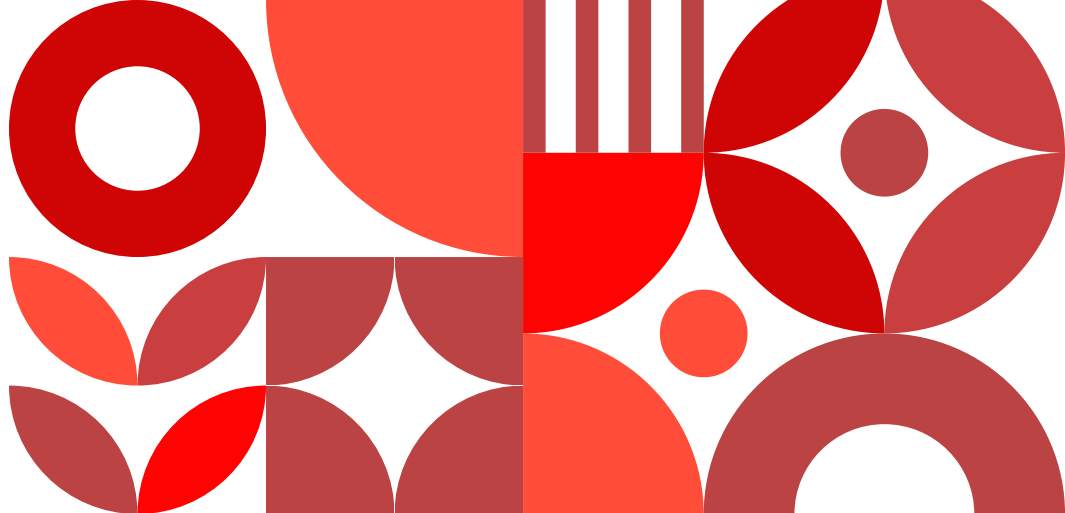


***Special  
Olympics***



# 2024

## **YOUTH FITNESS AND HEALTH ASSESSMENT TOOLKIT**

### **EVALUATION REPORT**

Fitness and Health Evaluation



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Project Overview

**Improving** the fitness and health of youth athletes with intellectual disabilities (ID) is important to the Special Olympics (SO) mission. Athletes with ID frequently face barriers that limit access to physical activity and often lead to not active lifestyle and unhealthy weight. By looking at both their physical activity and how we measure it, SO can create more effective ways to support their overall well-being. This project's goal is to develop a standardized toolkit to assess youth fitness, physical activity, and health.

## Approach

Special Olympics International (SOI) worked with SO Programs, coaches, and athletes to see if the Youth Health and Fitness Testing Manual, Youth Lifestyle Survey, and Fitbit physical activity devices were fun to use. Coaches tested these devices for measuring fitness levels, health, and physical activity habits of youth athletes to see if it was easy and fun. The true effectiveness of youth fitness programming relies on assessment tools that work and are accurate.

## Key Findings

Our study showed that using these devices and measurements worked.

## Recommendations

It is recommended that SO continue to use and improve the toolkit to better monitor the fitness and health outcomes of youth athletes with ID.



# FITNESS TESTING SUMMARY

## Results

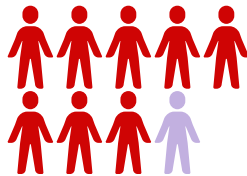
- (1) Coaches recommended making the tests fun to participate in the tests and including imaginative prompts for children.
- (2) Consider adding buddies, pacers, and fun props to keep children motivated throughout testing.
- (3) Providing performance goals to help gauge athletes' current abilities and set goals.
- (4) Most coaches think most tests should be included in the youth fitness testing workbook
- (5) Modifications might be needed because all athletes are different and all tests do not work for all athletes

**96 athletes**

From 2 Special Olympic programs

**9 coaches**

From 2 Special Olympic programs



**8 OUT  
OF 9**

Coaches provided feedback on  
Youth Fitness Testing manual

## Our Evaluation Shows

### Equipment

- 100% of coaches had the equipment needed for testing

### Training Sufficiency

- About half of the coaches said they had enough training.
- About half of the coaches said they needed more training.

### Testing Manual Instructions

- 70% of coaches said that the instructions were easy to understand and follow.
- 30% of coaches said that the instructions were NOT easy to understand and follow.

### Participation in Future SOI Evaluation

- 89% Yes, would participate
- 11% Maybe, would participate



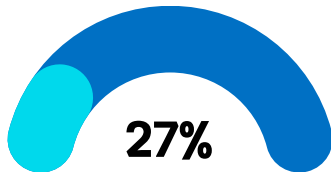
# SURVEY SUMMARY



## Youth Athlete Demographics

The sample was mostly white (82.61%), male (76.05%), and had an Autism Spectrum Diagnosis (45.07%).

