

Fillable Invitations to Parents, Family Members, and Caregivers [5 templates included]

UCS Family Engagement Toolkit

Designed For

Program leads, Special Olympics liaisons, physical education or Special Olympics coaches.

Time Estimate

Approximately 5-10 minutes to modify the template to match the needs of your school or event.



**Enhance Communication
with Families from
Diverse Communities**

Why would I use this resource?

Family members want to understand what the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program is, know what is going on with their students, and understand how they can participate if they have time. These five templates:

- provide language for you to use when you reach out to parents and families to provide information about UCS and to encourage them to be more engaged in the UCS program at schools;
- allow you to insert information specific to your school, students, and program activities;
- can be revised to include your words, your program information, and your school logo; and
- are also in Spanish, available [here](#); the sample letter and invitations for parents in Amharic and Navajo are available [here](#).



Family Engagement Toolkit Resources

You may access **Technology Tools for Communicating with Linguistically Diverse Families** [here](#). It can help you identify a translation app for communicating with families who may be more comfortable communicating in a language other than English.



When should I use this resource?

These templates help you begin the conversation about UCS with parents and families. They will be most useful at the beginning of the school year or when a student first joins UCS.

How should I use this resource?

You can print and mail these as letters, circulate them at an event as a memo, or email them directly to parents and family contacts. The second template, however, is designed to be used as a phone script.

After creating your version of these templates, you can use your version for future communication with families.

List of Templates (available in English and Spanish):

1. Sample UCS welcome letter to parents and families
2. Sample Script for phone calls to families inviting student participation in UCS (UCS Student Participation Invitation)
3. Sample Invitation to attend a UCS sporting event **off campus**
4. Sample Invitation to attend a UCS sporting event **on campus**
5. Sample Invitation to parents to get engaged with UCS

List of Templates (available in Amharic and Navajo):

1. Sample UCS welcome letter to parents and families
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SAMPLE UCS WELCOME LETTER TO PARENTS AND FAMILIES

COPY & PASTE



[INSERT STATE SOUCS AND SCHOOL LOGO HERE]

[DATE]

Dear families of Unified Athletes and Partners,

Congratulations to your student for becoming part of Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®!

About UCS: UCS is a school program that brings together students with and without disabilities. Students participate in sports and competition, inclusive leadership activities, and whole school engagement activities. Schools decide what UCS activities and events they want to participate in for each school year. This year we are [\[insert UCS activities\]](#).

Would you like to learn more about UCS? Here [\[select one\]](#) is a **video/are videos** that describe(s) in more detail what we do and how UCS impacts the lives of young people with disabilities and their families and community.

[\[Optional: Select any videos below that you want to share or search for other videos on the SONA website. You can also use images or media created at your school.\]](#)

[Discover your Moment](#) [5:53min]

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools provides students with and without intellectual disabilities meaningful experiences and friendships in the classroom and on the field.

[Learn Unified: Whole School Engagement](#) [6:17min]

A Special Olympics Unified Champion School has three components. One component, Whole School Engagement, consists of activities that promote inclusion and reach the entire school population. Examples include Spread the Word, Fans in the Stands, and Polar Plunge.

[Catherine and Claude's Moment](#) [7:45min]

Catherine and Claude emigrated from Cameroon with their children. One of their children, Prince, has autism. When Prince was at Kenmore Middle School, he got involved in Special Olympics Unified Sports®. Because of the power of sport, Catherine and Claude's view of their son's future changed.

[Rashaan's Moment](#) [6:51min]

Rashaan found his passion for basketball in childhood, and he found acceptance of people of ALL abilities in Unified Sports while at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Student participation in UCS: Students in UCS make the school a more welcome place for students of all abilities. We have found that students who join UCS are better at helping others, they stand up for each other, and they share responsibility. They learn to be more patient and they learn how to compromise.

Continued on next page ...



Sports safety: Each sport follows rules regulated by a national governing body for that sport. Special Olympics coaches receive training on assessing students of differing abilities to determine how best to modify activities so they are accessible and safe for each student. Training includes athlete development and preparing athletes for competition. Coaches are prepared to maintain a safe environment, prevent injury, and plan for emergencies.

About me/About our team: I am/We are [name(s), job title(s)] and I/we lead the [responsibility related to UCS]. [Include 1-2 sentence bio in plain language; mention other school staff whom you work with if it is important for families to know so families become familiar with their name(s).]

Keeping you informed: We know that your student's greatest supporter is you! And you are a valued part of the UCS community at [insert name of school].

Upcoming activities: [insert any upcoming activities to generate excitement, if applicable]

You will receive information about the UCS events and activities throughout the year. We provide information using [describe ways in which families will get information – email, newsletters, phone calls, in-person meetings, social media, etc.].

Again, congratulations to your student for joining the UCS program!

Please contact me with any questions, concerns, or suggestions at [include phone number, email address, and other social media, if applicable].

Thank you,
[insert name, title, school name, address, phone and email, website]



UCS STUDENT PARTICIPATION INVITATION SAMPLE SCRIPT ⁹



Hello [name of parent/family member],

I am [insert name, title] and I'm calling to talk with you about the Unified Champion Schools program at [insert name of school]. I want to explain how your child [insert name of student] can join the program and participate. Do you have about 5-10 minutes now to talk about the program?

[NOTE: If they are available, then proceed with the call. If they don't have time now, ask to set a date and time to call them back, or invite them to meet with you at the school if that is convenient for them.]

The Unified Champion Schools program is part of Special Olympics. At our school, we bring together students with disabilities and students without disabilities to play sports, socialize, and participate in leadership activities together. The program also helps the whole school to understand and better support students of all abilities.

