

Welcome to the Volunteer Orientation

Special Olympics
Kentucky



Welcome



You are about to start a unique opportunity that will bring you into contact with some very talented athletes, find out things you never knew about yourself , and experiences that you will never forget.

We here at Special Olympics Kentucky have a saying that “The athletes are why we exist but our volunteers are how we exist.” Whether your responsibility is to coach, help raise funds, or perform any number of other tasks, without your help, Kentucky athletes would not be able to experience the high quality training and competition that you as volunteers allow to be made a reality.

Thank you for your commitment to Special Olympics Kentucky Athletes, families, and friends. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Harville".

Justin Harville

Volunteer Services Director

Goals of this Orientation



1. To understand the Special Olympics Mission.
2. Know the difference between Special Olympics and other sports organizations.
3. Identify the **THREE** principal factors of divisioning.
4. Understand athlete advancement.
5. Know the opportunities for volunteering.

Special Olympics Mission

“Eunice Kennedy Shriver is a pioneer who literally changed the way persons with intellectual disabilities are treated and viewed, not only in the United States, but in Africa and around the world.”

—Nelson Mandela, President, South Africa

Special Olympics
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Our Message to the World



Special Olympics is a global movement that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports, every day around the world. Using sports as the catalyst and programming around health and education, Special Olympics is fighting inactivity, injustice and intolerance. As a result people with intellectual disabilities become accepted and valued members of their communities, which leads to a more respectful and inclusive society for all.

Special Olympics Mission



To provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities by giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills, and friendships, with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the **community**.

Vision and Oath



Our vision is a world where every person, regardless of their ability or disability, is accepted, welcomed and valued! We strive to create an atmosphere where each individual can contribute to the strength and goodness of his/her family and community. Through the vast array of programs offered by SOKY, we hope to improve the quality of life for people with intellectual disabilities, instilling new attitudes of self-confidence and self-worth and we hope to educate the general public about the value and talents of every human being.

Special Olympics Oath:

Let me win; but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.

Our Values



SPORTSMANSHIP WITH JOY We believe in the transformative power of sports. We embrace the purity of sports at all levels as we witness incredible personal athletic triumphs that shatter stereotypes.

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

We empower athletes to be contributing and respected members of Special Olympics and society. We support athlete-leaders on and off the field.

UNITY

We are united in our commitment to inclusion, respect and dignity. We build communities of acceptance: loving families, inspired employees, coaches, volunteers and fans. We are one Movement, across nearly every community and country.

BRAVERY

We live our athlete oath: "Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

PERSEVERANCE

We are capable, tenacious, and resilient. We don't give up on ourselves or each other

Special Olympics Facts



- Founded by **Eunice Kennedy Shriver**
- **1968** - First International Special Olympics Games held at Soldier Field in Chicago, 26 States and Canada, 1,000 athletes compete in Track and Field and Aquatics.
- **1971** The U.S. Olympic Committee gives Special Olympics official approval as one of only two organizations authorized to use the name “Olympics” in the United States.
- SO Movement includes more than **4.4 Million athletes**

Optional ESPN 30 for 30 video

- Highly recommended



Special Olympics founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver took her anger over the way her intellectually disabled sister was treated and turned it into a movement that changed the world. This is her story...



[Click
here to
watch](#)

Special Olympics Facts...



- More than 80% of the 4.4 Million live outside the United States
- 33.5% of athletes are adults (22 years of age or older)
- 1 million coaches and volunteers
- More than 70,000 competitions each year (roughly 190/day)
- Programs in more than 180 countries
- Athletes benefit physically, mentally, and socially from participating in Special Olympics

Special Olympics Kentucky Facts



- Year round sports training and competition in 15 Olympic type sports
- Serving over 7,400 athletes
- 9 Individual Sports Areas & 3 Team Sports Regions
- 10 State Level Competitions yearly
- Over 350 additional competitions at local, area, and regional levels
- State wide Polar Bear Plunges, Truck/Plane Pulls, and yearly raffles with the support of the Law Enforcement Torch Run assist in funding the Kentucky Program.

