



Special Olympics
youngathletes™

PLAYBOOK

Be a fan of fun



YOUNG ATHLETES

PLAYBOOK

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YOUNG ATHLETES

OVERVIEW

I. OVERVIEW

1.1 WELCOME

Over the years, Special Olympics has heard from many families, coaches and teachers who wished they could get their children involved in Special Olympics before they reached the age of 8. Thanks to the generous support of the Mattel Children's Foundation, the Lynch Family Foundation and the Gang Family Foundation and the pioneering efforts of Special Olympics Programs around the world, these young children with intellectual disabilities now have a setting where they can practice, enhance and display their abilities. It is with great enthusiasm and high expectations that we have created the Special Olympics Young Athletes™ program to welcome children ages 2 to 7 years old into the Special Olympics movement.

The Young Athletes program will serve as a tool for your Program to introduce new families of children with intellectual disabilities to the resources and support available within Special Olympics by providing a vehicle for families to network with each other. Your Special Olympics Program will benefit from the opportunity to involve children with intellectual disabilities before they reach the age of 8, which will foster future involvement and participation. Of course, these future Special Olympics athletes benefit from Young Athletes by enhancing their skills, developing confidence and increasing their readiness to compete when they reach the age of 8.

Special Olympics designed the Young Athlete Playbook with a number of objectives in mind. First and foremost, we hope the materials will help you understand, prepare and implement Young Athletes in your Program. Second, we hope the Young Athletes Playbook will support your efforts to raise awareness by educating the public about the diverse abilities of children with intellectual disabilities.

Thank you for deciding to implement Young Athletes in your Program. The partnership of Special Olympics, families, friends and coaches promises to offer young children with intellectual disabilities the same rich and rewarding experiences enjoyed by Special Olympics athletes around the world.

1.2 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, giving them continuing 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.

1.3 BACKGROUND

Reaching out to children with intellectual disabilities and their families is not a novel idea in the world of Special Olympics. The mission of Special Olympics seeks “to provide year-round training and athletic competition to children and adults with intellectual disabilities.” Special Olympics and the Joseph P. Kennedy Foundation knew that they needed to reach out to children with intellectual disabilities and their families before they reached the age of competition and training. However, since the 1960s, when Special Olympics started to implement its programs, training and competition opportunities were always focused on people with intellectual disabilities age 8 and up.

In the early 1970s, Special Olympics assembled a team of nearly 40 experts, parents, volunteers and teachers to develop a program that would help Special Olympics reach children under the age of 8. After countless hours of research, interviews and hands-on testing, the team developed the Let's-Play-to-Grow program. Let's-Play-to-Grow focused on encouraging families to develop structured play habits for their children with intellectual disabilities. The program included 12 detailed sections that ranged from dancing to softball. Flexibility represented an important programmatic principle – parents and guardians were encouraged to conduct the activities at a natural pace with no set timelines of curricula. The program included incentives to mark accomplishments – children would send a postcard to Special Olympics when they completed 30 hours of play, and in return, they would receive a certificate and a patch to mark their achievement. The Let's-Play-to-Grow program experienced success throughout the 1970s and early 1980s. At its highest point, Lets-Play-to-Grow involved approximately 2,000 children and their families throughout the United States. However, the loss of federal funding and other difficulties forced the initiative to come to a standstill in the mid-1980s.

In response to demand from Programs to include children younger than 8 years in training activities, Special Olympics revisited the approach to early outreach in 1997 by introducing the Play Activities program. This set out to establish a structured play program for children with intellectual disabilities ages 6 to 7. As opposed to Let's-Play-to-Grow, the Play Activities program focused more on targeted training for children with intellectual disabilities that were too young to compete in Special Olympics. The goal of the program was to introduce children to the “skill, courage, sharing and joy of Special Olympics.” Breaking from the flexibility offered by its predecessor, the Play Activities program included a rather rigid curriculum that included defined goals, a schedule of activities, planning guidelines and performance/skill assessment for participating children. The program consisted of individual skill activities and group games that followed a set sequence, preparing the child for eventual participation in Special Olympics competitions. The Play Activities program experienced modest success and minimal participation. It was clear that Special Olympics needed something more robust and appealing to attract future Special Olympics athletes and their families to the Movement.

Both the Let's-Play-to-Grow and the Play Activities programs offered unique approaches to Special Olympics' goal of reaching out to future athletes and their families. In an effort to combine the strongest aspects of both programs, Special Olympics New Jersey began experimenting with new approaches to Special Olympics Early Outreach. From the early days of the Let's-Play-to-Grow and into the development and launch of the Play Activities program, Special Olympics New Jersey leadership saw a great value in reaching out to young people with intellectual disabilities and their families. With the generous support of the Gang Family Foundation and a team of trained and licensed physical therapists, Special Olympics New Jersey created and launched the Young Athletes program. Young Athletes experienced tremendous success in New Jersey and eventually generated attention from Special Olympics, International as a potential model for global outreach to future athletes and their families.

1.3 BACKGROUND

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.

Despite isolated successes, evidenced by the experience of Special Olympics New Jersey, on a larger scale sports activities and opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities remain extremely limited. For years, Special Olympics International fielded questions from families of children with intellectual disabilities not yet old enough to compete in Special Olympics: “When can my child join Special Olympics? What can she do before age eight? What activities can I do with my child?” Questions such as these came to Special Olympics Programs across the globe. Both Let’s-Play-to-Grow, and the Play Activities program lacked a level of involvement in and identification with Special Olympics. The challenge became finding activities targeted to younger children that could be done one-on-one and easily conducted by a family member at home or teacher in a small group school setting, while at the same time offering families a warm welcome and an introduction to Special Olympics.

In 2004, the Special Olympics, International Board and its Program Committee responded to the challenge of future athletes, their families and Special Olympics Programs. The Committee discussed the topic of including children under age eight in developmentally appropriate activities as an early outreach mechanism for new athletes and their families. The Program Committee focused on the benefits of early skills development activities in preparation for sports training and competitions, health benefits, physical therapy, as well as social and cognitive development. After a thorough review, the Special Olympics, International Board decided to move forward with the Special Olympics New Jersey Young Athletes model. The board tasked Special Olympics staff to locate funds, to modify and to adapt the Young Athletes program, and to conduct a pilot-test.

The search for Young Athletes funding led to The Mattel Children’s Foundation who was delighted to generously support the development of Young Athletes throughout the world as a tool for Programs to recruit, welcome and introduce future athletes and their families to Special Olympics. The support included a three-year grant that would carry Young Athletes through the development, the pilot-testing and the eventual global launch. Young Athletes materials were finalized in early 2005 and on March 15, Special Olympics Chairman & CEO, Dr. Timothy Shriver introduced Young Athletes to the world in an interview on the NBC television program, The Today Show. Pilot-testing of Young Athletes began in late 2005 and continued through 2006.

1.4 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Since its inception in 1968, Special Olympics has established itself as a preeminent global organization offering sports training and competition opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities ages 8 and above. Over the years, families of children too young to compete looked for avenues to join the movement. Thanks to the generous support of The Mattel Children's Foundation, the Gang Family Foundation and the Lynch Family Foundation, Special Olympics can now welcome these future athletes and families through its newest initiative — Young Athletes™ — a developmentally appropriate play program for children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 7.

Young Athletes is a versatile program that can work in various learning situations. The program is designed for families to play with their young athletes at home in a fun atmosphere. It is also appropriate for preschools, schools, playgroups to use with small groups of young children with and without intellectual disabilities. The flexibility of Young Athletes ensures the opportunity to welcome families and their young children into the Special Olympics family.

PROGRAM GOALS

- Engage children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development;
- Welcome family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support;
- Raise awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Fun;
 - Young Athletes is all about fun. Children, peers, family members, teachers, and other participants should always remember that conducting Young Athletes activities and events should always be fun for all participants.
2. Introduce children with intellectual disabilities and their families to Special Olympics;
 - Young Athletes represents the first possible place for a child with intellectual disabilities to experience and participate in a structured Special Olympics activity.
3. Developmental improvements in children with intellectual disabilities;
 - The Young Athletes activities are designed to foster and help achieve developmental milestones in children with intellectual disabilities.
4. Raise awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities;
 - Young Athletes offers opportunities to raise awareness of the overall community about people with intellectual disabilities through unified peer participation, demonstrations, and other events.
5. Enhance sport readiness of children with intellectual disabilities to train and compete in Special Olympics when they reach the age of eight.
 - The Young Athletes activities are designed to introduce and develop fundamental skills necessary for future Special Olympics training and competition.

1.5 DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Outreach and inclusion opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities represent an integral part of Special Olympics — embedded from its inception into the Movement's Mission Statement. Over the years, Special Olympics tested a variety of approaches to the issue, including Let's-Play-to-Grow and Play Activities programs.
- In 2004, the Special Olympics, International Board and its Program Committee focused on the benefits of early skills development activities in preparation for sports training and competitions, health benefits, physical therapy, as well as social and cognitive development. After a thorough review, the Program Committee commissioned a field test of Young Athletes — an innovative sports play activities program.
- Generous funding provided by Mattel Children's Foundation, the Gang Family Foundation and the Lynch Family Foundation enabled Special Olympics to conduct the pilot test in 21 Programs around the world in 2006. Programmatic design and outcomes of the pilot are described in the current report. Generous funding provided by the Lynch Family Foundation enabled Special Olympics Massachusetts to commit to develop and to implement a Special Olympics Young Athlete Action plan and program for 2006 and 2007.
- With nearly 4,000 participants and over 1,800 family members involved in the project, it became clear that Young Athletes provides a flexible programmatic framework, which can be successfully utilized in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes offers families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.
- Special Olympics commissioned University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston to conduct a comprehensive study of the results and impacts of Young Athletes program on its key participants — young athletes, family members and teachers.
- Results of the UMass Boston Special Olympics Young Athletes study uncovered major benefits offered by the Young Athletes initiative. Specifically, teachers and family members reported substantial gains in social and motor skills; adaptive behavior; communication and cognitive development. 95 percent of parents in the United States signaled their interest in continuing with Young Athletes program, while 75 percent feel that their children will take part in Special Olympics training and competitions, once they reach the age of eligibility.

1.6 PILOT PROGRAM SUMMARY

THE TASK...

The 2004 Special Olympics Board decision to pursue Young Athletes issued the following objectives:

- Recruit new young athletes for participation in sports training and competition;
- Implement at least 12 pilot programs in 2005;
- Recruit a total of 1000 children through the pilot Programs;
- Produce a research report on findings from pilot program for use in development of Global resources scheduled for 2006;
- Have at least one Young Athletes Family Day demonstration at each pilot site.

Special Olympics leadership challenged the Organizational Development Department with the task of implementing the Special Olympics New Jersey Young Athletes model on a global scale. The department began by identifying the Mattel Children's Foundation to support the global launch of Young Athletes. Next, the Special Olympics International team worked closely with Special Olympics New Jersey to develop the necessary resources to implement the Young Athletes pilot. The resources included the Young Athletes Pilot Activity Guide, the Young Athletes Pilot Training DVD and the Young Athletes Equipment Kit. Once the Organizational Development team prepared the resources, attention turned to developing a strategy for identifying and managing Programs that would pilot Young Athletes.

Special Olympics chose to follow the previously successful structure of relying on Regional staff to identify potential Special Olympics Programs to pilot Young Athletes. Although the Board's mandate required that only 12 Programs participate in the Young Athletes Pilot, an overwhelming demand from the Programs lead Special Olympics to choose 21 Programs to participate. The Programs received \$5,000 grants, a supply of Young Athletes Equipment Kits and Young Athletes Activity Guides. The grants aligned with pilot objectives and encouraged ingenuity and innovation. The Young Athletes pilot included a diverse array of Special Olympics Programs that differed in size, experience and geography.

Objectives	Target	Actual
Number of pilot programs	12	21
Number of Family Days and Demonstrations	12	60
Number of Young Athletes	1,000	3,787
Number of Families	1,000	1,841

1.7 EVALUATION SUMMARY

Special Olympics International commissioned University of Massachusetts Boston to monitor implementation of the Young Athletes Pilot Projects at the pilot sites identified and cultivated by Special Olympics. The two primary aspects of the research project included: 1) identification and description of variations in Young Athletes program design; 2) impact of Young Athletes on program participants as perceived by teachers and parents.

The researchers focused on Young Athletes activities in the Israel, the United States and Romania, yielding consistent data in the following areas:

1. Structure of Young Athletes Programs;
2. Types of Activities;
3. Gains Reported by Teachers;
4. Comments from Parents.

