



Facilitator Guide

Family Health Forum

Special Olympics





Family Health Forums, part of Special Olympics Health, are made possible through the generous support of our funders.



**Lions Clubs International
FOUNDATION**



Welcome

Welcome to the **Family Health Forum Facilitator Guide**.

Special Olympics Family Health Forums (FHF) are designed by the community to meet their needs on a range of health topics. Since 2013, over 45,000 individuals around the world have participated in FHF's funded by **Lions Clubs International Foundation**.

FHF's are part of Special Olympics Health, which is made possible by the **Golisano Foundation**, and in the United States in collaboration with the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**. Special Olympics Health strategy is directed towards health equity and reducing disparities for people with ID globally.

Health has a substantial impact on the quality of life for people with ID and it affects each Special Olympics athlete's ability to train and compete in sports effectively.

Family members play a key role in the health of our athletes, and efforts to engage family members through Family Health Forums have proven successful. A survey conducted after these forums found that 98% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the health of their family had improved as a result of participating in a forum.

Special Olympics has a decade of experience in hosting Family Health Forums to support the health and wellbeing of the whole family, and ensure parents, caregivers, and siblings have the tools and resources to support their own health, the health of their family, and ultimately the health and wellbeing of their family member with ID.

This guide and its supporting materials provide a standardized approach to implementing Family Health Forums. Our aim is to ensure that the core features of FHF's and key messages on topics are maintained across all Forums. This standard tool will serve to guide facilitators to understand their parameters for adaptation while adhering to the FHF approach. Ultimately our goal is for all participants to feel supported when they attend a Forum.



Data about the health of people with ID from Special Olympics research:

- *Special Olympics adult athletes are two times more likely to be obese compared to adults without ID.*
- *Individuals with ID have as many chronic health conditions at 20+ years old as individuals in the general population do at 50+ years old.*
- *People with ID often do not have access to critical health services and resources to improve their health and die 16 to 20 years sooner than people without intellectual disabilities due to preventable health conditions.*



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Introduction

Family Health Forums provide a space for parents, caregivers, and siblings of people with ID to engage with health professionals, community leaders, and social service providers. The Forums introduce new families to Special Olympics and services provided through Healthy Athletes®, Young Athletes and other community-based programs for people with ID, while also surfacing challenges that athletes face and how best to overcome them—with a special focus on bettering access to health care, education, and inclusive activities.

Purpose of the Facilitator Guide

This facilitator guide for a Family Health Forum (FHF) on Healthy Eating is designed to provide you with the necessary information and skills to support families with healthy eating, address their concerns, and provide a space for families to connect with each other.

This guide and its supporting materials aim to support Special Olympics Programs with implementing a Family Health Forum on the topic of Healthy Eating. It provides templates, scripts, strategies, and suggestions for Programs to explore as they plan their forums.

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR THIS FACILITATOR GUIDE

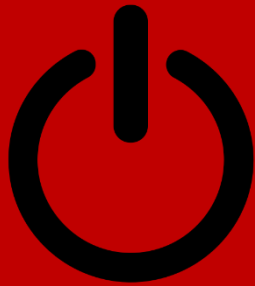
The target audience for this manual and its related resources are Special Olympics Program staff, volunteers, or partners who have the responsibility for facilitating FHF's for their context and community. Programs are encouraged to design forums in collaboration with community partners with relevant experience and expertise on the Forum topic. Please note that community partners may serve as facilitators and/or topic experts. For further guidance on community partners refer to the section of the guide labeled *Tips & Strategies: collaborating with community partners*.

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR FAMILY HEALTH FORUM EVENTS

Family Health Forums aim to support the whole family of new, current, and past former Special Olympics athletes. This includes parents, caregivers, siblings, and other relatives.



Getting Started



1. How to use the facilitator guide
2. Preparing for facilitation
3. Guidelines for adaptation
4. Tips & strategies
5. General facilitation techniques



How to use the Facilitator Guide

This guide has been designed to provide you with everything you need to effectively facilitate a Family Health Forum.