Knowing & Understanding
the difference...

Special Olympics
Kentucky



Special Olympics and Paralympics



Special Olympics and Paralympics are two separate organizations recognized by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). They are similar in that they both focus on sport for athletes with a disability and are run by international non-profit organizations. Apart from that, **Special Olympics and the Paralympics differ in three main areas: 1)** the disability categories of the athletes that they work with, **2)** the criteria and philosophy under which athletes participate, and **3)** the structure of their respective organizations.

The Athletes



To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, athletes must have an intellectual disability; a cognitive delay, or a development disability, that is, functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills.

Paralympics welcomes athletes from six main disability categories: amputee, cerebral palsy, intellectual disability, visually impaired, spinal injuries and Les Autres (French for "the others") To participate in the Paralympic Games, athletes have to fulfill certain criteria and meet certain qualifying standards in order to be eligible.

Sports Philosophy



Special Olympics believes deeply in the power of sports to help all who participate to fulfill their potential and does not exclude any athlete based upon qualifying scores, but rather divisions the athletes based on those scores for fair competition against others of like ability.

To participate in the Paralympic Games, athletes have to fulfill certain criteria and meet certain qualifying standards in order to be eligible. The Paralympics are about elite performance sport, where athletes go through a stringent qualification process so that the best, or highest qualified based on performance, can compete at the Games.

Structure



Special Olympics is a global movement leading the world of sport with intellectual disabilities and is focused on building a worldwide network of athletes of all ability levels who compete in sports while creating communities of leaders committed to inclusion, acceptance and dignity for all

The Paralympics are run by the IPC or International Paralympics Committee. As the international representative organization of sport for athletes with a disability, the IPC comprises elected representatives from around the world. The General Assembly, its highest decision-making body, includes around 165 member nations, represented through their National Paralympic Committees, and four disability-specific organizations.

So What makes Special Olympics Unique?



- A variety of sports opportunities are provided for **all ability levels**
- Ability groupings are created through a process called **divisioning** to provide equitable competition for all athletes within each division or competitive level
- Awards are **provided to all** participants who compete

THREE Principle Factors of divisioning...

Special Olympics
Kentucky





What is divisioning?

- The system of divisioning serves as the foundation of fair and equitable competitions for athletes of all ability levels
- Divisioning provides all competitors with a chance to excel
- No more than 8 athletes or teams per division
- In every division athletes are grouped by **age**, **gender** and **ability**



Why Special Olympics Enforces Rules



Special Olympics competition is based on the principle that the enforcement of the Official rules is essential for athletes to develop to their full potential!

When we enforce the rules of the sport, we do the following:

- › **Protect the rights of the athletes to fair and equal competition.**
- › **Uphold the integrity of the sport and the worldwide Special Olympics movement.**
- › **Provide athletes with a safe competition environment**
- › **Provide a critical foundation for setting goals and standards.**
- › **Prepare athletes for other community sports programs.**
- › **Prepare our athletes for every day life!**

Who Are Special Olympic Athletes?

Special Olympics
Kentucky



What is an Intellectual Disability?



According to the definition by the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), an individual is considered to have an intellectual disability (previously termed mental retardation) based on the following three criteria:

1. Intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75;
2. Significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas; and
3. The condition manifests itself before the age of 18.

What is an Intellectual Disability?...



Adaptive skill areas are those daily living skills needed to live, work and play in the community. The definition includes 10 adaptive skills: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics, community use and work.

Adaptive skills are assessed in the person's typical environment across all aspects of an individual's life. A person with limits in intellectual functioning who does not have limits in adaptive skill areas may not be diagnosed as having an intellectual disability.

