Special Olympics Florida
General Orientation
Welcome!

Thank you for taking the time to learn about Special Olympics Florida. We serve over 38,000 athletes and Unified partners with the help of over 27,000 volunteers and coaches.

We hope you:

• Learn about the mission of Special Olympics Florida
• Get involved in your community through Special Olympics Florida
• Help us ensure an environment of equality, respect and acceptance
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Sports training &amp; competition</td>
<td>• Physical fitness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Leadership</td>
<td>• Courage &amp; joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Health Screenings</td>
<td>• Sharing gifts &amp; skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‒ Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‒ Athletes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‒ Community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Philosophy & Vision

If individuals with intellectual disabilities can:
• Receive appropriate instruction and encouragement
• Receive constant training
• Compete among those with equal abilities

The results are:
• Personal growth
• Stronger families
• United communities
• An environment of equality, respect and acceptance
History

- Founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968
- First International Games held in July 1968 at Soldier Field in Chicago with 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competing in athletics, floor hockey and aquatics.
- In 1971 Special Olympics was given official approval to use the name “Olympics” by the IOC; one of only three global organizations (along with Junior Olympics and Paralympics).
- Now, there are more than 4.7 million Special Olympics athletes in more than 170 countries
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.

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

Local

National

Regional

Global

Local Athletes & Coaches

Area/County Sub-Programs

52 United States Programs

Canada National Program

Mexico National Program

Caribbean National Programs

North America Region

Latin America Region

Middle East-North Africa Region

Asia-Pacific Region

Europe-Eurasia Region

Africa Region

Special Olympics, Inc. Headquaters, Washington, DC

Special Olympics, Inc. Board of Directors

Special Olympics, Inc.
Special Olympics Florida is broken into 11 Areas
Special Olympics Florida Organization

Board of Directors

President/CEO

Staff
Headquarters
1915 Don Wickham Drive
Clermont, FL 34711

Local County Directors
We are a grassroots organization. The local County Director manages all local training and competition for each county.
What type of **Volunteer** are you?

**Class A Volunteers**

A Class A volunteer is 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 partners, Games Management Team (GMT) members, etc.

**Class B / Day of Event Volunteers**

A Class B or Day of Event volunteer assists with competition or fund raising events once, or a few times a year.

Positions include athlete escorts, competition aide and awards presenters.

---

**All Volunteers must be 14 years of age or older**
Special Olympics Florida strives to keep every athlete safe

Special Olympics requires all volunteers to participate in the Protective Behaviors Training Program. The program’s goal is to provide education intended to prevent physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

All Coaches, Class A Volunteers, and Support Staff must:

• Submit and pass Background Check
• Take and pass the General Orientation Course quiz
• Take and submit the Protective Behaviors online course

All of these forms are available online at www.specialolympicsflorida.org
Coach, Athlete & Volunteer Oaths

Athlete’s Oath:
“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”

Coach’s Oath:
“In the name of all coaches and in the spirit of sportsmanship, I promise that we will act professionally, respect others, and ensure a positive experience for all. I promise to provide quality sports and training opportunities in a safe environment for all athletes.”

Volunteer’s Oath:
“I promise to give the time in my life so that Special Olympics athletes can have the time of their lives. I promise to support Special Olympics not just as an expression of charity, but as a form of respect for my fellow human beings. I promise to spread the word of volunteerism because in giving, I receive so much more in return.”
Special Olympics Unified Sports®

- Special Olympics Florida offers Special Olympics Unified Sports, an inclusive sports program where those with intellectual disabilities (Special Olympics athletes) and those without intellectual disabilities (called Unified partners) compete on a team for training and competition.
- Persons whose functional limitations are based solely on physical, behavioral, or emotional disability or a specific learning or sensory disability are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes. However, these individuals may be eligible to be Special Olympics Unified Partners.
- There are varying levels of Special Olympics Unified Sports, from a competition model where athletes and Unified partners have similar abilities, to recreational models without training guidelines.
- Through Unified Sports, athletes improve their physical fitness, sharpen their skills, challenge the competition and become further involved with their non-intellectually disabled peers.
Florida Sports & Competitions

Special Olympics Florida currently offers 18 Olympic-type sports with competitions occurring at all levels throughout the year.

**Single-Sport State-Level Events**
- Equestrian
- Basketball
- Golf
- Aquatics
- Surfing
- Stand Up Paddle
- Bowling

**Multi-Sport State-Level Events**

**Fall Classic**
- Softball
- Flag Football
- Powerlifting
- Gymnastics (Artistic & Rhythmic)
- Cheerleading

**Summer Games**
- Soccer
- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Bocce
- Volleyball
- Cycling
- Tennis
Globally, Special Olympics offers an additional 13 official sports, three of which Special Olympics Florida offers as ‘locally popular’

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Badminton</th>
<th>Floorball</th>
<th>Netball</th>
<th>Sailing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>Handball</td>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>Table Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country Skiing</td>
<td>Floor Hockey</td>
<td>Judo</td>
<td>Snowshoeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Water Swimming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Additional sports offered by Special Olympics Florida, that do not have state-level competition:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alpine Skiing</th>
<th>Figure Skating</th>
<th>Roller Skating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sailing</td>
<td>Speed Skating (Ice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sports for All Ability Levels

For athletes who are new to the sport, Special Olympics offers Individual Skills Contest for that sport which allows athletes to score points through skills stations.

Special Olympics Florida also offers three non-competitive sport experiences:

- The Motor Activity Training Program (MATP) is designed for athletes with a severe or profound intellectual disability who are unable to participate in Official Special Olympics sport competitions because of their skill and/or functional abilities.

- Special Olympics Young Athletes, an early childhood sports play program for children age 2 to 7 years old, includes games, songs, and other fun physical activities to get future Special Olympics athletes moving and ready for sport training.

- Little ELITES (Elementary Level Introduction To Entry-level Sports) is a sports program that bridges the gap between Special Olympics Young and competitive Special Olympics sports (ages 8+) concepts and models. The program is ideal for children in 2nd through 5th grade.
Healthy Athletes Make Healthy Communities

Healthy Athletes & Healthy Communities are designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, to increase the athlete's ability to train and compete as well as enhance their well being. Through health programs, Special Olympics:

- Ensures quality Health Screenings/Referrals for athletes
- Offers Health Professionals the opportunity to learn how to treat people with intellectual disabilities and be more prone to welcome them into their practices.

Health disciplines include:

- Opening Eyes (vision)
- FUNfitness (physical therapy)
- Special Smiles (dental)
- Healthy Hearing (audiology)
- Health Promotion (well-being)
- Fit Feet (podiatry)
- MedFest (sports physical exam)
Special Olympics athletes are not only leaders on the field for their fellow athletes, but they are encouraged to be leaders in their community and for the Special Olympics Movement.

- Athlete Leadership allow athletes to explore opportunities for greater participation in our movement beyond sports training and competition.
- Athletes receive training in public speaking to become a Global Messenger, attend training schools to become a coach, or register and train as a sports official through the National Governing body of that sport.
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