I think [insert name of student] would really like to be part of the program because

- students who participate help to make [insert name of school] a more welcome place for students of all abilities;
- students who join the program are better at helping others, they stand up for each other, and they share responsibility; and
- students with and without disabilities learn to be more patient and they learn how to compromise.

We would love to have [student name] join the program, and I can send more information to you. Also, I would be happy to meet with you at the school and talk more about the program.

What else would you like to know about the program and the students who participate?

[answer questions]

Also, if you would like to speak to any other parents or families about their experience with their student in the program, I can introduce you to them. Let me know if you would like me to share your phone number or email address with one of the UCS families.

If you are interested in [student name] participating, then we can give the permission slip and forms that need your signature to her/him/them so they can participate in UCS and/or Unified Sports® this year. Please review the forms, sign them, and send them back to me at the school with your student.

[Or, offer to send with a return envelope to make it easier for parents to respond.]

I can send home information with [student name] and we can talk again about the program if you still have questions after you review the information.

Thanks again for your time. I really appreciate this opportunity to talk with you about the Unified Champion Schools program. I think [student name] will really enjoy and benefit from joining the program.

[share the best way they can contact you via phone, email, or other method]

⁹ Derived from a memo used in SO Tennessee



SAMPLE UCS SPORTING EVENT INVITATION

(Memo, Letter or Email)

COPY & PASTE



Off Campus Event Version

[INSERT STATE SOUCS AND SCHOOL LOGO HERE]

[Date]

Dear families of Unified Athletes and Partners,

We are excited about the upcoming [enter brief name of event]! This is an away game, so we are sharing details about the event below. We hope you will be able to join us!

Here are some details about the [name of event]:

- Event date: [insert date]
- Event time: [insert start time - end time]
- Location: [name of place and address]
- Transportation/Parking: [insert details if applicable]
- Uniform: All students who participate in the UCS program should wear their sports uniform for [name of school].
- Meals: Students should pack a lunch and bring it with them. Students who receive free school meals will receive lunch on the day. Please bring plenty of water to last the duration of the event. Food and drink [select one] **will/will not** be available to purchase at the event and students [select one] **will/will not** be permitted to leave the vent to purchase food and drinks.
- Medication: If your child needs medicine during the day, please make sure they have it with them at all times. You may also wish to bring a hat and sunscreen for your child.
- Program of events: [include details about the event or program of events]
- Other: [include other details such as sign in/sign out procedures and additional logistics details]

We look forward to seeing you at the [name of event] on [date of event]. Please call or email me if needed. You can reach me at [phone number] or [email address].

To learn more about the UCS program at [name of school], please visit our website at [insert URL for school's UCS program, or any other relevant public information].

Thank you!

[insert name, title, name of school, contact info again]



SAMPLE UCS SPORTING EVENT INVITATION (Memo, Letter or Email)

COPY & PASTE



On Campus Event Version

[INSERT STATE SOUCS AND SCHOOL LOGO HERE]

[Date]

Dear families of Unified Athletes and Partners,

We are excited about the upcoming [enter brief name of event]! This is a home game and we hope to have a great turnout!

Event Details

- Event date and time: [insert date and time]
- Event location: [insert name of school]
- Transportation/Parking: [insert details if applicable]
- Directions: [insert details of where event will be located on campus]

We hope that you and your family and friends can join us for the [name of event] on [insert date] at [name of your school].

Please call or email me with any questions or suggestions. You can reach me at [phone number] or [email address].

Thank you!

[insert name, title, name of school, contact info again]



SAMPLE PARENT AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT INVITATION

COPY & PASTE



[INSERT STATE SOUCS AND SCHOOL LOGO HERE]

Re: Opportunities for Families to be Part of Unified Champion Schools (UCS) [insert school year]

Dear [insert name of parent or family member],

Your child is an important part of the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® program at [insert school name].

We invite you to join us to help with UCS in any way that fits your schedule and your interests. If you have time or would like to contribute in some way, we have provided ways you can help below. You can volunteer to help out once or more frequently, depending on your schedule and interests.

This year we will have [select all that apply] Unified Sports / leadership / whole school engagement activities.

Select any activities that interest you from the list below. [Create a list of opportunities that help you in managing the UCS program; examples are provided below for you to revise.]

[insert name of activity] as a whole school event on [insert date]

- Help with checking in families and parents
- Help setting up (or decorating for) the event (1 hour prior)
- Help with cleaning up after the event (1 hour after)
- Other, please describe: _____

Unified Sports

- Help provide water and snacks to students
- Assist the coach during sports activities
- Be a mentor to an athlete leader
- Other, please describe: _____

Leadership team

- Facilitate a leadership excellence activity
- Other, please describe: _____

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Other parent engagement activities

- Participate in the UCS Leadership Team
- Participate in the school-based Family Support Network to assist other families who may want another family's perspective on UCS or need language support or help with filling out UCS forms
- Provide feedback to us through a quick survey or 15-minute conversation
- Share your positive experiences with UCS on our [insert tool/app used to share information]
- Other, please describe: _____

Please share your volunteer responses with me by email at [insert email address] or mail [insert mailing address; attach an envelope for ease of response].

We will contact you to share more information about the activities you are interested in supporting.

Thank you for your ongoing support of UCS activities and events! As always, if you or your family members have any questions about the UCS program, please feel free to contact me at [insert phone number] or [insert email].

Thank you,

[insert name, title, school name, phone number and email address]



Special Olympics
**Unified Champion
Schools®**

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools®
Family Engagement Toolkit

For questions or comments about the Toolkit, please contact:

ucs@specialolympics.help