STRUCTURE OF YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAMS

The original design of the Young Athletes program called for a healthy balance of consistency and diversity from region to region, facilitating achievement of the developmental goals in an appropriate cultural context. Across the board, “social/play time for children” constituted the backbone of the program, augmented by “welcoming/closing activities” and “warm-up/cool down activities.” At the same time, “family time” and other parents’ components represented an important point of emphasis in Programs outside of the United States. Almost one-third of Program leaders implementing Young Athletes in the United States and Romania introduced snack time as a part of the routine.

Class Structure	Types of Activities, USA	Types of Activities, Romania	Types of Activities, Israel
Social/Play Time for Children	64%	70%	100%
Welcoming Activity for Children	50%	40%	0%
Warm-Up Activity for Children	45%	100%	100%
Cool-Down Activity for Children	36%	80%	100%
Closing Activity for Children	36%	90%	100%
Drinks and Snacks	25%	30%	0%
Welcoming Activity for Parents	4%	60%	0%
Family Time	4%	60%	100%
Closing Activity for Parents	4%	40%	0%

1.7 EVALUATION SUMMARY

In Romania most programs were held once a week for 30- to 60-minute sessions. Seventy percent of teachers had eight to 13 children in each class, with one to 12 adults assisting the teacher, depending on the needs of the children. In addition to these standard program activities, two programs held meetings with parents on different subjects related to their child.

Meanwhile, in Israel most teachers were also parents of participants who conducted Young Athletes activities once a week for 30- to 60-minute sessions with seven to nine children in each class. Most classes were implemented by two adults, depending on the age and ability levels of the children.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

In terms of activity types, research findings identified substantial differences between Young Athletes activities conducted in the United States, Romania and Israel. Over 50 percent of Young Athletes sites in the United States focused on Foundational Skills, while the same indicator reached 30 percent in Romania and only 10 percent in Israel. At the same time, Romania reported higher levels of attention devoted to Trapping/Catching and Throwing Skills (60 percent for each of the skills).

Young Athletes programs in all three locations designated limited time for practicing Advanced Skills. Only 25 percent of sites in the United States and 10 percent of sites in Israel included an Advanced Skills component, while no Advanced Skills training was reported in Romania.

Across all Programs the predominant reason for not using all or most of the Young Athletes activities was related to difficulties resulting from the types of disabilities, especially in the areas of advanced skills, striking, and balance and jumping. Programs in the United States, Romania and Israel adjusted the pace and duration of activities and introduced the systematic use of prompts and praise to increase child participation.

Skill Area	Percentage of Use (All/ Most), USA	Percentage of Use (All/ Most), Romania	Percentage of Use (All/ Most), Israel
Foundational Skills	53%	30%	10%
Walk/Run Skills	62%	50%	40%
Balance/Jumping Skills	44%	20%	10%
Trapping/Catching Skills	53%	60%	30%
Throwing Skills	53%	60%	20%
Striking Skills	31%	20%	20%
Kicking Skills	34%	50%	20%
Advanced Skills	25%	0%	10%

1.7 EVALUATION SUMMARY

GAINS REPORTED BY TEACHERS

Teachers were asked questions related to child and family impact. Specifically, they were asked how much gain in skills they observed in their class¹. When asked, "What is the most important benefit of Young Athletes participation?," teacher responses were distributed into several distinct categories: gains in social and emotional development; motor development; adaptive behavior development; and communication development. Some of the key comments are presented in the table below:

Improvement Area Percentage of Use	Comments from Teachers in the United States	Comments from Teachers in the Romania	Comments from Teachers in the Israel
Motor Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved balance, coordination, jumping, hopping, throwing Gross and fine motor skills improved across the board Some were having problems with catching and kicking the ball. Now they are able to wait and kick or catch the ball when it is thrown to them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance and coordination skills, walking and running, jumping Balance and walking are significantly improved The increase of the spatial orientation ability during sports activities. The development of basic motor abilities, the diminishing of psycho-motor instability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One boy didn't succeed to kick the ball and now he does.
Social and Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in taking turns One child refused to join in. Now he wants to lead. They are encouraging each other to finish games. They cheered when each one finished. Cooperating with peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of the ability to interact with their own parents, with other children and their parents. Interaction with other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They improved their skills of working together.
Adaptive Behavior Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More eye contact and increased independence Increase in desire to participate from kids who were initially resistance. Better able to follow directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increase of attention and concentration. The stimulation of spontaneous performances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the lesson they make an effort to concentrate and listen to the instructions given. The children learned to arrive to the lesson in an orderly manner. They came more ready and organized to the class. They helped set up and put away materials.
Communication Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picked more equipment on their choice boards Imitating actions, signing "more" to do activity again. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The increase of verbal imitation ability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> He speaks all the time with his friends in the group. They communicate very well.

¹ Teachers did not evaluate the specific gains of individual children. They were asked to indicate whether gains were observed

1.7 EVALUATION SUMMARY

in children in their class in general in the five areas of development (motor, social, communication, adaptive, cognitive)

In addition to improvements in specific skill areas summarized in the table below², teachers also reported other child benefits as a result of participation in Young Athletes. Specifically, based on observations of the Young Athletes program activities, teachers in the United States raised their expectations about capabilities of the children in 54 percent of the cases. In Romania and Israel, this indicator reached 40 percent and 50 percent, respectively. Teachers believe that Young Athletes program participants “had fun with peers” in 89 percent of the cases observed in the United States, 100 percent — in Romania and 60 percent — in Israel.

In the United States and Israel the program impacted broader communities outside of the Young Athletes classroom setting. In over 25 percent of cases observed in the United States teachers linked Young Athletes programming with additional opportunities for service learning and volunteerism. In Israel additional volunteer opportunities were identified in 50 percent of the cases.

Developmental Skill Area	Percentage Gain Reported, USA	Percentage Gain Reported, Romania	Percentage Gain Reported, Israel
Communication	62%	90%	90%
Motor	75%	90%	80%
Social	65%	80%	80%
Adaptive Behavior	69%	80%	30%
Cognitive	71%	80%	60%

GAINS REPORTED BY PARENTS

As an important indication of Young Athletes effectiveness, parents of program participants believe that Young Athletes addresses practical needs and meets developmental expectations. In particular, in the United States 75 percent of parents believe that the goals they had for their children were met or exceeded. In Romania, 90 percent of parents attending Young Athletes sessions learned new ways to work with their children, while 70 percent of parents increased expectations regarding development of the children. When asked to outline plans for the future, 95 percent of parents in the United States signaled their interest in continuing with Young Athletes program, while 75 percent feel that their children will take part in Special Olympics training and competitions, once they reach the age of eligibility.

²Percentages in the table reflect the combined responses of “observed a lot” and “observed moderate gains.”

1.7 EVALUATION SUMMARY

An Exhibit featured below presents a unique perspective expressed in quotes collected from parents of Young Athletes program participants in the United States, Romania and Israel.

Parents Speak: the most important impacts of the program on Young Athletes participants.

- “(Young Athletes program) gives children a sense of increased mastery and competence. It leads to more willingness to initiate interactions with peers.”
- “Social and motor opportunities. Plays with siblings. I think they are happier together.”
- “They benefit from the organized and structured play. They can learn colors and shapes.”
- “(Young Athletes program) helps the community to gain an understanding of children with special needs. It is a good thing overall for the community and children.”
- “One thing maybe is to just have something to get behind the child and prevent them from being swept under the rug. It makes them an integral part of the family and gives them something to work for too.”
- “I have found a common ground — a place where my son and I can connect — through sports.”
- “(Young Athletes program) gets the families involved in the children’s development in a positive way. It lowers families’ anxiety because they can see their children making gains.”
- “It is great to be proud of the kids for doing little things.”
- “(Young Athletes program) provided opportunities to communicate with other parents about needs of other kids with disabilities. Connecting and sharing information is really a huge benefit...it gives you an opportunity to talk to someone that can relate to what it is like to have a child with disabilities.”
- “Neighborhood kids came over to play with us with the Young Athletes kit.”
- “The biggest benefit is there is a lot of opportunity out there — there are things for these kids to do; the goal is to get them out there doing something. Don’t shield them.”
- “I have changed my expectations about my child.”
- “After learning to step on the blocks, I noticed he could walk up the stairs out in the community.”

To access the complete Special Olympics Young Athletes Pilot Report visit:
www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes

YOUNG ATHLETES

RESOURCES

II. RESOURCES

2.1 ACTIVITY GUIDE

The Young Athletes Activity Guide contains the official Special Olympics Young Athletes activities. The activities were created by specialists from the fields of special education, physical education, adaptive physical education, physical therapy and occupational therapy. The team of specialists worked closely with experienced Special Olympics staff to design developmentally appropriate activities for children with intellectual disabilities. The activities are not only appropriate for children with intellectual disabilities, but all children of the targeted ages from two through seven, allowing for peer interaction among children with and without intellectual disabilities.

A PDF version of the Young Athletes Activity Guide is included on the CD accompanying this Playbook and can be used by Special Olympics staff, board of directors, or local volunteers interested in learning more about the project. The Young Athletes Training DVD can also be found online at www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes.

II. RESOURCES

2.2 TRAINING DVD

The Young Athletes Training DVD accompanies the Young Athletes Activity Guide. The DVD contains narrated video of the official Young Athletes Activities as demonstrated by children. These video clips will help children, parents, educators, coaches, and others familiarize themselves with the activities.

The Young Athletes Training DVD also includes an introduction to the Young Athletes Program, welcoming children, parents, educators, coaches, and others.

II. RESOURCES

2.3 EQUIPMENT

The Young Athletes program utilizes a specific set of equipment for conducting the official activities. The picture below from the Young Athletes Activity Guide lists the official Young Athletes Equipment Kit, offers alternative equipment, and contains picture of each piece of equipment. Information about Young Athletes Equipment Kit is available online at www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes. Please send an email to youngathletes@specialolympics.org for directions about ordering official Young Athletes Equipment Kits.

It should be noted that while Special Olympics endorses the use of an official Young Athletes kit, all materials included in the kit may be substituted with appropriate, alternative equipment described in the Guide.

II. RESOURCES

2.4 PRESENTATION

A PowerPoint® presentation is included on the CD accompanying this Playbook and can be used with Special Olympics staff, board of directors, families or local volunteers interested in learning more about the program.

The Young Athletes Powerpoint Presentation includes information about:

- Young Athletes program background
- The status of Young Athletes
- The future of Young Athletes
- Needs assessment and growth projections

YOUNG ATHLETES

PROGRAM
IMPLEMENTATION

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 OVERVIEW

THE YOUNG ATHLETES MODEL: ORGANIZE, COMMENCE, AND RECOGNIZE

An individual Young Athletes program can vary in size and scope yet it provides young children with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to partake in the developmentally appropriate play activities. A Young Athletes program is the first Special Olympics experience for a child with intellectual disabilities and their family. Individual Young Athletes programs range from individual families or caretakers performing the Young Athletes activities with their children to an entire city school district offering Young Athletes as part of a physical education program for early-elementary-aged children.

