

# Special Olympics Ohio General Orientation

*"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."*

*-Special Olympics Athlete Oath*

**Special Olympics**  
Ohio



# Welcome to General Orientation



## Why is a General Orientation Important?

- It's important to Special Olympics Ohio to have volunteers who understand and relate to the mission of our organization. As a volunteer with Special Olympics, we hope you will become an ambassador of the organization and be an advocate for the athletes.
- In order to accomplish this, we feel it is our responsibility to deliver the information about Special Olympics to you through this orientation.



# Objectives:

- Gain a general overview of Special Olympics International and Special Olympics Ohio organizational structure and history
- Identify opportunities within Special Olympics
- Identify Healthy Athletes and Health & Fitness Resources and Opportunities
- Become a well informed, dedicated volunteer who advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities

# Special Olympics Mission



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

<b>Components</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Year-round Training and Competition</li><li>• Olympic-type sports</li><li>• Leadership</li><li>• Health Initiatives</li><li>• Individuals with intellectual disabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical Fitness</li><li>• Courage &amp; Joy</li><li>• Sharing gifts &amp; skills</li><li>• Friendship<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Families</li><li>• Athletes</li><li>• Community</li></ul></li></ul>



# Philosophy and Vision

## **If individuals with intellectual disabilities can:**

- Receive appropriate instruction and encouragement
- Receive constant training
- Compete among those with equal abilities

## **The results can be:**

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

# History



- **June 1960** Eunice Kennedy Shriver starts a summer day camp for children and adults with intellectual disabilities at her home in Maryland
- **19-20 July 1968** The First International Special Olympics Games are held in Chicago's Soldier Field where 1,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities from 26 states and Canada compete in track and field, swimming, and floor hockey.
- **December 1971** The United States Olympic Committee gives Special Olympics official approval to use the name "Olympics," one of only two organizations.
- **February 1988** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) signs a historic agreement officially endorsing and recognizing Special Olympics.



# History



- **July 1988** The Special Olympics Unified Sports initiative is launched at Special Olympics conferences in Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California.
- **January 1997** Healthy Athletes becomes an official Special Olympics initiative, providing health-care services to Special Olympics athletes worldwide.
- **2006** Special Olympics surpasses its goal of doubling the number of athletes who participate worldwide to 2.5 million participants. With sports at the core, the movement stands as a leader in advancing rights and opportunities and policy change for its athletes in 165 countries worldwide.
- **2 October 2007** The 12<sup>th</sup> Special Olympics World Games in Shanghai, China debut a new initiative called Young Athletes.
- **Statistics of 2017:**
  - Athletes & Unified Partners: 6 million
  - Competitions: 103,540
  - Countries: 174
  - Athlete Leaders: 43,355
  - Volunteers: 1.1 million
  - Torch Runners: 109,770

# Who is Eunice Kennedy Shriver?



- Founder of Special Olympics
- Born in Brookline, Massachusetts
- Daughter of Joseph P. Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy
- Recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom
- Inducted into the National Women's Hall of Fame in 1998



