

General Orientation for Certified Coaches

Special Olympics Kansas

Special Olympics



Thank You

By viewing our General Orientation, you will become a better informed coach and volunteer by learning more about the following topics:

- Our mission, philosophy, and vision
- Our organizational structure
- Importance of sports and physical activity
- Our program offerings, challenges, and benefits to athletes and volunteers
- Advocating for persons with ID/DD

Special Olympics



Special Olympics Mission

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for persons eight years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

Special Olympics



Philosophy & Vision

Coaches should provide the following to their athletes:

1. Appropriate instruction and encouragement
2. Consistent training
3. Competition with those of similar abilities
4. New opportunities for life-changing experiences.

The results of participating in Special Olympics are:

- Personal growth
- Stronger families
- United communities
- An environment of equality, respect and acceptance

Special Olympics



Special Olympics is more similar than different from other sports organizations. However, it is important to identify four areas that make Special Olympics unique.

1. Special Olympics provides a variety of sports opportunities for all ability levels.
 - Adaptations are made at all competitions to accommodate low motor, high motor and wheelchair bound athletes. Regardless of talent or ability level, all athletes are encouraged to participate in Special Olympics programming.
2. For competitions, athletes are grouped by ability through a process called divisioning.
 - Competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. Divisions are most often broken down by gender and by age. Coaches play an integral role in the divisioning process by providing Special Olympics sports staff with entry information that helps guide the divisioning process. One of the founding principles of Special Olympics is that we provide an opportunity for every athlete, not to win, but to excel in competition.
3. Awards are provided to all participants who compete.
 - Divisions never have more than 8 athletes and places 1 through 3 receive medals while places 4 through 8 receive a ribbon.
4. Special Olympics does not charge a fee to athletes or their families to train or compete.
 - For some of the state tournaments, fees may be incurred for a hotel room or a banquet meal, but regional tournaments are always free and across the board, the cost of participating in Special Olympics is marginally lower than other sports groups and teams.

Proven Benefits

Athletes who participate in Special Olympics have:

- Improved strength, stamina, and motor skills
- Improved self-esteem and self-confidence
- Better health
- Greater rate of employment
- Greater independent participation in their community

Special Olympics



History

May, 1970 - The first Kansas Special Olympics was held at Parsons State Hospital and Training Center with 300 participants.

February, 1977 - Steamboat Springs, Colorado hosts the first International Special Olympics Winter Games with more than 550 athletes competing in skiing and skating events. Kansas was well represented having the second largest contingent exceeded only by Colorado.

July, 1979 - As a result of tremendous growth, it was decided that Special Olympics Kansas could, and should, stand alone and the organization was incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

If you would like to read and learn more about our history, please check out our website here: <https://soks.org/about-us/our-history/>

Special Olympics



Terms to be Familiar With

Athlete - An individual with intellectual disabilities who has a physical on file with Special Olympics Kansas.

Certified Coach - A coach who has met the requirements set forth by Special Olympics Kansas. This volunteer is a member of a Local Program and is responsible for providing consistent and professional training to Special Olympics athletes.

Class A Volunteer - A volunteer who has regular, close physical contact with athletes, is in a position of authority over athletes, supervises athletes.

Class A Volunteer Form - A document used to register a Class A volunteer and authorize a background check on that individual.

Terms to be Familiar With (cont'd)

Delegation - Athletes and coaches who participate in a regional or state competition.

Healthy Athletes - An initiative providing free health screenings and health education to Special Olympics athletes to improve access to health care, knowledge of health-related information and general fitness.

Intellectual disability (or ID) - is a term used when a person has certain limitations in cognitive functioning and skills, including communication, social and self-care skills. These limitations can cause a child to develop and learn more slowly or differently than a typically developing child.

Local Program - The local level of Special Olympics Kansas. Comprised of 1 or more athletes, families, and volunteers. Local Programs hold weekly practices during a sport season and compete in regional and possibly state events.

Local Program Coordinator(s) - The lead individual or individuals in charge of administration for a Local Program of Special Olympics athletes.

Terms to be Familiar With (cont'd)

Protective Behaviors - An educational training program designed to prevent physical, emotional, and sexual abuse

Region - Special Olympics Kansas divides the State into 5 geographic areas.