This guide is focused on facilitation of FHF's and guidance on specific topics. For general guidance on setting up an event use the [Family Health Forum Toolkit](#).

Family Health Forum Set of Materials

This facilitator guide will be used to support the facilitation of events on specific topics.

Each FHF topic will have the following materials.

1. Family Health Forum Topic Guide

The Topic Guide provides the facilitator with an overview of the topic and the content of the event.

It includes a sample agenda, a draft script and suggested list of materials.

2. PowerPoint presentation

The PowerPoint slide is for the facilitator to use during the Forum.

It includes all the topic specific content the facilitator will present from beginning to end of the Forum.

The notes sections include a draft script, instructions, and suggested materials.

3. Participant Workbook

The participant workbooks are to be distributed to Forum attendees.

They provide worksheets to complete activities during the forum.

They also include supporting resources for participants to refer to beyond the Forum.



Preparing for Facilitation of a Family Health Forum

The following is an outline of steps to be completed in planning for the event.

Review this guide in its entirety	
Review the accompanying PowerPoint presentation	
Review the accompanying participant workbook	
Identify community partners and/or topic experts to collaborate with	
Identify forum facilitator(s)	
Make adaptations as needed for your context and environment, this includes making comments and adding in your own examples/stories	
Identify and recruit family participants (parents, caregivers, siblings)	
Practice delivering the information multiple times to avoid reading from the script during	



Guidelines for adaptation of FHF materials

Special Olympics Programs are global and encompass a variety of languages and contexts. Therefore, these materials are intended to be used as a guide and for you to adapt the language, images, examples, and other references as needed. Below are some general considerations to support your adaptation process.

**Adaptation Planning:**

Set aside time for adaptation and translation in your workplan as part of planning for the forum.

**Cultural Sensitivity:**

Consider the cultural norms, values, and customs of your country. Ensure that the content, language, and examples used in the curriculum are culturally appropriate and resonate with your participants.

**Language Localization:**

Translate materials into the local language(s) of the country to facilitate better understanding and engagement. Consider using professional translators to ensure accurate translation and interpretation.

**Research National/Regional Guidelines:**

Research any relevant guidelines, regulations, and/or industry standards relevant to the Forum topic.

**Contextualize Examples:**

Include relevant examples and case studies from your country or region to make the content more relatable and applicable to participants. This helps them connect the concepts to their own experiences and better understand the relevance of the information shared.

**Customize Visuals:**

Adapt any visual aids, diagrams, or images used in the training to reflect your local context. For instance, where there are pictures of fruits, try to use diverse and representative images that reflect the fruits in your region.

**Address Local Challenges:**

Identify and address specific challenges or issues that are prevalent in your country or region related to the topic. Modify the content to provide solutions or strategies that are tailored to these challenges, making the training more practical and effective.

**Consider Educational Background:**

Take into consideration the educational background and literacy levels of your participants. Ensure that the language, vocabulary, and complexity of the content are suitable for the participants' educational levels.

**Delivery Methods:**

The Forum can be administered in person or virtually. Adapt the delivery methods to suit your local context. Consider the availability of technology, resources, and infrastructure in the country. If necessary, modify the format to accommodate different learning styles and preferences.



Duration and Schedule: Adjust the duration and scheduling of the training to fit the local culture, work patterns, and availability of participants. Consider local holidays, religious observances, and other significant events that may impact attendance or participation.



Collaborate with Local Partners: Seek input and feedback from local topic relevant stakeholders, subject matter experts, or trainers who have knowledge of the country's context. Incorporate their insights and suggestions to ensure the training manual is relevant and effective for your community.



Tips & Strategies for Collaborating with Community Partners

One of the key roles of Family Health Forums is to connect participants with community-based service providers. As a result, it is important for Programs to collaborate with community partners in the planning and design of forums. Working with community partners is important for supporting families beyond the forum. They provide a network of other providers that families can turn to for their questions, challenges, and concerns.