SUGGESTED PARTNERS FOR YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAMS:

- Individual Family Homes
- Parent-Supervised Playgroups
- Daycare
- Preschools
- Private and Public Schools
- Government-run Programs
- Residential Settings (institutions, group homes, orphanages)
- Special Olympics Centers
- In conjunction with Special Olympics Training and Competition

ORGANIZE, INITIATE, AND RECOGNIZE

The Special Olympics Program should seek to fulfill the following three basic functions:

1. Organize: General administrative management & preparation
 - a. Ensure that the Young Athletes program is clearly understood;
 - b. Aggressively seek to expand opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities and their families/caregivers to become involved in Special Olympics;
 - c. Offer leadership and guidance to developing and established Young Athletes Programs. The Young Athletes Coordinator¹ works to establish ongoing relationships within communities to support quality implementation of Young Athletes;
 - d. Oversight of administrative activities such as athlete registration, site evaluation, reporting, public relations activities, fundraising events, and other functions critical to the success of the Young Athletes program;
 - e. Liaise and link all Young Athletes sites to sub and National/State Program to ensure alignment with original goals, plans, and higher level competitions for athletes as well as state-wide or national opportunities or events that occur throughout the year.
2. Initiate: Introduce and begin Young Athletes at multiple levels of implementation
 - a. Properly introduce Young Athletes to any and all who will implement the program for children with intellectual disabilities
For Example: Hold an introductory session for parents who wish to perform the activities at home with their children
 - b. Facilitate the registration of Young Athletes
 - c. Begin evaluation of impact²
 - d. Ensure that Young Athletes sites conduct frequent play sessions that include official Young Athlete activities
3. Recognize: Conduct and organize events that highlight accomplishments of Young Athletes
 - a. Conduct frequent and high quality Young Athletes Demonstrations led by local Young Athletes coordinators
 - b. Include a Young Athletes Introduction and Demonstration at all State and National Competitions

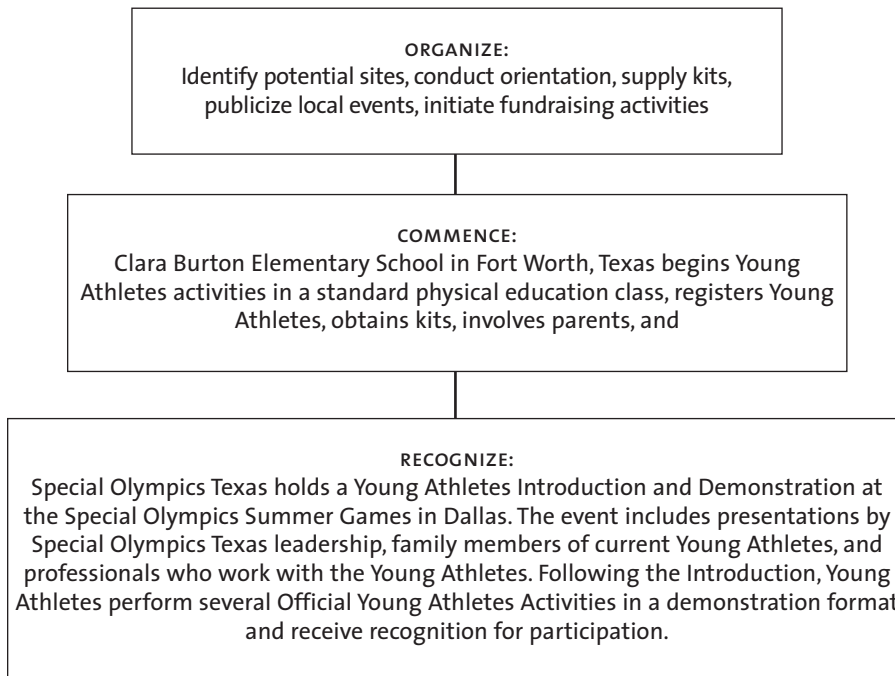
¹See Young Athletes Coordinator Job Description and First Steps — Starting Young Athletes for further information.

²See Young Athletes Registration, Evaluation, and Reporting for more details.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 OVERVIEW

EXAMPLE OF THE YOUNG ATHLETES OVERVIEW IN ACTION



III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 STARTING A PROGRAM

Remember that the key functions necessary to start a Young Athletes program are Organize, Commence, and Recognize. The three steps identified below provide an outline and brief listing of the activities necessary to organize the basic functions of a Young Athletes program. These steps are critical for Young Athletes organizers at both State/National Special Olympics Program level and the sub-program level. Executing all of these steps will facilitate the growth and expansion of a strong Young Athletes program.

Step 1: Plan

Identify a Young Athletes Coordinator

- Young Athletes Coordinator should become familiar with the Young Athletes resources, background, and goals;
- Young Athletes Coordinator is responsible for the three basic functions identified in the previous model:
 - o Organize: General administrative management & preparation
 - o Commence: Introducing and beginning Young Athletes at multiple levels of implementation
 - o Recognize: Conducting and organizing events that highlight accomplishments of Young Athletes
 - o Young Athletes coordinator should review and perform the Young Athletes activities to ensure familiarity and understanding.

Plan your Young Athletes operations

- Determine your planning timeline
- Identify components of your plan
- Process for recruiting Young Athletes sites
- Fundraising
- Young Athletes events
- Promotion
- Budget

Identify and Recruit Young Athletes Partners

- Identify lists of potential partners with access to the population of children with intellectual disabilities ages two through 7
- Establish contact
 - o Contact partners
 - o Brief them on Young Athletes
 - o Encourage partners to participate
 - o Organize a Young Athletes training with recruited partners to explain how to develop the Program and the Program's goals and objectives

Facilitate Young Athlete Registration

- Support Young Athletes sites as they begin registration process of Young Athletes
- Serve as central repository for Young Athletes registration materials and data

Prepare Young Athletes Facilitators

- Preparation should include:
 - o Special Olympics Mission and Philosophy
 - o Introduction to Young Athletes
 - Resources
 - Activities
 - Equipment
 - o Explanation of Demonstrations

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 STARTING A PROGRAM

Step 2: Implement

Begin Young Athletes participation

- Initiate Young Athletes activities

Conduct Young Athletes Introductions and Demonstrations

- Support Young Athletes sites as the plan and execute Young Athletes Demonstrations

Promote Public Awareness

- Leverage events for publicity and recruitment of more Young Athletes and potential partners¹

Raise Funds

- Identify and involve potential donors of Young Athletes²

Step 3: Evaluate

Evaluate Program

- Collect and organize data according to the Young Athletes Evaluation Guidelines
- Ensure proper reporting by collecting and reporting all Young Athletes registration information
- Seek constituent input on Young Athletes impact and functionality
 - o Facilitators
 - o Families
 - o Researchers

Expand Young Athletes

- Identify and recruit new partners
- Start new Young Athletes programs
- Empower experienced facilitators and families
- Raise more funding
- Continue to evaluate

¹See Young Athletes Public Relations Program for more details.

²See Young Athlete — Steps in the Funding Process for more details.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 STARTING A PROGRAM

3.21 PROGRAM COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

PROGRAM COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Position includes:

- Overseeing implementation of program;
- Maintaining equipment and activities;
- Oversight of administrative tasks associated with the program;
- Identifying and recruiting Young Athletes sites/partners;
- Planning Young Athletes Demonstrations;
- Working with Special Olympics Program staff to secure funding;
- Facilitating registration, data collection, and evaluation;
- Conducting public relations.

Qualifications:

- Experience with MS Office, and desktop publishing software
- Detail oriented
- Recommend 1 year prior Project Management experience
- Experience with children with intellectual disability
- Ability to multi-task
- Energetic, cheerful, and personable

Suggestions:

- Hire a college intern to work in the state/national office and coordinate Young Athletes
- Work with an engaged and enthusiastic family member
- Find a professional volunteer:
 - o Special education teacher;
 - o Occupational therapists;
 - o Physical therapists

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 STARTING A PROGRAM

3.22 SAMPLE LETTER TO EDUCATORS

Send this letter to preschool, kindergarten, and elementary school educators to introduce them to the Young Athletes™ program. Follow-up to schedule a Young Athletes demonstration.

Dear School Principal:

Finding creative, fun, and interactive ways to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities to the world of sports can be difficult. However, we are excited to tell you about an innovative, versatile program that strengthens physical development and self esteem among children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7, prior to eligibility for actual Special Olympics competition at age 8.

Special Olympics Young Athletes™ is a versatile program, capable of working in various learning situations. Piloted in 2006 around the world, Young Athletes™ has been successful in a variety of settings, including preschools, schools, and playgroups. Family members and caregivers also are encouraged to become involved as the child learns success through physical activity. Most importantly Young Athletes is a program for young children with and without intellectual disabilities to develop their skills in preparation for sports together.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.

What skills do Future Special Olympics Athletes need? Some of the skills these Young Athletes develop include: foundational skills, walking and running, throwing, kicking, and trapping and catching, as well as other advanced sports skills that are important to participating and competing as an Athlete in Special Olympics.

We invite you to experience the benefits young children, families and schools enjoy from Young Athletes™, in and out of the classroom. Special Olympics has resources available to help successfully implement the program, including a Young Athletes™ DVD and Playbook. We would love to arrange for a Young Athletes™ demonstration for you as well as other teachers at [Name of School], to demonstrate the advantages and benefits of Young Athletes™, in addition to how fun Special Olympics can be for children of all ages.

If you are interested, please call [insert contact name and number] to set up a Young Athletes™ demonstration.

Sincerely,
[Insert state or local Special Olympics official name and title]

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 STARTING A PROGRAM

3.23 SAMPLE LETTER TO LOCAL DISABILITY ORGANIZATION

Send this letter to local disability chapters or related organizations to introduce them to Young Athletes and Special Olympics.

Dear [insert name]:

Finding creative, fun, and interactive ways to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities to the world of sports can be difficult. However, we're excited to tell you about Young Athletes, an innovative, versatile program that strengthens physical development and self esteem among children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7, prior to eligibility for actual Special Olympics competition at age 8.

Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Young Athletes is a versatile program, capable of working in various learning situations. Piloted in 2006 around the world, Young Athletes has been successful in a variety of settings, including preschools, playgroups, and in the home. Family members and caregivers are also encouraged to become involved as the child learns success through physical activity.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children. Most importantly Young Athletes is a program for young children with and without intellectual disabilities to develop their skills in preparation for sports together.

What skills do Future Special Olympics Athletes need? Some of the skills these Young Athletes develop include: foundational skills, walking and running, throwing, kicking, and trapping and catching, as well as other advanced sports skills that are important to participating as an Athlete in Special Olympics.

We invite you to experience the benefits young children, families and communities get from Young Athletes. Special Olympics has resources available to help successfully implement the program, including a Young Athletes DVD and Playbook. We'd love to arrange for a Young Athletes demonstration for your organization to show the advantages and benefits of Young Athletes, in addition to how fun Special Olympics can be for children of all ages.

If you are interested, please call [insert contact name and number] to set up a Young Athletes demonstration.

Sincerely,

[Insert state or local Special Olympics official name and title]

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.2 STARTING A PROGRAM

3.24 SAMPLE LETTER TO VOLUNTEERS

Send this letter to volunteers to educate them about Special Olympics and Young Athletes.

Dear [insert name]:

Finding creative, fun, and interactive ways to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities to the world of sports can be difficult. However, we're excited to tell you about Young Athletes, an innovative, versatile program that strengthens physical development and self esteem among children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7, prior to eligibility for actual Special Olympics competition at age 8.

Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Young Athletes is a versatile program, capable of working in various learning situations. Piloted in 2006 around the world, Young Athletes has been successful in a variety of settings, including preschools, schools, and playgroups. Family members, caregivers, and volunteers are also encouraged to become involved as the child learns success through physical activity.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children. Most importantly Young Athletes is a program for young children with and without intellectual disabilities to develop their skills in preparation for sports together.

What skills do Future Special Olympics Athletes need? Some of the skills these Young Athletes develop include: foundational skills, walking and running, throwing, kicking, and trapping and catching, as well as other advanced sports skills that are important to participating as an Athlete in Special Olympics.

We invite you to experience the benefits young children, families and communities get from Young Athletes. Special Olympics has resources available to help successfully implement the program, including a Young Athletes DVD and Playbook. You will experience the advantages and benefits young children with intellectual disabilities received from Young Athletes, in addition to how fun Special Olympics can be for children of all ages.

If you are interested, please call [insert contact name and number] to learn more about Young Athletes volunteer opportunities within Special Olympics.

Sincerely,
[Insert state/national or local Special Olympics official name and title]

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.3 PLANNING & IMPLEMENTING A DEMONSTRATION

Purpose: To recognize the accomplishments of the children participating in Young Athletes, to introduce larger community to the Young Athletes program, and to recruit new families and Young Athletes into Special Olympics

SUGGESTIONS:

- Special Olympics, Young Athletes logo & Young Athletes global sponsor's Logos must be present on materials, advertising and signage at the event.
- Demonstration of official Young Athletes activities performed by children
- Recognition of the children (ie: tee-shirts, ribbons, certificates, etc.)

PLANNING:

- Choosing to build your Young Athletes Demonstration into an existing event, such as summer games, or field day events at school is an easy way to incorporate a Young Athletes into your calendar. Take the proper steps to publicize and record the event.
- Encourage family members of children to attend and participate in the event.

FORMAT:

- Demonstration should include an introduction to the program
- Plan for about one half hour of activities with the children
- Four to five stations with one official Young Athletes activity at each station is a good way to demonstrate the different abilities of the children
- Encourage family members of children to participate
- Invite media to attend to promote the accomplishments of athletes and families
- Invite groups involved in early childhood education to attend for awareness

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.3 PLANNING & IMPLEMENTING A DEMONSTRATION

3.31 EXAMPLE DEMONSTRATION

Young Athletes Demonstrations and Events serve as culminating points of the program, designed to showcase achievements of the participants and to promote Young Athletes among family members, Educators, experts, potential supporters, media and the community. In the course of 2006, Special Olympics International organized official Young Athletes demonstrations at Special Olympics Regional Games (and equivalents) in Latin America (El Salvador), North America (Iowa) and East Asia (China). However, Programs piloting Young Athletes around the world through their innovative approaches brought to light the true spirit of the initiative.