"Children with intellectual disabilities grow into adults with intellectual disabilities; they do not remain "eternal children"

Statement of Eligibility



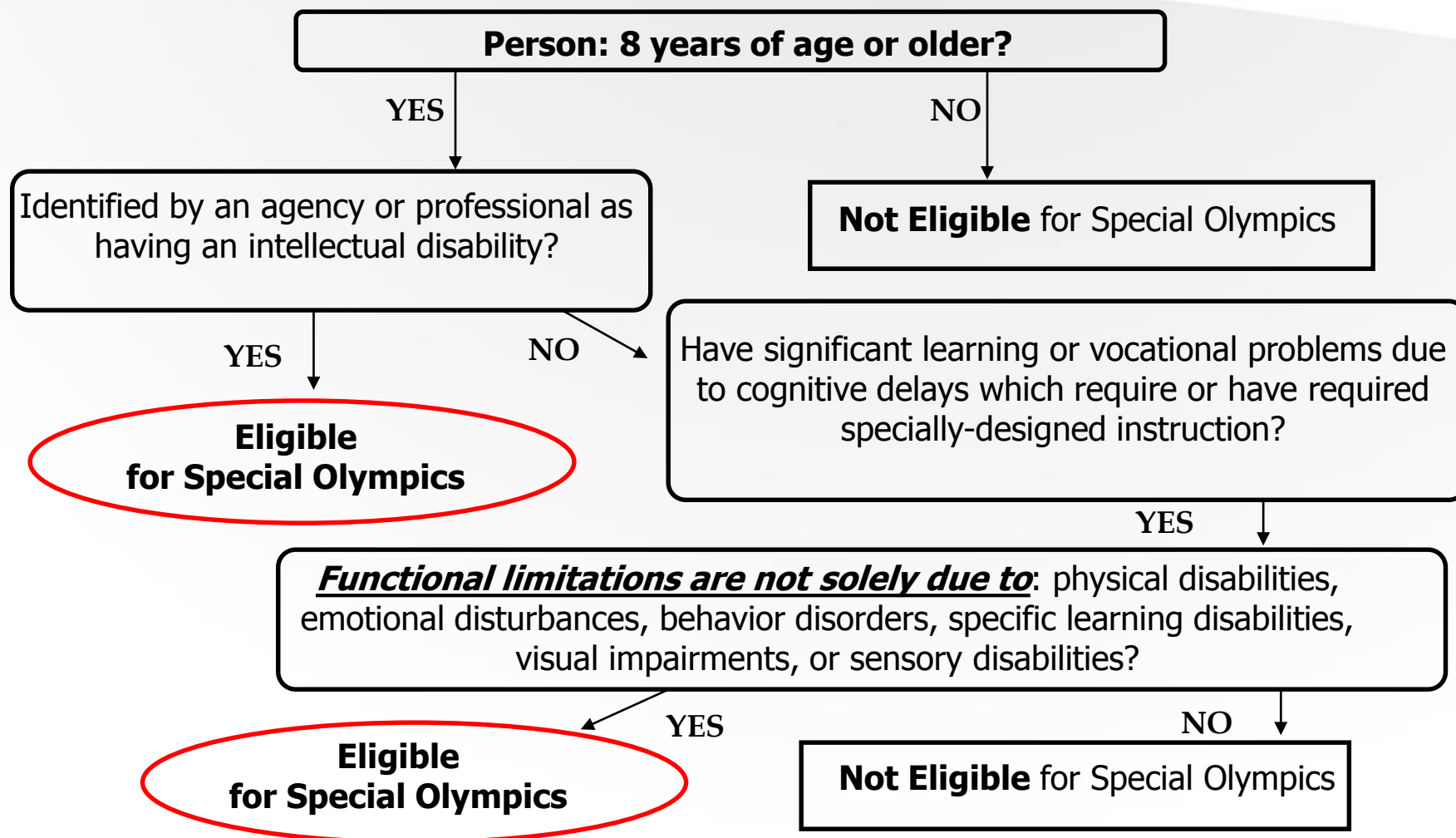
A person is eligible to participate in Special Olympics if they have been **identified by an agency of professional** as having intellectual disabilities as determined by their localities.

The minimum age requirement for participation in Special Olympics competition is **eight years of age**.

Special Olympics also offers the Young Athletes™ Program, an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 2-7, which engages young athletes through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development while also introducing them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age eight.



Statement of Eligibility...





