



Getting Started Checklist

Unified Clubs

A Unified Club is a school club that is focused on inclusive youth leadership skill building and opportunities and Unified Champion Schools activities. It is recognized as a formal club by the school. Members of the club with and without intellectual disabilities build friendships and leadership skills through sports and social activities. They plan and lead projects like whole school engagement activities to improve social inclusion throughout the school. Unified Clubs may be initiated by an adult sponsor or by students themselves. While adults provide guidance, the students should provide primary club leadership

- 1. Come up with a plan to recruit members and engage them in the club:**
 - Extend personal invitations to students with and without intellectual disabilities to join the club.
 - Advertise the club through posters, announcements, school paper, social media or other communications. Be sure to announce time and place for meetings and describe the types of activities you will be doing.
 - Work with staff and students to get advice on how to bring on club members who may not typically join or be considered leaders.
- 2. Follow the steps to start an official club at your school.** Ensure the club is designated as a sanctioned school club, following all rules and policies expected of other clubs in the school and participating in typical activities like yearbook photos, morning announcements of meetings, budgets, etc.
- 3. Hold your first meeting. Establish an agenda for the meeting that includes the following:**
 - Provide a description of the club and its purpose.
 - Include an “icebreaker” or “get to know you” activity at the first meeting to start establishing friendships among club members.
 - Have any students in leadership roles for the club introduce themselves and explain their roles.
 - Establish club routines and protocols for interacting and collaborating which ensure everyone is meaningfully engaged (such as discussion strategies that provide opportunities for each member to participate equitably).
 - Brainstorm ideas for future activities and issues of inclusion the club would like to address.
 - Discuss how often the club will meet and for how long. Identify where meetings will take place.
 - Remind members of the next meeting and encourage them to recruit additional members.
- 4. Set up a structure for the club,** including the election of members to fulfill leadership roles (e.g., chair, secretary, treasurer). Whenever possible establish co-leaders, having students with and without intellectual disabilities partnering to serve as club officers or committee chairs. Ensure someone is designated to:
 - Be the liaison with the adult advisor and your state Special Olympics office, as needed.
 - Keep track of funds and project costs.
 - Maintain membership records and take meeting notes.
- 5. Develop a list of activities to build into the initial meetings:**
 - Consider including diversity or disabilities awareness training as part of one of your first few meetings to ensure all participants have a better understanding of various disabilities so students can better support each other.
 - Discuss the Unified Champion Schools strategy and how the Unified Club can expand opportunities for social inclusion.
- 6. Use your regularly scheduled meetings to further enhance the skills of club members** while accomplishing goals and planning for activities. Meetings should be led by the officers, but find opportunities for all students to take a leadership role during the meetings.
 - Always welcome new members or interested students.
 - Discuss ideas and strategies with the group. Be certain each individual has the opportunity to share his or her thoughts.
 - Provide all members with notes of the meeting and action items to be completed through social media or other established forms of communication.