Every pilot site was required to conduct at least one Young Athletes Event/Demonstration. However, a number of Programs substantially exceeded the requirement and organized 3–6 additional events, with Romania and Delaware emerging as the overall leaders with 7 and 5 Young Athletes events organized in 2006, respectively. Despite using a variety of titles for their events, such as Young Athletes Family Day or Future Stars Sports Day, all Programs positioned the activities to highlight the relationship between program participants and their family members.

For example, one of Special Olympics Romania's events was designed as a "Young Athletes Forum." This forum incorporated an array of participants including, 22 family members, 19 Young Athletes, several children without intellectual disabilities, physical therapists, and special education teachers. During the forum, family members were provided an opportunity to share their stories and experiences. At the conclusion of the event, Special Olympics Romania presented Young Athletes Activity Guides, DVD's, and Brochures to everyone in attendance. The Young Athletes Forum let Young Athletes demonstrate their abilities, as well as a way for families and educators to interact.

At the same time, Special Olympics Texas organized four well-publicized Future Stars Sports Days across the state of Texas. The events took place at education service centers and schools in Dallas, Kyle, Fort Worth and Lufkin. In addition to the official Young Athletes program activities, the Future Stars Sports Days included sports dances, relay races, candy cane kickball, snowball fights, and awards ceremonies. Special Olympics Texas developed several songs designed to accompany exercises and movements performed by program participants.

Also, Special Olympics Delaware conducted five Young Athletes Activity Days. Each one of the events in Delaware included full-fledged Opening Ceremonies, including entertainment program, arrival of the torch and the Participants' Oath. The activities in Delaware followed a station pattern. For example, at the Leach School Young Athletes Activity Day participants used seven stations progressing from Station 1 — Body Socks through Stations 2 and 3 (Dancing with Scarves and Bike Riding) to Station 4 — T-Ball, followed by Stations 5, 6, 7 (Relay Races, Body Movement game, and Ball and Bag Toss). Each station took 15 minutes to complete. After the 2-hours-long event program participants, their parents and siblings took part in the official Closing Ceremonies.

The Young Athletes Culminating Events at Special Olympics Illinois take place after several weeks or months of training and practice within the Young Athletes program. Athletes are required to participate in Young Athletes training for a minimum of eight weeks prior to attending a Culminating Event. The events take place all across the state at varying times of the year, however a lot of the schools are going along with the school year and training on a September–May basis and hosting a culminating event in the Spring. Culminating events have had as few as 5 to as many as 450 Young Athletes and families attend. Culminating Events will now be an additional upcoming component of the Special Olympics Illinois Summer Games.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.3 PLANNING & IMPLEMENTING A DEMONSTRATION

3.31 EXAMPLE DEMONSTRATION

Outside of the United States, Young Athletes Family Days provided Special Olympics Programs with opportunities to develop new partnerships and reinforce existing relationships. In Paraguay, one of the four Young Athletes Family Days was hosted by the National Secretariat for Sports, while in Romania all seven Young Athletes Family Days were organized in cooperation with local non-profit organizations, as well as representatives of the United States Peace Corps.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.4 SOLICITING DONORS & SUPPORTERS

1. Compile a list of prospective donors. Start with individuals or businesses that have a connection to either Young Athletes or Special Olympics — either through direct involvement, or previous support, or an indication on their part that they would be interested in supporting Young Athletes. Next look to businesses or individuals for whom you see a fit with Young Athletes, but who you have not worked with.
2. Research each prospect to identify the correct contact person (owner, head of community relations, store manager, etc.), and determine appropriate ask — for example are they more likely to give a monetary donation or an in-kind donation? Decide if you benefit more from a monetary or in-kind donation — for example — a printing company would likely be more interested in donating printing services than money, and having printing donated will save a lot of money. A restaurant will probably rather donate food for an event than write a check, but a retail store or bank would rather donate money than products. Having your ask be close to what they would prefer to provide will improve your chances for success. Be creative — think of unique ways that a small business or individual could support your program, it could be products, money, space, volunteers, expertise, advertising etc.
3. Prepare information for potential Donor/Supporter that includes the following pieces:
 - An introductory letter providing a description and objectives of the program, and quantitative information about how many people in the community are affected by this program, and specific amount or form of support you are seeking, and what it will be spent on specifically, if applicable, and how the donation will be recognized (listed as sponsor on T-shirts, listed as donor on website etc)
 - Endorsements or quotes by people who have participated in the program.
 - Pictures of the Young Athletes engaged in the activities.
 - If asking for general operating support, provide a copy of the budget or project development plan to indicate where exactly the donation will be used, and the impact that it will have.
 - Brochure, flyers, calendar of events or other printed materials that promote the program.
 - Examples of recognition of previous supporters (if applicable).
4. Set up an appointment to discuss the possibility of support wherever possible (when possible, include a parent of a Young Athlete to assist you in the meeting). If a meeting is not possible, mail the materials and follow up with a phone call. You should indicate in the letter that you will follow up with them and provide a time-frame. Do not expect THEM to call YOU after they receive the materials.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.4 SOLICITING DONORS & SUPPORTERS

3.41 STEPS IN THE FUNDRAISING PROCESS

DEFINE YOUR PROJECT:

- Before soliciting any individual, company, foundation or organization for funds or in-kind donations you must communicate with your sub-Program/Program office and understand what fundraising activities are allowed and expected of you.
- Work with your sub-Program/Program office and gather a group of people (a committee) to provide assistance and feedback on defining your project and proposed benefits to sponsors.

ONCE YOU HAVE RECEIVED APPROVAL TO SOLICIT SPONSORS, YOUR PROPOSAL TO THE POTENTIAL SPONSOR SHOULD:

- Sell benefits (for example, signage or VIP tickets) not features (for example, the pool is Olympic-sized).
- Address the prospective sponsor's needs (marketing or business objectives), not yours (increasing athlete count).
- Be tailored to the sponsor's industry (for example, airplanes, beverages, apparel, automotive, etc.).
- Minimize the prospect's risk (show past successes, keep production or travel costs low).

THE SUCCESSFUL PROPOSAL DOES NOT:

- Include your budget.
- Interpret what an individual benefit is worth to a sponsor.
- Include a video.
- Appear costly to produce.

THE SALES PROCESS

There are several stages of the sales process such as research and targeting prospects, using sales techniques when making calls and presentations, negotiating the deal points, setting criteria and signing contracts.

RESEARCH AND RESOURCES TO HELP FIND TARGETS

- Internet and information services, libraries
- Newspapers: business and marketing section
- Industry trade papers
- Networking with associations, clubs, etc.
- Radio/Print Media/TV
- Chamber of Commerce, business associations

TARGETING SPONSORS: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL SPONSORS AND CONTACTS

- Target companies that provide sponsor support in general and sponsor-related events (for example, sports, special projects for special people)¹
- Target sponsors of other sports and charities
- Target competitors of other sports and charities
- Target companies based on your audience's demographics or purchasing habits
- Target new and increasing sponsor categories
- Leverage connections you have with your families, volunteers and friends to help you get in the door.

Identify the decision-maker at the company. Be patient as this task may require some time. You will also want to send out proposals simultaneously to many categories. The process can be very lengthy. It is estimated that for every 12 calls you will receive one positive response.

¹Please, note that Special Olympics imposes limitations related to cooperation with alcohol and tobacco producers. There also are specific rules related to the use of corporate logos on athlete sports equipment and apparel. Please discuss these issues in detail with your respective Program and/or sub-Program office and base your actions on provisions of Special Olympics Official General Rules.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.4 SOLICITING DONORS & SUPPORTERS

3.41 STEPS IN THE FUNDRAISING PROCESS

THE MEETING

Once you get the person on the telephone, the main goal is to set up a meeting and request only 30 minutes. Be prepared to present and plan to have revisions made to your proposal.

If you don't get a meeting, ask if you can send a tailored proposal to them and follow up with a telephone call. Start looking for other key contacts within the company network and find someone who knows the best person to approach.

Call to set up a meeting

- Always ask what the company wants.
- Know the company's business objectives and the achievable marketing objectives of your Program.
- Meeting length distribution suggestions
- Introduce Opportunity — 20 percent
- Present Selling Points — 70 percent
- Conclusion — 10 percent

When the meeting is ending, be sure to determine next steps with:

- Follow-up telephone call
- More materials
- Revised proposal
- Another meeting
- Another person to meet

GOOD SALES TOOLS

- Always do your homework on the company.
- Be armed with good statistics on your own organization and with sponsorship success stories.
- Create an easy-to-read benefits and opportunities brochure, PowerPoint presentation or a simple one-pager.
- Create a "Go Book" or scrapbook filled with photos, news clips, past promotions, testimonials, Program statistics and history.
- Create a cheat sheet/briefing book for those people who are going on the sales call with you so they also are prepared.
- Bring a video to have on hand to show.

TIME/TIMING

Most deals (61 percent) are done starting with a telephone call where you don't know the person, called a "cold call." Figure out when the company's budget cycle is so that your calls and proposals are in before budget decisions are made.

The average time it takes to cultivate and complete a sponsorship for your year-round Program is 12 months. Single-event sponsorship planning is estimated to be six months. Planning, determination and endurance are what is most needed!

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.4 SOLICITING DONORS & SUPPORTERS

3.42 SAMPLE LETTER TO SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

Send this letter to sponsors and supporters to educate them about Special Olympics and Young Athletes.

Dear [insert name]:

Finding creative, fun, and interactive ways to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities to the world of sports can be difficult. However, we're excited to tell you about Young Athletes, an innovative, versatile program that strengthens physical development and self esteem among children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7, prior to eligibility for actual Special Olympics competition at age 8.

Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Young Athletes is a versatile program, capable of working in various learning situations. Piloted in 2006 around the world, Young Athletes has been successful in a variety of settings, including preschools, playgroups, and in the home. Family members and caregivers are also encouraged to become involved as the child learns success through physical activity.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.

What skills do Future Special Olympics Athletes need? Some of the skills these Young Athletes develop include: foundational skills, walking and running, throwing, kicking, and trapping and catching, as well as other advanced sports skills that are important to participating as an Athlete in Special Olympics.

We invite you to experience the benefits young children, families and communities get from Young Athletes. Special Olympics has resources available to help successfully implement the program, including a Young Athletes DVD and Playbook. We'd love to arrange for a Young Athletes demonstration for you (or your organization) to demonstrate the advantages and benefits of Young Athletes, in addition to how fun Special Olympics can be for children of all ages.

If you are interested, please call [insert contact name and number] to set up a Young Athletes demonstration.

Sincerely,

[Insert state or local Special Olympics official name and title]

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.4 SOLICITING DONORS & SUPPORTERS

3.43 FUNDRAISING FORM

Fundraising Activity	Date(s) and Deadlines	Who/Committee Responsible	Narrative: Describe Approach/Plan/ Follow up strategy
SPECIAL EVENT Event Chair and Committee appointed by Contract/Facilities/ secured by Sponsors / seats secured by Speakers Secured by Flowers/food/décor/music secured by Mailing date for invitations secured by RSVPs deadline Clean up Follow up/ Thank you notes done by			
CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP Identify Prospects by Strategy Developed by Solicitation completed by Servicing sponsorship by Thanking / recognition by Renewing by			

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

The Young Athletes program attracts substantial media attention throughout the world, offering your Program the opportunity to spread the message of Special Olympics and highlight the extraordinary talents of people with intellectual disabilities at young ages. Thus, it is critical to establish a strong public relations program to promote Young Athletes.

Organizations with good media relationships tend to attract more coverage. Deadline-pressured journalists pay attention to organizations and/or specific contacts that prove to be credible and accessible sources of information. When you consider the strong influence the media has on public opinion, you quickly realize how important it is to build relations with journalists.

Creating a relationship with journalist takes some time initially, but it is an investment your Program will benefit from immensely. You will find that reporters not only become more apt to cover Young Athletes activities but also become more responsive to crisis situations, misrepresentations or sensitive issues that could damage the image of Special Olympics.

This section will provide you with an overview of the approaches you can take for building and maintaining successful relationships, tips for media outreach and the various media formats you can use as resources for publicizing your activities.

WORKING WITH JOURNALISTS

This step-by-step outline provides many insights for working with the media, specifically journalists who are constantly under the pressure of deadlines. Journalists are generally hard to get in touch with and when you do, they have little time to talk. Therefore, establishing credibility comes by following processes and using formats that journalists prefer.

Step 1: What is your story?

Being prepared and knowing what you want to communicate to journalists are the first steps to creating a positive relationship. Before you call a journalist, have the following in hand:

- A clear and concise description of what you want the journalist to cover.
- Written information about the topic you would like a journalist to cover (press release, media alert or fact sheet).
- Local information that may relate to the story.

