

Purpose of the Guide

This guide has been written in order to assist people who are providing training to Young Athletes families who may not have attended a training through their program. It is based on our experiences of training parents in relation to early childhood education and adult learning, and draws from those experiences.

When applying the content featured in this guide, please carefully consider the unique needs of learners. In particular, you may want to adapt the training for those who are new or returning to the Special Olympics or Young Athletes programs. Also, consider those who may be new to coaching or working with young children in a structured way so that you are appropriately addressing their needs.

Timing

This training was designed to last 2 hours. However, please modify it based on the needs and availability of your families.

Materials

For this training, you should have a computer, the Power Point presentation, and samples of the materials referred to.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Colorado and Illinois for so graciously sharing the materials that they have developed, used and refined over the years. Thank you to Gary Siperstein and

Paddy Favazza. Thank you to Barbara Warman, Janelle Nanavatti and Chris Hoyes for their guidance, perspective, and vision for the expansion of Young Athletes™.

Agenda



1. Introductions
2. Overview of objectives
3. Introduction to Young Athletes Activities, Summary Cards and Equipment
4. Create goal(s)
5. Write a letter to your child to include in *My Young Athletes Portfolio*
6. Hands on practice with resources/equipment
7. Close with discussion of the Field Test. Fill out training evaluation

Special Olympics

Facilitator will review Training Agenda.

Objectives



1. Become familiar with the Young Athletes™ activity resources available to families
2. Create a goal for your family and your child, reflecting on your role and the possibilities
3. Create a plan for incorporating play into the home and/or neighborhood routine

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Be sure to tell participants that there will be time for questions at the end, or, if time allows and your group is small enough, you may elect to take questions as they come. If you are managing a large group, you may wish to offer them a “want to know” poster board where they can post questions throughout the training. Let participants know you will respond to these questions at the end of the training.

Script:

These are our three objectives for the training. Review with participants.

Young Athletes™



Provides a foundation of essential skills within an inclusive environment by focusing on building skills progressively and incorporating concepts of movement.

As an athlete, this means growing from hitting a baseball off a tee to hitting a home run!

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

*The following resource was referenced for this slide: Block, Martin E. Ph.D, *A Teacher's Guide to Including Students with Disabilities in General Physical Education*, 3rd ed., Paul H Brookes Publishing Co.

Script:

Young Athletes™ occurs within an inclusive environment. Research says that parents play a significant role in shaping their children's understanding, respect and tolerance of those with disabilities (reference the Attitude research for Research team paper).

Your child's coaches and teachers will do the following to cultivate an inclusive environment: Have a positive attitude; Be the teacher for all students; Model appropriate behavior; Individualize the curriculum and instruction; Reinforce positive interactions; Be knowledgeable about each child.*

Skill building progression: starts with foundational skills (like visual tracking) and progresses to throwing, striking, and kicking. The final week focuses on review skills and relating them to sports like hockey. Each day in a Young Athletes™ session builds on the next!

Concepts of movement: effort (time, force, flow), space awareness (location, directions, levels, pathways) and relationships (of body parts, with other movers and objects, in roles with people)

Optional notes to share with the participants: Remember that fundamental to a movement program for this age group is to focus on getting along with and working with others, "self-improvement," and participation. This is not a competitive environment where children feel they need to outperform their peers.

List of Activities



1. Foundational Skills
2. Walking & Running
3. Balance & Jumping
4. Trapping & Catching
5. Throwing
6. Striking
7. Kicking
8. Review of skills as sports

Special Olympics

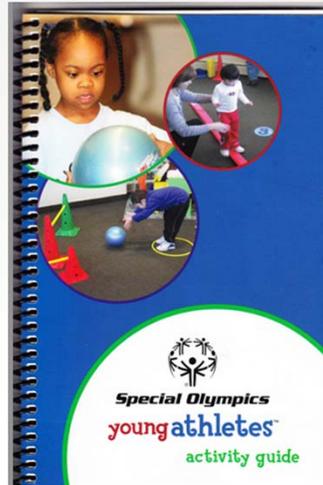
Facilitator notes:

To provide an overview of the progression and the variety of activities, show a sampling of video clips from the Activity Guide DVD, illustrating several of these activities. Inform parents that this is a great way to become familiar with the activities so that they are comfortable performing them with their children. There is time later in the session to practice with the equipment and become familiar with the activities. Be certain to have available and draw participants' attention to the easy-to-use Lesson Summary Cards which are to be together with the Activity Guide as they practice the songs and one or two activities at home between sessions.