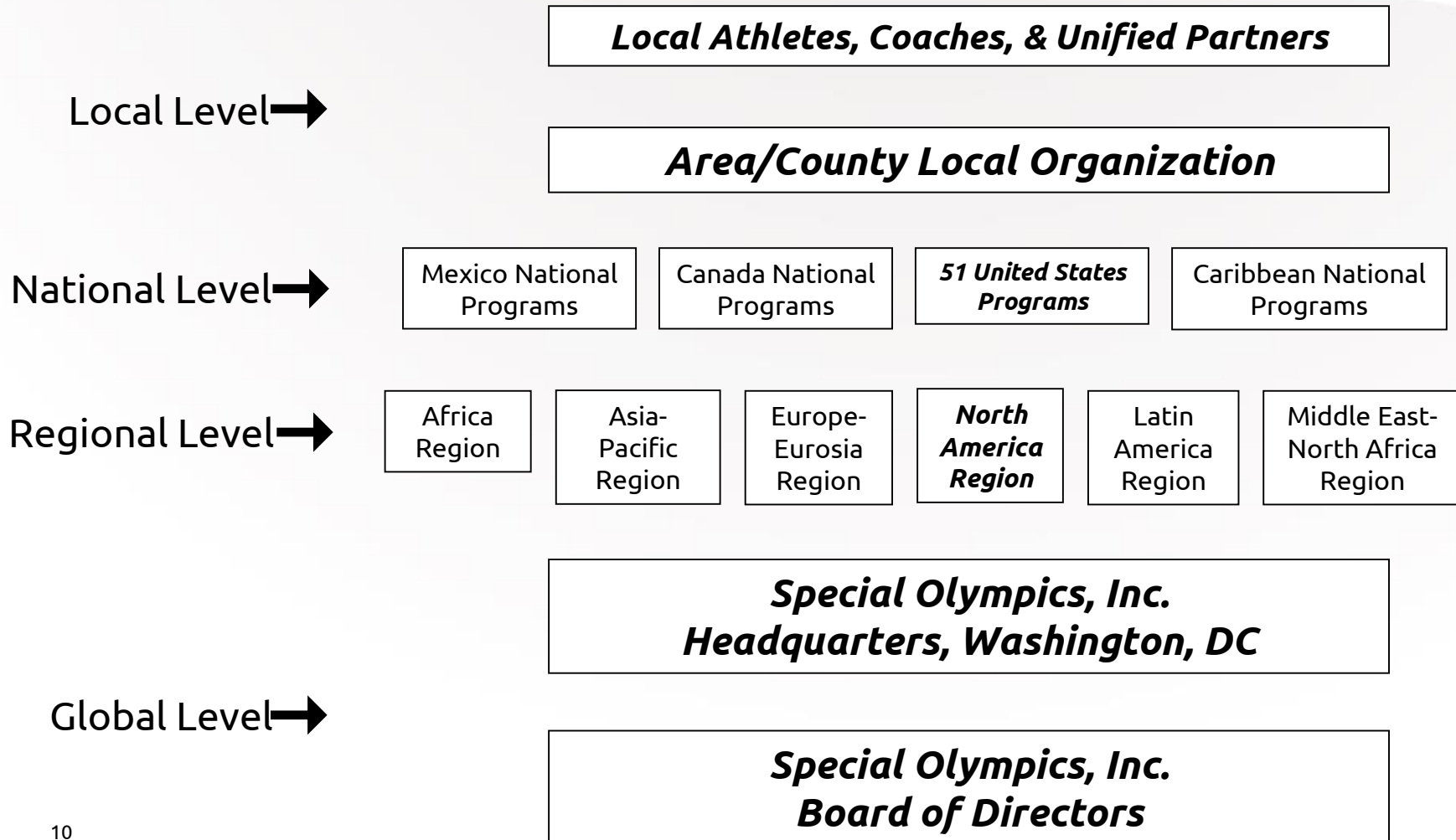




# Special Olympics Structure

- Special Olympics International. is the world governing body of Special Olympics
- Based in Washington D.C.
- Headquarters is staffed by approximately 80 people in 8 different departments
- Special Olympic headquarters oversees the management of all World and Multi-National Games and coaching education

# Organizational Structure



# Special Olympics Ohio Structure



## Regional Managers:

- Northwest Region (Blue): Angela Luke
- Northeast Region (Green): Libby Schafer
- Southwest Region (Red): Debi Williams
- South Central Region (White): John Esson & Andrea Headley

# Special Olympic Participants



## Who is eligible to participate in Special Olympics?

- Person's 8 years of age or older
- Those who have been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability
- Those who have registered to participate in Special Olympics

# Identifying Persons with Intellectual disabilities



A person is considered to have an intellectual disability for purposes of determining his or her eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

- The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability as determined by their localities; or
- The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligent quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures which are generally accepted within the professional community in that Accredited Program's nation as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
- The person has a closely related developmental disability. A "closely related developmental disability" means having functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (such as in recreation, work, independent living, self-direction, or self-care). However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral, or emotional disability, or a specific learning or sensory disability, are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes, but may be eligible to volunteer for Special Olympics.

