



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



**American Indian/
Alaska Native
Implementation
Guide**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge and honor the Indigenous peoples who have stewarded this land for generations. We recognize their enduring connection to this territory and express our gratitude for their contributions to our community. We pay our respects to their elders—past, present, and emerging—and commit to building respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples based on understanding, equality, and justice.

This guide embodies a collaborative endeavor between Special Olympics Young Athletes and the Native American Indian & Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office (NIANHSCO), marking a pivotal step of Indigenizing Young Athletes. We express profound appreciation to the American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) Head Start Pilot programs at Cook Inlet Native Head Start, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Head Start, and the Nisqually Tribe Head Start for their visionary leadership in guiding and enriching Indigenous early education practices within Tribal Nations across the United States.



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Micker Richardson, MBA

Director, National American Indian/Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office

Jennifer Hansen

Senior Manager, Special Olympics Young Athletes

Dr. Kassy Lopez

Early Childhood Consultant, A Lil Sass Early Childhood Consultation, LLC

Jolene Petticrew

Curriculum Coordinator, Cook Inlet Native Head Start

Dr. Patricia Broker

Sr. Program Manager, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe Head Start

Mona Gomez-Cabrera

Family Services/ERSEA Supervisor, Nisqually Tribe Head Start

Dr. Dan Ninham

Director, Northern Indigenous Games

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

- 4 Special Olympics
- 5 Special Olympics Young Athletes
- 7 AI/AN Young Athletes

APPLICATION

- 8 Using this Guide & Young Athlete Resources
- 9 Bringing YA AI/IN to the Community
- 11 A Commitment to Partner
- 12 Young Athletes Activities
- 13 Creating Young Athletes Lessons that Include AI/AN Traditional Games
 - 14 Step 1
 - 16 Step 2
 - 19 Examples of Completed Lessons
 - 28 Step 3

APPENDIX

- 32 Making the Connection Planning Template
- 33 Young Athletes AI/AN Lesson Plan Template
- 34 Alignment to Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework
- 37 Teaching Strategies
- 38 Book List
- 39 Language/Vocabulary Activities
- 40 Nutrition Resource Links
- 41 Equipment
- 42 Inclusive Play for Children of All Abilities

SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Special Olympics is a global movement to end discrimination against people with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics fosters acceptance of all people through the power of sport and programming in education, health, and leadership. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, sister of President John F. Kennedy, Special Olympics seeks to empower individuals with intellectual disabilities and promote inclusion and respect for all people, regardless of their abilities.

The organization offers year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities at local, national, and international levels, allowing athletes to showcase their talents, improve their physical fitness, and develop life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship.

Through programming in sports, health, education, and community building and its global network of volunteers, coaches, and supporters, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and solving the global injustice, isolation, intolerance and inactivity they face.



SPECIAL OLYMPICS YOUNG ATHLETES

Special Olympics Young Athletes is an early childhood play program for children with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes provides children with early access to foundational sports and movement activities that support development in a fun and inclusive environment. The program introduces children to the joy of sports at an early age, while also supporting the development of fundamental motor, social, and cognitive development skills.

Young Athletes activities are tailored to the developmental needs of young children to ensure every child can meaningfully participate. Through structured play sessions, children engage in activities that promote skills, such as running, jumping, throwing, catching, balance, and coordination. The inclusive program provides opportunities for children with and without disabilities to play and learn together and emphasizes socialization, inclusion, acceptance, empathy, and understanding.

Young Athletes also provides support to parents, families, caregivers, and communities by providing resources and education on disability, development, and access to local services to best care for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Everyone benefits from Special Olympics Young Athletes

- **Motor Skills**

Children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) who took part in Young Athletes over eight weeks saw seven to nine month's development in motor skills. This is compared to a three-month gain in motor skills for children who did not participate.

- **Social, Emotional, and Learning Skills**

Parents and teachers of children who took part in the Young Athletes curriculum said the children learned skills that they will use in pre-primary school. The children were more enthusiastic and confident. They also played better with other children.

- **Expectations**

Family members say that Young Athletes raised their hopes for their child's future.

- **Sports Readiness**

Young Athletes helps children develop important movement and sports skills. These skills get them ready to take part in sports and recreational activities when they are older.

- **Acceptance**

Inclusive play has a benefit for children without IDD as well, by helping them to better understand and accept others.

THREE MODELS FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS YOUNG ATHLETES



Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning. Children also learn to share, take turns, and follow directions. These skills help children in family, community, and school activities.

Young Athletes is a fun way for children to get fit. It is important to teach children healthy habits while they are young. This can set the stage for a life of physical activity, friendships, and learning.

AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKA NATIVE (AI/AN) YOUNG ATHLETES

2018 saw the formalized partnership between Special Olympics and the National Head Start Association, which was the precursor to the American Indian/Alaska Native Young Athletes work in place today. The original partnership fostered a number of local connections between Special Olympics State Programs and their local Head Start Centers for implementation of general Young Athletes.

Through this work with Head Start, Special Olympics began working with the Native American Indian & Alaska Native Head Start Collaboration Office (NIANHSCO) to bring Young Athletes activities to tribal communities across the United States. Following a listening and learning session and collaboration with the NIANHSCO team, the concept of “indigenizing” Young Athletes was born.

Indigenizing refers to the process of incorporating Indigenous perspectives, knowledge, practices, and values into various aspects of society, such as education, governance, culture, and the economy. This may involve recognizing and respecting Indigenous worldviews, histories, languages, and traditions, and working to address the systemic inequalities and injustices faced by Indigenous peoples. Indigenizing efforts often aim to promote cultural revitalization, and self-determination for Indigenous communities while promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration.¹

The Young Athletes Indigenized games nurture the foundational motor and movement skills essential for all children, while also connecting them to Traditional Games within each American Indian/Alaska Native community and honoring tribal languages and traditional foods. These activities serve as a cornerstone for promoting the physical well-being and development of children and families through dedicated programs.

American Indian/Alaskan Native programs seeking to implement Young Athletes can do so with confidence by leveraging the resources and support available through their local Special Olympics Program contacts in each state. These contacts serve as invaluable resources, offering guidance, expertise, and assistance on programming for people with IDD, tailored to the unique needs and cultural contexts of Indigenous communities.

¹ Antoine, A., Mason, R., Mason, R., Palahicky, S., & France, C. R. de. (2018, September 5). *Indigenization, decolonization, and reconciliation. Pulling Together A Guide for Curriculum Developers*. <https://opentextbc.ca/indigenizationcurriculumdevelopers/chapter/indigenization-decolonization-and-reconciliation/>

USING THIS GUIDE

The Special Olympics Young Athletes AI/AN Implementation Guide is a comprehensive resource to empower indigenous through inclusive play. To get started, review the full contents of this guide. With an emphasis on cultural sensitivity and inclusion, the guide offers strategies for integrating traditional knowledge and values into YA programming in AI/AN communities. It also provides practical tips for organizing events, improving skills, and cultivating a supportive environment. To strengthen the usefulness of this guide, it should be paired with the additional Young Athletes tools and resources available through the Special Olympics Program in your state.

Young Athlete Resources

Special Olympics Young Athletes has a wealth of resources available to educators. These resources are inclusive of an activity guide for 8 full weeks of gross motor skills play, a full school year set of lesson plans for ongoing implementation, and much more! For these resources, scan the QR code, visit <https://resources.specialolympics.org/early-childhood-development-resource-library>, or connect with your Young Athletes liaison through your Special Olympics State Program Office.



BRINGING YA AI/AN TO THE COMMUNITY

*Before incorporating the Young Athletes AI/AN program into both classrooms and extracurricular activities, it is important for participants to undergo training sessions. Work closely with your Special Olympics state partners to facilitate this essential step. Locate your local Program contact here: <https://www.specialolympics.org/programs>

Implementing programs to support the health of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities in American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities requires a thoughtful approach that respects cultural values and community dynamics. This guide outlines initial steps for educators and implementers introducing the Young Athletes program in AI/AN contexts. By prioritizing cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and community involvement, this guide aims to ensure the program’s integration as a sustainable and culturally relevant initiative. Through tailored training, partnerships, and youth empowerment, the Young Athletes program can positively impact both physical health and cultural identity within AI/AN communities.