Regional Director - The staff member in charge of operations for a specific geographic region of the state.

Regional Games - Competitions held for local programs within a specific region.

Special Olympics Kansas (SOKS) - Responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Special Olympics program within the state of Kansas.

Team - Athletes participating in a team sport as part of a delegation.

Regional Directors

Tim Rehder - Metro/South Central - rehdert@soks.org

Krystin Guggisberg - North Central - guggisbergk@soks.org

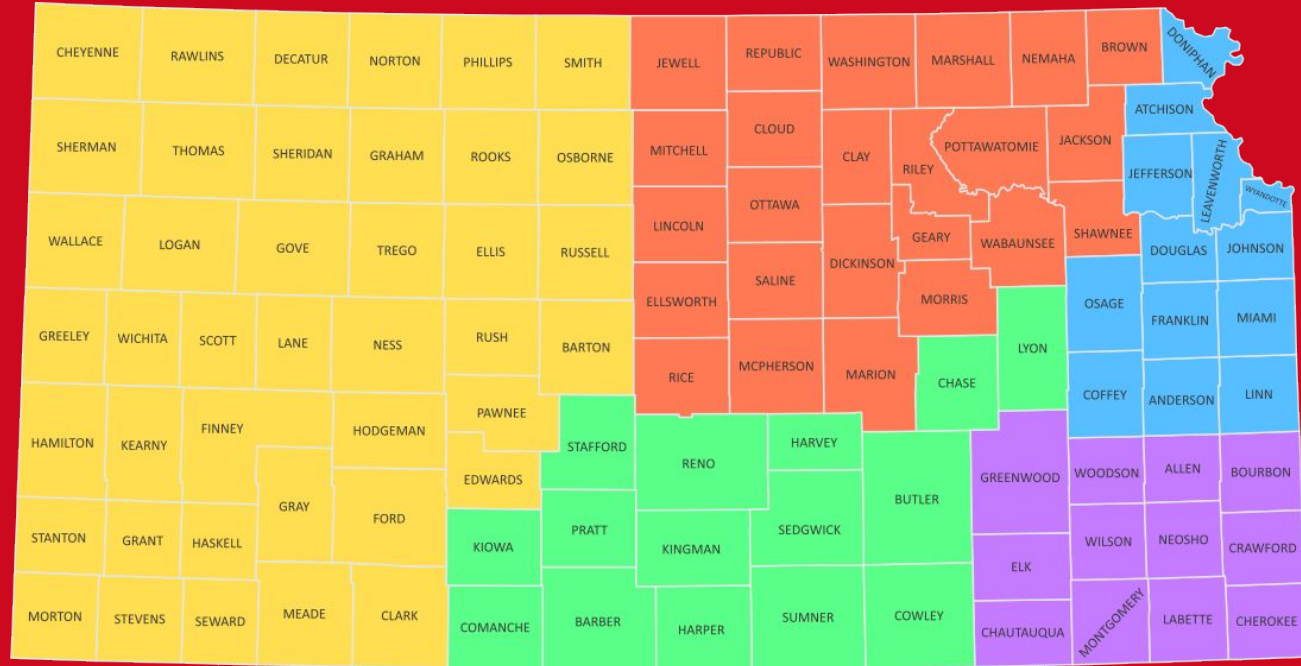
Olivia Lotven - Southeast - lotveno@soks.org

Brent Kaiser - West - kaiserb@soks.org

Special Olympics



The Regional Level



1. The State is divided into 5 regions, each region is managed by a Regional Director (RD) who receives support from the Headquarters (HQ) office staff.
2. RD's facilitate regional level competition throughout the year in sports offered by Special Olympics Kansas.
3. Regions may decide how many competitions, and in which sports, they are able to offer each year.
4. Points of contact: for Certified Coaches – LPC; for Local Teams – Regional Directors

Local Program Structure

- As a certified coach you are part of a Local Program.
- Local Program-The local level of Special Olympics Kansas. Comprised of 1 or more athletes, families, and volunteers. Local Programs hold weekly practices during a sport season and compete in regional and possibly state events. There may be 1 or more teams within a Local Program.
- Local Program Coordinator(s)- The lead individual or individuals in charge of administration for a Local Program.
- As a certified coach you are under the supervision of the Local Program Coordinator (LPC). This person should be a resource for you.