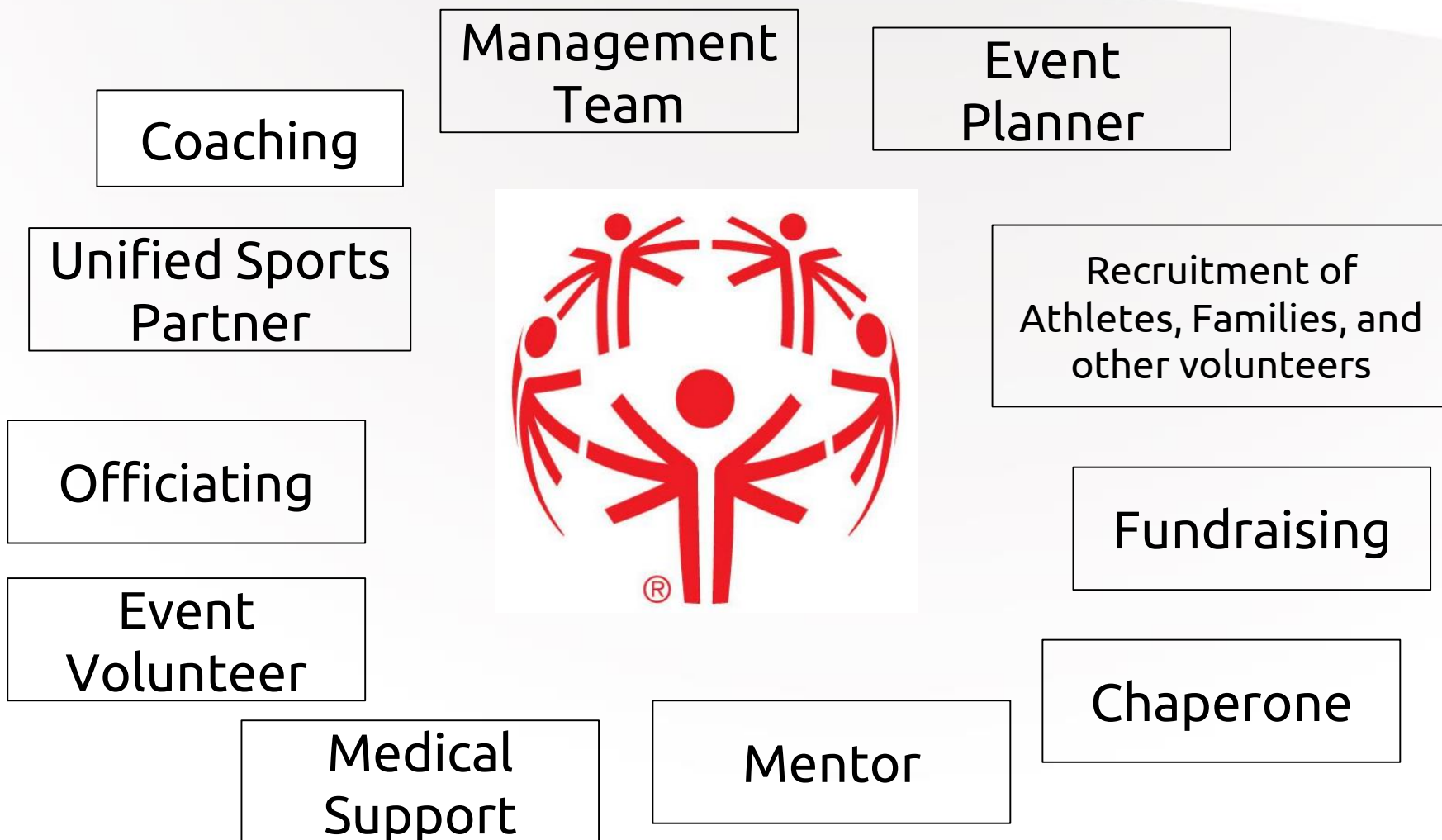
# Special Olympic Participants



Participants with Down Syndrome and Atlanto-axial Instability are prohibited from the following activities:

- Squat lifts
- Artistic gymnastics
- Soccer
- Flag football
- Basketball
- Pentathlon
- Alpine skiing
- Snowboarding

# Role of Special Olympic Ohio Volunteers





# What type of volunteer are you?

## **Class A Volunteers**

Class A volunteers are anyone who...