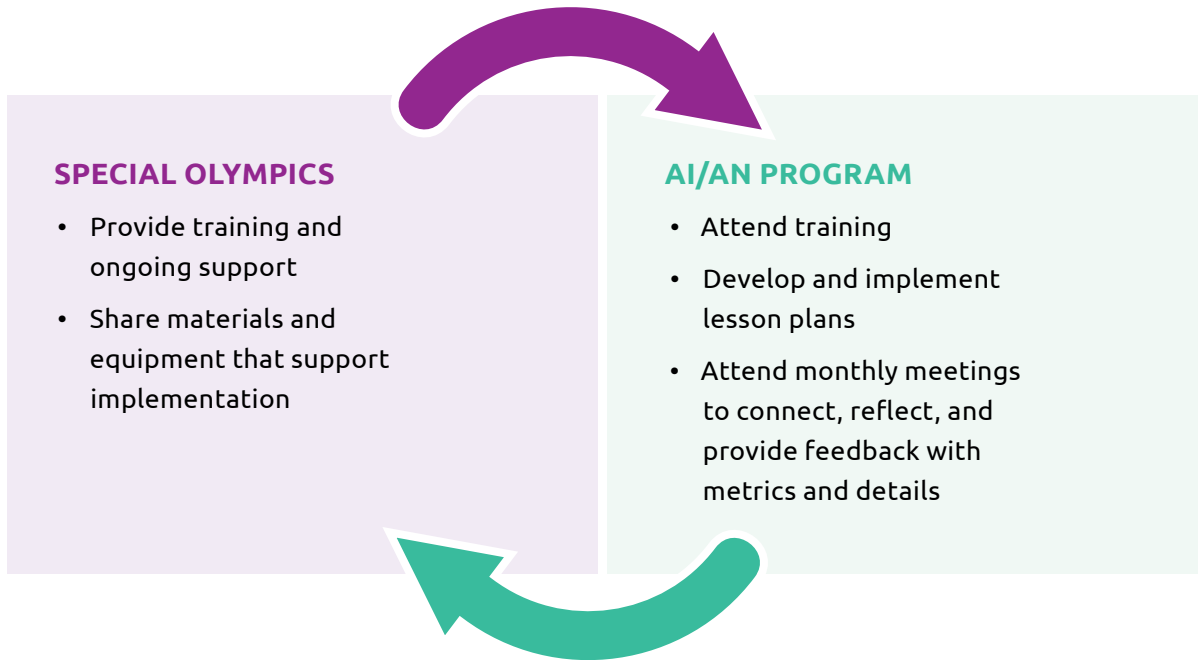
Initial first steps for educators or implementers to take:

- 1. Conduct Cultural Assessment:** Begin by understanding the cultural nuances and preferences within the AI/AN (American Indian/Alaska Native) communities where the program will be implemented. This involves engaging with community leaders, elders, and members to gain insights into their values, traditions, and perspectives on health and disability.
- 2. Develop Tailored Training:** Create training materials and sessions specifically tailored to the identified cultural context. These resources should not only educate participants about the Young Athletes program but also integrate cultural elements to ensure relevance and resonance with the community.
- 3. Partnerships:** Foster partnerships with local organizations, schools, and health agencies to garner support and expand the program's reach. Collaborating with established entities within the community can provide valuable resources, expertise, and networks to strengthen the initiative.
- 4. Promote Inclusivity:** Emphasize the importance of inclusivity throughout the planning and implementation process. Ensure that all aspects of the program, from recruitment to participation, are accessible and welcoming to children with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.
- 5. Cultivate Cultural Sensitivity:** Train staff and volunteers to be culturally sensitive and responsive to the diverse backgrounds and experiences of program participants. This may involve providing cultural competency training, promoting open dialogue, and actively listening to community feedback.
- 6. Encourage Community Involvement:** Actively involve the AI/AN community in decision-making processes and program activities. Seek input, feedback, and collaboration from community members to ensure that the program aligns with their needs, values, and aspirations.
- 7. Empower Youth Leaders:** Empower youth within the community to take on leadership roles within the Special Olympics program. Providing opportunities for young people to contribute their ideas, talents, and energy can foster ownership and sustainability over the long term.

By taking these initial steps, educators and implementers can lay a solid foundation for the successful implementation of the Special Olympics program within AI/AN communities, promoting the health and empowerment of children with intellectual disabilities in a culturally relevant and sustainable manner.

A COMMITMENT TO PARTNER

The partnership between Special Olympics and American Indian/Alaska Native programs signifies a significant step towards fostering inclusivity and empowerment within Indigenous communities and providing deeper support and understanding for children with IDD. Together we aim to enhance opportunities for children with and without IDD and promote physical activity and overall well-being through culturally-responsive inclusive programming. Each partner carries specific responsibilities in achieving this work.



BUILDING YOUR ACTIVITIES

The goal of aligning Young Athletes with American Indian/Alaska Native traditional games is to create a platform that honors Indigenous cultural heritage while fostering inclusivity, respect, understanding, and skill development for all children through inclusive play programs.

YOUNG ATHLETES ACTIVITIES

Special Olympics Young Athletes focuses on foundational skills such as running, jumping, throwing, and kicking, while also emphasizing social interaction and teamwork. Here's how existing Young Athletes activities can be leveraged to build new lessons:

- 1. Foundational Skills Development:** Young Athletes activities include various drills and games aimed at developing fundamental motor skills. These activities can be used as a base to design new lessons that focus on refining specific skills. For example, the activities can be centered around improving throwing accuracy or running agility for a cultural game.
- 2. Inclusive Learning Environment:** The Special Olympics Young Athletes program emphasizes inclusivity, ensuring that children of all abilities can participate together. Programs can expand on this principle by incorporating cooperative games and activities that encourage collaboration among children with and without disabilities. This promotes empathy, understanding, and teamwork.
- 3. Adaptation and Modification:** Young Athletes activities often include modifications to accommodate different ability levels. Programs can build on this by teaching children how to adapt activities to suit their individual needs. This fosters problem-solving skills and empowers children to participate fully, regardless of their physical or cognitive abilities.
- 4. Integration of Educational Concepts:** While Young Athletes primarily focuses on physical development, programs can integrate educational concepts into the lessons. For instance, they can incorporate counting and basic math skills into games involving counting repetitions or measuring distances. They can also incorporate colors, shapes, and letters into equipment or game elements to facilitate cognitive learning. Building in cultural language for the concepts is encouraged.
- 5. Family Engagement and Support:** The involvement of families is crucial in the Young Athletes program. Programs can extend this by providing families with resources and ideas for continuing the learning at home. They can create take-home activity sheets, suggest family-friendly physical activities, and offer guidance on how to reinforce skills learned during the sessions.
- 6. Celebration of Progress and Achievements:** Recognizing and celebrating progress is essential for boosting children's confidence and motivation. Programs can incorporate elements of celebration into the lessons, such as awarding certificates for participation or showcasing children's achievements through pictures or videos. This helps create a positive and supportive learning environment.

By building upon the existing Special Olympics Young Athletes activities, programs can create engaging and inclusive lessons that promote physical, cognitive, and social development in children with intellectual disabilities.

CREATING YOUNG ATHLETES LESSONS THAT INCLUDE AI/AN TRADITIONAL GAMES

To begin activities in your community, you will need to create lesson plans that integrate Young Athletes skills with traditional games, stories, and languages unique to your community. These lessons should be progressive, with the first five sessions focusing on developing each Young Athletes skill. The sixth lesson should then be designed to teach students a traditional game, utilizing the skills they have acquired.

Lesson plans can be created using the Making it Work process, which supports connecting research-based guidelines to traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to prepare children for school success. The Making It Work process:

- Promotes language development, including learning the tribal language
- Ensures lesson plans and teaching strategies infuse important cultural and life skills
- Aligns traditional cultural skills, values, beliefs, and lifeways to Head Start’s Early Learning Outcomes Framework, or tribal and state early learning guidelines
- Involves elders, families, and community members as resources for cultural knowledge
- Complements and connects each program’s research-based curriculum and ongoing assessment process to local cultural lifeways.

To build engaging lesson plans and bring Young Athletes Indigenized Activities to life in your community, follow the process outlined on the following pages.

STEP 1: MAKING THE CONNECTION

Follow these steps to create a series of five lessons that gradually lead up to the introduction and enjoyment of the traditional game.

1. Choose a Traditional Game

- Select a traditional game from your community that you wish to align with the Young Athletes framework.

2. Outline Components

- Identify the essential components of the chosen traditional game, including directions and objectives.
- Highlight the traditional equipment required to play the game.

