2021 Special Olympics Style Guide
Preface

Using a consistent writing style and form in all Special Olympics communications enhances the clarity and professionalism of our materials. It’s easy to do – and this guide makes it easier!

In general, Special Olympics follows the Associated Press Stylebook, one of the most widely used guides, along with Webster’s New World College Dictionary (the dictionary recommended by AP).

NOTE: The 2021 Special Olympics Style Guide is designed as a quick reference; it is not meant to be a glossary of every term or program. Instead, the Style Guide focuses on the most commonly asked questions on correct usage; it also points out where Special Olympics style diverges from AP style.

For handy reference, a snapshot of the Most Common Errors is featured on the next page.

If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to ask a member of the Marketing Department or email kmckenna@specialolympics.org.
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**Program -- P or p?**
- Capital P when referring to accredited Programs (Special Olympics Australia, Special Olympics Zambia, etc.)
- Lower case in all other uses (Healthy Athletes program)

**Other**

**Special Olympics always comes first (on first reference)**

**Correct:** Special Olympics Healthy Communities®  |  **Incorrect:** Healthy Communities®

**Calendar dates are written in order of date-month-year (no comma needed)**

**Correct:** 28 November 2020  |  **Incorrect:** November 20, 2020; 20 November, 2020
A Very Special Christmas®
Title of ongoing series of holiday music compilation albums and CDs benefiting the Christmas Records Trust, which funds grants and programmatic development. Spelled out on first reference; may be abbreviated as AVSC thereafter. NOTE: Records is plural. See also Christmas Records Trust.

academic degrees
Use only if requested or pertinent. Spell out degrees in text: use bachelor’s degree, master’s degree, etc. After someone’s full name, use abbreviations: Ph.D., M.D. NOTE: It is also correct to use certain academic degrees as titles. Examples: Dr. John Dow; Dr. Elisabeth Dykens.

ages
Always use numbers. Examples: Special Olympics athletes can range in age from 8 to over 80. Young Athletes are 2 to 7 years old.

a.m., p.m.
Lowercase with periods.

among, between
Use among for more than two items, between for two items. Examples: The funds were divided among Tom, Dick and Harry. The argument was between Romulus and Remus.

articles (newspapers, magazines, etc.)
Place the headlines/titles of newspaper, magazine and other published print or online articles in quotes. Do not italicize.

athlete
Lowercase in all uses. Example: Special Olympics athletes are children and adults with intellectual disabilities in 200 countries around the world.

athlete oath
“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.” On first mention, call it the Special Olympics athlete oath; thereafter, the oath. NOTE: Do not call this “the Special Olympics oath.”
**Athlete Leadership**
Special Olympics Athlete Leadership on first reference, Athlete Leadership thereafter. Athlete leaders are those who participate in Athlete Leadership activities and/or hold leadership roles.
NOTE: We no longer use the term Athlete Leadership Programs or ALPs. We simply refer to Athlete Leadership; no acronym or abbreviation needed.

**Athlete Leadership Council**
Athlete Leadership Councils give athletes the opportunity to share ideas and opinions as well as implement projects and contribute to programmatic areas. This can happen at the local, state, national or international level.
NOTE: This replaces the term Athlete Input Council.

**autism**
Lowercase. Also known as autism spectrum disorder (ASD). When possible refer to an athlete with this diagnosis as a person with autism (using people-first language). Use of the term autistic is acceptable, but not preferred. See also people-first language.

**Board of Directors, Special Olympics International Board of Directors**
Always capitalize. We refer to our Board as the Special Olympics International Board of Directors; on second reference, we may say Board of Directors or International Board of Directors. Someone can be called a Member or Director of the International Board of Directors, a Board Member, or a Member of the Board. Please do not say “Board Director.” Examples: Vanessa Williams, Director, Special Olympics International Board of Directors. Or: Shi Derong, Member of the Special Olympics International Board of Directors. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP Style.)

**book titles**
Place in quotes.

**Bosnia and Herzegovina**
Do not hyphenate. Do not use an ampersand.

**capital, capitol**
A capital is the city where a seat of government is located. A capitol is a government building, i.e., the U.S. Capitol.

**capitalization**
- Always capitalize Program when referring to Special Olympics Programs. Example: The Program held its first-ever Unified competition in October 2015.
• When referring to activities and initiatives, only capitalize “program” when it is part of an official name. Example: Motor Activity Training Program.
• Capitalize an official title, whether it comes before or after the individual’s name. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) Examples: Mary Davis, Chief Executive Officer, addressed the conference. Chairman Timothy Shriver delivered a video message.

