

Establishing a School-based Family Support Network

UCS Family Engagement Toolkit

Designed For

Special Olympics liaisons.



Time Estimate

Ongoing.

Grow and Sustain
the UCS Program

Why would I use this tool?

If you have consistent challenges with getting complete Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) paperwork and medical forms from parents, it may be due to difficulties they have with completing forms, reading and writing in English, or fears and uncertainties about their child participating in UCS.

This tool will help you to establish a family support network where current or former UCS family members are available to support new or potential UCS families in the initial stages of joining the program.

The Family Support outreach form to families is provided in English and Spanish.



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 tool?

You can use this tool before the school year begins, at the start of the school year, or any time you start planning UCS activities. Family members who are familiar with UCS can help with recruitment and paperwork by offering guidance and insight to families of students with and without disabilities.

How should I use this tool?

Use this tool to help you set up a process and tracking system for a school-based family support network. This resource provides:

- a process document for you to follow;
- a recruitment and sign-up document to share with families; and
- a tracking document you can use from year to year.

Establishing a School-based Family Support Network

A school-based family support network gives current and former Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) families an opportunity to offer their time and expertise or experience by connecting with, sharing, and helping prospective UCS families.

Family Support Network Roles

A family whose child participates in or has participated in UCS and can ...	A family interested in their child participating in UCS, but ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide support to others in how to fill out UCS paperwork; provide language support to others in filling out UCS paperwork; or be a resource for questions on their child's involvement in UCS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> would like support from another family in filling out UCS paperwork; would like language support from another family in filling out UCS paperwork; or has questions for another family about their own child's participation in UCS.

Family Support Network Process



I. Identify Families and Support Needs

Offering Support. Before or at the start of a school year, reach out to past or current families who may be able to support another family in completing and submitting UCS paperwork or answering questions about their experience with UCS. Be sure to include bi-lingual or multi-lingual families in case another family would like language assistance.

Let them know that you may need their assistance immediately or later in the school year, but that you will reach out in advance to ask if you can put them in touch with a family that could use support from another family.

Needing Support. Before or at the start of a school year, reach out to new and prospective families to see if they would like to connect with a current or former UCS family to answer questions about their child's experience with UCS, to help fill out the paperwork, or to provide language assistance in filling out the paperwork.

Accessibility and Inclusion Self-Reflection: Equitable Family Engagement

- How do you view families as partners in the education of students and in UCS programs?
- Are you using multiple channels of communication to communicate with families?



II. Match Families

Match families based on the needs or interest and ability identified in the previous stage.

Share contact information with the families so they can connect with one another.

Suggest to the family offering assistance that they make the initial contact for introductions and to schedule a date/time to talk.



III. Support Families

You should check in with the families 1 week after you match them to make sure they were able to connect and that the new or prospective family got the information and help they needed. Be sure to remind them of any deadlines if paperwork is involved.

Check in with your supporting family to learn how the experience was for them, and find out whether they are still available to help other families in the future.

Don't forget to thank both families for their engagement, regardless of the outcome.



Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) School-based Family Support Network

Join the UCS Family Support Network!

- ☐ Do you want to get help and advice from current or former UCS families?
- ☐ Do you want to help families who are thinking about UCS?

If yes, let us know how. Please check the boxes below for items you would like help with or items you can offer help with.

	I need help with this (check all that apply)	I can help with this (check all that apply)
filling out UCS paperwork		
language assistance in filling out UCS paperwork If so, in what language?		
questions about child's involvement in UCS If so, in what language?		

Please return this form to **[insert name]** at **[school name]** via **[insert email/text]**.



Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS)

Red Escolar de Apoyo Familiar

¡Únase a la Red de Apoyo Familiar de UCS!

- ☐ ¿Desea recibir ayuda y asesoramiento de parte de familias que actualmente participan o han participado anteriormente en UCS?
- ☐ ¿Desea ayudar a familias que están considerando participar en UCS?

Si su respuesta es sí, háganos saber como le gustaria recibir o proveer ayuda. Marque las casillas a continuación para indicar las areas con las que le gustaría recibir o proveer ayuda.

	Necesito ayuda con esto (marque todo lo que corresponda)	Puedo ayudar con esto (marque todo lo que corresponda)
Llenar los formularios de UCS		
Asistencia con el idioma para llenar los formularios de UCS ¿En qué idioma?		
Preguntas sobre la participación de su hija/o en UCS ¿En qué idioma?		

Por favor devuelva este formulario a [insert name] en [school name] por [insert email/text].



Parent or Caregiver (student)	Parent or Caregiver number and email	Parent or Caregiver preferred contact method (2 methods)	Parent or Caregiver Preferred Language	Supports Requested: Fill out forms, translate forms, questions about UCS, all	NOTES
Gloria Cardona (Christina Rosa)	xxx-xxx-xxxx; gcardona@example.com	text and email	Spanish	Translate forms and questions about UCS	

Family Support Network Tracking

Current/Former Families Offering Support



Parent or Caregiver (student)	Parent or Caregiver number and email	Parent or Caregiver preferred contact method (2 methods)	Caregiver Languages Spoken	Supports Requested: fill out forms, translate forms, questions about UCS, all	Former or Current UCS Family Active/Inactive	NOTES
Eli Jones (Camille Jones)	xxx-xxx-xxxx; gjones@example.com	text and phone	English, Spanish	All	Former (2020-2023). Active	



Prospective Family (student)	Family Offering Support (student)	Engagement Checkpoints 1. Initial Contact 2. Paperwork sent to family (welcome letter and forms) 3. Support provided 4. Any paperwork returned to SO liaison 5. UCS follow-up / thank you	NOTES
Gloria Cardona (Christina Rosa)	Eli Jones (Camille Jones)	Initial contact (call) and paperwork sent to family	Paperwork sent May 1st



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