FYI on Athlete Medicals

- All athletes are required to have a current medical on file at the SOKY office.
- All coaches are required to carry a copy of each athlete's medical with them at practices and competitions in the event medical information is needed to be provided to emergency medical staff such as the EMS.

Deadline for Athlete Medicals:

- Due on the Thursday before the event by 4:00 p.m. **NO EXCEPTIONS**
- Medicals are good for three (3) years from the date of the physician's signature.
- Every Medical turned into the state office **requires a physician's signature.**

Special Olympics KY Programs and Movement

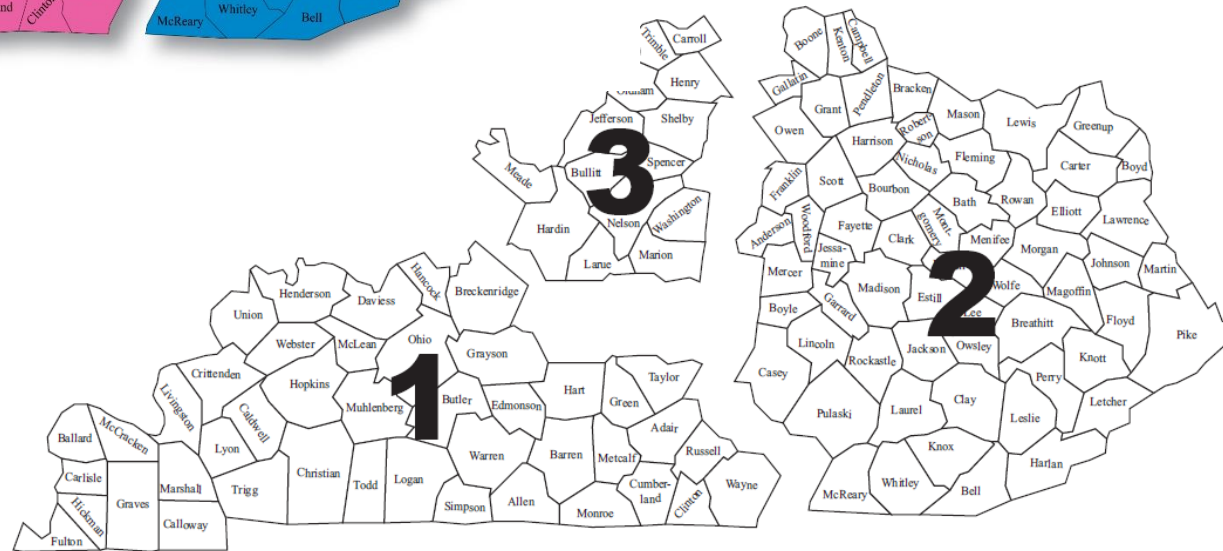
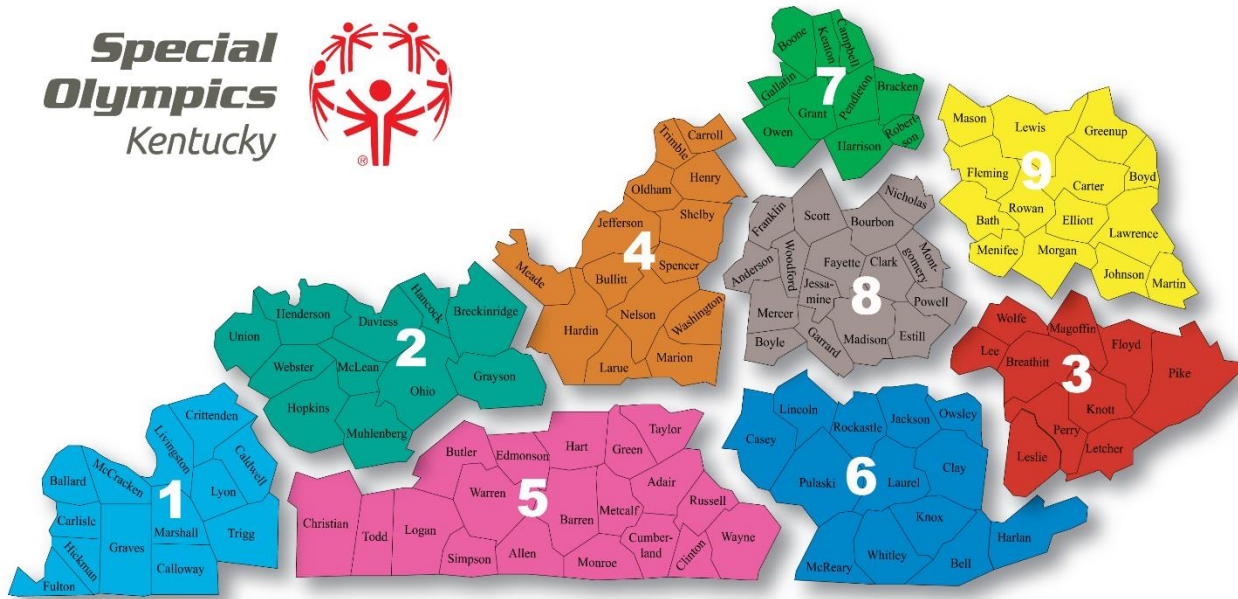
Special Olympics
Kentucky