Celsius
Use this term rather than centigrade for the temperature scale based on the metric system. When giving a Celsius temperature, use these forms: 40 C or 40 degrees Celsius.
In Special Olympics documents, we generally express temperature using the Fahrenheit scale and provide the Celsius equivalent in parentheses. Example: 77 F (25 C).

Center, centre
Both spellings are fine. This extends to other differences in American/British English, including behavior/behaviour, programs/programmes, honor/honour, etc.

Christmas Records Grants (CRG) or Christmas Records Trust (CRT)
Capitalize Christmas Records Grants or Christmas Records Trust. In subsequent mentions, use CRG or CRT. NOTE: Records is plural. Also see A Very Special Christmas.

Closing Ceremony
Capitalize. Treat as singular. Examples: The Closing Ceremony starts at 5 p.m. BUT: Thousands of athletes plan to attend both Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Choose to Include
This is our ongoing awareness and fund-raising campaign, based upon Three Pillars: 1/Sport and Health; 2/ Youth Engagement; 3/Inclusion and Athlete Leadership. NOTE: Both hashtags #choosetoinclude and #ChooseToInclude are acceptable. See also Three Pillars.

Commas
Use commas to separate elements in a complex series; do not use in a simple series.
Examples: The flag is red, white and blue. BUT: “... encourage relationships between schools and Programs, engage youth with and without disabilities, and build communities.”
NOTE: Commas always go inside quotation marks. As in: “This is how it should look,” she said. “Even if it’s an incomplete sentence,” he added.
company
Spell out when used as part of a company name. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Example: Otis Elevator Company.

Connect
The full term is Special Olympics Connect. This is the system that replaced GMS/Games Management Software. Please use Special Olympics Connect on first reference. SO Connect and/or Connect is acceptable on second reference. See Special Olympics Connect.

Cops on Doughnut Shops®
For more than a decade, this partnership between Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics organizers and Krispy Kreme stores has raised funds and awareness for Special Olympics.

currency
For the benefit of our international audience, use US$ when referring to American currency.
Example: Special Olympics received a grant of US$250,000.

dates
Whenever possible, please follow the world’s most widely used construction for dates – date-month-year: 19 September 2022. Months are spelled out; no comma needed.
NOTE: Please avoid using a conversational form, such as June 17th through June 24th. Correct form is: The World Games are set for 17-24 June 2023. (This is Special Olympics global style, contrary to AP style.)

devolutional disabilities
A general term for a range of conditions related to impairment in physical, learning or behavioral areas. These conditions include intellectual disabilities. NOTE: Special Olympics uses the more specific term: intellectual disabilities (See intellectual disabilities.)

directions
In general, lowercase north, south, northwest, northern, southern, etc., when they indicate compass direction. Capitalize when they designate regions, especially in the United States.
Examples: He drove west, then along the southern coast. A storm system that developed in the Midwest is heading toward the East Coast.

disabilities
Use people-first language: refer to the person first - and any disability thereafter. Never use crippled, handicapped, mentally disabled or retarded. If applicable to the context, refer to a person with a disability, not a disabled person; someone who uses a wheelchair, not someone “confined” to a wheelchair or wheelchair-bound; or a person with autism, not “suffering” from autism.
NOTE: Also pay attention to singular/plural usage. Examples: a person with an intellectual disability; people with intellectual disabilities.

**divisioning**
Lowercase. Special Olympics competitions are structured so that athletes compete with other athletes of similar ability in equitable divisions. This practice marks one of the fundamental differences between Special Olympics competitions and those of most other sports organizations.

**Down syndrome**
Not Downs syndrome or Downs Syndrome. The word syndrome is lowercase.

**email**
No hyphen.

**exams**
Do NOT use this word to describe what takes place at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes events or clinics. Screenings is the preferred term.

**eyeglasses**
One word.

**Fahrenheit**
The temperature scale commonly used in the United States. In Special Olympics documents, we generally express temperature using the Fahrenheit scale with the Celsius equivalent in parentheses. Example: 77 F (25 C).

**fewer, less**
In general, use fewer for individual items, less for bulk or quantity. Examples: Fewer than 10 applicants called about the position. He has less than US$10 in his pocket.

**Final Leg**
Capitalize, do not use quotes. A Final Leg consists of the last miles of a Law Enforcement Torch Run® in the days leading up to the Opening Ceremony of a Special Olympics competitive event. See Law Enforcement Torch Run.

**Flame of Hope**
No quotes, no italics. The torch carried in the Law Enforcement Torch Run® and used to light the cauldron at Special Olympics Games. There is no registered trademark for Flame of Hope.

**Founder’s Council**
Apostrophe before the s. Founder’s Council members play key roles in strengthening Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s vision and ensuring future success of the Special Olympics movement. The council is composed of not fewer than three and not more than nine direct descendants of Eunice Kennedy Shriver.
fundraiser, fundraising
Do not hyphenate.