Identifying partners can vary across communities and cultures. It is important to take the time needed for this, to ask for help and be open to non-traditional avenues. Partnerships for forums may include members of the following categories:

- Individuals with lived experience of the topic
- Service providers
- Topic experts
- Other professionals/researchers

Once you have identified community partners, it's time to collaborate. How you collaborate with your partners can differ based on internal expertise of the topic, availability, and type of community partners in the area. Below are a few examples of how collaborations can take place. This list is not exhaustive. Community partners may,

- be thought partners in planning the forum.
- provide or recommend venues based on their experience and networks.
- serve as forum facilitators and facilitate the entire forum.
- play the role of topic experts.
- share an overview of their services and how participants can connect with them in the future.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF TOPIC EXPERTS:

Topic experts play a key role at events. They are particularly useful in helping to:

1. Address challenging questions or experiences that participants may share.
2. Provide contextually relevant and accurate information to participants.
3. Support the presentation/facilitation with knowledgeable examples and facts.



Tips & Strategies for Enhancing Participant Engagement

The following strategies will help you keep participants engaged in virtual or in person events. Additional information on participant engagement can also be found in the [Family Health Forum Virtual Toolkit](#).

Include fun, interactive activities	Integrate fun activities to keep participants engaged. There are some already included in the curriculum, however, feel free to adapt these or change them to ones that are appropriate, relevant, and effective for your culture and context.
Ensure activities/content for athlete siblings	FHFs are for all family members, where possible adapt the activities and content to include sibling participants.
Schedule regular breaks	While these sessions are designed for 1 hour each, feel free to add in any breaks as needed.
Meet participants where they are at	Take a moment to check in with the participants at the beginning of each session. Think about what you know about the participants, their commute, home, or family environments, consider adding an additional 15 minutes at the beginning or end of the sessions for participants to settle into the session and feel ready to engage.
Turn on video during a virtual event	Facilitators can set an example and turn on their video. Facilitators can give participants the option of turning on their videos.
Use multiple formats for sharing content	This can include written text, images, video, and audio.
Leverage virtual accessibility features	Use a platform that supports screen readers (i.e., Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeetings, Blue Jeans).
Integrate Sign Language interpretation and other language translation	Use closed captioning (note automatically generated captions are not always accurate).
Use virtual apps for engagement	Use tools like chat, breakouts, and polls for participant engagement in virtual sessions.
Minimize distractions	Request participants to turn off/silence, phones, notifications, and other applications that may be distractors.
Share materials	Send participants their materials in advance.
Create accessible materials	Ensure all materials are accessible.
Provide childcare options	Provide childcare options to enable parents and family attendees to stay engaged during event.



General Facilitation Techniques

Use name tags to call learners by name and personalize the learning experience.



Redirect discussions that get off-topic as well as side discussions.



Use timers to keep on schedule.



encourage people to talk to one another and the group using prompts, questions, and activities.



Use questions to draw the group and individual participants into the conversation and to dive deeper into responses.



Pause for ten seconds after asking a question to give participants time to think and respond.



Paraphrase questions and responses so that individuals feel heard and the people in the back of the room can hear the question.



Use activities, pairs, triads, and small groups to increase learner engagement.



Incorporate physical movement, such as the formation of small groups, presenting information to the whole group, posting ideas on the wall/flip chart, standing exercises, etc.





Format of Family Health Forums

Family Health Forums are spaces for **learning, sharing** and **connection**.

To ensure delivery these components, there are four core elements that are integrated into any event:



1. THEORY

Ensures delivery of key content on specific topics



2. PRACTICE EXERCISES

Support learning and understanding of topic specific content.



3. REFLECTION EXERCISES

Ground content into real experiences of family attendees



4. DISCUSSION

Enables attendees to share their concerns and questions and receive support and guidance.