- has direct contact with athletes, or
- is in a position of authority, supervision or trust of athletes, or
- handles substantial amounts of cash or assets of Special Olympics

Positions include coaches, chaperones, committee members, Unified Sports Partners, Games Management Team (GMT) members, medical staff etc.

## **Class B / Day of Event Volunteers**

Class B or Day of Event volunteers assists with competition or special events

Positions include staging escorts, competition aide (i.e. scorekeeper) and awards presenters



# Class A Volunteer Requirements



To help ensure the safety of both athletes and volunteers, Special Olympics requires all Class A volunteers to participate in the Protective Behaviors online course. The course provides information intended to detect and prevent physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

## **Requirements to be a Class A volunteers include:**

- Complete this **General Orientation**
- Complete a **Class A Volunteer Form**
- Submit and pass **background check**
- Complete the **Protective Behaviors** course

# How Special Olympics is Unique



Special Olympics is more similar than different from other sports organizations. However, there are five areas that make Special Olympics unique.

1. Does not charge a fee to athletes or their families to train or compete
2. Offers sports opportunities for athletes of all ability levels
3. Groups athletes based on ability for equitable competition; a process called divisioning. Age and gender are also considered for divisioning.
4. All participants receive an award for their efforts.
5. Advancement to higher levels of competition is random based on order of finish for each division.

# Sports Offered in Ohio



Alpine Skiing

Athletics

Basketball

Bocce

Bowling

Competitive Cheerleading

Cross Country Skiing

Cycling

Equestrian

Figure Skating

Flag Football

Golf

Gymnastics-Artistic &

Rhythmic

Powerlifting

Roller Skating

Speed Skating

Soccer

Softball

Swimming

Tennis

Volleyball

# Special Olympic Rules



- All Special Olympics competitions follow the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. These rules have been adapted from official rules of the National Governing Body or International Federation of each sport offered by Special Olympics. Then they are approved by the Special Olympics Sports Rules Committee. After approval, the rules are set forth in the Official Special Olympics Rules books (Summer and Winter).
- Rules are based upon existing governing body and community sports organization rules in order to facilitate athletes transition into the community or school sports activities.



# Competition for All Abilities

- Special Olympics aims to provide a variety of competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities by offering events of various degrees of difficulty and challenge.
- The Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) provides participation for individuals with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities requiring the greatest assistance and support.
  - An example of an event would be the 25m Assisted Walk
- In team sports, lower-ability athletes who are not yet ready for team play can participate in Individual Skills Competitions.



# Divisioning

Athletes or teams are divisioned (grouped to encourage competitive play) using the following basic procedure:

1. **Divide by Gender:** Male, Female or Combined (under some circumstances)
2. **Divide by Age**
3. **Divide by Ability**
  - Pre-competition information and scores are used to place individuals or teams into preliminary divisions.
  - On-site preliminary events (timed heats or team observations) are conducted to verify or modify divisions for the final competition.
4. **Combining Groups:**
  - Age groups and/or males and females may be combined if this achieves a closer matching of ability.



# Code of Conduct: Athlete

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

## **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, competition 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 my Program or a Games Organizing Committee may not allow me to participate.

# Code of Conduct: Coach



All Special Olympics coaches agree to observe the following code:

## **Respect for Others**

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, coaches, other volunteers, friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

## **Ensure a Positive Experience**

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries and final heats in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.



# Code of Conduct: Coach



## **Act Professionally and Take Responsibility for My Actions**

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, parents, spectators, media, etc.).
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke or take illegal drugs while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competition or during Games.
- I will refrain from any form of personal abuse towards athletes and others, including inappropriate or unwanted sexual advances on others, verbal, physical and emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy on the prohibition of coaches dating athletes.