Games
Capitalize in all instances when referring to Special Olympics Games. (This is Special Olympics style, contrary to AP style.) Treat as a collective plural rather than a collective singular expression. Example: The World Games were held in Abu Dhabi. NOT “was held.”

When naming Games, put Special Olympics first whenever possible. The idea is for Special Olympics to stand out, rather than the year or location. Preferred: Special Olympics World Winter Games Kazan 2022. Not: 2005 Special Olympics World Winter Games, Nagano, Japan.

See below for specific guidance.

• World Games
  Capitalize. Designate the season only in title of World Winter Games, as in: Special Olympics World Games CITY/LOCATION YEAR (for summer competition) or Special Olympics World Winter Games CITY/LOCATION YEAR (for winter).

  Examples: Special Olympics World Winter Games Austria 2017; Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023.

  NOTE: On second reference, events may be abbreviated to World Games, the 2023 (or whichever year) Games, or the Games, if the meaning is clear within the context. See below list of past and upcoming World Games for full titles.

• Regional and National Games
  Capitalize the R and N. Example: Special Olympics Asia-Pacific Regional Games, as well as the season for Programs that hold Games in both summer and winter sports (Special Olympics Canada Summer Games; Special Olympics Canada Winter Games).

• U.S. State Games
  Capitalize. Identify season for Programs holding Games for both summer and winter sports (e.g., Special Olympics Maryland Summer Games).

• local Games
  Capitalize Games, lowercase local.

• Other
  Capitalize multinational or multistate events. Examples: Special Olympics Middle East/North Africa Regional Games; Mid-Atlantic Invitational Golf Tournament.
Special Olympics World Games and World Winter Games
(Note the change from “International” to “World” in 1991. Also note that, as of 2019, Special Olympics no longer numbers Games in official titles.)

1968
1st International Special Olympics Summer Games
Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1970
2nd International Special Olympics Summer Games
Soldier Field, Chicago, Illinois, USA

1972
3rd International Special Olympics Summer Games
University of California at Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California, USA

1975
4th International Special Olympics Summer Games
Central Michigan University, Mount Pleasant, Michigan, USA

1977
1st International Special Olympics Winter Games
Steamboat Springs, Colorado, USA

1979
5th International Special Olympics Summer Games
State University of New York at Brockport, Brockport, New York, USA

1981
2nd International Special Olympics Winter Games
Stowe and the Village of Smugglers’ Notch, Vermont, USA

1983
6th International Special Olympics Summer Games
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, USA

1985
3rd International Special Olympics Winter Games
Park City, Utah, USA

1987
7th International Special Olympics Summer Games
University of Notre Dame and Saint Mary’s College, South Bend, Indiana, USA

1989
4th International Special Olympics Winter Games
Reno, Nevada, and Lake Tahoe, California, USA

1991
8th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, USA

1993
5th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Salzburg and Schladming, Austria
1995
9th Special Olympics World Summer Games
New Haven, Connecticut, USA

1997
6th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Toronto and Collingwood, Ontario, Canada

1999
10th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

2001
7th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Anchorage, Alaska, USA

2003
11th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Dublin, Ireland

2005
8th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Nagano, Japan
or
Special Olympics World Winter Games, Nagano, Japan 2005

2007
12th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Shanghai, China
or
Special Olympics World Summer Games, Shanghai 2007

2009
9th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Idaho, USA
or
Special Olympics World Winter Games, Idaho USA 2009

2011
13th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Athens, Greece
or
Special Olympics World Summer Games, Athens 2011

2013
10th Special Olympics World Winter Games
PyeongChang, Republic of Korea
or
Special Olympics World Winter Games PyeongChang 2013

2015
14th Special Olympics World Summer Games
Los Angeles, USA
or
Special Olympics World Games Los Angeles 2015
2017
11th Special Olympics World Winter Games
Styria, Austria
or
Special Olympics World Winter Games Austria 2017
2019
Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019
2022
Special Olympics World Winter Games Kazan 2022
2023
Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023

Games Organizing Committee
Do not use. This phrase has been replaced by Local Organizing Committee, abbreviated as LOC on second reference.

gEographic names
Whenever possible, spell out names of countries, states and cities. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) Exception: For U.S. state names, add USA afterwards. Example: Special Olympics Rhode Island (USA) hosted a competition in the fall.

Get Into It
A K-12 school curriculum developed by Special Olympics and distributed to educational institutions to encourage students to respect and embrace the differences and similarities in people with and without intellectual disabilities. Formerly known as SO Get Into It.

