



Sport of the Month



September

This month's theme: **acceptance**

Goals:

- Help students get acquainted with one another.
- Help students understand that a person's appearance doesn't convey all there is to know about him or her.
- Help students understand that when they meet a person with an intellectual disability, that disability only conveys one aspect of the person.
- Help students understand that effective leadership involves using words of support and kindness and uniting a diverse group of people.

Cycling in Special Olympics

Cycling requires good physical condition, balance, endurance, and tactical thinking. Special Olympics includes time trial and road race events in different distances.

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

"The most significant change is that there is now awareness that every student, those with or without disabilities, has a voice and contributes to school programs."

Week 1:

How well do your students know one another? Help them discover new interests and talents that they share with this quick activity!

Explain to students that you will call out different categories and traits, and challenge them to find others who share those characteristics. (See the list below.) Tell students not to worry if they don't find a group before the next category is called. After the game, discuss:

- ▶ Which traits could be determined by looking at one another and which required asking questions and getting to know one another
- ▶ Why it can be scary to meet new people who seem unlike you
- ▶ Why it is important to get to know others before deciding what you do or don't have in common

—adapted from Get Into It, Grades 3–5

Team up with others who

- have the same eye color as you
- like the same pizza topping as you
- rode a bike in the last week
- ate cereal for breakfast
- are wearing sneakers
- brought their lunches
- prefer vanilla ice cream to chocolate
- like cherry pie more than apple pie
- have five letters in their first names
- have five letters in their last names
- have a younger sister
- have an older brother

Week 2:

By this age, many students have learned to ride a bike. Challenge students to think back to when they first rode a bike and discuss the questions below. Help your students see the gains that everyone receives by participating in physical activities!

- Did you use training wheels?
- How did you feel the first time you didn't use training wheels or have someone help you?
- How do you feel when you ride your bike? What does riding a bike allow you to do?
- What physical benefits do you get from riding a bike?
- How might riding a bike make someone with intellectual disabilities feel? What might riding a bike allow him or her to do?



Theme: acceptance

Sport of the Month:
cycling

September

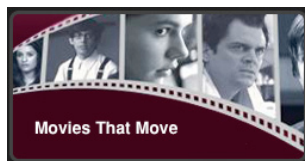
Week 3:

Take Action!

● **Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day (September 24) honors the founder of Special Olympics.** Plan and host a Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day event at your school to get staff and students excited and educated about the amazing opportunities that inclusion can bring! Visit <http://specialolympics.org/educators/> for more information.

● **Start a Unified Sports Team with local Special Olympics athletes and partners from your school.** Unified Sports Teams include athletes with and without intellectual disabilities. Contact your local Special Olympics Program to see what Unified Sports they offer; then get started recruiting a coach and scheduling practices. Visit <http://specialolympics.org/educators/> to find contact information for your local programs.

Students love superheroes! Demonstrate how each of us, through our unique abilities, can be a superhero to someone else with a quick movie clip from the *Movies that Move* DVD from Special Olympics. In the “Different Abilities” section, select the movie clip for the *X-Men* movie. Students may be familiar with the X-Men characters or comic books. Play the clip, which shows one student with unique abilities welcoming another to school. Refer to the teacher’s guide on the DVD to lead a discussion on the topic of why we sometimes find others with differences scary—and how, by respecting one another’s unique abilities, we can reach out to one another. Challenge students to think about a superpower they would like to have, with the condition that it must be one they could use to reach out to those who are different from them. Invite students to create posters based on their new superpowers and how they would use them.



Week 4:

Get students to take the lead in speaking the language of respect with a fun online game! During computer time, learning centers, or free time, have students go to <http://specialolympics.org/educators/>.

This word scramble game challenges students to unscramble the letters to find words that convey positive messages and respect!

The
RIGHT WORDS
to Spread!

Discuss with students in your class what they have learned from the activities they’ve done this month. Reinforce the value of similarities and differences in groups and how these differences and similarities can help produce different group leaders depending on the situation.

September events:

- Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day, September 22