State Area Map - Individual Sports



**Special
Olympics**
Kentucky



Regional Map - Team Sports

Sports Season Calendar



Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
	Spring Season										
					Summer Season						
							Fall Season				
Winter										Season	

Spring Season:

(Feb. to June) Aquatics, Bocce, Rhythmic Gymnastics, Track & Field, Soccer.

Summer Season:

(June to Sept.) Golf, Softball.

Fall Season:

(Aug. to Dec.) Flag-Football, Bowling, Equestrian, Artistic Gymnastics.

Winter Season:

(Nov. to March) Alpine Skiing, Snowshoeing, Basketball, Cheerleading.

Project UNIFY



Project UNIFY is an education-based program that uses the sports and education initiatives of Special Olympics to activate youth to promote school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity, and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.



Special Olympics
Project UNIFY®



Project UNIFY is for students, teachers and educators who believe:



- there can be more opportunities for young people of all ages and ability levels in school to make friends and work together through volunteering and service-learning.
- students can increase their knowledge, skills and comfort in forming positive relationships with students with intellectual disabilities and can work together to remove social barriers to inclusion.
- students with intellectual disabilities can become a part of the core fabric of their schools and communities.
- education leaders can develop policies which support positive and inclusive school climates.

Find out More...



Find out more about Project UNIFY and its movement by visiting the Project Unify webpage.

[Click Here to Visit](#)

Special Olympics Kentucky

Project Unify
Building Stronger School Communities

Additional Information
[Students](#)
[Educators](#)
[School Registration Form](#)
[Project Unify Kentucky Tool Kit](#)

DONATE NOW

With 15 official sports, there's something for everybody! Get your athlete started today. Click to request registration information.

Become a Special Olympics volunteer. We guarantee you'll change a life – Probably your own. Click to get started!

Ballard High School won the top division of the Jefferson County Unified Basketball League in 2015.

The Murray High School Unified track relay team became the first to participate in the Kentucky State Track Meet as part of a new initiative with



Unified Sports



Unified Sports is a program that combines approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes with athletes without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Age and ability of athletes and partners is specifically defined on a sport by sport basis.

Unified Sports is an important program because it expands sports opportunities for athletes and partners seeking new challenges. In addition, Unified Sports dramatically increases inclusion in the community by helping to break down barriers that have historically kept people with and without intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics Kentucky offers Traditional Unified in the following Sports:

- Aquatics
- Bowling
- Golf
- Cheerleading
- Track & Field
- Bocce

WE PLAY UNIFIED



In 2014 Special Olympics and the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) partnered to sponsor an inclusive program where students with and without intellectual disabilities train and compete together for their alma mater.

Currently Unified Track and Field is offered across the state.



The Murray High School Unified track relay team became the first to participate in the Kentucky State Track Meet as part of a new initiative with the KHSAA.