## **Quality Service to the Athletes**

- I will seek continual improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a plan for a regular training program.
- I will keep copies of the medical, training and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics Sports Rules for my sport(s).

# Code of Conduct: Coach



## **Health and Safety of Athletes**

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's medical form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes to seek medical advice when required.
- I will maintain the same interest and support toward sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

I understand that if I violate this Code of Conduct I will be subject to a range of consequences, up to and including being prohibited from coaching in Special Olympics.



# Benefits of Becoming Certified

- Promote the mission of Special Olympics
- Provide your athletes with the safest and most effective training sessions possible
- Enhance your coaching skills
- Keep up to date regarding current rules and training techniques
- Insure coaching consistency worldwide
- Demonstrate program credibility



**SPORT ASSISTANT (Entry Level Requirements)**

- Class A Form / Complete Background Check
- Special Olympics General Orientation
- Protective Behaviors Training
- Concussion Course

**LEVEL 1 – CERTIFIED COACH (Core Coaching Knowledge)**

<b>Traditional Special Olympics</b>	<b>Unified Sports</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Sport Assistant requirements</li> <li>• Coaching Special Olympics Athletes – online course via Human Kinetics Coach Education (formerly ASEP) or in person training conducted by certified trainer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Sport Assistant requirements</li> <li>• Coaching Unified Sports – online course via NFHS or in person training conducted by a certified trainer</li> </ul>

**LEVEL 2 – CERTIFIED COACH\* (Sports Specific Knowledge)**

<b>Traditional Special Olympics</b>	<b>Unified Sports</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Level 1 requirements</li> <li>• Sports Specific Course – online for those sports where online courses have been developed or in-person sport specific training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Level 1 requirements</li> <li>• Sport Specific Course – online for those sports where online courses have been developed or in-person sport specific training</li> </ul>

**\* NOTE: Level required of Head Coaches attending USA National Games in the specific sport being coached.**

**LEVEL 3 – CERTIFIED COACH\*\* (Advanced Coaching Knowledge)**

- All Level 2 requirements
- First Aid/CPR/AED
- Principles of Coaching Course- online via WVU or in person training conducted by a certified trainer

**\*\*Note: Level required of Head Coaches attending World Games**

# Special Olympic Unified Sports



The Special Olympics Unified Sports initiative brings together Special Olympics athletes and individuals without intellectual disabilities who are of similar age and ability to train and compete on the same team.

## **Benefits of Unified Sports:**

- Learn new sports
- Develop higher-level sports skills
- Have new competition experiences
- Experience meaningful inclusion as each athlete is ensured of playing a valued role on the team
- Socialize with peers and form friendships (the program provides a forum for positive social interaction between teammates and often leads to long lasting friendships)

# Special Olympic Unified Sports



- **Three models of Unified Sports:**
  1. Unified Sports® Competitive – Athletes and Partners of similar age and ability are teammates in competitive play
  2. Unified Sports® Player Development – Teammates of lower ability not ready for competitive play are mentored by teammates of higher ability
  3. Unified Sports® Recreation – An introduction to Unified Sports®
- **The most important aspect of Unified Sports is the principle of meaningful involvement. The principle of meaningful involvement ensures that every player is given an opportunity to contribute to the success of his or her team through their unique skills and qualities.**
- **This means that every teammate:**
  - demonstrates sufficient sport specific skills and game understanding;
  - plays a valued role on the team that emphasizes his or her personal talents;
  - has an opportunity to play without a heightened risk of injury.



# Unified Champion Schools

The Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program is aimed at promoting social inclusion through intentionally planned and implemented activities affecting systems-wide change.