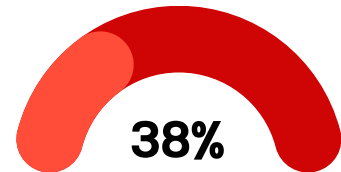
## Survey Health Outcomes



27% of athletes met **daily water intake** recommendations (5+ bottles daily)



20% of athletes met **daily screen time** recommendations (2 hours or less daily)

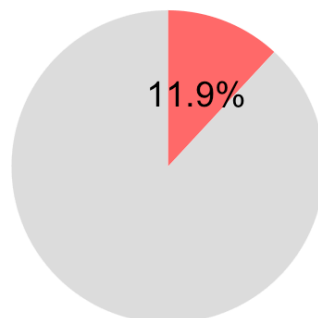


38% of athletes met **weekly physical activity** recommendations (5+ days per week)

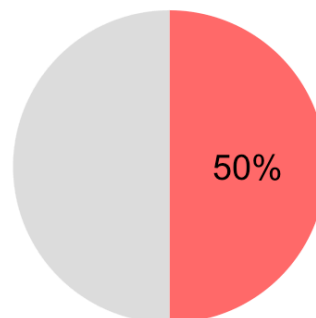
## Completing the Survey Results

**92.3%** of athletes needed help to complete the survey. Types of help included:

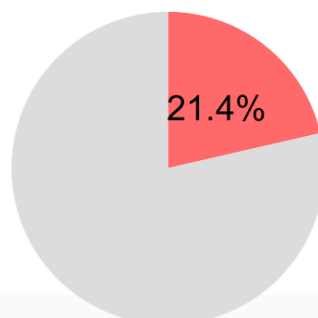
All Types of Help



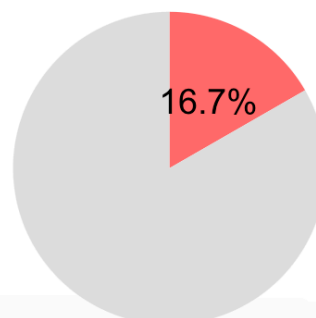
Answered Questions



Explained Questions



Read Questions Out Loud

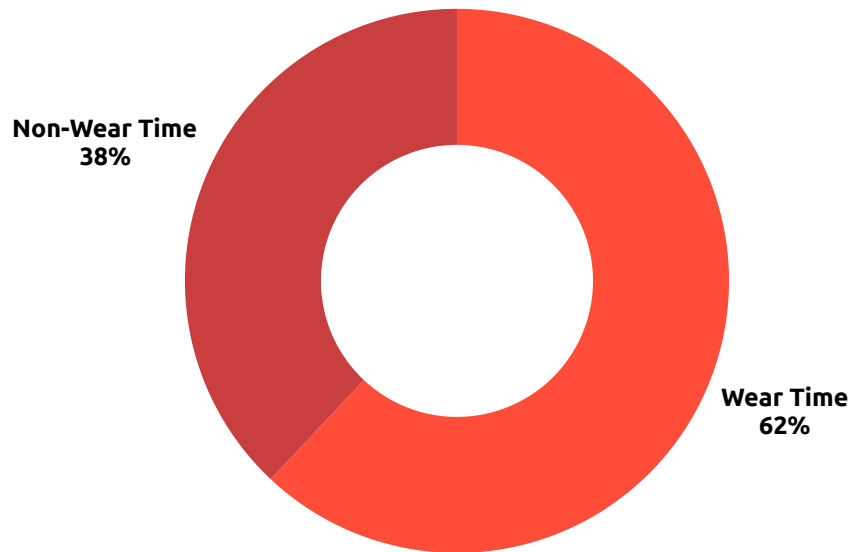


# FITBIT SUMMARY



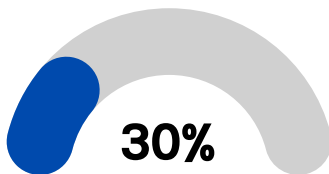
## How Long Athletes Wore Their Device

On average, athletes wore the Fitbit about **62%** of the day

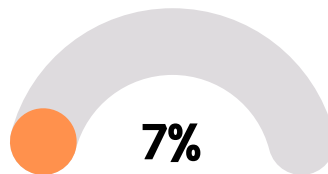


## Fitbit Health Behaviors

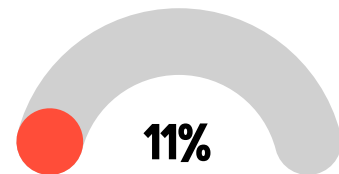
On average, athletes had about 7 hours of sleep per night, 8 hours of sedentary time daily, and 43 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) daily.



30% of athletes met **sleep** guidelines (10+ hours nightly)



7% of athletes met **not active** guidelines (2 hours or less daily)



11% of athletes met **daily physical activity** guidelines (60+ mins daily)



# SO WHAT?



**The youth health and fitness evaluation provided the following information and next steps to help improve the assessment of Special Olympics youth fitness programming:**

- **Health and Fitness Assessment Manual**
  - Coaches successfully used testing protocols, but revisions are needed to improve youth engagement.
  - Making fitness tests more fun can improve participation.
  - Removing challenging or unpopular tests.
- **Lifestyle Survey**
  - Direct feedback from youth and families is needed for improving the survey.
  - Encouraging athletes to personally answer survey questions will provide more accurate insights and to help encourage athletes to take care of their own health.
- **Physical Activity Devices**
  - Instructions and support are important.
  - Not all athletes like to wear a device. Find another way for those athletes to use them.

