



# Teacher's Guide: Using Your Special Olympics Lessons



## Theme of the month:

September: acceptance  
 October: perseverance  
 November: fairness  
 December: inclusion  
 January: individuality  
 February: diversity  
 March: power of words  
 April: encouragement  
 May: taking action

## Each month you'll receive a handy newsletter.

Weekly lessons provide step-by-step instructions for completion. Plus you'll find quick summaries of Special Olympics initiatives, action items, monthly newsletters for parents, links for more information, ready-to-use worksheets, and much more.

It's everything you need to incorporate important lessons about respect, perseverance, and diversity into your classroom!

## Tips for success:

- **Read through each monthly newsletter in advance.** The majority of lessons don't require any preparation. But in some cases you may need to gather a few materials, such as poster board, markers, or other basic items. Plus you'll want to visit <http://www.specialolympics.org/educators> to download any additional materials or to preview video clips.
- **Designate a regular time to complete the lessons.** Friday afternoons can be a good time, but you might also want to consider scheduling the lessons for the middle of the week, such as every Wednesday afternoon. Many of the activities cover language arts skills, so you might also consider carving a segment from your language arts block.
- **Send home the parent pieces at the beginning of the month.** These pieces preview what's coming up and get parents on the same page.

## Sport of the month:

September: cycling  
 October: soccer  
 November: bowling  
 December: alpine skiing  
 January: figure skating  
 February: floor hockey  
 March: basketball  
 April: golf  
 May: aquatics



- **Include Special Olympics updates in your weekly class newsletter.** Share information with parents about weekly lessons and upcoming events.
- **Check out the website for your local Special Olympics office.** No doubt you'll be looking for opportunities to update your students about events, so spend a few minutes getting familiar with your local office's website.
- **Get to know the wide variety of resources available through Project Unify®.** You'll find activities, online games, film clips, and much more. Take advantage of the rich resources available to you!
- **Attend a Special Olympics event on your own or with family or friends.** You'll be better able to get students and their families involved if you're already familiar with events, locations, formats, and so forth.
- **Utilize the knowledge base in your classroom.** If a parent has been involved in Special Olympics, find out if they'd like to help with your weekly lessons and projects.
- **Work in Special Olympics across the curriculum.** Use Special Olympics sports as examples when you're doing word problems, challenge students to work in Special Olympics events as they write sentences with their spelling words, and include Eunice Kennedy Shriver or Special Olympics athletes in your discussions of heroes and change-makers.
- **Talk to your colleagues.** If they're less familiar with Special Olympics, they'll appreciate knowing about these wonderful resources. Involve your physical education teacher and see if he or she can include each month's featured sport in the activities planned for that month.
- **Keep your principal in the loop.** Make sure he or she knows all about the special activities you're doing to build students' character and academic skills. Your whole school community will benefit!
- **Keep your ears open.** As you talk to people, ask if they've ever been involved with Special Olympics. No doubt you'll stumble onto lots of energizing stories about the difference Special Olympics makes for athletes, volunteers, and many others.
- **Plan ahead for next year.** As you complete lessons, make notes about what worked well for you and what you might do differently next year.
- **Remind yourself every day that the lessons you're teaching your students will change the world.** Ending the R-word, building an atmosphere of respect, and accepting one another's differences—these are life lessons that students will carry with them forever. You and your students really are making a difference!