Step 2: Create a media list.

Most public relations professionals have what is called a media list which is nothing more than a list of contacts who might be interested in covering specific types of programs and events. It is possible to send your information generically to the “editor” or “producer,” but you may find that response rates are low. To increase your chances of getting a response, it is important to know whom to contact.

When creating your media list, be sure to include daily and weekly newspapers, radio and television stations, magazines, and any other media outlets in your area.

To find out which reporters will cover your Young Athletes projects, you can:

- Reference a media directory — these are usually available in larger metropolitan areas. Public libraries generally carry these directories in their reference section, or an online search may be an alternative source.
- Call the broadcast station or publication — the receptionist or assignment editor should be able to direct you to the appropriate person’s name and contact information.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

- Read local newspapers and magazines, and watch TV — Take note of reporters' bylines (names in publications) and names of reporters on television and cable who might report on Special Olympics and its constituents. It is also a way to gain insight into reporters' styles and sense of what they consider news.

Information you need when creating your media list:

- Name of media company
- Name of reporter or editor
- Telephone number
- Fax number
- E-mail address
- Mailing address
- Information about how the reporter or editor prefers to be contacted
- Lead times
- Deadlines

Step 3: Prepare your resources in advance.

Be prepared to answer the questions of journalists and follow-up conversations with information. Here's an overview of the tools you may need:

- Press (or media) kit — organized package of information that includes background information on Young Athletes and names of key Young Athletes sites and events, in addition to photographs, if necessary. Press kits are usually mailed in advance; event-specific kits are handed out at the event.
- Media advisory (also known as media alert, news advisory or tip sheet) — a brief summary of the basic facts surrounding a Young Athletes event; often used when there isn't enough time, the occasion does not warrant a printed invitation or there is a need for an update when new information becomes available. Due to their urgent nature, advisories are usually faxed or e-mailed.
- Press (or news) release — used to announce Young Athletes news and information; usually one page (no longer than two pages), which is faxed, e-mailed or mailed, depending on the reporter's preference.
- Query (or "Pitch") letter — a proposal much like a sales letter which suggests to the editor that coverage of a particular topic is newsworthy. This will essentially contain the same information as a press release but is formatted differently. If used, a query letter is usually the first correspondence to be sent; it is usually mailed.
- Photographs — Broadcasters and most print media tell stories through the use of visuals so it is important to be able to provide Young Athletes-specific pictures.

Step 4: "Pitch" your story or event.

Your first communication with your contacts should take place according to their lead times. Mail reporters a press kit with a press release for the event. As it gets closer to your event — about a week or two prior — e-mail or fax a media advisory to reporters. After a day or two, begin "pitching," or making calls to your contacts. "Pitching" is a public relations term for "selling" the story to journalists.

When pitching, your goal is to capture the journalist's attention in as few words as possible while still providing the essential facts. Preparing a 10- to 15-second pitch before contacting the reporter is good practice as it forces you to relay only the most essential facts.

- Give just enough information without giving away everything. Save a few facts for a media advisory that can be sent out just before your event to remind reporters.
- Position your story so that it is relevant and newsworthy to your community. To accomplish this, first start by thinking about the audience of each media outlet and start crafting your story from that audience's point of view.
- Make headlines for press releases and advisories short yet eye-catching. Long headlines are acceptable only if they are full of essential information. Be sure to highlight the involvement of recognizable celebrities, local heroes, community leaders and businesses in the headline only if they will attract the media's attention.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

SAMPLE MEDIA CALL SCRIPT

Hello (OR PREFERRED GREETING), my name is _____ and I am calling from Special Olympics. Are you on deadline?

or

Are you available to talk? I just need a moment of your time.

If the reporter says he/she is on deadline or is unavailable say:

Is there a better time that I can reach you regarding a Young Athletes program/event I think your readers might be interested in?

or

In the meantime, can I verify your e-mail address or fax number so that I can send you information?

May I call to follow up? When is the best time for you to talk?

Thank you [NAME OF REPORTER] and I look forward to talking to you on [DATE AND TIME].

If the reporter is not available, leave a message saying:

Thank you for your time. I am calling regarding [EVENT] that will be held at [PLACE/LOCATION] on [DATE]. We are expecting [NUMBER] participants to [DESCRIBE EVENT]. I would be happy to arrange an interview with our Program director and some of our participants if you are interested.

TIP: Because most reporters have afternoon deadlines, it is best to pitch between 10 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Avoid calling television stations during their airtime.

TIP: Keep track of your calls with reporters as you go in order to keep your media list updated as well as know who you've spoken to as compared with who shows up at your event.

Step 5: Follow up with reporters before the event.

Because journalists receive so much information and are invited to cover a variety of events, it is appropriate to follow up with a telephone call. When following up, do not start pitching the event but reiterate the significance of Young Athletes and/or the specific Young Athletes event for your community.

The day before the Young Athletes event, fax media advisories to local media daybooks or community calendars. Releases can be embargoed until a specific date and time. Place the time and date when the reporter can release the information prominently on the press release.

Even if a reporter is not able to attend the event, he or she may write a brief story based on the information provided in the press release. You may also want to make a pre-event "reminder call" to media who had expressed an interest. This is especially true for television media, which may not make a decision as to whether it wants to cover your event until a few hours before the event begins.

TIP: If you have a press event in the morning, try one last round of quick calls to TV assignment desks as broadcast groups and local stations often have 9–9:30 a.m. meetings to assign camera crews.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

Step 6: Interact and work with reporters at the event.

At the Young Athletes event, be sure to greet journalists who are covering your event; have business cards and press kits ready to hand out. Set up a press table at your event to keep track of which media outlets attend your event.

In the course of events try to have athletes raising key issues and delivering critical messages. As your local Program grows, train Global Messengers, thus developing a pool of athlete speakers capable of working with journalists effectively.

Step 7: Follow up.

Follow up within two days after mailing a press release or media advisory. After an event, call the reporters who attended your event to see if they have any additional questions. Be sure to send a quick, sincere letter thanking them for their coverage. It is also helpful to follow up with reporters who did not attend the event to see if they are interested in receiving facts about the actual event. You may be surprised how many journalists write articles without attending.

TIPS ON WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- Talk or write from the viewpoint of the public's interest versus your Program's point of view.
- Make the news easy to read and use. Do not use jargon, slang or unfamiliar acronyms or technical terms.
- Prepare in advance. Whether you can speak directly to the journalist or have to leave a message, prepare a 10- to 15-second pitch ahead of time. Your pitch should be enticing in either case.
- Get to the point. Journalists want to know the facts.
- Create a short yet eye-catching headline to attract attention. Long headlines are acceptable only if as they are full of essential information. Be sure to highlight the involvement of recognizable celebrities, local heroes, community leaders and businesses in the headline only if they will attract the media's attention.
- State and restate the most important facts. Whether providing information to a reporter over the telephone for an article or responding during an interview, be sure to know the point you are trying to make; repeat it many times. If asked to elaborate, do so by providing concrete examples or evidence to back up your point. On the other hand, if you are asked a question that strays from your talking points, simply refocus the conversation by restating your main goal or objective (and the Special Olympics mission).
- Do not argue with a reporter or lose your control. Trying to get your story across can be frustrating, especially when you are on deadline. Stay calm and stick to the facts. It will not help your Program get future coverage if relationships with reporters are damaged.
- If you don't know the answer, say so and get back to the reporter later. For example, you may encounter a situation where a reporter is collecting information for a story and is in need of statistics to back it up. If you do not know the numbers, ask the reporter when his or her deadline is and get back to him or her as soon as possible with the answer. (Remember, strong media relationships are essential, as is credibility.)
- Follow up.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

Sample Media Relations Plan
 Event: Young Athletes Demonstration
 Event Date(s): 16–19 MAY

MEDIA OUTLETS

Print Media	Idea	Timeline	Notes
Newspapers (Weekly and Daily)	Calendar announcement	Send 1 April	
	Feature story	Send query letter 16 April, follow up 24 April. Continue to offer story ideas.	
	Photo	Send media alert to photography Desk 13 May. Follow up with telephone call 14 May.	
	Letter to the Editor	Send letter thanking volunteers 20 May.	
	Special section dedicated to the Event	Contact newspaper 10 January with suggestion.	
Magazine	Story with photos	Send information and query letter 15 January.	

Broadcast Media	Idea	Timeline	Notes
Television	Feature story	Send release 1 May	
	In-studio interview	Call 8 May	
	Sports	Call 13 May	
	Other Weekly feature program	Call 6 May	
	Morning Show	Call 6 May	
Magazine	Radio Remote	Call to invite radio station to broadcast from event 22 March.	

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

Internet	Idea	Timeline	Notes
Web sites	Research potential Web sites which may publicize the Games	Contact Web sites by 1 April.	
Program Web site	Stories leading up to the Games	Post new story weekly until the Games.	

OTHER PUBLICITY

Publicity	Plan	Timeline	Notes
Poster	Poster announcing the Games with a "call to action" for volunteers.	Distributed by 5 April.	
Fliers	Flier announcing the Games placed in shopping bags at local stores.	Provided to stores by 5 April.	
Sponsors' communications outlets	Provide announcements and information to sponsors for newsletters, Web sites and internal e-mail. Send photos and stories to sponsor after the Games.	Provide information monthly beginning 1 February. Send photos and stories Week of 20 May	

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION
3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM
3.51 SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Jane Smith, (515) 555-1234

SPECIAL OLYMPICS ANNOUNCES PROGRAM FOR 2-7 YEAR OLDS

Ames, Iowa, July 1, 2005 — Special Olympics Iowa (SO Iowa) is pleased to announce that Young Athletes™ has arrived in Iowa. Young Athletes is a sports play program developed for children with intellectual disabilities between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.

The program will be administered three times a week at the Special Olympics Iowa training facility in Decatur. Enrollment is now open for families who would like to include their child, age 2-7 in this program. We are also looking for siblings and parents to serve as volunteers during the Young Athletes program sessions. If you are interested in enrolling your child or volunteering to support the program, you can visit our website at www.soiowa.org for more information or by calling 1-800-555-2346.

Young Athlete™ is a sports play program created by Special Olympics International through funding from the Gang Family Foundation, the Lynch Family Foundation and Mattel Children's Foundation.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

3.52 STORIES

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

Young Athletes introduces children to Special Olympics

by: Sally Lemmon

Get ready to welcome the next generation of Special Olympics athletes! Last year, Special Olympics piloted Young Athletes™, an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility for training and competition at the age of 8. Young Athletes creates opportunity and hope for young children and their families all over the world.

While watching her child participate in Young Athletes, one parent remarked, "It was the first time that I realized every child needs to be cheered on, that every child has potential. It was the first time my husband realized we had a child with a disability and at the same time realized how much our child was capable of."

The success and popularity of Young Athletes is partly due to its versatility and adaptability. Young Athletes can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms, to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children. The program is designed to address two specific levels of play: Level 1 includes physical activities that focus on developing motor skills and hand-eye coordination; Level 2 concentrates on the application of these physical skills through sports skills programs. Several resources, such as the Young Athletes Activity Guide, DVD and Young Athletes Equipment, make these activities easy for family members and teachers to implement and integrate into their regular play programs or everyday lives.

After watching her son Brendan participate in Young Athletes with his peers, Colleen Popp, of Delaware, USA, observed with a proud smile, "Brendan has changed physically and socially on many levels since he has participated in this program. He's jumping, he's running, he's hitting balls, he's running bases. He's shown a lot of interest socially with his friends and with his typical peers. It's been an amazing program so far."

Young Athletes is also fun and appropriate for children without intellectual disabilities. Several Special Olympics programs are using Young Athletes as an opportunity for children with and without intellectual disabilities to play and interact together. One teacher commented, "The Young Athletes program gives children a sense of increased mastery and competence. It leads to more willingness to initiate interactions with peers."

The flexibility of Young Athletes ensures the incredible opportunity to welcome young children, their peers and their families into the Special Olympics family worldwide. Last year, the Young Athletes program began in 21 Special Olympics Programs in 11 countries around the world and will grow to include nearly 50 Special Olympics Programs in 21 countries by the end of 2007. Not only are more than 10,000 children expected to participate in Young Athletes and simultaneously welcomed to Special Olympics, but their families will find a common ground in sports through which they can connect to their children and other parents of children with intellectual disabilities in their communities.