Special Olympics Young Athletes™



Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics. Young Athletes is designed to meet the physical and developmental needs of children in the areas of physical activity and play. This program is loaded with opportunities for language development, social interaction and learning numbers, colors, shapes, and more.



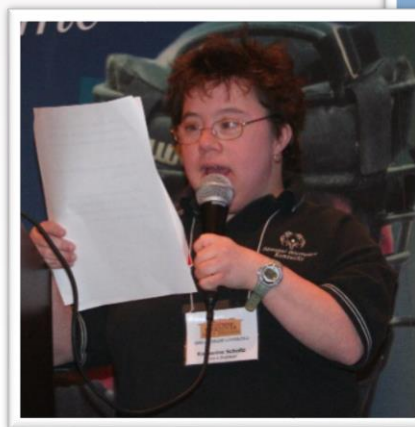


Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs)

The purpose of Athlete Leadership Programs is empowering athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to undertake meaningful leadership roles, influence change in the Special Olympics movement and create inclusive communities around the world.

Currently Athlete Leaders in Kentucky lead as:

- Volunteers
- Board Member
- On Input Councils
- Global Messengers
- Coaches
- Officials
- Fundraisers / Donors



Coach Education Program



This program adheres to the quality standards and competencies outlined by Special Olympics, Inc. that are necessary and essential for being a Special Olympics Coach.

Coach refers to an individual who assumes responsibility for athletes, actively trains athletes, and works directly with athletes on the field of play.

Coaches not only provide skills training for athletes but they are also role models and character builders. Coaches give Special Olympics athletes the most immediate awareness of their own worth, ability, courage and capacity to grow and improve.

ALL coaches must become certified under the Coach Education Program by the conclusion of their second season coaching.

Visit: <http://www.soky.org/coachcertification.htm> to find out more.



Healthy Athletes



Caring For Special Olympics Athletes Beyond The Field Of Play

Special Olympics International began the Healthy Athletes Initiative in 1996. The mission is to improve, through better health and fitness, the athlete's ability to train and compete. To reach this goal programs involving dentistry, optometry, audiology, health promotion and physical therapy came together to provide services at Special Olympics events. The program provides training for health care professionals and students about the special needs of patients with intellectual disabilities.



Special Olympics Kentucky at the present time offers four healthy athlete programs: **Special Smiles, Opening Eyes, Healthy Hearing, FUNfitness and Fit Feet** . The programs are conducted at the SOKY Summer Games each June.



“Every time I come away from a Healthy Athletes event, I am pumped up and ready to change the world. Healthy Athletes helps athletes achieve great things they never thought possible—on and off the playing field.”

—Dr. Matthew Holder, MD, MBA, Executive Director of the American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry and Healthy Athletes Global Medical Advisor and Special Olympics Kentucky Board Member and Immediate Past Chair

How do athletes Benefit?

Special Olympics
Kentucky



TRAINING ATHLETES



Training of athletes is very important to the success of any Special Olympics program and mission.

- Athletes are expected to compete in events according to the rules and competition is expected to be fair and evenly contested.
- Athletes are expected to have trained a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks prior to their first competition.

A good training program challenges an athlete to do his/her own personal best.

- Through good training and coaching athletes should always be challenged to move to the next level.
- The time spent training helps to build athlete confidence and strength to preform at their highest ability levels during competition.



Proven Benefits

- Improved strength, stamina, & coordination
- Improved self-esteem & self-confidence
- Healthier life styles and increased health awareness.
- Special Olympics Athletes gain high chance of being employed.
- Greater independent participation in community



Words Matter

Special Olympics
Kentucky



Words matter.

~ Language Guidelines



Words can open doors to cultivate the understanding and respect that enable people with disabilities to lead fuller, more independent lives.