Global Messengers
Always capitalize. The term refers to Special Olympics athletes who have received training to become spokespeople for people with intellectual disabilities and to raise awareness of Special Olympics. These athletes are referred to as Special Olympics [Program name] Global Messengers. Example: Special Olympics China Global Messengers.
In addition, every few years, 10-12 athletes are chosen from Programs around the world to serve four-year terms as spokespersons for the Special Olympics movement; they are Special Olympics Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers (SSIGMs). Also see Health Messengers.

Global Strategic Plan, 2021-2024
Special Olympics Global Strategic Plan, 2021-2024 on first reference to our vision and strategy for the coming years.

good will, goodwill
The noun is two words. The adjective is one word.
grass roots, grass-roots
Two words; hyphenate when used as an adjective.

Guardians of the Flame®
Capitalize, no quotes. Describes law enforcement officers who take part in a Torch Run, including a Final Leg. See Final Leg and Law Enforcement Torch Run®.

Heads of Delegations
Capitalize. After first reference, can be abbreviated as HOD. This refers to the leaders of the delegations that will be competing at a World Games.

Heads of Delegation Seminar
Formerly called the Heads of Delegation Conference. Generally held one year prior to a World Games (at the World Games location), these meetings offer an overview of World Games for Heads of Delegations.

Health
Special Olympics Health is ever-expanding. On first reference, when referring to our health work, please refer to the overarching program as: Special Olympics Health, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, and in the United States in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This can include Healthy Athletes activities, fitness and wellness initiatives, and Healthy Communities programming. On second reference and thereafter, refer simply to Special Olympics Health or the Special Olympics Health program.

Examples: Special Olympics Health, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, and in the United States in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is breaking new ground in Florida. Or (outside the USA): Our Special Olympics Health program, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, is making a huge difference around the world.

health care (noun); healthcare (adjective)
As a noun, health care is two words, no hyphen. The adjective is one word, no hyphen. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style). Examples: People with ID face challenges in accessing quality health care; Special Olympics is working toward full healthcare inclusion for all.

Health Messenger
Capitalize. A Health Messenger is a Special Olympics athlete trained to serve as a leader in health and/or fitness within their Special Olympics community or the community at large.
Healthy Athletes*
On first reference, when referring to Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, outside the United States, say: Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, made possible by the Golisano Foundation; thereafter, simply refer to Healthy Athletes. When referring to Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® in the United States, first reference is: Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®, made possible by the Golisano Foundation, and in the United States in collaboration with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Healthy Athletes thereafter. The Healthy Athletes name covers eight disciplines:

- Special Olympics MedFest® (health history, physical exam)
- Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes® (vision/eye health)*
- Special Olympics Healthy Hearing (audiology)
- Special Olympics Special Smiles® (dentistry)
- Special Olympics Health Promotion (prevention and nutrition)
- Special Olympics Strong Minds (emotional health)
- Special Olympics FUNfitness (physical therapy)
- Special Olympics Fit Feet (podiatry)

*This is a partnership between Special Olympics and Lions Clubs International. Always use the full name as shown above on first reference; use Opening Eyes thereafter.

NOTE: When mentioning any of the Healthy Athletes disciplines, please include Special Olympics on first reference, as in: Special Olympics Special Smiles®. Additional note: some computer software programs automatically use a superscript for the registered mark, while others do not. Whenever possible, the superscript is preferred.

Healthy Community
Within Special Olympics, a Program is identified as having achieved Healthy Community recognition after meeting several criteria related to year-round health programming. The plural term Healthy Communities® may be used when referencing the overall year-round Special Olympics health work and recognition structure.

NOTE: It is important to refer to a Program receiving a 1-year or 3-year Healthy Community grant as a "Healthy Community grantee" or one that is "seeking to achieve Healthy Community recognition" until the Program is officially recognized as a Healthy Community.

Examples: Special Olympics is working toward creating Healthy Communities around the world. Special Olympics New York is recognized as a Healthy Community through its dedication to athlete health year-round.
**Host Town program**
This involves cities and towns around a World Games location that volunteer to host Special Olympics athlete delegations for several days prior to a World Games competition. The Host Town – or Host Towns -- program allows athletes to rest, acclimate and train prior to competing at World Games.

**inclusive health**
Special Olympics Health supports inclusive health for people with intellectual disabilities. Inclusive health means people with ID are able to take full advantage of the same health programs and services available to people who do not have ID.

**intellectual disabilities**
This is the official term used to refer to our focus population. Use the singular when referring to one person, e.g., a child with an intellectual disability, or a child with intellectual disability. Use plural when referring to more than one person, e.g., “adults and children with intellectual disabilities.” May be abbreviated as ID on second reference.
NOTE: Special Olympics does not use the term intellectual and developmental disabilities, which is a broader category. See developmental disabilities.