Script:

1. Foundational Skills- basic movement, tracking, concept mastery, verbal/color/action/object recognition, memory, and counting
2. Walking and Running- directional movement, body part movement, endurance training
3. Balance and Jumping- leaning, body coordination, feet placement, body weight effects
4. Trapping and Catching- hand-eye coordination, dexterity, target concentration
5. Throwing- Body positioning, teammate awareness, over/under hand, one/two handed, target accuracy, follow through, weight transferring
6. Striking- making contact with objects, positioning, balance, follow through, weight transferring
7. Kicking- Distance, contact, direction orientation, balance
8. Review of skills as sports- these Lessons give young athletes the chance to apply the skills developed over the course of the Young Athletes™ program to sports games like kickball, tennis, and hockey.

Activity Guide



Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Ask families to pick up and pass around this activity guide to browse.

 <p>CURRICULUM OVERVIEW</p> <p>Young Athletes™ is an innovative sports play program for children aged 2-7 years old. The program includes active games, songs and other play activities that help children develop skills. The key skill areas are: foundational skills; walking and running; balance and jumping; trapping and catching; throwing; striking; and kicking.</p> <p>Lesson Plans: Detailed Lesson Plans give adult leaders an 8 week structure for introducing the activities and helping children practice skills while having fun. The Lessons should be led with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Recommended times for each activity allow leaders to complete the Lesson Plans in 30 minutes. However, we encourage you to adjust the pace and length of time to meet the needs, interests, ages, and skills of your group.</p> <p>Sequence: For each week there are 3 days of Lesson Plans for a total of 24 days. Lessons are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.</p> <p>Summary Cards: Lesson Summary Cards are provided as prompts for teachers and coaches to use while teaching. They also serve as a resource for families to learn about their child's experience in the program. The Summary Cards also reference the online videos and the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide, an illustrated and simple guide for both leaders and families to use.</p> <p>Adults Needed: Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.</p> <p>Playing at home: Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and/or play some of the games with their child at home each week. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing family demonstration sessions, as well as referring them to the Activity Guide and online videos at: www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes.</p> 	<p>WEEK DAY one 1 Foundational Skills Lesson Summary Card</p> <p>Equipment: Scarves (enough for each child to have one); floor markers, balls, bean bags, cones, hoops (distributed around room). All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.</p> <p>5 min. Opening Sports Song Wheels on the Bus melody <i>The athletes in our class touch their toes...</i> <i>The runner on the team goes run run run...</i> <i>The swimmer in the water goes swim swim swim...</i></p> <p>5 min. I Spy Equipment: floor markers, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls</p> <p>5 min. Scarf Game Equipment: Scarf for each child</p> <p>5 min. Inchworm Wiggle</p> <p>5 min. Bridges and Tunnels</p> <p>5 min. Closing Sports Song If You're Happy and You Know It <i>If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp</i> <i>(wiggle your body; fly like a bird; arms outstretched)</i> <i>If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show</i> <i>it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp,</i> <i>(wiggle your body; fly like a bird; arms outstretched).</i></p> <p>Tip: Use a variety of body movements.</p> <p>>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Foundational Skills, pages 2-5) and other resources at: www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes</p> 
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Script:

Here is an image of the Summary Card. Ask families to take out the Summary Card for Week One Day 1, 2, 3 and review how each day builds on the next.

Meeting the needs of your Athletes



Scenario 1: Young Athletes activities take place in the home basement at the same time each week with two children and two adults

Scenario 2: Young Athletes happens occasionally with a playgroup at rotating homes (once or twice a month)

Scenario 3: Young Athletes activities take place with a child and family (siblings included)

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Above are some possible scenarios of where and how frequently Young Athletes may occur. If there are other scenarios that seem more realistic or pertinent, you can focus on them instead. As you consider these (or other) scenarios, ask the following questions:

Script:

What impacts the implementation? Planning? How can you apply what you know about your child to help them get ready for these special Young Athletes sessions at home? Encourage participants to visualize where their Young Athletes Activities will take place. Using what you know, picture the space, make a list of things you might have to do to prepare/modify the space so that children can have fun and be productive during the time you set aside for Young Athletes™. Turn and talk with those at your table and share your thoughts/approach. Think through how to meet the needs of children who vary in age and ability. You can expand the time you spend on a game and add additional challenges for those who can attend for longer periods of time, for example.

Working with your child at home



- A routine
- Safety
- Explore first, then provide a cue
- 8 of 10 times, rule of thumb for practice
- Motivate your child to continue practicing
 - praise
 - introduce a variation to create interest
 - modify the activity by introducing a challenge
- Break it down into smaller steps

Special Olympics

Routine: Create a simple Young Athletes schedule and routine. Children like predictable routines that they can count on and look forward to. Just like a waking up or going to bed routine. There's an order. Include your child in coming up with a few simple rules, and cleaning up afterwards. Make sure that you choose a time when your child is not too tired or hungry to fully participate and enjoy this special time with you.