3. Connections to Cultural Language Development

- Explore how the chosen game can contribute to the cultural language development within your community.
- Identify specific vocabulary or communication opportunities essential in the game. This might include color, movement, number, food, or shape words.

4. Review Young Athletes Skill Areas

- List the physical movements and actions involved in the traditional game.
- Familiarize yourself with the Young Athletes skill areas and activities.
- Evaluate which foundational skill areas from the Young Athletes framework would complement and support the traditional game.

5. Identify Equipment

- Examine the inventory of Young Athletes Equipment and determine appropriate items for integration into the traditional game's play.

By following these steps and utilizing the planning template, you can effectively align traditional games with the Young Athletes framework, fostering inclusive and enriching experiences.

Once the planning is complete, you can begin building lesson plans that integrate Young Athletes and the selected traditional game.

STEP 1		MAKING THE CONNECTION	
		NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan	
STEP 2	ORIGIN	The Canoe Paddle idea came from the Minute to Win it YouTube channel for The Magic Carpet Ride. The variation is not to use a floor mat and to move the body in a forward motion from one point to another point or in an obstacle course. The cultural connection is the birch bark canoeist. Children are also connected to imagination in their movements.	
	TRADITIONAL EQUIPMENT	None	
	DIRECTIONS TO PLAY	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notify the children to sit down side by-side on the gym or classroom floor with their legs straight in front of them. 2. Tell the children they are going to be imagining they are paddling a special canoe: the birchbark canoe. 3. Tell the children the Ojibwemowin word for the birch bark canoe and paddle. 4. Demonstrate how to imagine paddling a canoe without moving forward. 5. Demonstrate the body movement forward as they paddle their canoe to a set distance. 	
STEP 3	CULTURAL LANGUAGE VOCABULARY	Wiigwaasi-jiimaan: Birch bark canoe Bimishkaa(n/g)!: Paddle!	
STEP 4	YA CONNECTED SKILLS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Foundational Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Trapping & Catching <input type="checkbox"/> Kicking <input type="checkbox"/> Walking & Running <input type="checkbox"/> Throwing <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Sports Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Balance & Jumping <input type="checkbox"/> Striking	
	YA CONNECTED SKILLS ACTIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obstacle Course • Tunnels and Bridges • Animal Games 	
STEP 5	YA EQUIPMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Balance beam <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Floor markers <input type="checkbox"/> Tunnel <input type="checkbox"/> Small foam ball <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hoops <input type="checkbox"/> Parachute <input type="checkbox"/> Beanbags <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Scarf <input type="checkbox"/> Play food items <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sport cones <input type="checkbox"/> Playground ball <input type="checkbox"/> Jr. sized sports equipment: <input type="checkbox"/> Large plastic blocks <input type="checkbox"/> Rope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plastic dowels <input type="checkbox"/> Stacking cups <input type="checkbox"/> Paddle <input type="checkbox"/> Agility ladder	

STEP 2: MAKING IT HAPPEN

Create Indigenized YA lessons that are aligned to the program goals and to provide strategies for family and community engagement built on a foundation of inclusion.

A planning template is used to support Step 2.

Overview of Lesson Components

There are 5 components to each lesson:

- 1. Equipment/Materials Needed:** This marks the starting point for pre-planning each lesson. Utilize the template provided in *Step 1: Making the Connection* to create the five lessons leading up to the traditional game.
- 2. Leadership Time:** This segment is dedicated to offering an overview of the origin of the Traditional Indigenous game while weaving in a framework for discussing social-emotional learning with students.
- 3. Language Lesson:** This section is time dedicated to strengthening the cultural language for AI/AN children.
- 4. Young Athletes Skill Practice:** The activity or games are designed to introduce the skill being taught in preparation to play the Traditional Indigenous game.
 - *Traditional Game: Lesson 6* is where the Traditional Indigenous game is fully introduced. Students use the skills gained through engaging in the Young Athletes activities. The cultural language is implemented through play and communication.
- 5. Cool down/Flexibility:** This is an opportunity for students to cool down their bodies. Keep these different exercises around to use for a calming brain break or way to transition in your classroom.

Incorporated within each lesson's five focal areas lies the opportunity to integrate nutritional activities. This can involve engaging children in snack or meal preparation, establishing a nutrition-focused center, or dedicating time to learning about healthy eating habits. Encouraging healthy habits from a young age is paramount, and food serves as a vital component of cultural identity. Explore supplemental materials in the appendix for additional support in implementing cultural nutrition practices through food.

Lesson Creation

1. Outline Components

- Utilize the template provided in *Step 1: Making the Connection* to create the five lessons leading up to the traditional game.
- Identify the essential elements of the selected Traditional Indigenous game, including rules, objectives, and cultural significance.

2. Plan Leadership Time

- Select children's books to facilitate discussions on social-emotional learning.
- Incorporate the leadership time segment into the lesson plan timeline.

3. Language Lesson

- Locate the selected vocabulary words related to the Traditional Indigenous game.
- Plan language instructional activities to reinforce cultural language. Consider some of the activities provided in the appendix.

4. Young Athletes Skill Practice

- Referencing the template outlined in *Step 1: Making the Connection*, assess step 4 to determine the Young Athletes activity to be incorporated into each of the 5 lessons leading up to the traditional game.
- Each lesson can have more than one Young Athletes activity to practice.

5. Traditional Game

- In Lesson Six, we embark on the exciting journey of introducing the selected traditional game. Craft an introduction that vividly demonstrates to the children how the Young Athletes activities serve as stepping stones, progressively building the skills necessary to master the traditional game.
- Lessons Seven and Eight mark a pivotal moment of full engagement as we delve into playing the traditional game with enthusiasm and dedication.

6. Family Engagement

- Create a culminating lesson that builds a connection with families and the community.
- Consider setting up stations with activities for families to move through.
- Determine ways that allow the children to lead the activities.

Implementation of the lesson plans are progressive—starting with the introduction of Young Athletes skills and ending with the teaching of a traditional AI/AN game. The six lessons should be outlined as follows:

Week 1:

Introduction to the Young Athletes skill

Week 2:

Continued practice of the Young Athletes skill to insure understanding

Week 3:

Final session solely focusing on the Young Athletes skill prior to introducing components of the aligned traditional game

Week 4:

Introduction to components of traditional game aligned with Young Athletes skill

Week 5:

Continued practice and alignment of the Young Athletes skill and traditional game

Week 6:

Full Traditional Game Play, Students participate in full traditional games, utilizing all the skills and knowledge gained in the previous weeks.

By structuring the content in this way, each lesson builds logically on the last, providing a clear pathway for students' development and ensuring that they are fully prepared to engage in traditional games by the end of the program.

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 1

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards
- Book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett
- Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

5 min. Share the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe and give an overview of what will be learned for the next days.

5 min. Read the book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language Words-(I Do, We Do, You Do)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

5 min. Young Athletes Sports Song

5 min. Obstacle Course
Materials: Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams

COOL DOWN:

5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 2

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards, Ziploc bags, Coloring Utensils (crayons, markers, etc.)
- Book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett
- Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

- 5 min. Review the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe
- 5 min. Read the book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

- 10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Ziploc bags, Coloring Utensils

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

- 5 min. Young Athletes Sports Song
- 5 min. Obstacle Course
Materials: Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- 5 min. Tunnels and Bridges
Materials: None

COOL DOWN:

- 5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 3

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards for Teacher and Student Made Cards
- Book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett
- Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

- 5 min. Review the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe
- 5 min. Read the book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

- 10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Student Made Cards

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

- 5 min. Young Athletes Sports Song
- 5 min. Obstacle Course
Materials: Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- 5 min. Tunnels and Bridges
Materials: None

COOL DOWN:

- 5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 4

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards for Teacher and Student Made Cards
- Book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett
- Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

- 5 min. Review the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe
- 5 min. Read the book: *Mashkiki* by Elizabeth S. Barrett

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

- 10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Student Made Cards

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

- 5 min. Young Athletes Sports Song
- 5 min. Obstacle Course
Materials: Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- 5 min. Tunnels and Bridges
Materials: None
- 5 min. Animal Games
Materials: None

COOL DOWN:

- 5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 5

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards for Teacher and Student Made Cards
- Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

5 min. Review the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Student Made Cards

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

5 min. Young Athletes Sports Song

5 min. Obstacle Course
Materials: Cones, Floor Markers, Hoops, Dowels, Beams

5 min. Inchworm Wiggle
Materials: None

5 min. Animal Games
Materials: None

COOL DOWN:

5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 6

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards for Teacher and Student Made Cards
- Scarf or Towel
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

5 min. Review the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Student Made Cards

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

5 min. Inchworm Wiggle
Materials: None

TRADITIONAL GAME – BIRCH BARK CANOE (WIIGWAASI-JIIMAAN):

5 min. Introduce the Traditional Equipment that was Used and the YA Equipment that will be used
Materials: Canoe; Scarf or Towel

10 min. Learn and practice playing Birch Bark Canoe

COOL DOWN:

5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 7

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards for Teacher and Student Made Cards
- Scarf or Towel
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

5 min. Review the Traditional Story for Birch Bark Canoe

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Student Made Cards

TRADITIONAL GAME – BIRCH BARK CANOE (WIIGWAASI-JIIMAAN):

5 min. Introduce the Traditional Equipment that was Used and the YA Equipment that will be used
Materials: Canoe; Scarf or Towel

10 min. Practice playing Birch Bark Canoe

COOL DOWN:

5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: 8

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Premade Vocabulary Cards for Teacher and Student Made Cards
- Scarf or Towel
- YA Flash Cards

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

5 min. Explain that children can move in various ways and speeds to music and use Ojibwemowin commands

NUTRITION ACTIVITY:

10 min. Refer to Guidebook for a selection of activities

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

10 min. Introduce Ojibwe language (Guidebook)
Materials: Premade Vocabulary Cards, Student Made Cards

TRADITIONAL GAME – BIRCH BARK CANOE (WIIGWAASI-JIIMAAN):

15 min. Practice playing Birch Bark Canoe
Materials: Canoe; Scarf or Towel

COOL DOWN:

5 min. End with a few cool down stretches to work on flexibility

EXAMPLES OF COMPLETED LESSONS

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME: BIRCH BARK CANOE
Ojibwemowin: Wiigwaasi-jiimaan

LESSON #: Family Night Event

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

As a culminating activity and to build the connection between home and school, host a Family Night Event using the Young Athletes and the Birch Bark Canoe Game. Consider setting up stations with activities for families to move through. Encourage the students to lead the activities as much as possible. This is a great time to provide any supportive materials for families to take home and continue to play the Young Athlete's games and the Birch Bark Canoe Game.

YA SKILL ACTIVITY	YA SKILL ACTIVITY	YA SKILL ACTIVITY
YA SKILL ACTIVITY	YA SKILL ACTIVITY	OJIBWE LANGUAGE ACTIVITY
<p>READ:</p> 	MAKE A HEALTHY SNACK	TRADITIONAL STORY SHARING

STEP 3: IMPLEMENTATION

Engage the developed lesson plans into the program. Ongoing reflection and revisions take place to ensure that the Indigenized YA lessons are appropriate.

Implementation By Location:



SCHOOL

- **Frequency:** at least one time per week, three times per week is best.
- **Lessons:** Six lessons should be completed before introducing and playing the traditional game. This allows the children to build their skills through YA activities. **Lesson activities do not have to be done during one setting. They can be split up throughout the day in a way the best fits the daily schedule.**
- **Timing:** 15-30 minutes if full lesson is done during one session.
- **Setting:** Indoors or Outdoors
- **Structure:**
 - » Establish a routine. Routines provide clear expectations, consistency, and comfort for many children.
 - » Plan for rest breaks. Provide a space where children can rest if they become tired or overstimulated by the environment or activity.
 - » Encourage different modes of movement to transition between activities. This strengthens different muscles and encourages children to learn a new skill.
 - » Use music to signal transition. Songs can be used to signal when one activity is finished and another is about to begin.
- **Family Engagement:** While families may not be involved with Young Athletes in schools, it is important for families to participate with their child. Families can participate in a variety of ways, including:
 - » Initial Meeting. Schools are encouraged to host an introduction for parents at the start of the school year.
 - » Weekly newsletters and emails. Connect with parents weekly to share the activities and progress with families.
 - » Volunteers. Invite family members to participate as volunteers and support the Young Athletes lessons.
 - » At-home activities. Share the Activity Guide with families. Provide suggestions of everyday items that could be used as equipment. This allows families to replicate activities with their child at home.
 - » Family Night Event. Foster family engagement, strengthen parent-child relationships, and create a supportive community environment where families feel connected and empowered in their children's education and development with YA AI/AN activities. After all lessons for a traditional game have been completed, showcase the learning that has taken place and allow the children to lead stations. Consider planning the event with the template below.



COMMUNITY

- **Frequency:** one time per week.
- **Lessons:** Six lessons should be completed before introducing and playing the traditional game. This allows the children to build their skills through YA activities.
- **Timing:** 45 minutes to one hour session
- **Setting:** Indoors or Outdoors
- **Locations:** Community Center, Recreation Center, Park, Library, or other venues.
- **Coaches:** Community volunteer, specialized professional, family member.
- **Volunteers:** Family members, Young Athletes leaders, community volunteers, elders, leadership.
- **Structure:**
 - » Establish a routine. Routines provide clear expectations, consistency, and comfort for many children.
 - » Create different skill stations to accommodate children of different ages and abilities.
 - » Add group games and activities into the session when children are of similar age or ability.
 - » Encourage different modes of movement to transition between activities. This strengthens different muscles and encourages children to learn a new skill.
 - » Use music to signal transition. Songs can be used to signal when one activity is finished and another is about to begin. Consider using Traditional music.
 - » Plan for rest breaks. Provide a space where children can rest if they become tired or too excited by the activity or environment.
- **Family Engagement:** Families can engage in a community program in a variety of ways, including:
 - » Weekly newsletters and emails. Connect weekly to share the activities and progress with families.
 - » Session supporters. Invite family members to participate in weekly sessions, supporting their children through the various activities.
 - » Family support groups. Provide families with a space to talk and connect while their children are in Young Athletes AI/AN.



HOME

- **Frequency:** at least two times a week.
- **Lessons:** select two to three activities to focus on in each play period. Six lessons should be completed before introducing and playing the traditional game.
- **Timing:** 15 to 30 minutes
- **Key Points to Consider:**
 - » Do not feel limited by the suggested equipment. Official sports equipment is not required. Most equipment can be replaced with things you can find at home. Like tape for a balance beam or empty soda bottles for cones. Use your creativity and have fun.
 - » Families can support the growth of their children by using Young Athletes as a guide for play at home.
 - » Have fun! While there are many benefits of Young Athletes, one of the main goals is to support parents in playing with their child in a fun setting. Enjoy this time playing together. Make a connection through physical activities, fitness, and sports.

As you embark on the journey of integrating AI/AN traditional games, language, and food into Young Athletes, remember that every step you take brings us closer to a more inclusive, culturally rich, and empowering environment that support the needs of children with IDD. By honoring Indigenous heritage, fostering cross-cultural understanding, and promoting inclusivity within the realm of inclusive early childhood development, you are paving the way for a brighter future. Your dedication and commitment are invaluable in shaping a world where every child, regardless of ability, feels valued, respected, and empowered to thrive.



Appendix

MAKING THE CONNECTION PLANNING TEMPLATE

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME:

ORIGIN

TRADITIONAL EQUIPMENT

DIRECTIONS TO PLAY

CULTURAL LANGUAGE VOCABULARY

YA CONNECTED SKILLS

- Foundational Skills
- Walking & Running
- Balance & Jumping
- Trapping & Catching
- Throwing
- Striking
- Kicking
- Advanced Sports Skills

YA CONNECTED SKILLS ACTIVITY

YA EQUIPMENT

- Balance beam
 - Small foam ball
 - Beanbags
 - Sport cones
 - Large plastic blocks
 - Plastic dowels
 - Paddle
 - Floor markers
 - Hoops
 - Scarf
 - Playground ball
 - Rope
 - Stacking cups
 - Agility ladder
 - Tunnel
 - Parachute
 - Play food items
 - Jr. sized sports equipment:
- _____
- _____

YOUNG ATHLETES AI/AN LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

NAME OF TRADITIONAL GAME:

LESSON #: 1

CORRESPONDING YA SKILLS: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

**EQUIPMENT/
MATERIALS NEEDED:**

LEADERSHIP & LEARNING:

LANGUAGE/LESSON:

YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL PRACTICE:

COOL DOWN:

ALIGNMENT TO HEAD START EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Providing quality lessons in the Head Start classroom is critically important in meeting the requirements of instruction and ensuring all students have access to learning and growing. To ensure that implementation in AIAN Head Start programs meet the Performance Standards, Young Athletes has been aligned to the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (ELOF).

The Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework is a comprehensive guide used in early childhood education programs, particularly within the Head Start program in the United States. This framework outlines the developmental areas and skills that children are expected to achieve during their participation in early childhood education and care. It serves as a roadmap for educators and caregivers to plan and implement developmentally appropriate activities and experiences that support children’s growth and learning across various domains, including cognitive development, language and literacy, social-emotional development, physical development, and approaches to learning. The framework typically aligns with national early learning standards and is designed to ensure that children receive high-quality, individualized education and support to prepare them for future success in school and life.

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Alignment to Young Athletes: Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development		YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL AREAS							
		FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS	WALKING & RUNNING	BALANCE & JUMPING	TRAPPING & CATCHING	THROWING	STRIKING	KICKING	ADVANCED SKILLS
PERCEPTUAL, MOTOR, & PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT	Goal P-PMP 1. Child demonstrates control, strength, and coordination of large muscles.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-PMP 2. Child uses perceptual information to guide motions and interactions with objects and other people.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-PMP 3. Child demonstrates increasing control, strength, and coordination of small muscles.								
	Goal P-PMP 4. Child demonstrates personal hygiene and self-care skills.								
	Goal P-PMP 5. Child develops knowledge and skills that help promote nutritious food choices and eating habits.	✓	✓			✓			
	Goal P-PMP 6. Child demonstrates knowledge of personal safety practices and routines.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

✓ = YA Healthy Play

HEAD START

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Alignment to Young Athletes: Language & Communication		YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL AREAS							
		FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS	WALKING & RUNNING	BALANCE & JUMPING	TRAPPING & CATCHING	THROWING	STRIKING	KICKING	ADVANCED SKILLS
LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION	Goal P-LC 1. Child attends to communication and language from others.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-LC 2. Child understands and responds to increasingly complex communication and language from others.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-LC 3. Child varies the amount of information provided to meet the demands of the situation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-LC 4. Child understands, follows, and uses appropriate social and conversational rules.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-LC 5. Child expresses self in increasingly long, detailed, and sophisticated ways.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-LC 6. Child understands and uses a wide variety of words for a variety of purposes.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-LC 7. Child shows understanding of word categories and relationships among words.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

HEAD START

Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Alignment to Young Athletes: Social & Emotional Development		YOUNG ATHLETES SKILL AREAS							
		FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS	WALKING & RUNNING	BALANCE & JUMPING	TRAPPING & CATCHING	THROWING	STRIKING	KICKING	ADVANCED SKILLS
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT	Goal P-SE 1. Child engages in and maintains positive relationships and interactions with adults.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 2. Child engages in prosocial and cooperative behavior with adults.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 3. Child engages in and maintains positive interactions and relationships with other children.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 4. Child engages in cooperative play with other children.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 5. Child uses basic problem-solving skills to resolve conflicts with other children.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 6. Child expresses a broad range of emotions and recognizes these emotions in self and others.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 7. Child expresses care and concern toward others.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 8. Child manages emotions with increasing independence.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 9. Child recognizes self as a unique individual having own abilities, characteristics, emotions, and interests.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 10. Child expresses confidence in own skills and positive feelings about self.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Goal P-SE 10. Child has sense of belonging to family, community, and other groups.								



The Indigenized Young Athletes lessons seamlessly complement the continuous assessments employed within classroom setting. Each lesson can be designed to align with the Teaching Strategies GOLD assessment tool, a comprehensive system utilized in early childhood education for monitoring the development and growth of young learners from infancy through kindergarten. This esteemed tool, known as GOLD, emphasizes “Guidance, Observation, and Assessment Linked to Development,” offering a standardized framework for evaluating children’s progress across physical, language, and social-emotional domains within diverse early childhood programs, including Head Start, preschools, and childcare centers.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

- 1. Regulates own emotions and behaviors**
 - a. Manages feelings
 - b. Follows limits and expectations
 - c. Takes care of own needs appropriately
- 2. Establishes and sustains positive relationships**
 - a. Forms relationships with adults
 - b. Responds to emotional cues
 - c. Interacts with peers
 - d. Makes friends
- 3. Participates cooperatively and constructively in group situations**
 - a. Balances needs and rights of self and others
 - b. Solves social problems

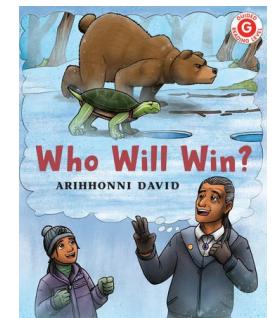
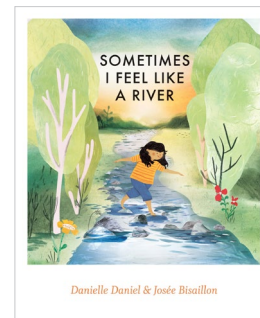
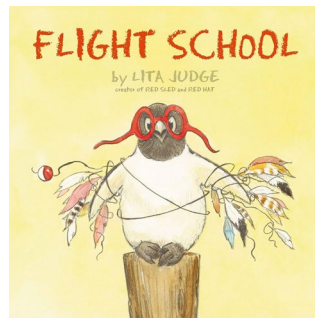
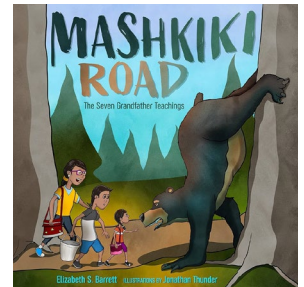
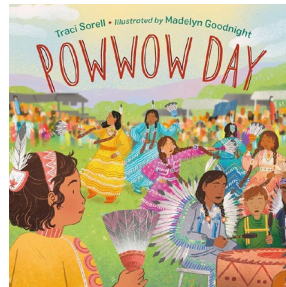
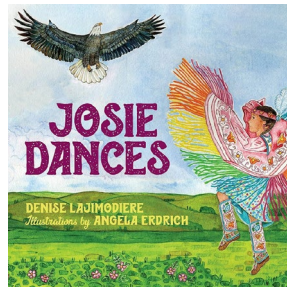
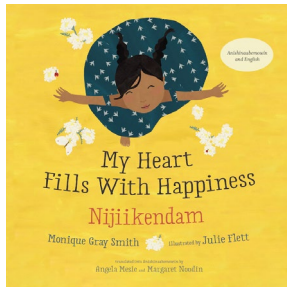
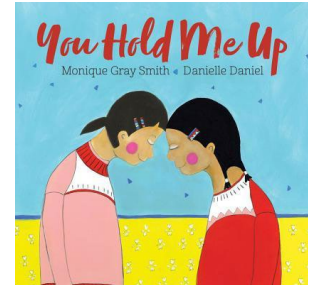
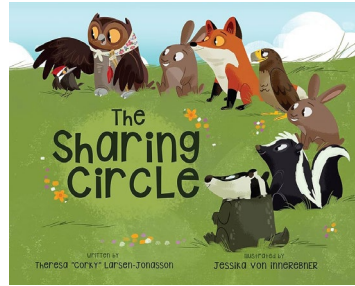
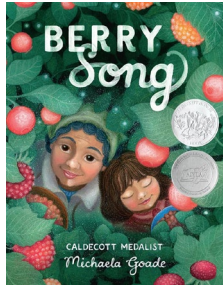
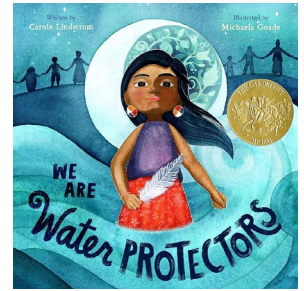
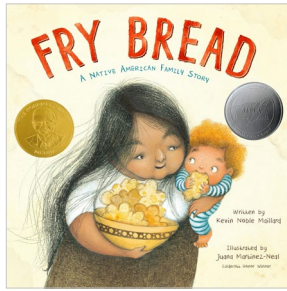
PHYSICAL

- 4. Demonstrates traveling skills**
- 5. Demonstrates balancing skills**
- 6. Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills**
- 7. Demonstrates fine-motor strength and coordination**
 - a. Uses fingers and hands
 - b. Uses writing and drawing tools

LANGUAGE

- 8. Listens to and understands increasingly complex language**
 - a. Comprehends language
 - b. Follows directions
- 9. Uses language to express thoughts and needs**
 - a. Uses an expanding expressive vocabulary
 - b. Speaks clearly
 - c. Uses conventional grammar
- 10. Uses appropriate conversational and other communication skills**
 - a. Engages in conversations
 - b. Uses social rules of language

BOOK LIST



Jump & Shout:

Lay out flashcards in a line along the floor with some space between each card. Students jump and say the flashcard they land next to, jumping their way down the line of cards. You can make this competitive by dividing the class into two teams to race along two lines, or timing students to see who can get to the end of the line fastest.

