

School Model

The benefits of physical activity and play go beyond sports. Special Olympics Young Athletes helps children interact with each other and develop important communication, learning and self-help skills. Starting motor activities early is very important for children with intellectual disabilities. Children who receive support at an early age will be more capable of doing challenging movements as they grow older.

Structure

Frequency

At least one time a week for a minimum of 8 weeks

Timing

30-45 minute sessions

Setting

Indoors or outdoors. Any space can be used!

Coaches

Educators, physical educators, counselors, administrators

Inclusion

Open for all students in the class to participate

Volunteers

Family members, older students, school staff



Implementing in the School

Safety and Space

- Not too big; not too small. Make sure the space matches the needs of the activity and your group size.
- Indoor vs outdoors. Young Athletes is great for indoors and outdoors – but be mindful of spacing and safety.
- One space vs two spaces. If the class is large, you can consider dividing the class into two groups.

Structure

- Establish a routine. Routines provide clear expectations.
- Plan for rest breaks. Provide a place where children can rest if they become overstimulated.
- Encourage different modes of movement to transition between activities.
- Use music to signal transitions.
- Unified Partners. Have older children or children without ID support younger children.

Engage Family Members

Initial Meeting—host an introduction meeting at the start of the school year

Weekly newsletters and emails—easy way to connect with parents weekly!

At home activities—share the Activity Guide with parents so they can practice the activities at home

Volunteer—Invite family members to volunteer