

Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders

Section 3: Welcoming Families

Special Olympics



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The *Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders, Section 3: Welcoming Families* provides Power Point presentations, sample materials, templates and guidance for family leaders (both staff and volunteers) to introduce Special Olympics to families.

Note: This section builds on information provided in:
Section 1: Orientation to Family Engagement
Section 2: Planning for Successful Family Engagement

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Section 3: Welcoming Families

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The Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders, Section 3: Welcoming Families is intended for family leaders, Board Members, Program staff and key volunteers. The objective of this section is to provide tools for registering and orienting families to Special Olympics. Key information includes:

- Overview of Special Olympics
- Awareness activity
- What Special Olympics means to you
- Purpose of family registration
- Opportunities for involvement
- Special Olympics resources for you

Global Reach



Special Olympics

Eunice Kennedy Shriver began Special Olympics in her backyard over 40 years ago and it has now grown to be a global movement including 170 countries around the world. The organization serves those with intellectual disabilities providing year-round sports and competition and building communities of inclusion and support beginning in early childhood.

We are a global organization serving over 4 million people with intellectual disabilities in more than 170 countries.

GLOBAL SNAP SHOT



- **NEARLY 4 MILLION** athletes worldwide
- **170 COUNTRIES** have Special Olympics Programs
- **76,000 YOUNG ATHLETES** in the 2-7 age group
- **MORE THAN 30 SPORTS**, including athletics, football, basketball, bowling, aquatics and table-tennis
- **130,000 UNIFIED SPORTS® ATHLETES** and more than **196,000 PARTNERS** are now engaged In Unified Sports®
- **22,177 ATHLETES** serve in leadership positions
- **50,000 COMPETITIONS** around the world each year

Often people think Special Olympics is an event: as you can see it is much more than that. (Read slides)

Awareness Activity



Special Olympics

We appreciate that you are here to support athletes and that it is not always an easy task in our society. Let's take a few minutes to consider challenges for families.

Warm up Activity (Stigma exercise):

Ask the group to stand. Explain that you will read some statements and each participant should determine how strongly they agree or disagree with the statements about their country/culture. Then they should move to designated areas in the room to show how strongly they agree or disagree with the statements about you're their country/culture. Give them time to move after reading each statement.

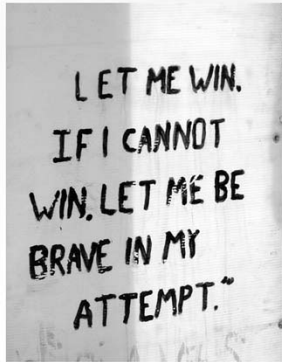
- It is humiliating and shameful to have a family member with ID.
- Families are fully aware of all that Special Olympics offers.
- Mothers are blamed for having a child with disabilities.
- Families receive adequate information about how to care for young children with disabilities.
- Athletes have the same rights and opportunities as those without disabilities.

Discuss participants observations about the group similarities/differences and the extent of stigma, shame and humiliation that is demonstrated. Then ask the group to sit down and take time for a few to share their personal stories as family members of

Special Olympic athletes. To get the conversation started you might ask: What brought you to Special Olympics? What difference has it made to your family? What do you think is the biggest challenge for families to raise a child with disabilities in your country/culture.

Summarize: Families share a common experience and Special Olympics offers a caring community to speak freely and learn from each other how to meet challenges and celebrate successes.

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.

Special Olympics helps transform the negative attitudes of society and personal challenges into a positive changes for athletes, families and communities. Our Mission and the Athlete's oath focus on this positive view that individuals with intellectual disabilities can develop to their fullest potential when given opportunities and support. (Read the slide)



An estimated 200 million people worldwide have intellectual disabilities. These are among the most neglected and vulnerable groups in the world. In many places, they have limited access to education and healthcare, and less opportunity for employment. Individuals with intellectual disability are often marginalized or ignored, and are more likely to be victims of violence and abuse than the general population.

And as we have discussed, for families there is often stigma.

Special Olympics Movement



Global engagement of those with
intellectual disabilities through
sport



Special Olympics

In the face of these challenges, Special Olympics has created a global platform through sports to educate and communicate the dignity and value of people with intellectual disabilities and to give them opportunities to showcase their abilities and talents. Our 40+ years experience has demonstrated that when those with disabilities have the opportunity to showcase their talents, community awareness and policy changes are made possible.

Sports



SUMMER SPORTS

- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Bowling
- Cycling
- Equestrian
- Football
- Golf
- Artistic Gymnastics
- Rhythmic Gymnastics
- Power lifting
- Roller Skating
- Softball
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
- Volleyball

WINTER SPORTS

- Alpine Skiing
- Cross Country Skiing
- Floor Hockey
- Figure Skating
- Speed Skating
- Snow Shoeing
- Snow Boarding

NATIONALLY POPULAR SPORTS

- Netball
- Badminton
- Sailing
- Handball
- Cricket

Special Olympics

Special Olympics offers over 32 Olympic-style individual and team sports that provide meaningful training and competition opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. Program offerings vary and this is a sample list from Africa (change the slide to list what you offer and make sure someone is on hand to tell more about your sports program schedule and opportunities).

