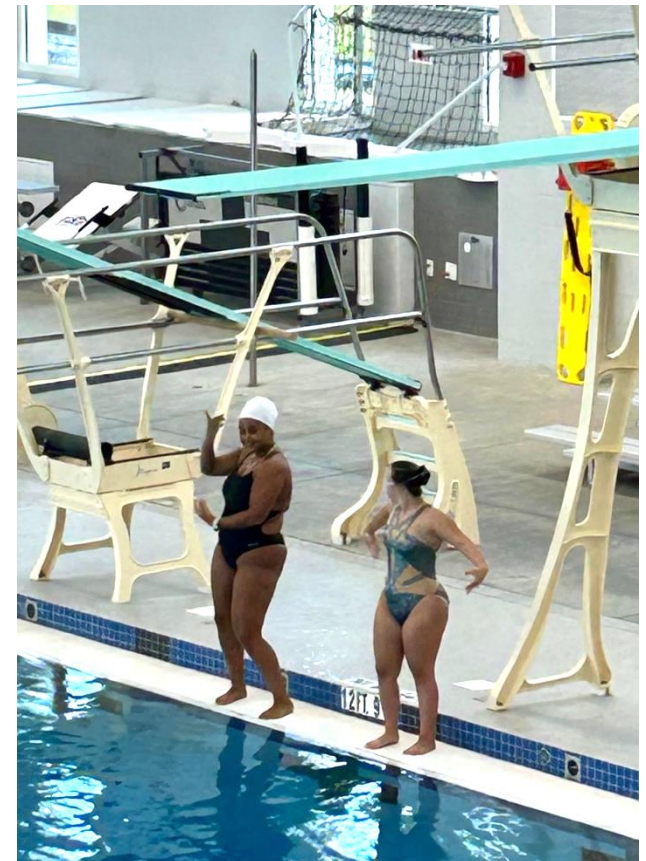


Integration Benefits

Builds empathy and leadership
in regular swimmers

Fosters teamwork and
community pride

Encourages diversity and
belonging



Parent & Community Involvement

Host	Host info nights to explain the program
Encourage	Encourage parents to volunteer
Share	Share athlete progress stories





Final Steps

- Confirm pool accessibility
- Schedule athlete assessments
- Apply for grants or sponsorships
- Promote program with flyers/social media

Final Message

“Inclusion is not a favor
— it’s a responsibility.
Every athlete deserves
the chance to shine.”

Contact us to start your
AWD Artistic Swimming
journey!

