

Grades 3–5

January

Sport of the Month

Special Olympics

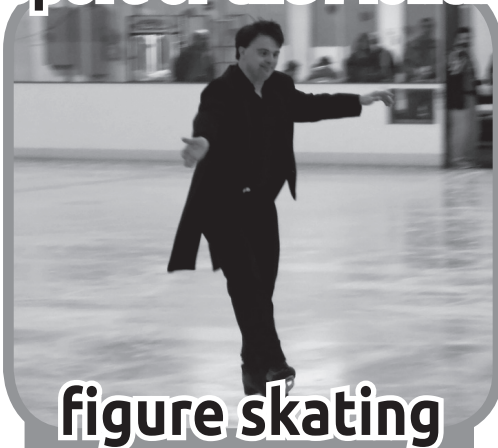


figure skating

Figure skating is a sport in which individuals or pairs perform spins, jumps, footwork, and other intricate and challenging moves on ice skates.

Dear Family,

We are all individuals. Your child is a unique individual. Together, we make up communities whose integrity and outlook is determined by the quality and strength of its individual parts. This month in our continuing work with Special Olympics, we focus on the individual.

Using Special Olympics' sport of figure skating as our starting point, we'll examine exactly what it is that makes each of us unique. Furthermore, we'll look at the characteristics of individuals and what brings value to every one of us. And finally, just as a figure skater's coach plays an important role in maintaining the skater's self-esteem and confidence, we'll look at ways in which your child can maintain his or her own sense of self-worth.

teacher signature

This month's theme: **individuality**

One of the more important factors in teaching children to value their own individuality is to first understand the meaning behind some important terms. Among these terms are *self-esteem*, *unique*, and *individual*. After we have defined these terms so that all students have a firm working definition, we'll do exercises in which students can determine their individual strengths.

Next, we'll determine how all these various individuals contribute to make a dynamic, exciting community that benefits from all of its separate parts. And following this exercise, we'll look at the important ways in which individual group members can act as supporters of other community members, becoming coaches and cheerleaders for our friends and classmates.



What you can do:



This month we will view the Special Olympics video *Be a Fan of Confidence*, which introduces Charles Howard, a medal-winning snowboarder and someone who shows his individuality with pride. You'll find the video at <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators>.

When the video is finished, we'll spend some time talking about Charles's talents, how he shows his individuality, and how Special Olympics has contributed to making him the person he is. Take a minute to watch the video with your child. Talk about ways that sports and other activities shape who you are and the individual you become. Then talk about ways we can support one another (parents can support children and children can support parents too!). Most importantly, of course, demonstrate to your child how you are, and will always be, his or her number one fan!