Reveal the Picture:

Use a blank or piece of colored paper to cover pictures of the target words. Slowly slide the cover paper to reveal only a small part of the image at a time. Students can shout out and guess what the word is.

Word Fishing:

Before this game you need to have the students in pairs draw and cut out a picture of a fish for each pair. While they are doing that, put 2 parallel lines of tape on the floor a few meters apart. Have students play in twos - each student behind a different line. Ask each student what the flashcard word is and if they answer correctly, they can blow once to propel the fish forward. The student who blows the fish over the taped line is the winner.

Dice Roll:

This game requires a dice, even better if it's giant dice! Write the number 1-6 on the board and a different flashcard or the vocab word next to each number. Each student gets a chance to toss the die and say out loud the word that corresponds to that flashcard.

Letter Soup:

Place plastic letters or letter flashcards in a bowl. Each student draws a letter from the bowl and then finds the flash cards beginning with that letter.

True or False:

Hold up a flashcard to your students and either say the word for that card or say an incorrect word. Students must guess if it's the correct word and shout out "true" if they think it's correct, or "false" if it's incorrect.

Four Corners:

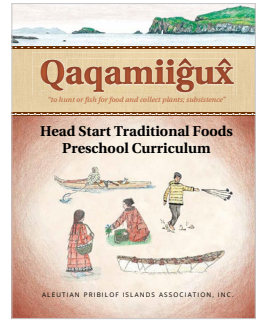
Stick up a flashcard in each corner of your classroom. One student stands in the middle with their eyes closed and counts to ten while the other students scramble to one of the four corners. When they reach the number ten, the student in the middle shouts "stop" and picks one corner by naming it's corresponding flashcard word. The students in that corner are out of the game. The game continues until only one student remains and they take the place of the student in the middle.

Flyswatter:

Stick some flashcards or write some vocabulary words on the board and split your class into two teams. One student from each team comes to the board and the teacher gives some hints or clues about the word. The first one to hit the correct word with their flyswatter is the winner.

Head Start Traditional Foods Preschool Curriculum:

<https://www.apiai.org/services/education/head-start/qaqamiigux-head-start-traditional-foods-preschool-curriculum/#curriculum>



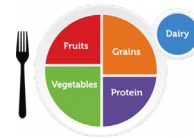
Growing Minds Preschool Lesson Plans

<https://growing-minds.org/preschool-lesson-plans/>



USDA My Plate Recipes

<https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes?node=18226&f%5B0%5D=cuisine%3A137>



My Native Plate

https://www.ihs.gov/sites/diabetes/themes/responsive2017/display_objects/documents/printmat/IHS_MyNativePlate_Letter.pdf

MY NATIVE PLATE

Remember:

- Stay active
- Drink water
- Use a 9-inch plate

Notes:

More Ideas for MY NATIVE PLATE

Vegetables and Fruits

Tips:

- Stock up on fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruits.
- Keep fruits and vegetables on hand for snacking!
- Plan some meals around a vegetable main dish, such as stir-fry, stew, or soup.
- Enjoy fruit as a dessert.

Examples: Vegetables: Wild greens, tomatoes, carrots, leafy greens, asparagus, broccoli, green beans, cauliflower, corn, zucchini, peas.

Fruits: Bananas, apples, grapes, pears, oranges, lemons, lemons, peaches.

Proteins

Tips:

- Choose fish, beans, lentils, eggs, and nuts more often to cut down on meat.
- Instead of a beef patty for your burger, try a single beef steak, turkey or chicken patty.
- Grill, bake, or broil meat instead of deep-frying.
- Try some new proteins, try yogurt instead of the milk, or soy milk.

Examples: Animal proteins: Fish, wild game, trout, poultry (turkey, beef, pork), eggs.

Plant proteins: Beans, lentils, nuts, nut butters, seeds, tofu, soy products.

Dairy proteins: Milk, lactose-free milk, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese.

Grains and Starches












Tips:

- Choose whole grain foods, such as whole wheat bread, oat cereals, oatmeal, and wild or brown rice.
- Try whole wheat flour instead of white flour.
- Add wild or brown rice to your dishes, such as in a stir-fry, stew, or soup.
- Bake or roast potatoes instead of deep-frying.

Examples: Grains: Pasta, bread, crackers, rice, oats, popcorn, barley, cereals, tortillas, flour cornmeal.

Starchy vegetables: Potatoes, corn, green peas, winter squash.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Suggested Substitutions
 <p>Balance beam</p>	<p>Tape Rope</p>
 <p>Small foam ball</p>	<p>Tennis Ball Any small ball</p>
 <p>Bean Bags</p>	<p>Small, soft toys or figures Bags filled with rice, sand, or beans Natural items like flowers or leaves</p>
 <p>Sport Cones</p>	<p>Boxes Plastic soda bottles filled with sand</p>
 <p>Large plastic blocks</p>	<p>Foam or wood blocks Bricks</p>
 <p>Plastic dowel</p>	<p>Stick Paper towel roll</p>
 <p>Paddle</p>	<p>Short stick</p>
 <p>Floor markers</p>	<p>Stickers or tape Carpet squares Chalk-drawn shapes</p>
 <p>Hoops</p>	<p>Hula hoops Bicycle tubes Old tires</p>
 <p>Scarf</p>	<p>Dish towel Small piece of cloth</p>
 <p>Playground ball</p>	<p>Beach ball Any lightweight ball Balloon</p>

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

EQUIPMENT

Equipment		Suggested Substitutions
	Parachute	Large piece of fabric Sheet
	6 dice	Print out these and fold to make dice
	Jump ropes	Rope
	Tape measures or yard sticks	Rulers Printable rulers
	Bowling pins	Plastic cups Plastic bottles
	Basketball for each student	Playground ball for each student
	Soccer ball for each student	Playground ball for each student
	Unifix cubes	Other math manipulatives (cubes, chips, etc.)
	Small basketball hoop	Basket Box
	Way to play music (speaker, phone, computer)	

A young child with a physical disability is running over a yellow hurdle in a gymnasium. The child is wearing a dark blue polo shirt and light-colored pants. The background is blurred, showing other people and colorful equipment. The text is overlaid on a white circular shape in the upper right corner.

Inclusive Play for Children of All Abilities

A Collaboration Between
Special Olympics and Head Start



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



ABOUT SPECIAL OLYMPICS

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. This gives them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization for people with intellectual disabilities. Founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in 1968. Special Olympics serves more than 5 million athletes in 172 countries.

ABOUT NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

The National Head Start Association (NHSA) is a nonprofit organization committed to the belief that every child, regardless of circumstances at birth, has the ability to succeed in life. NHSA is the voice for more than 1 million children, 200,000 staff and 1,600 Head Start grantees in the United States. Since 1974, NHSA has worked diligently for policy changes that ensure all at-risk children have access to the Head Start model of support for the whole child, the family and the community.

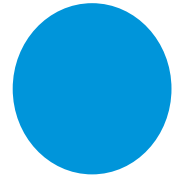
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- National Head Start Association: Andrew Lee, Courtney Christensen, Cody Kornack
- Special Olympics: Jennifer Hansen, Rebecca Ralston



TABLE OF CONTENTS



● Special Olympics

- Special Olympics and Head Start: From the Beginning
- Special Olympics Young Athletes
- Results from Young Athletes
- Young Athletes Activities

● Young Athletes Alignment

- Head Start Performance Standards
- Head Start Early Learning Framework

● Additional Young Athletes Resources

- Young Athletes Equipment
- Family Forums
- Healthy Young Athletes
- Getting Started with Young Athletes



SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Special Olympics and Head Start Connected from the Beginning

Eunice Kennedy Shriver's husband was Sargent Shriver a diplomat, activist, and politician. During his time working for the Lyndon B. Johnson administration, he led many lasting initiatives that still impact millions of lives today. He is credited as the driving force behind the creation of the Peace Corps, Job Corps, and Head Start.