**International Association of Chiefs of Police**
Abbreviate as IACP after first mention. The founding law enforcement organization of the Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics.

**Korea**
The Special Olympics Program is located in Korea. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) However, when necessary, use Republic of Korea or South Korea to identify the country that hosted the 2013 World Winter Games. Example: The 2013 Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in PyeongChang, South Korea.

**Kosovo**
The official name is Kosovo and its abbreviation is KOS. NOTE: We no longer need to add the statement: “under UNSCR 1244/99.”

**Law Enforcement Torch Run®**
Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics on first reference; use Law Enforcement Torch Run, Torch Run or LETR thereafter. The first use of the full title should include the registration symbol ® after the word “Run.”
Law enforcement officers carry the Flame of Hope (torch) prior to a Special Olympics competition to raise funds for and awareness of the Special Olympics movement worldwide. Officers involved in the Law Enforcement Torch Run are also called Guardians of the Flame. NOTE: law enforcement officer is lowercase, no hyphens. See also Final Leg, Flame of Hope.

**Local Organizing Committee**
Organization that plans, organizes, finances and conducts Special Olympics World or Regional Games, as well as International Single Sport Events. On
first mention, spell out and capitalize; also include a reference to the specific event (e.g., the Local Organizing Committee for the Special Olympics World Winter Games Kazan 2022). Abbreviate as LOC thereafter. NOTE: This term replaces Games Organizing Committee.

long jump
As a noun, two words. As an adjective, hyphenate. Examples: He competed in the long jump. She won a medal in the long-jump event.

longtime
One word as a compound modifier. Examples: They are longtime supporters of Special Olympics. BUT: They've been friends a long time.

Macedonia
Refer to this country as North Macedonia. Do not use Macedonia alone.

magazines
Place in quotes. Lowercase “magazine” unless it is part of the title of the publication; do not italicize the word “magazine.” (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) Examples: “Harper’s Magazine,” “Newsweek” magazine.

measurements
All Special Olympics documents should include both metric and U.S. measuring systems.

- foot—the basic unit of length in the U.S. measuring system. The metric equivalent is exactly 30.48 centimeters.
- kilometer—the metric term for 1,000 meters. A kilometer is equal to approximately 3,281 feet or five-eighths (0.62) of a mile. NOTE: Abbreviate as km.
- knot—one nautical mile.
- meter—the basic unit of length in the metric system. It is defined as being equal to approximately 39.37 inches. NOTE: Abbreviate as m.

mental retardation
Do not use. This outdated wording has been replaced with the term “intellectual disability.” In descriptions, please use people-first language, as in: a person with an intellectual disability; children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

mid
No hyphen unless followed by a number or a capital letter. Examples: midterm exam, mid-April, mid-1990s.

millions, billions
Use figures with million or billion. Example: More than 6 million athletes and Unified partners participate in Special Olympics.
Minister
Capitalize before or after a person’s name. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.) Example: Dr. Rafael Sánchez Cárdenas, Minister of Health, Dominican Republic

Ministry
As a government entity, capitalize. NOTE: Do not capitalize when referring to government ministries in general. Examples: the Ministry of Sports; sports ministries around the world.

Motor Activity Training Program
Activity is singular. Abbreviate as MATP after first mention. A program specially designed for athletes who are unable to participate in official Special Olympics sports competitions due to functional abilities. NOTE: Be careful not to use the redundant phrase “MATP program.”

movement
Lowercase. Example: Her inspiring speech marked a turning point in the Special Olympics movement.

movies, television shows
Place in quotes.

multi
In general, no hyphen. Examples: multinational, multiregional, multistate.

National Director
Capitalize. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

the Netherlands
The word “the” is lowercase. Example: Athlete Leaders gathered in Groningen, the Netherlands.

nonprofit
One word, no hyphen.

North Macedonia
Refer to this country as North Macedonia. Do NOT use the outdated terms Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia or FYR Macedonia.

numerals
Spell out numbers one through nine, except for ages and before millions or billions. Use figures for 10 and above. Examples: Special Olympics has seven Regional offices. A delegation of 23 athletes is expected. NOTE: Follow the same rule for most ordinals (first, second, third, etc.) UNLESS they’re used to form a name/title. Example: The 8th Special Olympics World Winter Games were held in Nagano, Japan.
open water swimming
Lowercase. No hyphen.

OSEP
This abbreviation may be used on second reference for the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education (OSEP). Referring to the U.S. Department of Education alone is not acceptable.

Opening Ceremony
Capitalize. Treat as singular. The Opening Ceremony was held at the University of Nebraska. Also note: Many volunteers worked at both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies.