Safety: Remove breakable items (like floor lamps or decorative items), ensure there is plenty of space to move

Explore first: Allow your child to show you where they are and what they can do.

Offering a cue or a short phrase will help focus your child's attention on something as they perform an activity or execute a skill. You might say, "what would happen if you bend your knees a little before jumping or take a step forward as you throw the bean bag?" This is a gentle way to encourage a more efficient movement pattern.

Motivate your child: specific feedback; introduce a different sized ball, move the target a farther away, stand on one foot

Break it down into smaller steps: we want to avoid unnecessary frustration and encourage independence, so if you sense that your child doesn't feel successful, offer a simpler way to complete the activity. For instance, take a rest from the position of bridges or tunnels, if you hear your child complain how hard it is. Holding the position for shorter periods of time will help your child feel successful until they gain

the strength to hold the position for longer.

A general rule of thumb is that children should be successful 80% of the time when learning a new skill. (Brophy & Good 1986; Siedentop 1991; Graham 1992), so keep this in mind as you introduce new levels of challenge.

Ways to extend a catching activity



Simple

A big beach ball with some slack



A taut beach ball

A 9" or 4" ball

Complex

A tennis ball

Facilitator: There are several slides like this related to catching, striking, kicking. You may choose to use one or all of the slides. The idea is to show how to change a variable or two and the difficulty can decrease or increase.

Ways to extend a striking activity



Simple

Your hand



A paddle

A dowel rod

Complex

A plastic bat

This slide is optional. Just another way to review the concept of making an activity more or less challenging.

Ways to extend a kicking activity



Simple

Stationary ball



Slow moving ball

Complex

Fast moving ball

This slide is optional. Just another example of how to make an activity more or less challenging.

Objectives



1. Become familiar with the YA activity resources available to families
2. Create a goal for your family and your child, reflecting on your role and the possibilities
3. Create a plan for incorporating play into the home and/or neighborhood routine

Goal Setting



We will add the template for goal setting to this slide.
This template will be part of the *My Young Athletes Book*.

What do you hope your child will try in Young Athletes?

How will you know whether your child has tried something new?

How do these hopes connect with your child's participation in Young Athletes?

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

There is a template that accompanies this slide to be used for setting goals. The template will be part of *My Young Athletes Book*.

Remind participants of the common strategies used to promote achieving the goal. For instance, aim to identify something fairly specific that you can later look at and tell whether you reached the goal or whether it's still in progress. It can be helpful to find a way to hold yourself accountable as your work to accomplish your goal. So, you can either write it down and keep it somewhere close by or tell someone who you can count on to ask about your progress. It's also helpful to think of a deadline when you want to accomplish your goal or, at least, check in on your progress so that you can stay on track. Sometimes having a time frame that's broken into smaller segments is easier to track. In the case of Young Athletes, you could say something like I hope to work with my child for 15 minutes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings doing two activities that he/she chooses while looking at the pictures in the Activity Guide.

Activity



Write a letter, poem or song to your child.

Or, draw a picture that captures how you feel about him/her, what your dreams are for your child, and how you plan to encourage and support your child during Young Athletes™.

Special Olympics

Facilitator will pass out template from *My Young Athletes Book*. Have blank pieces of paper for parents to jot down some ideas or brainstorm as they draft their letter. Markers and pens will be provided, too.

Dear _____,

You are now a Young Athlete. Soon you will be making new friends, trying new things and learning new skills. Your family wants to practice these activities with you at home. We're going to have a lot of fun together.

I look forward to

I hope you will

I think the one of the best parts will be

I enjoy (playing tennis), I hope that when you are older we can play (tennis) together.

Objectives



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Young Athletes™ at home



When?

How often?

With whom?

Including others? neighbors? siblings?

How will I do it?

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Facilitator: this is an opportunity for small groups of families can talk about how they imagine incorporating Young Athletes into their home/neighborhood routine. The groups can share their ideas on making it happen in their homes. And, maybe, there are some parents who would like to take a leadership role and collect contact information and preferable times and days when groups can get together and enjoy Young Athletes™ together.

The facilitator will show the participants the goal setting page in the *My Young Athletes Book* and the version of the *Young Athletes at Home Record*. Talking about the goals and then seeing exactly where they will record the practice at home will help make sure they're connecting the practice with recording their progress afterward.

Before trying Young Athletes at home...



Become familiar with the tasks listed under the major skills in the Young Athletes Lesson Summary Cards and/or Activity Guide;

Observe clips from the DVD that relate to a skill or activity

Talk with your child(ren) about the skill and what you are about to do together.