Coach Information

Special Olympics



Certified Coach Requirements

All volunteers working with a team must register with SOKS as a certified coach and complete the following requirements:

- Class A Form (allows SOKS to perform background check) - Renewed every 3 years rounded to the end of the year.
- Protective Behaviors training (on-line training regarding Abuse & Neglect) - Renewed every 3 years rounded to the end of the year.
- Concussion Training — Complete the Heads up Coaches Concussion in Youth Sports Free through Special Olympics North America. Renewed every 3 years rounded to the end of the year.
- General Orientation (on-line training) One-time only.

Coaches Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of all coaches to maintain the highest standards of conduct for themselves, their athletes and in all trainings and competitions. Failure to do so undermines the official's authority and the integrity of the game, resulting in a hostile environment for the athletes, officials, coaches, assistant coaches and spectators. As a role model for the athletes, spectators and coaches participating in the event, all are expected to be supportive of and to acknowledge the effort, good play and sportsmanship on the part of ALL players from all participating teams.

By example, coaches and assistant coaches are expected to show that although they are competing, they have respect for the opponent and officials at all times. Special Olympics Kansas will not tolerate negative behavior exhibited either by demonstrative actions and gestures, or verbally by ill-intentioned remarks, including those addressed toward the official or opposing team members. Coaches exhibiting hostile, negative sarcastic or otherwise ill-intended behavior toward officials, opposing athletes or coaches will be subject to disciplinary action by Special Olympics Kansas.

Responsibilities to the Rules of the Game

- Coaches should be thoroughly acquainted with and demonstrate a working knowledge of the Rules of the Sport.
- Coaches are responsible to assure their athletes understand the intent as well as the application of the Rules.
- Coaches must adhere to the letter and spirit of the Rules of the Game.
- Coaches are responsible for their athletes actions during competition and must not permit them to perform with intent of causing injury to opposing athletes.
- The coach must constantly strive to teach good sporting behavior.

Coaches Code of Conduct (cont'd)

Responsibility to the Officials

- Officials must have the support of the coaches, players and spectators.
- Coaches must always refrain from criticizing officials in the presence of players or spectators.
- Professional respect, before, during and after the competition should be mutual. There is to be no demeaning dialogue or gestures between official, coach or players.
- Coaches must not incite players or spectators or attempt to disrupt the flow of the game.
- For comments regarding an official, talk to staff or a competition person at the event away from everyone in a respectful manner.
- Coaches should not approach officials after the competition to discuss calls.
- Coaches shall not offer dissent to any call made by an official or referee at any time.
- Coaches are not to address the official/referee during competition except to: a) respond to officials/referees who has initiated a conversation; b) point out emergency or safety issues; c) make substitutions; and d) ask for the time remaining in regulation play.

Coaching Tips

Training considerations:

- Frequent repetition and reinforcement
- Consistent use of action-oriented key words
- Appropriate levels of instruction
- Continuous assessment

Coaching Resources

Resources to assist you in your coaching journey:

- Main Sports Page - A listing of all sports offered organized by season includes sports rules and modifications - soks.org/sports
- Coaches Corner - General and sport specific resources and policies - soks.org/coaches-corner
- Events Calendar - soks.org/events
- State Competitions Main Page - A listing with links to state competition information - soks.org/sports/state-competitions

The Better the Coach...

The Better the Experiences...

The Better the Athlete!

Special Olympics



Athlete Information

Special Olympics



Special Olympics Athletes

Understanding the requirements of being an athlete and learning to adapt training is a key to success.

Special Olympics training and competition is provided to persons who:

- Have been identified by an agency or professional as having:
 - an intellectual disability
 - a cognitive delay
 - a closely related developmental disability
- Are ages 8 and older (Athletes ages 2-7 may train in our [Young Athletes™ Program](#).)
- Are registered with Special Olympics to participate and have completed an Athlete Registration and Medical Forms. [More on becoming an athlete](#)

Special Olympics Athletes

- Families/individuals may register through the State Office or approach a local program directly to complete eligibility requirements, including a Medical Release form. Forms must be on file at the State Office prior to the athlete participating in practice or competition.
- Athletes are (preferably) placed on teams geographically close to their home which offer training in sports in which the athlete has shown interest.
- Athletes are expected to compete in regional competitions if it's offered. If competition is not available in the athlete's "home" region they may compete in another Regional games or they may advance directly to a State Games.