In his State of the Union address in 1964, President Johnson declared a "War on Poverty." Soon after, Sargent Shriver, who was the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity from 1964 to 1968, brought together experts to establish a child development program to help communities meet the needs of disadvantaged preschool children.

"Since its creation in 1965, Head Start has provided comprehensive child development services for 32 million children — services that foster children's growth in social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development, and monitor their progress in these areas to ensure that they are well prepared for kindergarten."

- David Hudson Former Associate Director of Content for the Office of Digital Strategy

In addition to his role in the creation of Head Start, Sargent Shriver was Chairman of the Board Emeritus for Special Olympics and served as President of Special Olympics from 1984-1996, during which he emphasized the expansion of programming to countries outside of the United States. Sargent Shriver believed in the importance of supporting those in need and providing all children with the opportunity to be successful. In this way, he linked together the missions of Special Olympics and Head Start.



Special Olympics Young Athletes

Head Start has led the way as an early education program for low-income children for over 53 years, and in 2017 more than 10% of enrolled children had a disability.

Special Olympics has developed a program to improve early childhood play skills called Young Athletes (YA). This program not only serves children with disabilities. Young Athletes is an inclusive sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, ages 2 to 7 years old. This makes it a logical fit for any Head Start program looking to expand inclusive physical activities for all the children in the classroom.



Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Young Athletes offers families, teachers, and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children. When children of all abilities take part, they all benefit. Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning. Children also learn to share, take turns and follow directions. Young Athletes has simple step-by-step lesson plans that can easily be implemented by Head Start educators in the classroom.

Young Athletes is a fun way for children to get fit. It is important to teach children healthy habits while they are young. This can set the stage for a life of physical activity, friendships and learning. Through Young Athletes, all children, their families, and people in the community can be a part of an inclusive team.

Since its founding, Special Olympics has been built on the premise that lasting change must start with young people. The goal is to inspire a transformation in attitudes of the next generation. In this way, their attitudes and actions toward those with disabilities will be radically different, and more inclusive than ever before. Special Olympics is committed to developing a Unified Generation so that children who “play unified” become better at helping others, standing up for one another and sharing responsibility to make the world more inclusive for everyone.

For children 2 to 7, Young Athletes is the first introduction to the Special Olympics unified movement.



Results From Special Olympics Young Athletes

- **Motor skills.** Children with intellectual disabilities (ID) who took part in an eight-week Young Athletes curriculum saw seven month's development in motor skills. This is compared to a three-month gain in motor skills for children who did not participate.

The proven benefits from Young Athletes continue even after the program ends. At 5 and 10-month follow-ups, children who participated in Young Athletes maintained a 4-month advantage in development.

- **Social, emotional, and learning skills.** Parents and teachers of children who took part in the Young Athletes curriculum said the children learned skills that they will use in elementary school. The children were more enthusiastic and confident. They also played better with other children.

Special Olympics Young Athletes forms a community of support and resources for parents and families

- **Expectations.** Family members say that Young Athletes raised their hopes for their child's future.

"When my baby was born, and I found out that he had an intellectual disability, my world fell apart. At Young Athletes, I see him move about, smiling, mixing freely with others and not holding onto the tail of my skirt. It makes me cry tears of happiness and restores my hope that he can be independent one day. Now I dare to dream and plan to play baseball with my son when he grows up." -Misae

- **Sport readiness.** Young Athletes helps children develop important movement and sport skills. These skills get them ready to take part in sports when they are older.

Children learn how to share, take turns, and follow directions. These skills help children in family, community and school activities.

- **Acceptance.** Inclusive play has a benefit for children without ID as well. It helps them to better understand and accept others.

Young Athletes teaches acceptance at a very young age by creating an inclusive play environment. All children can participate in Young Athletes and all children can experience success!

Favazza, P.C., Siperstein, G.N., Zeisel, S., Odom, S.L., & Moskowitz, A. L. (2011)

Young Athletes intervention: Impact of motor development. Washington, DC: Special Olympics Inc.

Young Athletes Activities

Young Athletes Activities provide skills that can be used in a Head Start program, in the community or at home. There are eight skill activities in the Activity Guide which can be done with one child or a group of children. The skill areas and activities help children learn movements they will use in sports and daily life.

- **Foundational Skills:** Foundational skills help children become aware of themselves and their relationship to their surroundings. They also support basic health and physical fitness. Body awareness, strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance are important for motor and social skills.
- **Walking and Running:** Walking and running are skills that allow children to explore their environment.
- **Balance and Jumping:** Good balance is important for many activities and sports. Balance helps children climb stairs and walk on uneven surfaces, like grass or sand.
- **Trapping and Catching:** Trapping is when children stop a ball with their body and not their hands. Catching is when children use only their hands to stop a ball that is thrown, bounced or rolled. Both skills require children to watch the ball as it moves and hand-eye coordination.
- **Throwing:** Throwing requires strength, flexibility, balance and coordination. Children learn how to grip and let go of an object by tossing something small and light.



- **Striking:** Striking means hitting a ball or object with one's hand or with an object, like a stick, bat, paddle or racket. Striking helps develop the hand-eye coordination skills.
- **Kicking:** Kicking describes when an object is hit with the foot. Kicking requires eye-foot coordination. It also requires the ability to balance, at least for a moment, on one foot.
- **Advanced Sports Skills:** Advanced sports-specific skills require children to use the skills they have developed through YA and put them into a sports context. This requires a high level of connection, strength, power, coordination, teamwork and awareness.

HEAD START PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Young Athletes Alignment

Head Start Performance Standards	Special Olympics Young Athletes Alignment
Subpart A: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance	
1302.11 Determining community strengths, needs, and resources (C) Children with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Athletes (YA), which serves both children with and without intellectual disabilities, provides relevant training and resources to serve children in the Head Start community.
Subpart B: Program Structure	
1302.20 Determining program structure (b) Comprehensive services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YA programming offers flexibility and fits into a variety of program structures including center-based within Head Start, home-based and in childcare.
Subpart C: Education and Child Development Program Services	
1302.31 Teaching and the learning environment (a) Teaching and the learning environment (b) Effective teaching practices (c) Learning environment (d) Materials and space for learning (e) Promoting learning through approaches to rest, meals, routines, and physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young Athletes provides support and materials to teachers through training, continued professional development and equipment. YA addresses motor skills, social emotional learning skills, expectations of child with intellectual disabilities (ID), sport readiness and acceptance. YA programming is flexible and can be implemented in a variety of ways. Activities can be adapted depending on the various abilities of the children. This program can run in a classroom or gym space. Activities can be modified to meet the availability of space. YA materials are developmentally appropriate for both children with and without disabilities ages 2-7. The equipment is meant to be modified for a variety of skill levels. YA activities include an assortment of skills that integrate intentional physical movement for a large range of abilities.
1302.32 Curricula (a) Curricula (b) Adaptation (c) Programs are encouraged to partner with outside evaluators in assessing such adaptations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> YA is a research-based program that meets the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five YA is inclusive of children with and without intellectual disabilities. This allows a Head Start program to support children of all needs and ability levels at a location, while also fulfilling requirements to have a minimum 10% of children with disabilities in programming. Lesson plans, the Young Athletes Activity Guide and in-person trainings are provided to all Head Start locations by local Special Olympics state Programs. Adaptations for a variety of ability levels are provided in the Young Athletes Activity Guide, including modifications for children with motor challenges and children with autism. Special Olympics state Programs have staff that can either visit or consult remotely on implementation and assessment questions and strategies.