Words can also create barriers or stereotypes that are not only demeaning to people with disabilities, but also rob them of their individuality. The following language guidelines have been developed by experts for use when writing or speaking about individuals with intellectual disabilities:

Appropriate Terminology

- Refer to participants in Special Olympics as “Special Olympics athletes” rather than “Special Olympians” or “Special Olympic athletes.”
- Refer to individuals, persons or people with intellectual disabilities, rather than “intellectually disabled people” or “the intellectually disabled.”
- A person has intellectual disabilities, rather than is “suffering from,” is “afflicted with” or is “a victim of” mental retardation/intellectual disabilities.

Appropriate Terminology..cont



- A person has intellectual disabilities, rather than is “suffering from,” is “afflicted with” or is “a victim of” mental retardation/intellectual disabilities.
- Distinguish between adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Use adults or children, or older or younger athletes.
- A person “uses” a wheelchair, rather than is “confined” or “restricted to” a wheelchair.
- “Down syndrome” has replaced “Down’s Syndrome” and “mongoloid.”
- Refer to participants in Special Olympics as athletes. In no case should the word athletes appear in quotation marks.
- In formal documents, refer to persons with a disability in the same style as persons without a disability: full name on first reference and last name on subsequent references. Do not refer to an individual with intellectual disabilities as “Bill” rather than the journalistically correct “Bill Smith” or “Smith.”
- A person has a physical disability rather than crippled.
- Use the words “Special Olympics” when referring to the worldwide Special Olympics movement

Terminology to Avoid



- Do not use the label "kids" when referring to Special Olympics athletes. Adult athletes are an integral part of the movement.
- Do not use the word "the" in front of Special Olympics unless describing a specific Special Olympics event or official.
- Do not use the adjective "unfortunate" when talking about persons with an intellectual disability. Disabling conditions do not have to be life-defining in a negative way.
- Do not sensationalize the accomplishments of persons with disabilities. While these accomplishments should be recognized and applauded; people in the disability rights movement have tried to make the public aware of the negative impact of referring to the achievements of people with physical or intellectual disabilities with excessive hyperbole.
- Use the word "special" with extreme care when talking about persons with intellectual disabilities. The term, if used excessively in references to Special Olympics athletes and activities, can become a cliché.

How to GET INVOLVED

Special Olympics
Kentucky



Volunteer Agreement



As a Special Olympics volunteer, I agree that while serving as a volunteer, I will:

- Provide for the general welfare, health and safety of all Special Olympics athletes and volunteers.
- Dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- Follow the established rules and guidelines of Special Olympics and/or any agency involved with Special Olympics.
- Report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the health and safety of the participants.
- Abstain from the consumption or use of all alcohol, tobacco products and illegal substances while involved with any Special Olympics event, competition or training school.
- Not engage in any inappropriate contact or relationship with athletes, volunteers or other participants of Special Olympics

Kinds of Volunteers



CLASS “A” VOLUNTEER

also be referred to as Long Term or Certified Volunteers

- Have daily interaction with athletes and are in a position of authority, supervision and trust.
- These types of volunteers include:
 - Coach
 - Head of Delegation
 - Bookkeeper
 - Assistant Coach
 - Local Coordinator
 - Chaperone
 - Board Member
 - Unified Sports® Partner
 - Committee Member

CLASS “B” VOLUNTEER

also be referred to as Day of Event Volunteers.

- Assist on the day of the event but are not necessarily in contact with the athletes on a regular basis or have supervisory responsibilities of athletes.
- These type of volunteers include:
 - Fans in the stands
 - Track Judge / Timer
 - Event Times / Scores recorder
 - Referee or Umpire
 - Announcer for Basketball or Softball Games
 - Skills Competition Assistant
 - Bowling Lane Worker
 - And many more...

Prerequisites for Class “A” and “B” Volunteers



CLASS “A” VOLUNTEER

The following items are required to become an Approved Class A Volunteer. All are able to be downloaded or completed ONLINE

- Class “A” Volunteer Application
- Volunteer Orientation Training and quiz.
- Special Olympics International Protective Behaviors course.
- CDC’s “Heads Up” Concussion Training for Special Olympics Kentucky and *quiz*.

CLASS “B” VOLUNTEER

The following items are required to become a Class B Volunteer.