What are intellectual disabilities?

According to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning (reasoning, learning, problem-solving) and adaptive behavior, which can cover a range of everyday social and practical skills. These disabilities originate before age 18.

People with intellectual disabilities are unique, just like everyone else. Disabilities impact each person differently, so it is important to get to know your athletes personally.

Athletes want coaches to be dedicated to the team by committing to learn more, not only about their sport but also the athletes. They want coaches to know individual strengths, weaknesses, and the personality traits that make them unique from their fellow teammates.

Special Olympics Kansas Medical/Release Procedure

It's important to note that the SOKS Athlete Medical/Release Form must be renewed approximately every two years. The renewal period will begin January 1 of a cycle and all Medical/Release Forms submitted during the renewal period or during the cycle will expire on December 31 of 2022, 2024, 2026, etc. A Medical/Release Form may be submitted to Headquarters at any time.

Physicals Given Between	Expire
January 1, 2020 – December 31, 2021	December 31, 2022
January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2023	December 31, 2024
January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2025	December 31, 2026

Athlete Code of Conduct

Special Olympics Kansas is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics.

THE CODE - All Special Olympics athletes and Unified Sports partners agree to the following code:

SPORTSMANSHIP

I will practice good sportsmanship.

I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team and Special Olympics.

I will not use bad language. I will not swear or insult other individuals.

I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.

Athlete Code of Conduct (cont'd)

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

I will train regularly. I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.

I will listen to my coaches and the officials and ask questions when I do not understand.

I will always try my best during training, divisioning and competitions.

I will not “hold back” in preliminaries just to get into an easier final heat.

RESPONSIBILITY for MY ACTIONS

I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal or sexual advances on others.

I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competitions or during Games.

I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.

I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.

I understand that if I do not obey this Code of Conduct, Special Olympics Kansas may not allow me to participate.

Athlete Disciplinary Policy

The following progressive disciplinary actions may be taken by a Local Program and/or Special Olympics Kansas state office. Depending upon the nature of the incident, any actions may be bypassed in the disciplinary process. Physical aggression toward another athlete, coach, community member, volunteer or staff will result in accelerated disciplinary action. An Incident Report Form should be completed and kept on file for any athlete or volunteer with whom there are ongoing behavioral or safety concerns, and must be completed immediately if it is suspected further disciplinary action may be needed. Copies of Incident Report Forms should be forwarded as soon as completed to the Regional Director for your region or to the state office. Regional Directors and Local Program Coordinators must involve Special Olympics Kansas State Office staff prior to suspension or release of a volunteer or athlete.

Athlete Disciplinary Policy (cont'd)

Action One: A verbal warning will be given to the athlete and documented on an Incident Report Form with the Local Program and SOKS State Office.

Action Two: A written warning will be given to the athlete. Prior to this action being taken, an Incident Report Form must be completed and sent to the SOKS State Office. Subsequent to its receipt, the written warning will be given to the athlete with a copy to the appropriate individuals.

Action Three: Personal meeting with the athlete to review unacceptable behavior and work out a plan for improvement. If the athlete is under age 18, he/she will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or caseworker. If the athlete is over age 18, a third person selected by the athlete will attend the meeting. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the athlete, SOKS President/CEO, Local Program file, parent/guardian or caseworker.

Action Four: Suspension from practices or competition during the specific sport season. The Special Olympics Kansas State Office must be contacted before a Local Program suspends an athlete. A representative from the SOKS State Office will discuss the circumstances with the Local Program and approve the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the athlete, parent/guardian and a copy will be filed at the State Office. Any further action must be referred to the SOKS President/CEO who will approve further action. Further action could be, but is not limited to:

- Suspension for more than one sport season.
- Expulsion for one year or more and even lifetime ban to protect volunteers, athletes and other community members.

