



## Sport-of-the-Month



### floor hockey

# February

This month's theme: **diversity**

### Goals:

- Understand the meaning of the word *diversity*.
- Understand the importance of diversity in the classroom and communities of all types.
- Change negative perceptions about people with intellectual and other disabilities.

### Floor Hockey in Special Olympics

Floor hockey is generally played in the style of ice hockey, except that the game takes place on a flat floor surface such as a basketball court. Players on each team attempt to shoot a ball or puck into a goal using sticks, usually with a curved end.

How do Special Olympics activities impact students? Here's how one teacher answered:

*"We have created an expectation in our school community: All students should be included, respected, and treasured whenever it is in the best interest of the kids. Our administration and staff are very supportive."*

### Week 1:

As students enter the room, put them in groups and tell them they have two minutes to complete one of the following activities. Talk about the activities seriously to create a sense of urgency.

a. *Translate the following Latin phrase into English:*

Aut viam inveniam aut faciam.

Answer: Either I shall find a way or I will make one.

b. *Compute the following math problem:* The sum of the first and twice the second is the same as the year George Washington finished his presidency. What are  $x$  and  $y$ ?

Answer:  $x = 1,198$ ;  $y = 299.5$ . The year was 1797.

After a minute of work, discreetly distribute answer sheets to some groups but not others.

Once time is up, ask students to discuss or journal their feelings about the exercise. Tell students that these feelings will serve as a springboard for the rest of the lesson. Ask: *How did the exercise make you feel? Did you sincerely try to complete the challenge? For those who did not get the answer sheets, did it increase your frustration when other groups got the answer and you didn't?*

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 6–8



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## Take Action!

- Next month Special Olympics will host a nationwide campaign called “Spread the Word to End the Word”. Your class has done some preliminary planning for a Spread the Word to End the Word event at your school. Complete your plans and start lining up resources to make your R-word event a success!

### Week 2:

Remind students about last week’s activity. Distribute the worksheet titled “My Perceptions,” available at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>. This page asks students to answer preliminary questions about people with intellectual disabilities, based on existing knowledge and perceptions. Give students time to complete the worksheet. Ask student volunteers to share answers for each question.

Tell students that this lesson is intended to broaden their perceptions about people with intellectual disabilities. It also helps them understand the concept of diversity by recognizing the contributions of people who appear different from them. Challenge students to share everything they already know about intellectual disabilities and the concept of diversity. This list could include factual information, historic perceptions, how people with intellectual disabilities are treated, emotions, etc. Create a list on the board.

Next, ask students to create a second list with questions that they’d like answered. Encourage them to create questions that help to give them a balanced picture of those with intellectual disabilities and the diversity within their school and local community.

Once the class has developed its list, organize questions into categories. Examples might include, “Local, National, International Statistics,” “Causes,” “Historic Perceptions,” “Capabilities,” or “Feelings.” Each category will then have a few different questions under it. Challenge each group to select one of the categories to research. Encourage students to use the Internet or print resources; conduct interviews, if possible, with local organizations, educators, or people with intellectual disabilities; or use observation.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 6–8

### February events:

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### Week 3:

Once student groups have completed their research, mix up the groups so that the new groups include one person from each original group. Have each group member teach or share his/her original group’s research with the new group.

Ask students to share something they’ve learned that has changed or broadened their perceptions of intellectual disabilities and diversity within groups, communities, and societies.

Have students refer back to the worksheet “My Perceptions” and review their answers. Ask students to share what they know about Special Olympics. Distribute and have students read Special Olympics’ Fact Sheet, available at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 6–8



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## Fans in the Stands

No one likes competing in front of empty bleachers. Fans in the Stands makes it easy for students to rally together to support Special Olympics athletes at competitive events. Fans in the Stands brings together groups of friends to design posters, gather at a local Special Olympics or Unified Sports® game or tournament, and cheer like crazy! Contact your local Special Olympics office for more information.

### Week 4:

Instruct students to watch one or more of the videos about Special Olympics athletes, which can be found at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

After watching, ask the following questions:

- Would students change any of the descriptive words they circled on the “My Perceptions” worksheet? Would they change their answer to #4?
- What characteristics do they think describe Special Olympics athletes? Why does it take a special kind of bravery to do what these athletes do?
- In what ways do sports and particularly Special Olympics help those with intellectual disabilities to change their perceptions of themselves?
- What kind of diversity do students see among the groups portrayed in the videos?

Finally, challenge students to summarize how their perceptions of those with intellectual disabilities have changed since the beginning of the lesson.

—adapted from *Get Into It!*, grades 6–8



## My Perceptions

According to a definition by the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, a person is considered to have an intellectual disability based on the following three criteria.

- Intellectual function level (IQ) is below 70-75.
- Significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas (e.g., communication, self-care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, self-direction, functional academics, community use, and work).
- The condition manifests itself before the age of 18.