Unique Aspects of Special Olympics



- Serves individuals from the age of two through 102
- Serves all ability levels
- No charge to athletes and their families for participation
- Awards for all athletes in competition
- Random draw for advancement
- Equitable competition through divisioning



Special Olympics

(Read slide)

Paralympics



The Paralympics differs significantly from Special Olympics in that:

- It caters for elite athletes only
- It predominantly serves athletes with physical and sensory disabilities



Special Olympics

(read slide)

Dynamic Movement



Special Olympics is not one country's movement.

It is global!

Special Olympics is not "nice."

It is important.

Special Olympics is not an event.

It is a movement.

Special Olympics is not just a charity.

We are now a business, too.

Special Olympics is not about "them."

It's about all of "us."



Special Olympics

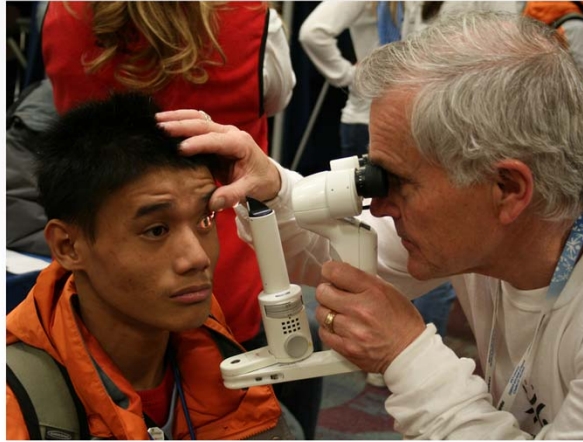
(Read slide)



Special Olympics is about more than sports: We are one of the world's most powerful and effective social movements.

By garnering the support of political leaders across the globe, Special Olympics has influenced policies that resulted in better health, education and employment opportunities for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. (Make sure someone is present to tell more about your Program offerings in this area.)

Healthy Athletes engages the medical community in meeting the need



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We also directly serve children, families and adults. Special Olympics is the world's largest public health organization for people with intellectual disabilities, providing access to free health services for a population with many unmet needs. For many athletes in the developing world, Special Olympics Healthy Athletes screenings are the first time they've ever seen a doctor. (Give details on what screenings will be offered and where they will be.)

Young Athletes: Motor Development, Social Inclusion, Early Intervention, Community Awareness



Special Olympics

The Young Athletes is a sports development program for 2-7 year olds that uses simple equipment, activities, games and songs. The program can be used at home, in schools and in the community. It is a high-impact early childhood motor development program that delivers significant gains in not only physical, but also social, emotional and cognitive development. This is a starting place for many families to get involved and something you can do at home or in the community.

Reaching vulnerable children

Outreach through churches, radio and visits to villages effective to bring families out of hiding



Special Olympics

Special Olympics empowers families as leaders and spokespersons for vulnerable children through the Family Support Network and family leadership training. These families are helping us build communities of support and inclusion beginning in early childhood.

For example, in Kenya's rural villages families often hide their children who have special needs due to the stigma and shame they experience. Yet our Global Family Leader Zipporah Mulinge has successfully recruited the families to start Young Athletes training at home, to lead sports clubs and to participate in family health forums to learn how they can support their children's development and access services. Her outreach starts on the radio, continues in community settings and then onsite in rural villages.

What Works, What Helps



Disability Facts

Talking Points

Intellectual Disability (also known as Mental Retardation) FACT SHEET

What is intellectual disability?

Intellectual disability, also known as mental retardation, is a term used when there are limits to a person's ability to learn at an expected level and function in daily life. Levels of intellectual disability vary greatly in children—from a very slight problem to a very severe problem. Children with intellectual disability might have a hard time letting others know their wants and needs, and taking care of themselves. Intellectual disability could cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than other children of the same age. It could take longer for a child with intellectual disability to learn to speak, walk, dress, or eat without help, and they could have trouble

There are many signs of intellectual disability.

For example, children with intellectual disability may:

- sit up, crawl, or walk later than other children
- learn to talk later, or have trouble speaking
- find it hard to remember things
- have trouble understanding social rules
- have trouble seeing the results of their actions
- have trouble solving problems

What can I do if I think my child may have intellectual disability?

Talk with your child's doctor or nurse. If you or your



Special Olympics Messaging & Talking Points

Special Olympics is a global organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sport, everyday around the world. Through programming in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities tackling the injustice, isolation, intolerance and inactivity they face throughout the world. With 225 Accredited Programs in 170 countries, Special Olympics is providing opportunities for more than 4 million athletes, one million volunteers and millions more people including family members, supporters, and fans.