Palestinian Authority
Not Palestine Authority. However, the Special Olympics Program in the MENA Region is referred to as Special Olympics Palestine.

Pan American Health Organization
On first mention, use Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO). PAHO is fine on subsequent use. Please refer to PAHO as a partner.

Parade of Athletes
Capitalize. The procession of athletes at the start of an Opening Ceremony.

partner
Lowercase. Unified partners refers to people without intellectual disabilities. Example: The Unified Sports tennis match featured an athlete from Costa Rica and a partner from Turkey.

people-first language
Lowercase. People-first language puts the person first, not a diagnosis. People-first language signals that a person is not defined by a disability; disability may just be one characteristic – and comes last. Examples: child with an intellectual disability; adult with autism; athlete with cerebral palsy.

percent
One word. Use figures only, as in: 3 percent, 50 percent.

personal best
Lowercase. Special Olympics athletes are always trying to exceed their personal best in every sport. NOTE: An athlete’s personal best is defined as the best result (highest score, fastest time or other individual stat) that he or she has ever achieved.
**Plane Pull®**
A Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics fundraiser. Capitalize.

**Polar Plunge®**
Capitalize. A Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics fundraiser. Polar Plunge is a registered trademark of Special Olympics and is recommended over “Polar Bear Plunge” and other similar names not registered by Special Olympics.

**prefixes**
In general, do not hyphenate when using a prefix with a word starting with a consonant.
- Use a hyphen if the prefix ends in a vowel and the word that follows begins with the same vowel (e.g., pre-existing)
- Use a hyphen if the word that follows is capitalized (pre-Colombian).
- Use a hyphen to join doubled prefixes (e.g., sub-subparagraph).

**Preliminary Games**
Capitalized. This term is preferred over Test Games, but either one is acceptable. May be shortened to Pre-Games. NOTE: Invitational Games may also be used.

**President, the President**
Capitalize when used as a title. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

**Prime Minister, the Prime Minister**
Capitalize when used as a title. (This is Special Olympics style, not AP style.)

**Principle of Meaningful Involvement**
Term used to describe the monitoring of the meaningful involvement of all teammates participating in Unified Sports. POMI on second reference.

**Program**
The word Program is always capitalized when referring to a Special Olympics Program to differentiate it from initiatives and activities. Example: Special Olympics Australia’s National Games were one of the Program’s most successful ever.

- **National Programs**
  Capitalize. Example: Representatives of nine National Programs attended the seminar.
  - In National Program names, “Special Olympics” precedes the country name (Special Olympics Malawi, NOT Malawi Special Olympics).
• **State, Provincial and City Programs**

In state, provincial and city Program names, Special Olympics always comes first.
Examples: Special Olympics Massachusetts, Special Olympics District of Columbia, Special Olympics Ontario, Special Olympics Toronto.

**Quotation Marks**

Please note that commas and periods always go inside quotation marks, even with sentence fragments. Example: We call this “an easy rule.” NOT: We call this “incorrect punctuation”.

®

Registered trademark symbol is used only on first reference. NOTE: Some software programs use a superscript for the registered mark, while others do not. Whenever possible, the superscript is preferred. NOTE: Please also see Trademarks for a list of Special Olympics’ registered trademarks.

**R-word**

Note hyphen and capital “R.” Refers to the words "retard" or "retarded.” Derogatory use of these words can hurt millions of people with intellectual disabilities, their families and friends.

**Regions (Special Olympics)**

With a capital “R.” Always use the full Special Olympics Region name on first reference, as in: Special Olympics Europe Eurasia, not SOEE. Special Olympics is organized into seven Regions. The Regional offices provide training and support to their area Programs.
- Special Olympics Africa (SOA)
- Special Olympics Asia Pacific (SOAP)
- Special Olympics East Asia (SOEA)
- Special Olympics Europe Eurasia (SOEE)
- Special Olympics Latin America (SOLA)
- Special Olympics Middle East/North Africa (SOMENA)
- Special Olympics North America (SONA)

**Sargent Shriver International Global Messengers**

See Global Messengers.

**Screenings**

This is the preferred term to describe what takes place at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes events or clinics. Please note that we no longer use the word “exams.”