In addition to collecting the stories and information of those who have hands-on experience with Young Athletes, Special Olympics also commissioned the University of Massachusetts to conduct a study of various Young Athletes pilot sites to learn more about the benefits of Young Athletes. Preliminary findings suggest that participation in the Young Athletes program may lead to improvements in motor development, social and emotional development, and communication development. These early findings are incredibly exciting and encouraging.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

3.52 STORIES

The upcoming 2007 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Shanghai, China, is another exciting chance for local children with intellectual disabilities to demonstrate Young Athletes activities along with their families and teachers. The demonstration is a great opportunity to continue to raise awareness about the abilities of young children with intellectual disabilities and a chance for those who haven't experienced Young Athletes to see it in action.

Thanks to the many families, teachers, athletes and the generous support of the Mattel Children's Foundation, the Lynch Family Foundation and the Gang Family Foundation, Special Olympics now opens the door for young children with intellectual disabilities and their families to a world of physical activity, social development, pride and community.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

3.52 STORIES

ELC STUDENTS COMPETE IN YOUNG ATHLETES' EVENTS

by Martin Mbugua

12 p.m., Dec. 7, 2007 — One hundred preschool and kindergarten students gathered in the gymnasium of UD's Early Learning Center (ELC) on Dec. 3 for the second annual Special Olympics Young Athletes' Day. Participants at the event were students with intellectual disabilities and their non-disabled peers who have been working with 32 University students from the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences in the College of Health Sciences.

The event began with all the students reciting the Special Olympics athlete's oath: "Let me win. If I do not win, let me be brave in the attempt."

Comprised of six stations that challenged students' motor coordination, speed, concentration and navigation skills, the arena of competition included an obstacle course, a cone slalom, parachute games and other activities. All students were recognized during a presentation of medals by Cpl. Marvin Clark, a UD police officer, and Barbara Spence and Winnie Spence of Wilmington, board members of Special Olympics Delaware.

The event was a culmination of the physical education program that Nancy Getchell, UD associate professor of health, nutrition and exercise sciences, conducts with preschoolers at ELC.

"This event perfectly exemplifies the partnership between the University of Delaware's academic programs and our clinical program for young children," said Peg Bradley, director of ELC. "The excitement and enthusiasm demonstrated here today by preschool children and UD students alike bears testimony to the mutual benefit of clinical placements that have a service learning focus."

The coordination and organization of the event involved UD undergraduates enrolled in Getchell's HESC 250 class, Jon Buzby, director of program innovations at Special Olympics Delaware, and Bradley.

"It's been a very good learning experience," said Tom Sheridan, a sophomore health and physical education major from Williamstown, N.J. "You get to interact with the children and see how they develop. We study the theory in class, come here and teach and each week we write a reflection about what we learned in class and how it applies here."

The Young Athletes program is an innovative sports play program designed to introduce children with intellectual disabilities ages 2–7 to the world of sports. The program strengthens physical development and self-esteem by building skills for future sports participation and socialization.

"It's very invigorating, very exciting for the kids, and it teaches them to learn things quickly," said Jutta Pils, a Newark resident whose 4-year-old son is an ELC student. "Every room has something different, and it involves adaptability. They should do it every day."

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

3.52 STORIES

SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM HELPS CHILDREN TO BUILD SOCIAL SKILLS

December 10, 2007 — 11:59am

Maggie Harris spends a lot of her time shuttling her children to and from the various activities she plans for them.

They have occupational therapy, speech and social skills classes and visits with specialists who monitor their conditions.

Cameron, 6, and Adam, 3, are diagnosed with autism.

Harris' insurance covers many of the classes, but she still has \$15 co-pays, about six a week, that add up. Her insurance does not cover the social skills classes, for example, which cost \$800 for 12 classes.

So when Harris found out about a new Special Olympics program in Frederick County that combined many of the therapies and skills Cameron and Adam were already learning, she jumped at the chance to get involved.

The Youth Athletes Program started about two years ago as a pilot program in six states for intellectually disabled, elementary school age children, said Anne MacDonald, western district director of Special Olympics Maryland.

The program was designed, she said, to have children with disabilities, joined by their parents, interact in a social environment while learning key motor skills.

Special Olympics decided it was effective and began to offer the Youth Athletes Program worldwide.

"Maryland was quick to jump on this boat," MacDonald said.

MacDonald, with the help of her daughters and Harris, have been organizing classes at the Frederick Gymnastics Club for more than three months.

There are three basic ways of offering athletes the program, MacDonald said.

The most effective, she said, is through community-based programs, like the one offered at the Frederick Gymnastics Club. MacDonald said so far, eight to 10 people attend each Saturday.

"It's like a play date," MacDonald said.

Children do the Hokey-Pokey or red-light, green-light, she said. As a result, they are interacting with peers, developing fine and gross motor skills and learning how to play.

In some cases, the children take it a bit further.

When one autistic 6-year-old first attended the local Youth Athletes Program, he would watch the traditional gymnast classes taking place at the same time, MacDonald said. After a couple weeks, he joined in with the regular group and can now jump on the vaulting board and land on two feet, a difficult task.

He can also do a forward roll on the mat, difficult for people with autism.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.5 PUBLIC RELATIONS PROGRAM

3.52 STORIES

The sports children play in all Special Olympics programs vary, depending on local interest and the availability of volunteer coaches, MacDonald said.

For example, in Frederick County, gymnastics is available because MacDonald, among others, offered to instruct.

Oliver Gillespie, 4, swung on the rings and jumped on the trampolines Saturday at the Frederick Gymnastics Club. He can not speak and has other developmental disabilities, but he played with Cameron and Adam Harris and other children.

Gretchen Gillespie has brought Oliver and his older brother, James, for the past four weeks to the Youth Athletes Program.

The children love it, MacDonald said. When practice is over, they start crying because they do not want to leave.

Gillespie said it was a relief for her to talk with the other parents attending the classes.

“(Parents) don’t feel so alone when it comes to dealing with problems of having a special needs child,” MacDonald said.

The second way to bring athletes to Special Olympics Maryland is to request a free kit.

The kit is a way to bring the Youth Athlete program home, and includes toys like plastic circles with numbers, colored stars, paddles and steps.

Parents or care givers with intellectually disadvantaged toddlers, or children with behavioral problems, can use the kit to start teaching the program.

The third method, MacDonald said, is through public school programs.

Maryland schools have yet to offer the Special Olympics program, she said, but she hopes Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers throughout the state will start in a couple of months.

“Judy Centers” prepare students and their families with the scholastic and social skills they need to perform well in school.

The idea, MacDonald said, will be to combine the academics of the “Judy Centers,” with the sports offered by the Special Olympics.

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III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.6 IDEAS FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

The importance of family involvement in the lives of young children is unquestionable. Parents, caretakers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins should be afforded every opportunity to become involved in Young Athletes. Preliminary research findings indicate families benefit from Young Athletes in the following ways: enjoying seeing their young athlete participate in demonstrations and event; raising parental expectations about their child's capabilities; establishing support networks among other family members; providing new ways for families to interact with their child; and many others. Your Young Athletes program should seek to enhance and expand upon these benefits¹. Explore the following ideas to involve family members in your Young Athletes program.

- Anticipate that the initial family experience of Young Athletes will include signing a registration form for 'Special Olympics'. It may be difficult for a parent who, for the first time, is seeing their child's abilities and development relative to others in a community based setting. Meeting with parents at the onset or start-up of Young Athletes may be needed to address such family challenges.
- Maximize the days when parents are present, (start-up day, celebrations, demonstration activities, and other Young Athletes events).
 - o Provide an opportunity for a voluntary parent contact exchange list
 - o Utilize the opportunity for connecting families to families or other programs and services with resource listing of other programs in the area².
 - o Often, other community resources welcome opportunities to connect with families. They could be invited to set up booths to connect families to other services and programs. It is notable that parents have a greater sense of impact on families than Young Athletes teachers and coaches³.
 - o Set up informal meetings or discussions with local coaches to discuss opportunities for future sports training and competition
- Communicate weekly Young Athletes activities and progress to families.
 - o Post electronically or send home weekly with suggestions of what we could do at home;
 - o Develop simple notes to send home with children about the weeks activities
- Let families know about everyday home items that can be used to substitute for the Young Athletes equipment, for families who do not have the equipment at home.
 - o Print black & white copies of the Young Athletes Activity Guide (Included as a PDF on the Young Athletes Playbook CD) for family members so that they can continue Young Athletes activities at home.
- In community based programs or ones where families can be involved, encourage families to bring siblings and other family members to introduce them to the equipment and become athlete assistants.

¹Favazza, Paddy and Gary Siperstein, Evaluation of Young Athletes Program. Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center, University of Massachusetts Boston. 29 December 2006. 22.

²See section 3.5 for further details.

³See sections 3.1, 3.2 and subsections 3.22 and 3.25 for further details.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.6 IDEAS FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

3.61 FAMILY SUPPORT NETWORK

Young Athletes is a versatile program, working in many different types of settings, in schools, local community organizations, established playgroups, and perhaps most importantly in the home. Families and care givers of young children with intellectual disabilities are urged to take an active part in encouraging and assisting their child as they learn success while participating in the program.

The Special Olympics Family Support Network (FSN) offers families the chance to be actively involved in Special Olympics year round, providing social interaction between families and athletes, while providing a much needed support system. FSN also gives families an opportunity to interact with other families with common interests and similar challenges, provides families with volunteer opportunities within Special Olympics, and allows them to get truly involved with their athletes training and competition.

Young Athletes offers a unique opportunity to introduce family members of young children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support. Programs should encourage Family Support Networks or other Special Olympics family groups to become involved in the Young Athletes program. As FSNs seek to broaden membership and involvement, families may choose to organize events around Young Athletes, either at a family member's home or local community center. Young Athletes is a fun way to introduce the benefits of Special Olympics, both social and physical, to other families.

Utilizing the FSN to showcase Young Athletes also provides new families with young children with intellectual disabilities access to much needed information regarding Special Olympics. Young Athletes, along with the FSN, will provide new families with a support system that they very often need while also giving them a chance to realize the potential for social and physical development of their child even at a very young age, while also providing parents and caregivers with hand- on involvement.

Aside from local community events, larger regional Family Forums are also a great environment to introduce Young Athletes. Demonstrations may be held to present the Young Athletes. Family members should be encouraged to take this valuable information with them to educate and energize other family members in their National/State Programs and communities. On a smaller scale, families might choose to approach a local school about conducting a Young Athletes demonstration. The direct exposure of families, teachers, principals, and other school officials provides meaningful experience that often leads to organized implementation of Young Athletes within a school.

The early success of Young Athletes enabled it to be easily integrated into schools and local communities, however, sustaining this success will not be possible without the support and involvement of Special Olympics families. As an organization built around the family, Special Olympics often relies on families to communicate information to local communities – educating and enhancing attitudes about Special Olympics and Special Olympics athletes with intellectual disabilities.

For additional information on the Family Support Network visit www.specialolympics.org

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.6 IDEAS FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

3.62 SAMPLE LETTER TO FAMILIES

Send this letter to local athletes and their families to introduce them to the Young Athletes program.

Dear [insert name]:

Finding creative, fun, and interactive ways to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities to the world of sports can be difficult. However, we're excited to tell you about Young Athletes, an innovative, versatile program that strengthens physical development and self esteem among children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7, prior to eligibility for Special Olympics competition at age 8.

Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Young Athletes is a versatile program, capable of working in various learning situations. Piloted in 2006 around the world, Young Athletes has been successful in a variety of settings, including preschools, playgroups, and in the home. Family members and caregivers are encouraged to become involved as the child learns success through physical activity.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.

What skills do Future Special Olympics Athletes need? Some of the skills these Young Athletes develop include: foundational skills, walking and running, throwing, kicking, and trapping and catching, as well as other advanced sports skills that are important to participating as an Athlete in Special Olympics.

We invite you to experience the benefits young children, families and communities get from Young Athletes. Special Olympics has resources available to help successfully implement the program, including a Young Athletes DVD and Playbook. If you are interested in attending a Young Athletes demonstration in your local area please contact [insert name and contact number]. You will experience the advantages and benefits of Young Athletes, in addition to how fun Special Olympics can be for children of all ages.

Sincerely,

[Insert state or local Special Olympics official name and title]

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.7 IDEAS FOR INCLUDING PEERS

Young Athletes offers opportunities to begin facilitating strong relationships among children with intellectual disabilities and their peers, building relationships and enhancing awareness at early ages. The Young Athletes activities are appropriate for all children ages 2 through 7. Special Olympics Programs that participated in the pilot test of Young Athletes found that initiatives designed to include peers of young athletes produced greater levels of impact both on the young athletes as well as their peers. Consider the following suggestions to include peers in your Young Athletes program.