Overview

- Special Olympics uses sports as a catalyst to reveal the champion in all of us (as athletes, volunteers, coaches, spectators, fans, supporters, etc.). Special Olympics is able to remove barriers and stigmas that people with intellectual disabilities face, to share with the community the gifts and talents of people with intellectual disabilities. Everyone who comes in touch with Special Olympics is impacted in a way that helps them strive to achieve their personal best.
- Special Olympics has a vision of a world where people with intellectual disabilities lead healthy, vibrant lives grounded in ongoing sports and physical activity, sound nutrition and a deeply held conviction to improve, compete, achieve and demonstrate their personal best to themselves and their community.
- Special Olympics believes that every person with intellectual disabilities and their family should be empowered to preserve and understand what they need to do in order to optimize their health, and where accessible information, resources, systems and policies exist at the individual, community, national and global levels that support them in realizing healthy productive lives.
- Special Olympics is working to position people with intellectual disabilities as leaders in engineering and sustaining acceptance and respect within schools and communities through

We have more materials to help you learn about Special Olympics. We also know it important for families to know the facts about ID, so we are sharing a fact sheet. (Refer to NICHCY Disability Fact Sheet 8, January 2011—see below for some key info from the sheet and access the full sheet about ID and t at: <http://nichcy.org/disability/specific/intellectual>)

What is an Intellectual Disability?

Intellectual disability is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself, and social skills. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child.

Children with intellectual disabilities (sometimes called *cognitive disabilities* or *mental retardation*) may take longer to learn to speak, walk, and take care of their personal needs such as dressing or eating. They are likely to have trouble learning in school. They *will* learn, but it will take them longer. There may be some things they cannot learn.

What Causes an Intellectual Disability?

Doctors have found many causes of intellectual disabilities. The most common are:

Genetic conditions. Sometimes an intellectual disability is caused by abnormal genes inherited from parents, errors when genes combine, or other reasons. Examples of genetic conditions are Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, and phenylketonuria (PKU).

Problems during pregnancy. An intellectual disability can result when the baby does not develop inside the mother properly. For example, there may be a problem with the way the baby's cells divide as it grows. A woman who drinks alcohol or gets an infection like rubella during pregnancy may also have a baby with an intellectual disability.

Problems at birth. If a baby has problems during labor and birth, such as not getting enough oxygen, he or she may have an intellectual disability.

Health problems. Diseases like whooping cough, the measles, or meningitis can cause intellectual disabilities. They can also be caused by extreme malnutrition (not eating right), not getting enough medical care, or by being exposed to poisons like lead or mercury.

An intellectual disability is not a disease. You can't catch an intellectual disability from anyone. It's also not a type of mental illness, like depression. There is no cure for intellectual disabilities. However, most children with an intellectual disability can learn to do many things. It just takes them more time and effort than other children.



Strategic Plan Goal for Families:

To create trained, empowered and involved families at all levels of the organization.

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Our goal is to create trained, empowered and involved families at all levels of the organization. (Consider passing out Action Tips and/or Commitment Cards or having some families from your Program talk a few minutes about how they have been involved)

To begin with we

Point out specific volunteer roles families are now playing in your Program (e.g. Board Members, Coaches, event volunteers)

Also share roles that families fulfill at other levels and use the Action Tips as appropriate (e.g. transporting athletes to practice, posting Special Olympics news on Facebook, making commitments to be Healthy Families, Young Athlete Leaders, Community Builders)

e-Library Launched



- Interactive site allows families to post their stories and photos
- Highlights Program successes to support best practice sharing
- Provides access to both the Family Toolkit and Young Athletes Toolkit
- <http://resources.specialolympics.org>

KS Day in Nassau, Bahamas
A Smashing Success
By Vashti Thompson. 14 years



"I carry on Eunice Kennedy Shriver's legacy as I spread the word at every opportunity that persons with Intellectual Disabilities are no different from anyone else."

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Distribute and review the "Welcome Families" brochure and Family Registration form available from the e-Library, and any other promotional fliers/event calendars from your Program.

As we work together to advance athlete opportunities and development, we welcome you to our sports events, health screenings, Family Forums, awareness events, coach training, fundraising events, committees and more. When you register as a family member we ask for your contact information so we can keep you informed of all the opportunities and events that are available. We also want to know how you would like to be involved and what skills you can contribute to the organization.

As a Special Olympics family member you are part of a worldwide community. Our interactive e-Library is the best link to join the community, sharing your stories, finding resources and keeping up-to-date on Special Olympics news.

Demonstrate the sections of the e-Library live at:

http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Family_Support_Network/Family_Support_Network_E-Library.aspx

For more information



Contact: _____

www.specialolympics.org

Visit the main website for general information and updates

<http://resources.specialolympics.org>

Go to the Family section of Special Olympics Resources website for more facts and tools

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Thank you for participating. Please contact us and visit the websites for more information.

(Close your meeting with refreshments and time for networking. Give gifts from sponsors if able and make sure the National Director, Board Member or Coach is on hand for questions.)