Families & Young Athlete Programme

Working Together - 2012 Leadership Conference
Istanbul, Turkey 2012
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Strategic Plan 2010 - 2015

Athlete Experience

- Advance Quality Sports & Competitions
- Build Communities
- Connect Fans & Funds
- Develop Movement Leadership
- Establish Sustainable Capabilities

Special Olympics Foundation: Mission, Values and Model of Change
Young Athletes is an innovative sports play programme for children with intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age eight.

- Involves play activities designed to promote physical, cognitive & social development.
- A very versatile programme which can take place at home, pre-school, play groups and school, for children with and without intellectual disabilities.
- Young Athletes welcomes families and their young children into the Special Olympics family.
History of Young Athletes Programme

2004 – Special Olympics Board of Directors authorized a Young Athletes pilot.

2004 – Young Athletes program concept was finalized and tested at Special Olympics New Jersey.

2005 – Mattel Children’s Foundation committed funds to conduct a Young Athletes pilot.

2005 – Special Olympics finalized Young Athletes resources; identified 21 pilot sites globally.

2005-2006 – Pilot Programs initiate implementation of Young Athletes.

2006 – 3 Young Athletes Demonstrations at Regional Games – El Salvador, Iowa and China.

2006 – Initial Evaluation Results; Pilot Programs recruit 3,772 Young Athletes.
Resources & Equipment

- Brochure
- Activity Guide
- DVD
- Equipment Kit
Family Support Network E-Library:

http://resources.specialolympics.org/RegionsPages/content.aspx?id=23808&LangType=1033
Young Athletes Programme SOEE

Pilot project 2005 – 4 Countries
2010 – 12 Countries
2011 – 14 Countries
2012 – 18 Countries
2013 – Target = 20+
SOEE Young Athletes Numbers

- 2010: 957
- 2011: 979
- 2012: 1431
- 2013 Target: 2391
Steps in Implementing YAP

• Make contact with kindergartens, schools, colleges & centres.
• Organize a seminar for parents, caregivers, physical therapists, teachers and students.
• Presentation of Special Olympics & Young Athletes Programme.
• 3-4 months trainings
• Demonstration
Welcoming activities for children (and parents)
Warm up activity
Social/Play time for children
Cool down activities
Family time
Drinks and snacks
Closing activities for children (and parents)
Family Day

- T-shirts
- Certificates
- Special medals
- Gifts
- Drinks, sweets, music, fun 😊
Benefits of YAP

Benefits for the *parents*:

- An excellent way for parents to work with their children
- A measure for the parents of their child’s abilities
- It addresses the parents’ need to involve their children in some kind of sports activity
- Being part of the weekly trainings, some of the parents feel like going to a “special club”
- Family expectations are raised as they see their children demonstrate new skills
Benefits of YAP

For the *children*:

• Children become more and more cooperative as the trainings develop

• Significant improvements in motor development and social skills

• Children are ready to take part in Special Olympics competitions

For the *physical therapists*:

• An opportunity to learn new methods to work with children with intellectual disabilities and to involve the parents in the trainings
Success Story – SO Greece

Implemented YAP in 2011 in advance of World Games.

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<tr>
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<th>Before World Games</th>
<th>After World Games</th>
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<td>Young Athletes</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trainers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Trainers</td>
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Additional Events: Lets Play Together & Young Athletes Camp
FAMILY PROGRAMME
SOEE Registered Family Members

- 2010: 26,668
- 2011: 32,857
- Expected 2012: 39,000
SOEE Family Programme Goals for 2011 -> 2015

- 6 new Family Support trainers available across the region – 2013
- Family Support materials available in at least 4 major languages – 2013
- 2 new Family Community Builders in place across the region – each year
- 2 internal + 2 external speaking opportunities at regional level for family ambassadors – each year
Families as Community Builders

• Families are athletes first fans
• Sharing stories of success makes an impact
• Families can be passionate spokespersons and recruiters for Special Olympics
Sample Opportunities for Families, Athletes & Youth

- Board members
- Fundraising Committee
- Family Support Network
- ALPS Mentors
- Young Athlete Leaders
- Youth Activation
Thank You

Questions, Comments, Discussion.