**Semicolon**

Use to separate complex information or lists beyond what a comma can convey; also to link independent clauses. If these clauses get too unwieldy, however, consider writing separate sentences.
Shriver family members
Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Founder (Mrs. Shriver or EKS on second reference)
Sargent Shriver, former President and Chairman of the Board Emeritus
Timothy P. Shriver, Chairman, Special Olympics International*
Anthony K. Shriver, Founder, Chairman & CEO, Best Buddies International
Bobby Shriver, Member, Special Olympics International Board of Directors, producer of “A Very Special Christmas” music series
Maria Shriver, former Member, Special Olympics International Board of Directors; author, activist
Mark Shriver, Member, Special Olympics International Board of Directors; CEO, Save the Children Action Network

*NOTE: When mentioning the Special Olympics Chairman in introductions, please use Dr. Timothy P. Shriver. For documents and formal correspondence, his signature is Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D. For all else, including press releases and anything on our website, use Tim Shriver (plus his title on first reference).

Soldier Field
In Chicago, this was the site of the 1st International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1968 and the 2nd International Special Olympics Summer Games in 1970, as well as 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2018.

Special Olympics
The preferred name is Special Olympics. Please do not refer to “the Special Olympics” or a Special Olympic (singular) competition. If possible, avoid the possessive (Special Olympics’); never refer to Special Olympics’s.
NOTE: The legal name is Special Olympics, Inc. -- not Special Olympics International. You do not need to use the official name, except in documents. The abbreviations SOI or SO are acceptable in informal use only.

Special Olympics athlete oath
See athlete oath.

Special Olympics athletes
Lowercase. NOTE: Our athletes are not Olympians or Special Olympians. And please don’t forget the ‘s’ in Olympics.

Special Olympics Health
See Health.

Special Olympics USA
Always use Special Olympics USA to refer to athletes and coaches representing the United States of America at a World Games competition. Do not say Special Olympics Team USA or Team USA. (Team USA -- without the words Special Olympics -- refers to the U.S. Olympic team.) Do not use periods in USA.
Special Olympics Unified Schools
See Unified Schools.

sports
Individual sports are not capitalized. Athletes can compete in 30+ sports, including summer and winter sports.
NOTE: Article 1 of the Special Olympics Sports Rules no longer designates sports as "official," "recognized" or "locally popular." Sports are now classified as levels, based on annual Program and athlete participation numbers. Sports with the highest participation numbers are Level 1, next is Level 2, etc.

- Summer sports offered:
  
  athletics (track and field)
  badminton
  basketball
  beach volleyball
  bocce
  bowling
  competitive cheer
  cricket
  cycling
  equestrian
  football (soccer)
  NOTE: Soccer, in parentheses, appears after “football” at the first mention in locations where readers/viewers might confuse the sport with American football.
  golf
  gymnastics (artistic)
  gymnastics (rhythmic)
  handball
  judo
  kayaking
  open water swimming
  powerlifting
  roller skating
  sailing
  softball
  swimming
  table tennis
  tennis
  triathlon
  volleyball
• Winter sports offered:
  alpine skiing
  cross-country skiing
dancesport
  figure skating (Hyphenate when a compound adjective, e.g., figure-skating venue)
floorball
  floor hockey (Hyphenate when a compound adjective, e.g., floor-hockey stick)
short track speedskating (Hyphenate only when used as a compound adjective, e.g., the short-track speedskating competition)
snowboarding
snowshoeing

• Demonstration sports: These are sports that take place only at a specific Games event. An example includes rowing.

**Spread the Word >> Inclusion**
Capitalized. Spread the Word >> Inclusion is the campaign for mutual respect and dignity that has spread across the United States and around the globe, involving people of all ages -- from high schools to college campuses and corporate offices. The goal of Spread the Word >> Inclusion is to focus not just on elimination of the R-word, but on creating a new reality: inclusion for all people with intellectual disabilities.
NOTE: The name Spread the Word >> Inclusion replaces Spread the Word to End the Word.

**Strategic Plan**
This is an informal way to refer to our Global Strategic Plan. On first reference, please say: Special Olympics Global Strategic Plan, 2021-2024. See also Global Strategic Plan.

**teammate**
Not capitalized. Refers to people with and without intellectual disabilities who participate in traditional or Unified Sports. Example: More than 1 million teammates take part in Special Olympics Unified Sports.

**Technical Delegates**
May be abbreviated as TDs on second reference

**Tip-A-Cop®**
Capitalize (including the “A”) and use hyphens. A Law Enforcement Torch Run® fundraising event in which officers assist with waiting tables at a restaurant and collect “tip” donations for Special Olympics.
**T-shirt**
Capitalize the “T.”

**Three Pillars**
Capitalized. Special Olympics’ five-year awareness and fundraising campaign -- known as “Choose to Include” -- is based on Three Pillars. They are: Pillar 1= Sport and Health; Pillar 2=Youth Engagement; Pillar 3=Inclusion and Athlete Leadership. See also Choose to Include.