Sports Information

Special Olympics



SOKS Sports Offered

Click [here](#) to see each sports rules

Alpine Skiing

Basketball

Bocce

Bowling

Cheerleading

Cornhole

Cross Country Skiing

Cycling

Figure Skating

Flag Football

Floor Hockey

Golf

Powerlifting

Snowshoeing

Soccer

Softball

Swimming

Tennis

Track & Field

Volleyball

*Sports offered by region and teams vary

*Not all teams compete in every sport

*Athletes can still compete in a sport that is not offered by their team or region

Levels of Special Olympics Competition

Special Olympics training and competitions begin on the Local Level (school, agency, recreation department, etc.), progress to the Regional Level and then to the State Level. Athletes must attend practices and the regional competition, when offered, prior to competing at the State Level.

LOCAL EVENTS: Games and events are encouraged as additional competitions prior to a Regional or State event. Individuals wishing to conduct a Local competition must inform the Regional Director of their interest. The Regional Director is responsible for ensuring that the organization and quality of the event meet the acceptable standards of SOKS, and the dates, times and location do not conflict with other scheduled Special Olympics events. The Regional Director may approve the sanctioning of the event. If a request is denied, the name Special Olympics may not be used.

REGIONAL EVENTS: Athletes from a certain geographic region of the state.

STATE EVENTS: Athletes from across the state are eligible, if participation criteria are met.

USA GAMES: USA Summer Games are held every 4 years.

WORLD GAMES: Offered every two years on an alternating Winter Games and Summer Games basis. The next World Summer Games will be in 2023, Winter Games in 2025, etc. U.S. Programs will compete as Special Olympics U.S.A.

*To compete in USA or World games, must be an athlete in good standing. Please contact Tim Rehder rehdert@soks.org for more information

Regional Events Calendar

Basketball & Cheerleading - February

Softball - September

Golf - September

Track & Field - April/May

Tennis - May

Volleyball - October

Soccer - May

Swimming - October

Cycling - May

Bocce - Varies by region

Bowling - July

Powerlifting - July

*Contingent on each Region's offerings

Flag Football - July

State Competition Information

John L Cassidy Heartland Winter Games (Weston, MO)- January

Competition offered: Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing,, Figure Skating, Snowshoeing, Floor Hockey and Floor Hockey Individual Skills

Basketball & Cheerleading Tournament (Hays/Manhattan) – March

Competition offered: Team Basketball, Individual Skills, Speed Dribble, Team Skills and Cheerleading.

Summer Games (Maize) - June

Competition offered: Track & Field, Cycling, Soccer, and Tennis

Flag Football & Powerlifting (Pittsburg) – July

Competition offered: Flag Football, Powerlifting (Bench, deadlift, squat and combined)

Bowling (Olathe) - August

Competition offered: Bowling

Fall Outdoor Classic (Wichita) - October

Competition offered: Softball, Golf

Fall Indoor Classic (Johnson County) – November

Competition offered: Team Volleyball, Swimming

Sports Rules/SOKS Sports Rules Modifications/Coaching Guides

The Official Special Olympics Rules shall govern all SOKS competitions. The National Governing Body Rules shall apply only when they are not in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Rules. In such case, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply. SOKS may have rules specific to Kansas that differ from the National Governing Body or the Official Special Olympics Sports rules. Any questions pertaining to the rules should be directed to the Sr. VP of Program Operations at Headquarters.

Suggested Rules Modifications

The field has the opportunity to make suggestions on new rules. Please contact Tim Rehder at rehdert@soks.org (Sr. Director of Competitions) about this process. Click [here](#) to see sports rules.

Age Group Policy

One unique and important feature of the Special Olympics program is its ability groups for competition. It is our goal to provide each and every athlete in any given event an equal opportunity to place first. In order to accomplish this, we form our competition divisions differently than any other sports program. The following age groups shall be used for all SOKS games and competitions:

A. Individual Sports:

- Youth: ages 8-11 Junior: ages 12-15
- Senior: ages 16-21 Masters: ages 22-29
- Senior Masters: ages 30 and above

Open Age Group: reserved for combining age groups to meet the required minimum number of competitors or teams in a division.