## Three Components of Unified Champion Schools:

- **Inclusive Sports:** a fully inclusive sports or fitness program that combines an approximately equal number of students with and without intellectual disabilities, such as Special Olympics Unified Sports, Interscholastic Unified Sports, Unified PE or Unified Intramurals
- **Whole School Engagement:** awareness and education activities that promote inclusion and reach the majority of the school population and all students in the school have opportunities to participate through sustained school wide activities.
- **Inclusive Youth Leadership:** students with and without intellectual disabilities working together to lead and plan advocacy, awareness, and other Special Olympics and related inclusive activities throughout the school year



# Healthy Athletes

## The key objectives of Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Initiative are:

- Improve access and health care for Special Olympics athletes at event-based health screenings.
- Make referrals to local health practitioners when appropriate.
- Train health care professionals and students in the health professions about the needs and care of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Collect, analyze and disseminate data on the health status and needs of people with intellectual disabilities.
- Advocate for improved health policies and programs for person with intellectual disabilities.



FIT FEET  
(podiatry)



funFITNESS<sup>®</sup>  
(physical therapy)



HEALTH PROMOTION  
(better health & well-being)



HEALTHY HEARING  
(audiology)



MedFest<sup>®</sup>  
(sports physical exam)



OPENING EYES<sup>®</sup>  
(vision)



SPECIAL SMILES<sup>®</sup>  
(dentistry)



STRONG MINDS  
(emotional wellbeing)



# Healthy Athletes



**Healthy Athletes conducts screenings at local, regional, and state levels of competition in eight disciplines.**

- MedFest (history and physical exam)
- Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes (vision/eye health)
- Healthy Hearing (audiology)
- Special Smiles (dentistry)
- Health Promotion (prevention and nutrition)
- Strong Minds (emotional health)
- FUNfitness (physical therapy)
- Fit Feet (podiatry)

**If you are interested in hosting a Healthy Athletes Screening for your Program, please contact Amy O'Neal at [aoneal@sooh.org](mailto:aoneal@sooh.org).**

# Fitness



Special Olympics encourages individuals with ID to pursue a life of fitness through:

- Physical activity
- Nutrition
- Hydration

**If you are interested in conducting a fitness initiative for your Program please contact Amy O'Neal at [aoneal@sooh.org](mailto:aoneal@sooh.org).**



# Resources for Health & Fitness

[Fit 5](#) is a resource for any Program looking to improve fitness programming and initiatives.

[School of Strength](#) provides progressive fitness videos and tracking worksheets to serve as a resource for fitness.

[Performance Stations](#) are events held at, or near, the field of play at tournaments/competitions of Games that are designed to educate and activate athletes and their supporters in the tenets of fitness: nutrition, hydration, and physical activity.

# Young Athletes



Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), ages 2 to 7 years old providing children with activities and games that meet their individual skill and ability levels, while allowing them to play together in a fun and inclusive environment.

## Benefits of Young Athletes:

- Motor Skills
- Social, emotional and learning skills
- Sport readiness
- Acceptance

If you are interested in hosting a Young Athlete Program in in your area, please contact Hannah Lawrentz at [hlawrentz@sooh.org](mailto:hlawrentz@sooh.org).

# Athlete Leadership



The goal of Athlete Leadership is to empower athletes to develop leadership skills and utilize their voices and abilities to assume meaningful leadership roles, influence change within the Special Olympics movement, and create inclusive communities around the world.

Special Olympics Ohio has Athlete leaders who:

- Engage in public speaking opportunities
- Hold positions on committees and input councils
- Volunteer
- Become certified coaches and assistant coaches
- Organize fundraisers
- Serve as team captains and role models



# Benefits of Special Olympics

Participation in sports brings significant benefits to people with intellectual disabilities of all ages and abilities. The following benefits also reflect benefits of sports for everyone.

**Physical:** Physical fitness along with increased coordination, cardiovascular fitness, and endurance

**Mental:** Knowledge of rules and strategy along with increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and pride

**Social:** Teamwork, interaction with peers and people without intellectual disabilities, opportunity to travel and learn about other places and interests, family pride, and increased community awareness and acceptance



# Putting it All Together

- **TRAINING** is the key
- **COMPETITION** is the means
- Skill, confidence, courage & joy are the **OUTCOMES**
- Better preparation for life is the **GOAL**
- Lifelong skills & increased independence are the **RESULTS**



Thank you for devoting your time to developing our athletes. To complete your General Orientation, please complete this short quiz [HERE](#).