- Create an inclusive Young Athletes program where children with and without intellectual disabilities may play alongside one another, much like Unified Sports.
 - o 'Train' peers of children with intellectual disabilities to serve as mentors.
 - o Encourage peers to participate in the Young Athletes activities.
 - o Offer service awards to peers who display an exceptional interest in supporting Young Athletes.
 - o Create support roles for peers to play when holding a Young Athletes demonstration
 - Greeters
 - Ushers
 - Possibly give a welcome speech and say how they have helped the children, "Learn to throw", Learn to run", etc.
- Develop strategies to implement Young Athletes in a more inclusive setting that supports friendships across children with and without intellectual disabilities and social acceptance in the context of Young Athletes.
 - o Urge parents to invite and include children with intellectual disabilities in "playdates" in the home and then integrate Young Athlete's activities among other activities for children.
 - o Get involved. When children with and without intellectual disabilities come together, don't just let them go off and play, use your guidance to help children feel at ease with each other and get to know one another using the Young Athletes activities.
 - o Introduce Young Athletes to children with and without intellectual disabilities at separate times. After assimilating the children to the activities and equipment, bring the groups together to perform the activities with each other. The groups will recognize the similarities of having fun with Young Athletes activities, rather than their differences.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

3.7 IDEAS FOR INCLUDING PEERS

3.7.1 SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS OF PEERS

Send this letter to families of young children without intellectual disabilities in the local community to introduce them to Young Athletes™.

Dear [insert name]:

Finding creative, fun, and interactive ways to introduce young children with intellectual disabilities to the world of sports can be difficult. However, we're excited to tell you about Young Athletes, an innovative, versatile program that strengthens physical development and self esteem among children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 through 7, prior to eligibility for Special Olympics competition at age 8.

Special Olympics is an international nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports training and competition. Young Athletes is a versatile program, capable of working in various learning situations. Piloted in 2006 around the world, Young Athletes has been successful in a variety of settings, including preschools, playgroups, and in the home. Family members and caregivers are encouraged to become involved as the child learns success through physical activity.

Special Olympics has asked your preschool program to participate in the new Young Athletes program. The activities will be centered around the concept of movement education and will culminate with a Family Fun Day involving all the participants demonstrating the skills they have learned during the program.

We would like to incorporate your son or daughter without an intellectual disability into the Young Athletes activities, by pairing them with students with special needs during the activities. All of the children would come together to participate in the activities as a whole class.

Young Athletes engages children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development; welcomes family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support; and raises awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events. The program can be used in a variety of environments: from individual family settings, to classrooms to community programs. Young Athletes seeks to offer families a community network experience that supports the development of their young children.

We invite you to experience the benefits families and children with and without intellectual disabilities get from Young Athletes. If you are interested in attending a Young Athletes demonstration at your child's school, please contact [insert name and contact number]. You will experience the advantages and benefits of Young Athletes, in addition to how fun Special Olympics can be for children of all ages.

Sincerely,

[Insert state or local Special Olympics official name and title]

YOUNG ATHLETES

REGISTRATION
& TRACKING

IV. REGISTRATION & TRACKING

4.1 REGISTRATION

Each child that participates in the Young Athlete program must have a Young Athletes Registration Form completed by his or her parents or legal guardian. Forms must be on file at all times and on-site with children at all Special Olympics activities. Young Athletes Registration Forms contain confidential information and should be handled accordingly. The Young Athlete Registration form is contained in this volume, on the accompanying computer disk, and via the state or national Special Olympics Office.

IV. REGISTRATION & TRACKING

4.1 REGISTRATION

4.11 REGISTRATION FORM

The purpose of this form is to identify individuals who will be participating in the Young Athletes program.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANT:

Participant's Name _____
(Last/Family) (First/Given)

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Province: _____ Postal Code/Zip Code _____

Country: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Birth Date: Month ____ Day ____ Year ____

Is there anything about your child that you think we should know before he/she participates in Young Athletes?

Does the child attend a formal daycare or preschool program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the participant attend school? ☐ Yes (What grade/year: _____)
☐ No

ABOUT THE PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

Name of Parents/
Guardians of Participant: _____
(Last/Family) (First/Given)

Address (If different from Participant)

City: _____ State/Province: _____

Postal Code/ Zip Code: _____

Country: _____ Phone # _____

Cell Phone # _____

Email: _____

What is your relationship to the Participant you are registering?

☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Sibling ☐ Other family member

☐ OTHER (please specify): _____

IV. REGISTRATION & TRACKING

4.1 REGISTRATION

4.11 REGISTRATION FORM

PROGRAM INFORMATION (COMPLETED BY OFFICE STAFF)

Special Olympics Program (Please specify) :

(Country or State)

Site or Sub-Program (if applicable):
(A site is defined as the specific location of the Young Athletes Activities. Enter the name of the town/city where this child will participate in Young Athletes.

(City or Town)

A program (country or state) may have multiple sites. Site is defined as the specific location of the Young Athletes Activities. The Young Athlete site this child will attend is (Select one of the following.)

☐ A group site (attended by multiple families at a school, center, etc.)

☐ At home (implemented by you or a family member at home)

Date this form was completed:

Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Date of Young Athletes Participant Release Form:

Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

(Enter date of submission of the completed Participant Release Form which contains a release to be signed by a parent/guardian of a minor participant, medical matters and permissions for publicity).

Name of person completing this form:

IV. REGISTRATION & TRACKING

4.1 REGISTRATION

4.11 REGISTRATION FORM

Please remember to sign and date the two attached pages.

YOUNG ATHLETES RELEASE FORM — SUMMARY

- 1) PARAGRAPH ONE:
 - Athlete gives consent to participate in Special Olympics Parent or guardian of a minor athlete gives permission for said minor to participate in Special Olympics
- 2) PARAGRAPH TWO:
 - Notification of the right to use athlete's likeness, voice or words for the purpose of Special Olympics publicity, and acknowledgement that data from the Pilot will be used for program evaluation and improvement
- 3) PARAGRAPH THREE:
 - Authorization for Special Olympics to provide athlete with medical treatment in case of a medical emergency.
 - Instructions for those with Religious Objections for emergency medical treatment: Cross out Paragraph 5, initial the document and complete attached Religious Objections form on the back of this page

ANY CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE FORM BELOW MUST BE APPROVED BY SOI

YOUNG ATHLETES RELEASE FORM

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF MINOR ATHLETE

I am the parent/guardian of _____, the minor participant, on whose behalf I have submitted the attached application for participation in Special Olympics. The participant has my permission to participate in Special Olympics activities. I further represent and warrant that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the participant is physically and mentally able to participate in Special Olympics.

In permitting the participant to participate, I am specifically granting my permission, forever, to Special Olympics to use the participant's likeness, name, voice and words in television, radio, film, newspapers, magazines and other media, internet and in any form, for the purpose of publicizing, promoting or communicating the purposes and activities of Special Olympics and/or applying for funds to support those purposes and activities. I also understand that group data collected from the Young Athletes Pilot Program will be used to plan, evaluate, and improve the program.

If a medical emergency should arise during the participant's participation in any Special Olympics activities, at a time when I am not personally present so as to be consulted regarding the participant's care, I hereby authorize Special Olympics, on my behalf, to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that the participant is provided with any emergency medical treatment, including hospitalization, which Special Olympics deems advisable in order to protect the participant's health and well-being. (If you HAVE RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO RECEIVING SUCH MEDICAL TREATMENT, PLEASE CROSS OUT THIS PARAGRAPH, INITIAL IT AND SIGN AND ATTACH THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING MEDICAL TREATMENT FORM) I am the parent (guardian) of the participant named in this application. I have read and fully understand the provisions of the above release, and have explained these provisions to the participant. Through my signature on this release form, I am agreeing to the above provisions on my own behalf and on the behalf of the participant named above. I hereby give my permission for the participant named above to participate in Special Olympics games, recreation programs, and physical activity programs.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

IV. REGISTRATION & TRACKING

4.1 REGISTRATION

4.11 REGISTRATION FORM

RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS FORM**SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR ATHLETES HAVING RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO STANDARD FORM****TO ATHLETES AND PARENTS:**

Special Olympics respects the religious beliefs of all its athletes. Our standard application form normally requires each athlete (or his/her parent, if the athlete is a minor) to give Special Olympics permission to arrange for emergency medical treatment, including hospitalization, for any athlete if a medical emergency arises during his/her participation in Special Olympics under circumstances in which neither the athlete nor his/ her parents is available to consent to that emergency treatment. If you have religious objections to approving that provision, please cross it out and initial it on the application form, and submit the application along with this page, after reading and signing it below.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT OF MINOR ATHLETE

On the attached official Special Olympics Release form, I have crossed out and rejected, on behalf of _____ (name of athlete), the provision that authorizes Special Olympics to make arrangements for emergency medical treatment for the athlete if the athlete is injured and his/her parent are unable to consent to that treatment. I am withholding this permission on behalf of the athlete on religious grounds. However, on behalf of myself and the athlete named in this Application, I do agree to and confirm the following:

1. I agree to be present with the athlete at all times at the site of any Special Olympics training or competitive event in which the athlete participates, including during travel to and from the training or competition, in the dormitories, meal time, and during competition, training and practice sessions, so that I can be readily available to take personal responsibility for the athlete if a medical emergency arises. I understand that if I am not present at all times, the athlete will not be permitted to participate in that event, and that no exception will be made.
2. I also agree on behalf of myself and the athlete to release Special Olympics and its employees and volunteers from any and all claims, demands or liabilities of any kind that may arise out of Special Olympics failure to take measures to provide the athlete with emergency medical treatment during Special Olympics' events and activities. I am agreeing to this release because I have refused, knowingly and voluntarily, to give Special Olympics permission to take such emergency measures, and I am expressly directly Special Olympics not to do so on religious grounds.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

*Please see section VI. or visit the web site for a printable form.

IV. REGISTRATION & TRACKING

4.2 TRACKING AT GAMES & COMPETITIONS

The Young Athletes registration form and parental/guardian release form offer Special Olympics Programs the opportunity to keep track of children that participate in Young Athletes, but Programs should also be interested in monitoring how children participate in Young Athletes. Maintaining records of Young Athletes participation will help ensure that the Program's Young Athletes program is attracting children to become the next generation of Special Olympics athletes when they are old enough to compete which is age eight as deemed by the Special Olympics Medical Committee. If a Program holds a Young Athletes event in conjunction with, for instance, a Summer Games, then there are several options for tracking children that participate in that event using the current GMS system.

Step 1.

Create a custom event titled Young Athletes Demonstration in GMS.

Step 2.

Ensure that all Young Athletes are registered and that registration forms are onsite.

Step 3.

Register children to participate in the Young Athletes Demonstration as Athletes in GMS. Entering the Young Athletes date of birth in GMS automatically registers them as participants.

YOUNG ATHLETES

EVALUATION,
FEEDBACK,
STORIES &
WEB RESOURCES

V. EVALUATION, FEEDBACK, STORIES & WEB RESOURCES

5.1 EVALUATION

Feedback and Evaluation of the Young Athletes Program will help to improve and change the Young Athletes to meet the needs of Special Olympics Programs, families, educators and volunteers. Please complete the following Young Athletes evaluation and return to:

Special Olympics, Inc.
c/o Manager, Young Athletes
1133 19th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
or Fax to: 202-628-3926

The evaluation form can also be completed online at:
www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes.

WHAT WAS THE SETTING WHERE THE YOUNG ATHLETES PROGRAM WAS CARRIED OUT? (CHECK ONE OR MORE BOXES)

1. ☐ Home
2. ☐ Pre-School
3. ☐ School
4. ☐ Community center (YMCA, Gymboree, etc.)

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. Fun;
 - Young Athletes is all about fun. Children, peers, family members, teachers, and other participants should always remember that conducting Young Athletes activities and events should always be fun for all participants.

Was this fun for these participants? (check box)

1. Young Athletes Yes ☐ No ☐
 2. Unified/Inclusive Peers Yes ☐ No ☐
 3. Family Members
 - a. Siblings Yes ☐ No ☐
 - b. Parent/Guardian Yes ☐ No ☐
 4. Teachers/Instructors Yes ☐ No ☐
 5. Others (list) Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Introduce children with intellectual disabilities and their families to Special Olympics;
 - Young Athletes represents the first possible place for a child with intellectual disabilities to experience and participate in a structured Special Olympics activity.

Did this introduce participants to Special Olympics? (check box)

1. Young Athletes Yes ☐ No ☐
2. Unified/Inclusive Peers Yes ☐ No ☐
3. Family Members
 - a. Siblings Yes ☐ No ☐
 - b. Parent/Guardian Yes ☐ No ☐
4. Teachers/Instructors Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Others (list) Yes ☐ No ☐

V. EVALUATION, FEEDBACK, STORIES & WEB RESOURCES

5.1 EVALUATION

3. Developmental improvements in children with intellectual disabilities;
 - The Young Athletes activities are designed to foster and help achieve developmental milestones in children with intellectual disabilities.