- Register for a specific event confirming intent to volunteer.
- Sign in day of event and sign release for PR purposes.
Example: your photo taken and put on the SOKY website.

It is not required of Class B Volunteers to complete the Volunteer Orientation Training but is highly recommended.

Links to ALL trainings can be located by visiting
<http://www.soky.org/trainingcourses.htm>

Working With Special Olympics Athletes



- Be yourself - Use your normal voice and give support. Try not to over praise.
- Excessive hugging and kissing is NOT appropriate. Encouraging pats on the back or handshakes is also another way of praising an athlete. Let the athlete take the lead as to what recognition they would be comfortable with.
- Get to know the athlete - There may be opportunities to sit and talk to a child or an adult and get to know who they are, where they work, go to school, etc.
- Expect and encourage appropriate behavior AND sportsmanship throughout the event.

Be a Day of Event Volunteer



Day of event volunteer opportunities typically are:

- 3 to 8 hour commitments.
- On the weekend with a few opportunities throughout the week.
- Require individual event registration showing your intent to fill the select opportunity.
- Opportunities might be running a stop watch at track, recording distances, running a scoreboard.
- Majority of our opportunities do not require any previous sports knowledge. Skilled opportunities are available such as a softball/baseball umpire.

Become a Coach

Pictured 2014 Coach of the Year – Jeff Johnson with Athlete of the Year Tee Salinas



HEAD COACH: Assumes overall responsibility for the delegation, team, etc. He/She must be at least 18 years of age and a responsible individual who can commit time on at least a weekly basis throughout the respective sport season. (Coach Education Certification is required.)

ASSISTANT COACH: He/She must be at least 16 years of age and a responsible individual who can commit time on a least a weekly basis throughout the respective sport season. (Coach Education Certification is required.)

LETR – Law Enforcement Torch Run



The mission of the Kentucky Law Enforcement Torch Run® (LETR) for Special Olympics is to raise funds for and awareness of Special Olympics Kentucky. Law enforcement officers from throughout the state, carry the Flame of Hope in honor of the Special Olympics athletes in their area and around the world.

Kentucky: The Torch Run began in Kentucky in 1986 with law enforcement personnel from federal, military, state, county and local agencies participating in a year-long fundraising campaign and has raised over \$1.9 million for Special Olympics Kentucky since its inception.

Official LETR Signature Events

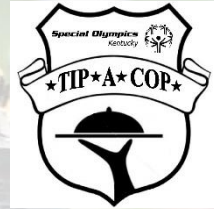


Cops On Doughnut Shops:
Officers take to the roofs of Krispy Kreme retail stores across the country where they collect donations from customers as they eat, sleep and play on the rooftops of Krispy Kreme stores.

Annual LETR T-Shirt Sales:



LETR shirts are produced each year and identify the top fundraising agencies of the past year in print on the back of each shirt for all of Kentucky to see. You can sell them as a fundraiser or buy them for your departments.



Tip-A-Cop:
Law enforcement officers and volunteers shed their badges and take up trays to help staffs take care of restaurant customers from all over Kentucky by serving and working for additional "tips" to help fund Special Olympics events.



Trivia Night:
Trivia Nights can be held anywhere and usually include 8 to 10-person teams answering 10 questions from 10 different categories. There are lots of prizes, raffles and fun and an easy way to raise funds!

Special Olympics KY Signature Events



Polar Plunges:
Get your departments involved by teaming up to take the plunge in one of six held each year. Your department is also needed for setup and logistics.



Truck/Plane Pulls:
Get your departments involved by teaming up pull a loaded UPS 18 wheeler or a DHL 767 plane. Teams with the fastest pull times receive trophies, gifts, bragging rights and help fund Special Olympic events.

As Special Olympics athlete
Ben Collins said,



“No Volunteers, No Special Olympics”



www.soky.org

Facebook www.fb.com/sokentucky

Twitter @sokentucky

**Thank You for
supporting Special
Olympics Kentucky
Athletes!**

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[Click Here to Take the](#)
Volunteer Orientation Quiz

(required to complete the course)