**titles**
Special Olympics titles are capitalized when used before or after a name. No commas are needed if the name goes first. Examples: Mary Davis, Chief Executive Officer, will deliver remarks. Special Olympics Chairman Tim Shriver is the featured speaker. NOT: Special Olympics Chairman, Tim Shriver, is the featured speaker.

**Torch Lighting Ceremony**
Always capitalize.

**Torch Run**
Use Law Enforcement Torch Run® for Special Olympics on first reference. Law Enforcement Torch Run, Torch Run, or LETR thereafter.

**Trademarks**
Trademarks registered by Special Olympics include:

- A Very Special Christmas®
- Cops on Doughnut Shops®
- Cops on Top
- Guardians of the Flame®
- Healthy Athletes®
- Healthy Communities®
- Law Enforcement Torch Run®
- Medfest®
- Opening Eyes®
- Plane Pull®
- Play Unified®
- Polar Plunge®
- Special Smiles®
- The Champion’s Society®
- Tip-A-Cop®
- Truck Convoy®
- Unified Champion Schools®
- Unified Sports®
- World’s Largest Truck Convoy®

NOTE: Special Olympics International, through its Legal Department, is the only organization permitted to register Special Olympics trademarks. See
also ® for instructions on when to use the registered mark ®. Do not add a trademark (™) symbol for trademarks that are not registered.

Train-the-Trainer
Hyphenated and capitalized.

Unified
Capitalized when used as an adjective. Examples: John is a Unified partner at his school. This is Sheila’s first year as a Unified athlete. Keith coaches Unified floor hockey. See also Unified Sports.

Unified Champion Schools®
Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® on first reference. This is a program for schools Pre-K through university level that promotes meaningful social inclusion by bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities to create accepting school environments by utilizing three interconnected components: Special Olympics Unified Sports®, inclusive youth leadership, and whole school engagement.

Unified Cup
Capitalize. When naming the Unified Cup, put Special Olympics first whenever possible. Example: Special Olympics Unified Cup Detroit 2022. If the event has a presenting sponsor, this can be listed after the official name of the event. Example: Special Olympics Unified Cup Detroit 2022, presented by Toyota.
NOTE: On second reference, the event may be referred to as the Unified Cup, the 2022 Unified Cup, Detroit 2022, etc., if the reference is clear within the context.

Unified Schools
Special Olympics Unified Schools on first reference. This is our global program for schools offering Special Olympics Unified Sports at least two times within a school year. Unified Sports may be implemented using any of three models of Unified play: competitive; player development; and recreation, which includes Unified Physical Education (PE), Young Athletes, and Unified fitness.
NOTE: All Unified Champion Schools fall under this umbrella definition. Also note that the term Unified Schools is not widely used in the United States, as all U.S. schools are encouraged to fully implement Unified Champion Schools: the education-based strategy that uses inclusive sports, youth leadership and whole-school engagement to develop school communities where all youth -- with and without intellectual disabilities -- work together toward greater respect and dignity for people with intellectual disabilities.

Unified Sports®
Capitalized. On first reference, Special Olympics Unified Sports®. See also Unified.
Unified Sports Experience
Formerly known as Unity Sports. These are exhibition games that team people with and without intellectual disabilities on the field of play. These games often involve celebrities or other high-profile supporters. USE is acceptable on second reference.

Unified Sports Rivalry Series
A Unified Sports Rivalry game or series is a Special Olympics Unified Sports competition in which teams represent traditional college rivals (i.e. Alabama vs. Auburn). The teams are comprised of university students and local Special Olympics athletes. These games are typically held around the same time as a larger game between the two schools.

United States, U.S., USA
Spell out when used as a noun. Use U.S. only as an adjective. Use USA (no periods) after U.S. State Program names on first reference. Examples: Canada, the Caribbean and the United States make up Special Olympics North America. Special Olympics Connecticut is a U.S. Program. Special Olympics Texas (USA) is planning its Fall Classic.

Washington, D.C.
Include comma and periods (except in mailing addresses).

World Health Organization
When abbreviating, use WHO; do not put “the” in front of WHO. If necessary, please refer to WHO as a collaborative organization, not a partner.

World Games
Use to describe Special Olympics World Games competitions involving summer sports. This replaces the term “World Summer Games.” NOTE: We continue to use the phrase World Winter Games. Examples: Two tours are planned to potential hosts of the World Winter Games. Athletes will compete in 24 sports at the Special Olympics World Games Berlin 2023. See also Games.

year-end
Hyphenated for both noun and adjective.

year-round
Hyphenated.

Young Athletes
Athletes is plural. Young Athletes is an inclusive program created to reach out to children with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 7 and introduce them to the world of sport. Do not say Young Athletes program or abbreviate as YAP. Do not add a trademark (“) symbol.