B. Team Sports and Relay Events:

- Junior: ages 15 and under Senior: ages 16-21
- Masters: ages 22 and above

Open Age Group: See above

An athlete's age group is determined by the athlete's age on the opening date of the competition or games. The age of the oldest athlete on a team shall be used to determine the age group in which that team will compete.

Combining Age Groups: In situations where there are not enough competitors to hold competition in a certain age group, the athletes should be moved into the next oldest age group or moved to an open age group.

Skills Assessment Test (SAT)/Coaching Guides

Skills Assessment Test (SAT) -- In order to create fair and equal levels of competition, Special Olympics has gone to great lengths to division athletes of equal or similar abilities on the athletic playing field. The first step in determining an athlete's ability is their Skill Assessment Test (SAT) score. Each athlete's score is recorded and the average of the athletes' scores will be used as the team SAT Score. Contact SOKS for (SAT) Test or the SOKS website.

Safety/Risk Management

Risk Management addresses potential problems before they occur.

Coaches have the ultimate responsibility to reduce the risk of participation for athletes involved in the sport that they are coaching.

Questions coaches should ask themselves:

- Is the facility I use for practice safe? It is free from obstacles? Is the playing surface uneven – holes, uneven grade, moisture
- Is our equipment appropriate and well maintained. Coaches should direct athletes on how to use equipment. Does the equipment fit properly?
- What weather considerations should I be aware of.
- Do I have an adequate First Aid Kit?
- Is athletes attire appropriate for the sport?
- Do I allow “horse play” from athletes that could cause an injury
- Have I communicated the importance of safety to coaches, athletes, etc.
- What is Risk Management – It seeks to address potential problems before they occur
- Am I aware of medical conditions that affect my athletes?

Policies Related to Coaching

All SOKS Policies can be accessed on-line at <https://soks.org/resources/>

Below are some of the Sports Policies:

- Special Olympics Age Groups Policy
- Athletics Event Participation Ratio Policy
- Heat and Lightning Policies
- Athlete Housing Policy
- Volunteer Screening Policy
- Special Olympics Kansas Medical/Release Procedure
- Certified Coach Policy
- Concussion Policy

Special Olympics Awards

SOKS has an annual awards program that recognizes great coaches, families and volunteers. The winners are selected from nominations submitted by local program coordinators and the many individuals involved in Special Olympics throughout the state. While we know firsthand that we have fantastic coaches, families and volunteers in our state, historically, our nominations have been very low so we'd love your help in nominating anyone you know that you think is worthy of an award. The nomination form and deadline information can be found online at soks.org/awards.



Special Olympics



Health and Fitness Programs

Special Olympics



Healthy Athletes (HA)

Offered since 2003

Provides free health screenings to registered SOKS athletes at competitions

- Educate athletes on healthy lifestyle choices and attempt to identify potential health issues. When health issues are discovered they are shared with guardians and, when asked, SOKS will work with caregivers to develop a follow-up plan with a health professional (refer to Provider Directory)

Disciplines currently offered;

- Special Smiles (dental)
- Health Promotion (healthy living)
- Opening Eyes (ophthalmology)
- Healthy Hearing (audiology)
- Fit Feet (podiatry)
- FUNfitness (physical therapy)

Disciplines to be offered in the future;

- Healthy YOUNG Athletes (healthy living)
- Strong Minds (counseling)
- Medfest (physicals)

Health Messengers

Athletes who are trained to serve as health and wellness leaders, educators, advocates and role models within their Special Olympics communities, as well as the community at large

Health Messengers lead their teams, families, friends and communities to pursue healthy lifestyles, and advocate for healthcare providers and governments to adopt inclusive policies around health, wellness services, education and resources for people with intellectual disabilities

Applications are accepted **April 1st - May 31st**

- <https://forms.gle/vvpVPn9wZttU7T8GA>

Training includes four, one-hour evening training sessions in July

Graduation occurs beginning of October, annually

Program Resources

Fit 5

- Fit 5 and Fitness Cards have been valuable resources for Programs looking to expand their fitness programming and initiatives. The resources were designed to be utilized with flexibility, giving Programs the opportunity to integrate and implement the resources in a way that aligns with their current goals and objectives. <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/fit-5>