Head Start Performance Standards	Special Olympics Young Athletes Alignment
Subpart C: Education and Child Development Program Services (continued)	
<p>1302.33 Child screenings and assessments</p> <p>(b) Assessment for individualization (c) Characteristics of screenings and assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Olympics provides a Young Athletes Motor Skills Assessment which can be used in addition to current Head Start screenings. • This assessment tracks motor skills development over time. • The Motor Skills Assessment can be done multiple times to see progress in skills. • The Motor Skills Assessment can be easily shared with parents to show the progress of a child’s motor skills.
<p>1302.34 Parent and family engagement in education and child development services</p> <p>(b) Engaging parents and family members</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes is designed to involve family members. During home visits the YA curriculum and materials can be shared with families to implement programming in the home. • Larger celebration events can be hosted to highlight YA. Families can come observe or volunteer directly with the event. These events include stations highlighting the YA activities, awards, and healthy snacks for all participants.
<p>1302.35 Education in home-based programs</p> <p>(a) Purpose (d) Home-based curriculum (e) Group socialization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes can be implemented in the home by the families, in addition to the child practicing YA in their classroom. This provides the greatest opportunity for skill development. • The Motor Skills Assessment can be completed by families in the home and shared with Head Start to compare progress of the child. • Families are encouraged to explore Special Olympics beyond YA. There are large state competitions and multiple events hosted in states across the country. Parents and families who attend these events, as either a spectator or volunteer, have the ability to see their child’s potential future. • For a child with a disability, YA provides the opportunity for a child to show what they can do.
Subpart D: Health Program Services	
<p>1302.46 Family support services for health, nutrition, and mental health</p> <p>(a) Parent collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes provides a guide “Realizing the Bright Future of Your Child with an Intellectual Disability.” • This guide can help in the process of having difficult conversations with parents regarding a child’s disability. • This guide provides families with information on what a diagnosis means, a review of the therapies and support services for children with ID and much more. • YA includes activities that focus on healthy play encouraging children to make healthy eating and social activity choices.
Subpart E: Family and Community Engagement Program Services	
<p>1302.50 Family engagement</p> <p>(a) Purpose (b) Family engagement approach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes is offered in a multi-layered approach (in the home, at school, at larger events) allowing for a parent to play a key role in their child’s physical development. • YA provides the opportunity for a parent to share their child’s newly gained skills with other family members, increasing positive attitudes toward a child with a disability. • The flexibility of the program allows a family member to insert a game or song from their cultural background into the program.

Head Start Performance Standards	Special Olympics Young Athletes Alignment
Subpart F: Additional Services for Children with Disabilities	
<p>1302.60 Full participation in program services and activities</p> <p><i>A program must ensure enrolled children with disabilities, including but not limited to those who are eligible for services under IDEA19, and their families receive all applicable program services delivered in the least restrictive possible environment and that they fully participate in all program activities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes meets the requirements of IDEA that require the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities. • YA is an inclusive program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, therefore children who fall outside of a disability diagnosis but still struggle with gross motor skills can benefit from participation in these skill areas.
<p>1302.61 Additional services for children</p> <p>(a) Additional services for children with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes provides Head Start programs with intentional activities that support the needs of each individual child. Modifications and multiple accommodations for instruction are the cornerstone of Young Athletes.
<p>1302.62 Additional services for parents</p> <p>(a) Parents of all children with disabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Olympics can connect families with local opportunities and programs through its vast network.
Subpart G: Transition Services	
<p>1302.71 Transitions from Head Start to Kindergarten</p> <p>(a) Implementing transition strategies and practices</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a Head Start center staff is invited participate in a child’s IEP, YA can be presented as an option to follow a child to Kindergarten. • YA is part of a larger movement in inclusive education called Unified Champion Schools. • Unified Champion Schools provides inclusive sports, leadership and whole school engagement opportunities for students in grades K-12.
Subpart F: Human Resource Management	
<p>1302.92 Training and professional development</p> <p>(a) A program must provide to all new staff, consultants, and volunteers an orientation that focuses on, at a minimum, the goals and underlying philosophy of the program and on the ways they are implemented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Olympics will train Head Start staff on Young Athletes. Training will include a review of Special Olympics, the Unified Movement, a technical walk through of Young Athletes and the Young Athletes Activity Guide, suggestions on modifications based on child’s need, etc. • Special Olympics will provide training for new Head Start staff annually. • Ongoing professional development will be offered through Special Olympics.
Subpart G: Program Management and Quality Improvement	
<p>1302.102 Achieving program goals</p> <p>(a) Establishing program goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young Athletes will provide goals and strategic plans to assist in development of Head Start program goals.
<p>1303.4 Federal financial assistance, non-federal match, and waiver requirements</p> <p><i>In accordance with section 640(b)32 of the Act, federal financial assistance to a grantee will not exceed 80 percent of the approved total program costs. A grantee must contribute 20 percent as non-federal match each budget period.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special Olympics will support Head Start by assisting with the recruitment and placement of volunteers to meet VIK needs. • Special Olympics will provide the equipment kits to run YA.

HEAD START EARLY LEARNING OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Young Athletes Alignment

**Young Athletes Alignment Begins at age 24 months*

Young Athletes is proven to positively affect participants' motor and social skills and will be a powerful tool for Head Start centers to use and implement. Young Athletes can support Head Start Centers in fulfilling required standards in five of the central domains from the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework

1. Approaches to Learning
2. Social and Emotional Development
3. Language and Literacy
4. Cognition
5. Perceptual Motor and Physical Development

Approaches to Learning

- Young Athletes provides a space for movement and exploring athletic ability in a welcoming environment.
- Children are encouraged to be curious, learn from others, and explore how movement works for them.
- Young Athletes provides an early opportunity for children to take turns, wait for others, and try again in a different way if an activity is not going well.
- Group play is encouraged each time children participate in Young Athletes.

Social & Emotional Development

- Young Athletes can be a child's first opportunity to participate in structured physical activity.
- Children connect with adults and their peers leading the activities by mimicking their movements .
- Children with and without intellectual disabilities play together to better understand each other.
- Children are valued for their talents and abilities.
- Children are also recognized as leaders.



Young Athletes Alignment to Head Start Early Learning Framework (continued)

**Young Athletes Alignment Begins at age 24 months*

Language and Literacy

- A key component in Young Athletes is the use of descriptive language.
- During the activity an adult leader may ask a child to follow multiple steps, or ask the child to repeat the instructions given.
- An adult leader may ask a child to “go around” a cone or “on” the balance beam to increase understanding.
- An added benefit of Young Athletes is the child learning shapes, numbers and colors through active play.

Cognition

- When a child participates in Young Athletes they are encouraged to experiment and be creative with their movements and equipment.
- Young Athletes is consistent with verbal cues and demonstrations.
- Repetition helps children learn and master new skills.
- In Young Athletes, an adult leader makes note of a child’s ability to remember lyrics, activities, body parts or other important concepts.
- Counting is a key component in Young Athletes. An adult leader may call out scores or ask the children to count during an activity.
- Young Athletes offers activities that help children become aware of themselves and their relationship to their peers and surroundings.

Perceptual, Motor, and Physical Development

- Young Athletes supports the development of gross motor skills.
- Games and activities included in Young Athletes help children with movements they will use in sports and daily life.
- Young Athletes promotes inclusive group play.
- Young Athletes assists with body awareness, strength, flexibility, and endurance.
- Young Athletes can be adapted to meet the individual needs of each child.
- Activities are in order of development from basic to more complex skills.



NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

ADDITIONAL YOUNG ATHLETES RESOURCES

Young Athletes Equipment

Young Athletes activities use equipment to help children focus on each skill. Special Olympics will make Young Athletes training materials and resources readily available for local Head Start centers to implement.

The following equipment is used to conduct Young Athletes activities.

Balance Beam



Paddle



Small Foam Ball



Floor Markers



Bean Bags



Scarf



Sport Cones



Slow Motion Ball



Large Plastic Blocks



Hoops



Plastic Dowel



Family Forums

Family forums involve bringing together families that participate in Special Olympics activities. They offer a setting for parents and families to gain access to health information, resources and support. Family Forums address questions and concerns of local family members. A Family Forum can be hosted by Head Start with the support of the local Special Olympics state office.

Topics can include:

- Advocating for your child's rights and access to services
- Medical and dental care for children
- Accessing follow-up care
- How to identify the right professional for your child
- Learning through play
- Healthy sibling relationships
- Promoting independence at an early age

Healthy Young Athletes

At more than 1.4 million free health screening clinics in more than 100 countries, the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program offers health services and information to athletes in dire need. In the process, Special Olympics has become the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities.

Healthy Athletes has adapted screenings for Young Athletes in the following areas: Health Promotion, fitness, optical, and physicals. Special Olympics can bring these screenings to local Head Start chapters free of cost. The screenings provide families with information on their child's healthcare needs and referrals for follow-up care.



Getting Started with Young Athletes

1. Contact Jennifer Hansen, Special Olympics Young Athletes Manager
JHansen@specialolympics.org, 202-715-1154
2. Jennifer will connect you with a local Special Olympics representative in your state
3. Receive Young Athletes training, materials, and equipment from Special Olympics
4. Begin your new inclusive Young Athletes programming



Special Olympics
Young Athletes