When possible, demonstrate the skill for your child.

What works well with young children



1. **Acknowledge** what children do or say.
2. **Encourage** persistence and effort
3. **Give specific feedback** rather than general comments.
4. **Model** attitudes, ways of approaching problems, and behavior toward others
5. **Demonstrate** the correct way to do something.
6. **Create or add challenge** so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do.
7. **Ask questions** that provoke children's thinking.
8. **Give assistance** (such as a cue or hint) to help children work on the edge of their current competence
9. **Provide information**, directly giving children facts, verbal labels, and other information
10. **Give directions** for children's action or behavior.

Special Olympics

Young Athletes is unique because it combines sports play with early learning. Developmentally Appropriate Practice, or DAP, involves teachers meeting young children where they are (by stage of development), both as individuals and as part of a group; and helping each child meet challenging and achievable learning goals.

Developmentally Appropriate Practice Teaching Strategies

1. Acknowledge what children do or say. Let children know that we have noticed by giving positive attention, sometimes through comments, sometimes through just sitting nearby and observing. (*"Thanks for your help, Kavi." "You found another way to do the Side Stepping activity."*)

2. Encourage persistence and effort rather than just praising and evaluating what the child has done. (*"You're trying really hard to bounce the ball. Let's keep going!"*)

3. Give specific feedback rather than general comments. (*"The beanbag didn't get all the way to the hoop, James, so you might try throwing it harder."*)

4. Model attitudes, ways of approaching problems, and behavior toward others, showing children rather than just telling them (*"Hmm, that didn't work and I need to think about why." "I'm sorry, Ben, I missed part of what you said. Please tell me*

again.”)

5. Demonstrate the correct way to do something. This usually involves a procedure that needs to be done in a certain way (such as dribbling a ball).

6. Create or add challenge so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do. For example, a child can already walk across the 'balance beam' that is made from sticking tape on the ground. To add a challenge, you could put a rope on top of the tape and ask the child to walk across that new 'beam.' To reduce challenge, you could simplify the task by asking the child to choose a friend to hold their hand while they walk across the taped down 'beam.'

7. Ask questions that provoke children’s thinking. (“*We will jump like a frog for our Frog Hopping Activity. What does it look like when a frog jumps?*”)

8. Give assistance (such as a cue or hint) to help children work on the edge of their current competence (Feedback for Foot Trap Slow Motion Activity: “*You have done a great job placing your foot on top of the ball to get your balance before kicking the ball . . . Now, when I roll it to you, can you try trapping the ball by putting your foot on top of it to stop it, like me?*”, *modeling how to trap*)

9. Provide information, directly giving children facts, verbal labels, and other information. (“*A goalie is the person who tries to block, or stop, a ball from going in the net during a hockey or soccer game.*”)

10. Give directions for children’s action or behavior. (“*First, we will stand up on our own spots on the carpet. Then, we will hold the hands of our friends standing next to us.*”)

From NAEYC, 10 Effective DAP Teaching Strategies, <http://www.naeyc.org/dap/10-effective-dap-teaching-strategies>

Activities



Let's practice!

Count off by 8 and find the area with
your activity.

Share-observations and questions

Special Olympics

Set up stations where parents can rotate through the list of activities and give each other feedback as they practice implementing the activities found in the Activity Guide, using the Lesson Summary Cards and the equipment. The idea is that parents will be encouraged to practice the songs and one or two activities on the Summary Cards for the week. Underscore that children may want to choose from among the pictures in the guide as a way to get started at home. Facilitators will provide the 1-page Lesson Summary Cards and the YA Activity Guides at each station and will walk around to each table and point out that they are to be used in tandem. By showing them the resources they will know exactly where to turn when they try to practice at home. Encourage the parents to talk through where they might do this in their home or in an outdoor space. Each station will have a big piece of paper and a marker, where they can list ideas, feedback, and questions. Facilitator will address questions at the end to ensure everyone feels comfortable.



Closing: Part 1 **Sharing Your Young Athletes™ Experiences**

For our Field Test, we will seek your input through:

- The Program Coordinator
 - Surveys
 - Testimonials
 - Possible sampling of phone interviews

Facilitator: This was stated in the Whole Group Training, but will be addressed once more in case there are specific questions.



Closing: part 2

- Final thoughts
- Questions?
- Survey
- Thank you for your time and participation today!

Facilitator will close by re-stating what a tremendous opportunity it is to be a part of Young Athletes and the greater Special Olympics Family. We encourage you to provide feedback, ideas, and to reach out when you have questions or need additional support.

After questions have been answered, the facilitator will ask families to complete a brief survey/evaluation on the training they received specific to their role.



This training was developed for Special Olympics
by School Readiness Consulting



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