High 5 for Fitness

- High 5 for Fitness is a set of resources for youth ages 8 – 21 to help you take control of your own fitness by making healthy choices. Being fit means that you eat well, drink plenty of water, and move a lot every day. <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/high-5>

Other Program Models

- SOfit, UNIFIED Fitness Clubs, and Fit Families and Friends
- <https://resources.specialolympics.org/health/fitness/program-models>

Request Form

- If you are in need of assistance with implementation of different Health and Fitness programs and activities or are in need of equipment/funding, please feel free to use this Form and a Health and Fitness staff member will reach out to you.
- <https://forms.gle/bKLFnVKDSYuHs2sh9>

Reporting Form

- If you implement any of your own Health and Fitness activities (or any of the above) within your Program, please use this link to report on such, for administrative purposes.
- <https://forms.gle/bJnfS3TuOb7sXrEW9>

Young Athletes

An innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, ages 2-7, designed to introduce them to the world of sports, prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age 8.

- Focuses on the development of fundamental physical skills through general fitness and recreational activities.
- Occurs once a week for 8 weeks or twice a week for 4 weeks.
- One-hour, family-friendly sessions.
- Activities are designed to be used by parents in the home or a preschool/school environment, with a playgroup or in a one-on-one situation.
- Those opting in are provided an activity kit, along with user friendly instructions, to take home and continue working on their skills with their families.

We are always looking for potential families to be involved, volunteers willing to be trained to facilitate clinics in their region, and sites to host the Young Athletes™ Programs.

- If you are interested in hosting a Young Athlete program in your city, contact Erin McDaniel at mcdaniele@soks.org.

Teaching and Promoting Self Advocacy Among Your Athletes

Special Olympics



What Is Self-Advocacy?

"Self-advocacy teaches us how to make decisions and choices that affect our lives." -SARTAC Self Advocacy Center

- Self-advocacy is the practice of supporting a cause or standing up for something you believe in.
- Have you ever questioned people's beliefs or perception of your abilities? That is self-advocacy.
- Have you ever taken responsibility for decisions that could affect your life? That is also self-advocacy.
- Self-advocacy can look different for everyone in every setting. The goal in every instance of self-advocacy is to take control of decisions, choices, and situations that affect you.
- Self-advocacy allows you to be an active participant in your life!

Special Olympics



Why is it important for our Athletes?

Self-advocacy can help bring about change in unjust situations, it fights discrimination, and it supports inclusion.

- The common adage of “knowledge = power” rings true when it comes to self-advocacy
- Encouraging athletes to be curious about their health, their finances, their needs, the way society perceives disability, and more will help them to take an active role in life decisions and the community.

Special Olympics



How can you teach these skills through sport?

Encourage Self-Awareness

- Help athletes identify their strengths and weaknesses
- Help athletes identify support needs or adaptations that would help them be successful

Support Critical Thinking

- When an athlete encounters a barrier in the sport or in other areas of life, encourage critical thinking about solutions/adaptations
- Engage athletes in problem-solving to overcome their barrier or meet their needs

Build Self-Esteem

- When you notice self-advocacy occurring, offer encouragement
- A confident athlete is more likely to be a confident and successful self-advocate

Special Olympics



Self-Advocacy Resources

For athletes and coaches to learn more

- <https://www.selfadvocacyinfo.org/resources/organization-resources/>
- <https://sackonline.org/>

Self-advocacy for various life stages and goals

- <http://www.selfadvocacyonline.org/learning/>

Self-advocacy webinars

- <https://www.sabeusa.org/resources/sabe-webinars/>

Parent/coach resources for teaching

- <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/priority-selfadvocacy/>

Printable resources from the SOKS website

- <https://soks.org/resources/> Search for "Appointment Organizing Guide" or "Common Insurance Terms"

Special Olympics



SOKS appreciates the time and talents volunteers give to our organization.

By volunteering you are making a difference in the lives of our athletes. The impact of your service goes beyond the playing field.

Special Olympics



Athlete Oath

“Let me win,
But if I cannot win,
Let me be brave in the attempt.”

Special Olympics



Next Step

Complete the General Orientation Quiz at

<https://soks.vsysweb.com/pages/tool/live.webapp:GENORIENTATION>

Special Olympics