Answer the following questions based upon your existing knowledge or perceptions of intellectual disabilities:

1. Do you personally know anyone with an intellectual disability?

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2. If the answer to #1 is yes, briefly describe this person. What adjectives would best describe him or her?

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3. Based on your experiences or perceptions, circle five words from the list below that you think would best describe someone with an intellectual disability. You can also add your own words to the end of the list.

Limited

Competitive

Tough

Brave

Scared

Thoughtful

Clever

Champion

Joyful

Frustrated

Happy

Hopeless

Athletic

Sad

Uncoordinated

Capable

Resilient

Independent

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4. Do you think that someone with an intellectual disability could be a successful athlete? Why or why not?

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5. Complete this sentence. When I think of someone with an intellectual disability, I think of...

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# Special Olympics Fact Sheet

With sports at the core, Special Olympics is a leader in the field of intellectual disability and the world's largest movement dedicated to promoting respect, acceptance, inclusion, and human dignity for people with intellectual disabilities. With programming in the areas of health, youth and education, family support, research and policy change, Special Olympics has...

- More than 3.1 million athletes
- 228 Special Olympics Programs
- 30 Olympic-type summer and winter sports
- 7 regional offices around the world, including Ireland, Egypt, South Africa, Singapore, China, Panama, and the United States
- More than 750,000 volunteers
- More than 300,000 coaches
- More than 30,000 competitions around the world each year

## 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 Vision

The Special Olympics movement will transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

## Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, an athlete must be at least eight years of age and identified by an agency or professional as having one of the following conditions: intellectual disability, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that have required specially designed instruction.

## Competition

Special Olympics athletes are divided to compete in categories based on gender, age, and ability level. All Special Olympics activities reflect the values, standards, traditions, ceremonies, and events embodied in the modern Olympic movement. These Olympic-type activities have been broadened and enriched to celebrate the moral and spiritual qualities of persons with intellectual disabilities so as to enhance their dignity and self-esteem.

## History and Leadership

Special Olympics began in 1968 with the First International Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field in Chicago. Since then, millions have benefited from the movement.



# Special Olympics Fact Sheet

J. Brady Lum is President and Chief Operating Officer.

Timothy P. Shriver is Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of Special Olympics Board of Directors.

The Lead Board Director and Vice Chair is Stephen M. Carter, Chief Executive Officer, Superior Essex, Inc., the Board Vice Chairs are Nadia Comaneci, Olympic Gymnastics Gold Medalist; and Raymond J. Lane, Partner, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded Special Olympics in 1968.

## Special Olympics Initiatives

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes™ is an initiative designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to an enhanced sports experience and improved well-being. Athletes receive health services at Special Olympics competitions, while healthcare professionals learn about the health needs of Special Olympics athletes, gaining confidence in volunteering their skills to an underserved population and thus creating more inclusive medical practices.

Youth and Schools Outreach– Special Olympics is leveraging sports as a platform to teach acceptance and inclusion to young people around the world. Project UNIFY® is a program which builds Special Olympics in schools and is engaging, motivating and activating young people through many existing programs including the Special Olympics Get Into It™ is a K-12 service-learning curriculum, Special Olympics Unified Sports™ and the “R-Word” campaign which is building respect through language. Global Youth Summits are also held to unite youth from throughout the world in the spirit of change. In addition, the Special Olympics Young Athlete Program provides opportunities for young athletes between the ages of 2 ½ and 7 years of age to learn basic sports skills and motor activities to prepare them for Special Olympics competition.

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) offer athletes the opportunity to take active leadership roles both on and off the playing field. Athletes serve on the Boards of Directors, officiate competitions, coach other athletes, act as spokespersons and make decisions about the future of Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is a program that brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same athletic team.

Family Support Network gives families support in communities within Special Olympics. Understanding the challenges of raising a special needs child, Special Olympics has created the Family Support Network to provide a connection for families of Special Olympics athletes. There are more than 100 networks in more than 60 countries.

## Special Olympics Fact Sheet

### Benefits of Special Olympics

Individuals who compete in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills and greater self confidence. They exhibit courage and enthusiasm and build lasting friendships. These life skills enhance their ability to live normal productive lives. More than ever, Special Olympics athletes hold jobs, own homes, go to school and successfully confront life challenges on a daily basis.

Through millions of individual acts of inclusion where people with and without intellectual disabilities are brought together through Special Olympics programs, longstanding myths are dispelled, negative attitudes changed, and new opportunities to embrace and celebrate the giftedness of people with intellectual disabilities are created. Ultimately, the Special Olympics movement can transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

### Funding

Special Olympics receives funding in support of the movement from individuals, corporations, foundations, government and restricted grants. The vast majority of funding received is from individuals through the Special Olympics direct mail program.

*The Law Enforcement Torch Run®* for Special Olympics is the movement's largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics in the world, made up of more than 85,000 law enforcement officers in all 50 U.S. states, eleven Canadian provinces and 43 countries. Since 1981, the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics has raised more than US\$272 million, with a record US\$34 million raised in 2008 alone.

