



**Special Olympics**  
Romania

# The Young Athletes Program in Romania



# Young Athletes Background

2004 – Special Olympics Board of Directors authorized a Young Athletes pilot.

2005 – Mattel Children's Foundation committed funds to conduct a Young Athletes pilot.

2006 – 3 Young Athletes Demonstrations at Regional Games – El Salvador, Iowa and China.

2004 – Young Athletes program concept was finalized and tested at Special Olympics New Jersey.

2005-2006 – Pilot Programs initiate implementation of Young Athletes.

2005 – Special Olympics finalized Young Athletes resources; identified 21 pilot sites globally.

2006 – Initial Evaluation Results; Pilot Programs recruit 3,772 Young Athletes.



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# The Young Athletes Program- resources

## Brochure



## Activity Guide



## DVD



## Equipment Kit



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# Some numbers

## No. children

•2006: **84**      2007: **51**      2008: **21**      2009:**52**

## No. towns

•2006:**7**      2007:**6**      2008: **3**      2009:**2**

## No. teachers/physical therapists

•2006:**10**      2007:**11**      2008: **6**      2009:**5**

## Types of institutions:

- State institutions* (special kindergarten/pre-school, mainstream kindergarten/pre-school, Social Assistance and Child Protection General Department: day-centers, placement centers)
- NGO's* (day center, special school)



# Some numbers 2

2010- 101 new Young Athletes

3 demos in 3 different towns

+ 1 demo at the National Games



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# Some numbers 3

2011-2012

57 new Young  
athletes in 2 new  
sites

Now SO Romania is  
part of the Kim  
Samuel -Johnson  
study grant





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# Steps

- Contact the entities
- Apply for grant assistance
- Organize a seminar for parents, caregivers, physical therapists, teachers, students-presenting SO and the Young athletes program
- 3-4 months trainings
- Demonstration

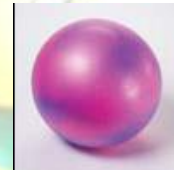




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# Training Steps

- ❖ Welcoming activities for children (and parents)
- ❖ Warm up activity
- ❖ Social/Play time for children
- ❖ Cool down activities
- ❖ Family time
- ❖ Drinks and snacks
- ❖ Closing activities for children (and parents)





# Family Day- demo



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- T-shirts
- Diplomas
- Special medals
- Gifts

Drinks, sweets, music,  
fun😊





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# Benefits

## Benefits for the **parents**:

- An excellent way to make the parents work with their children.
- It helps the parents to better understand their children abilities.
- It addresses the parents' need to involve their children in some kind of sports activity.
- Being part of the weekly trainings, some of the parents feel like going to a "special club".
- Children are trained for Special Olympics competitions- a very strong argument for parents as well as for physical therapists/ sports teachers.



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# Benefits

For the **children:**

- Children become more and more cooperative as the trainings develop.
- Special improvements can be seen in the area of motor and social abilities.

For the **physical therapists:**

They learn new methods to work with children with intellectual disabilities and to involve the parents in the trainings.





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During the years we came across different situations:

-We had “Unified Young athletes”- siblings and class mates of the young athletes participated in trainings and demonstration

-Students from the SO Get Into It program came and encouraged the young athletes during demonstration

-The International Global Messenger Ioana Ciobanu, SO athlete, was an assistant coach



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