Did participating in Young Athletes improve child's development? (check box)

- | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Motor | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Social / Emotional | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Adaptive Behavior | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Communication | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Cognitive | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Raise awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities;
 - Young Athletes offers opportunities to raise awareness of the overall community about people with intellectual disabilities through unified peer participation, demonstrations, and other events.

Which group below had awareness raised as a result of participation in Young Athletes? (check box)

1. ☐ Family members
 2. ☐ Friends, Neighbors, etc.
 3. ☐ Teachers / Instructors
 4. ☐ Unified/Inclusive Peers
 5. ☐ Others (list)
5. Enhance sport readiness of children with intellectual disabilities to train and compete in Special Olympics when they reach the age of eight.
 - The Young Athletes activities are designed to introduce and develop fundamental skills necessary for future Special Olympics training and competition.

Did participation introduce and develop these skills? (check box)

- | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Foundational skills | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Walking & running | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Balance & jumping | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Trapping & catching | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Throwing | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Striking | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Kicking | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. Advanced skills | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

Would you like to add any other comments that will serve to improve the Young Athletes program?

Name _____
 Program _____
 Email _____

*Please see section VI. or visit the web site for a printable form.

V. EVALUATION, FEEDBACK, STORIES & WEB RESOURCES

5.2 FEEDBACK AND STORIES

The past success of Young Athletes is due in part to the creativity, ingenuity and fantastic experiences of Special Olympics Programs, family members, volunteers, and coaches. Special Olympics is constantly striving to enhance and improve Young Athletes. Feedback and stories from the field offers Special Olympics the best perspective from those with the most experience.

Please encourage all Young Athletes constituents to become members of a global team, sharing stories, ideas and opinions. Sharing knowledge not only enriches the Young Athletes program, but also ensures a quality developmental experience for the next generation of Special Olympics athletes.

To share your feedback and stories, visit: www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes

V. EVALUATION, FEEDBACK, STORIES & WEB RESOURCES

5.3 WEB RESOURCES

Special Olympics designed the Young Athletes website as an interactive resource. Visitors to the website will find information on topics such as:

- Young Athletes Stories
 - o This would include stories about Young Athletes and their families around the world.
- About Young Athletes
 - o Includes a description of the program
 - o Includes a page on findings from the UMass study/Pilot Programs
 - o Sub-page of Regional SOI contacts for Young Athletes
 - o Link to Special Olympics Family Networking Site
- Young Athletes News
 - o Offer programs a medium over which constituents can share Young Athletes news and events
 - Demonstrations, Young Athletes at State Games, Stories, etc.
 - Updates from SOI regarding new Programs starting with appropriate contact information etc.
- Young Athletes Activity Guide
 - o Pages are divided by section and include the activities from the section, video of each individual activity, and places for additional information
 - o Supplemental research for conducting Young Athletes activities, such as lesson plans, alternative activities, etc.
- Young Athletes Equipment Information
 - o This page shows the official Young Athletes Equipment Kit, offers alternatives, and directs people on how to order Young Athletes Equipment Kit
- Young Athletes Feedback
 - o A section for constituents to submit feedback, respond to surveys, etc.
- Helpful Links
 - o Highlights Young Athletes Partners and Resources

YOUNG ATHLETES

PRINTABLE FORMS



Special Olympics
young athletes

Organizational Development, 2008

**YOUNG ATHLETES
REGISTRATION FORM**

The purpose of this form is to identify individuals who will be participating in the Young Athletes program.

About the Participant:

Participant's Name _____
(Last/Family) (First/Given)

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Province: _____ Postal Code/Zip Code _____ Country: _____

Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female Birth Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Is there anything about your child that you think we should know before he/she participates in Young Athletes?

Does the child attend a formal daycare or preschool program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the participant attend school? ☐ Yes (What grade/year: _____)
☐ No

About the Parents/Guardians:

Name of Parents/Guardians of Participant: _____
Last/Family First/Given

Address (If different from Participant) _____

City: _____ State/Province: _____ Postal Code/ Zip Code: _____

Country: _____ Phone # _____ Cell Phone # _____

Email: _____

What is your relationship to the Participant you are registering?

☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Sibling ☐ Other family member ☐ OTHER (please specify): _____



Special Olympics
young athletes

Organizational Development, 2008

**YOUNG ATHLETES
REGISTRATION FORM**

Program Information (Completed by Office Staff)

Special Olympics Program (Please specify) : _____

(Country or State)

Site or Sub-Program (if applicable):

(A site is defined as the specific location of the Young Athletes Activities. Enter the name of the town/city where this child will participate in Young Athletes.

(City or Town)

A program (country or state) may have multiple sites. Site is defined as the specific location of the Young Athletes Activities. The Young Athlete site this child will attend is (Select one of the following.)

- ☐ A group site (attended by multiple families at a school, center, etc.)
- ☐ At home (implemented by you or a family member at home)

Date this form was completed:

Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

Date of Young Athletes Participant Release Form: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

(Enter date of submission of the completed Participant Release Form which contains a release to be signed by a parent/guardian of a minor participant, medical matters and permissions for publicity).

Name of person completing this form: _____



Please remember to sign and date the two attached pages.

Young Athletes Release Form – SUMMARY

1) PARAGRAPH ONE:

•Athlete gives consent to participate in Special Olympics Parent or guardian of a minor athlete gives permission for said minor to participate in Special Olympics

2) PARAGRAPH TWO:

• Notification of the right to use athlete's likeness, voice or words for the purpose of Special Olympics publicity, and acknowledgement that data from the Pilot will be used for program evaluation and improvement

3) PARAGRAPH THREE:

•Authorization for Special Olympics to provide athlete with medical treatment in case of a medical emergency.

•Instructions for those with Religious Objections for emergency medical treatment:

Cross out Paragraph 5, initial the document and complete attached Religious Objections form on the back of this page

ANY CHANGES OR ADDITIONS TO THE FORM BELOW MUST BE APPROVED BY SOI

Young Athletes Release Form

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT OR GUARDIAN OF MINOR ATHLETE

I am the parent/guardian of _____, the minor participant, on whose behalf I have submitted the attached application for participation in Special Olympics. The participant has my permission to participate in Special Olympics activities. I further represent and warrant that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the participant is physically and mentally able to participate in Special Olympics.

In permitting the participant to participate, I am specifically granting my permission, forever, to Special Olympics to use the participant's likeness, name, voice and words in television, radio, film, newspapers, magazines and other media, internet and in any form, for the purpose of publicizing, promoting or communicating the purposes and activities of Special Olympics and/or applying for funds to support those purposes and activities. I also understand that group data collected from the Young Athletes Pilot Program will be used to plan, evaluate, and improve the program.

If a medical emergency should arise during the participant's participation in any Special Olympics activities, at a time when I am not personally present so as to be consulted regarding the participant's care, I hereby authorize Special Olympics, on my behalf, to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that the participant is provided with any emergency medical treatment, including hospitalization, which Special Olympics deems advisable in order to protect the participant's health and well-being. **(IF YOU HAVE RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO RECEIVING SUCH MEDICAL TREATMENT, PLEASE CROSS OUT THIS PARAGRAPH, INITIAL IT AND SIGN AND ATTACH THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING MEDICAL TREATMENT FORM)**

I am the parent (guardian) of the participant named in this application. I have read and fully understand the provisions of the above release, and have explained these provisions to the participant. Through my signature on this release form, I am agreeing to the above provisions on my own behalf and on the behalf of the participant named above. I hereby give my permission for the participant named above to participate in Special Olympics games, recreation programs, and physical activity programs.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date



Special Olympics
young athletes

Organizational Development, 2008

**YOUNG ATHLETES
REGISTRATION FORM**

RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS FORM

SPECIAL PROVISIONS REGARDING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR ATHLETES HAVING RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS TO STANDARD FORM

TO ATHLETES AND THEIR PARENTS:

Special Olympics respects the religious beliefs of all its athletes. Our standard application form normally requires each athlete (or his/her parent, if the athlete is a minor) to give Special Olympics permission to arrange for emergency medical treatment, including hospitalization, for any athlete if a medical emergency arises during his/her participation in Special Olympics under circumstances in which neither the athlete nor his/her parents is available to consent to that emergency treatment. If you have religious objections to approving that provision, please cross it out and initial it on the application form, and submit the application along with this page, after reading and signing it below.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT OF MINOR ATHLETE

On the attached official Special Olympics Release form, I have crossed out and rejected, on behalf of _____ (name of athlete), the provision that authorizes Special Olympics to make arrangements for emergency medical treatment for the athlete if the athlete is injured and his/her parent are unable to consent to that treatment. I am withholding this permission on behalf of the athlete on religious grounds. However, on behalf of myself and the athlete named in this Application, I do agree to and confirm the following:

1. I agree to be present with the athlete at all times at the site of any Special Olympics training or competitive event in which the athlete participates, including during travel to and from the training or competition, in the dormitories, meal time, and during competition, training and practice sessions, so that I can be readily available to take personal responsibility for the athlete if a medical emergency arises. I understand that if I am not present at all times, the athlete will not be permitted to participate in that event, and that no exception will be made.
2. I also agree on behalf of myself and the athlete to release Special Olympics and its employees and volunteers from any and all claims, demands or liabilities of any kind that may arise out of Special Olympics failure to take measures to provide the athlete with emergency medical treatment during Special Olympics' events and activities. I am agreeing to this release because I have refused, knowingly and voluntarily, to give Special Olympics permission to take such emergency measures, and I am expressly directing Special Olympics not to do so on religious grounds.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date



Special Olympics
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Organizational Development, 2007

**YOUNG ATHLETES
EVALUATION FEEDBACK
AND STORIES**

Feedback and Evaluation of the Young Athletes Program will help to improve and change the Young Athletes to meet the needs of Special Olympics Programs, families, educators and volunteers. Please complete the following Young Athletes evaluation and return to:

Special Olympics, Inc.
c/o Manager, Young Athletes
1133 19th Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20036
or
Fax to: 202-628-3926

The evaluation form can also be completed online at
www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes.

What was the setting where the Young Athletes program was carried out? (✓ check one or more boxes)

1. ☐ Home
2. ☐ Pre-School
3. ☐ School
4. ☐ Community center (YMCA, Gymboree, etc.)

Program Objectives

1. Fun;

- Young Athletes is all about fun. Children, peers, family members, teachers, and other participants should always remember that conducting Young Athletes activities and events should always be fun for all participants.

Was this fun for these participants? (✓ check box)

- | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Young Athletes | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Unified/Inclusive Peers | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Family Members | | |
| a. Siblings | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Parent/Guardian | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Teachers/Instructors | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Others (list) | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

**YOUNG ATHLETES
EVALUATION FEEDBACK
AND STORIES**

2. Introduce children with intellectual disabilities and their families to Special Olympics;

- Young Athletes represents the first possible place for a child with intellectual disabilities to experience and participate in a structured Special Olympics activity.

Did this introduce participants to Special Olympics? (✓ check box)

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. Young Athletes | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Unified/Inclusive Peers | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Family Members | | | | |
| a. Siblings | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. Parent/Guardian | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Teachers/Instructors | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Others (list) | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3. Developmental improvements in children with intellectual disabilities;

- The Young Athletes activities are designed to foster and help achieve developmental milestones in children with intellectual disabilities.

Did participating in Young Athletes improve child's development? (✓ check box)

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. Motor | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Social / Emotional | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Adaptive Behavior | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Communication | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Cognitive | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Raise awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities;

- Young Athletes offers opportunities to raise awareness of the overall community about people with intellectual disabilities through unified peer participation, demonstrations, and other events.

Which group below had awareness raised as a result of participation in Young Athletes? (✓ check box)

- ☐ Family members
- ☐ Friends, Neighbors, etc.
- ☐ Teachers / Instructors
- ☐ Unified/Inclusive Peers
- ☐ Others (list)



Special Olympics
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Organizational Development, 2007

**YOUNG ATHLETES
EVALUATION FEEDBACK
AND STORIES**

5. Enhance sport readiness of children with intellectual disabilities to train and compete

in Special Olympics when they reach the age of eight.

- The Young Athletes activities are designed to introduce and develop fundamental skills necessary for future Special Olympics training and competition.

Did participation introduce and develop these skills? (✓ check box)

- | | | | | | |
|----|---------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. | foundational skills | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | walking & running | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | balance & jumping | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | trapping & catching | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | throwing | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | striking | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | kicking | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | advanced skills | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Would you like to add any other comments that will serve to improve the Young Athletes program?

Name _____
Program _____
Email _____