

Community Builders Toolkit for Family Leaders

Section 1: Orientation to Family Engagement

Special Olympics



1 Special Olympics

The *Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders* provides Power Point presentations, sample materials, templates and guidance for family leaders (both staff and volunteers) to use. The toolkit highlights effective strategies for recruiting, retaining and engaging families to make Special Olympics better for athletes, families and communities. It also highlights core resources accessible in the online Family Support Network e-Library and the interactive components of the site designed to offer additional engagement opportunities across Programs and Regions.

Toolkit Table of Contents



Section 1: Orientation to Family Engagement

- About the Toolkit
- Strategic Plan Goals
- Principles for recruiting, welcoming and engaging families
- Definition of families
- 4 areas of focus
- Getting started

2 Special Olympics

Section 1: Orientation to Family Engagement is intended for family leaders, Board Members, Program staff and key volunteers. The objective for the orientation is to provide a framework for engaging and supporting family members in Special Olympics. Key information includes:

- Purpose and Content of the Toolkit
- Strategic Plan Goals
- Principles for recruiting, welcoming and engaging families
- Definition of families
- 4 areas of focus
- Getting started

Additional Toolkit Sections



Section 2: Planning for Successful Family Engagement

Section 3: Welcoming Families

Section 4: Family Volunteer Recruitment

Section 5: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Section 6: Engaging Families of Young Athletes

Section 7: Resources Section

3 Special Olympics

It is recommended that leaders attend train-the-trainer sessions on the entire toolkit in the order it is written. Then they can use the material that applies best to their Program structure, priorities and goals as reference material and for training other family members. They will also be better equipped to use the online resource materials and to contribute their own examples of successes for others to replicate or adapt successfully.

There are a total of 7 sections in the Toolkit. In addition to the Orientation to Family Engagement they are:

Section 2: Planning for Successful Family Engagement

Section 3: Welcoming Families

Section 4: Family Volunteer Recruitment

Section 5: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Section 6: Engaging Families of Young Athletes

Section 7: Resources Section

Strategic Plan Framework



Special Olympics

The Special Olympics 2011-2015 Strategic Plan provides a framework for our Movement that strives to enhance athlete experiences—both on the playing field and in our communities. The foundation of the Strategic plan is built on our Mission, Values and Model of Change—we transform lives through the power of sports. To provide the athlete experience we seek strategies have been identified in 5 “Pillars”.

1. Establish Sustainable Capabilities;
2. Develop Movement Leadership;
3. Advance Sports and Competitions;
4. Connect Fans and Funds; and
5. **Build Communities at the center that includes goals for family engagement**



Strategic Plan Goal for Families:

To create trained, empowered and involved families at all levels of the organization.

5 Special Olympics

The overarching strategic plan goal for families is to create trained, empowered and involved families at all levels of the organization. This *Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders* is intended to support that effort, providing key information and a variety of tools for Programs to use based on their current structure and priorities.

Measuring Success



By 2015

- Every Program and every sub-Program will recruit and train a minimum of two family members as community builders.
- Every Region will expand the reach of Young Athletes by 100%.

6 Special Olympics

So how do we measure our success? While the scope of our global families work is very broad, the strategic plan challenges us to focus on developing families as community builders—that is family members who serve as spokespersons in the community and have defined leadership positions within their Program with terms of at least 1 year (e.g. National Family Coordinator, Board Member, Young Athlete Coordinator). The measurement is:

Every Program and every sub-Program will recruit and train a minimum of two family members as community builders.

Secondly, the plan recognizes the importance of engaging families in Special Olympics before children are aged 8 and eligible to participate in training and competition. During the early years it is critical for families with young children who have disabilities to find support and resources for both their child and themselves and the best time to recruit their involvement in Special Olympics—building a base for a stronger program with more family leaders in the future. The measurement is:

Every Region will expand the reach of Young Athletes by 100%.

Discussion



1. What family members are most involved now?
2. Who else do you consider “family members” and have you made any particular efforts to involve these members?
3. What might be some benefits of targeting additional family members to get involved?

Special Olympics

Discuss these questions in pairs and then as a full group.

1. What family members are most involved now?
2. Who else do you consider “family members” and have you made any particular efforts to involve these members?
3. What might be some benefits of targeting additional family members to get involved?

Summarize: Typically mothers are the most involved in Special Olympics, but there are many others who athletes consider important to them and who could be part of Special Olympics, too. These include mothers, fathers, siblings, grandparents, aunts, cousins, other relatives and caregivers. By expanding the reach of our family recruitment efforts we can support these important people in athletes lives who have a role in their success. We can also engage families in supporting Special Olympics Programs success and in building communities of acceptance and inclusion. When you think of family engagement, think about all the relatives of athletes and their primary caregivers/guardians, too.

Family Support Network Approach



- Special Olympics connects families with similar experiences to witness the power of sports and see what our athletes can do.
- Peer support enables families to deal with challenges, access resources and develop positive attitudes about athletes.
- Structure provides for ongoing communication, leadership development and regular programming.

8 Special Olympics

The family support network approach connects families, provides peer support and ongoing communication. This positive approach enhances families view of athletes capabilities, helps them access needed resources to support athletes in developing to their fullest potential, and keeps them informed of opportunities to get more involved in making Special Olympics successful. Planning for successful family engagement begins with creating structures and plans for ongoing communication with families.

The *Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders* provides guidance and tools needed in:

Section 2: Planning for Successful Family Engagement

Section 3: Welcoming Families



Four Focus Areas to Engage Families



Special Olympics

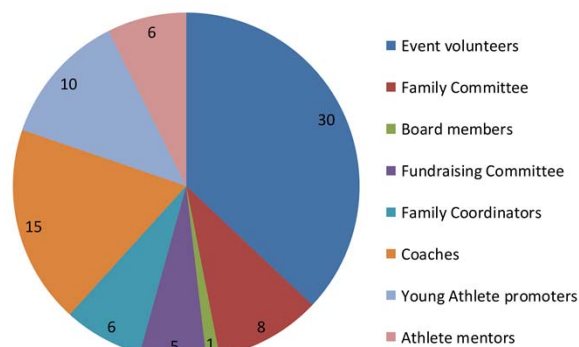
In addition, we have developed four focus areas for family engagement to assist in meeting our goal *to create trained, empowered and involved families at all levels of the organization*. The *Toolkit* provides practical guidance for developing and implementing family engagement in these four areas:

- Family Volunteers
- Healthy Families
- Young Athlete Leaders
- Community Builders

Family Volunteers



Sample Program Volunteers



Special Olympics

Every Special Olympics Program has a need for volunteers that are essential to the Program operations. Families are a key resource for taking on volunteer jobs, whether they are one-time activities like events, ongoing committee work, or tasks that support the Program like posting news on Facebook. The Toolkit will help family leaders systematically identify family skills and interests that can be matched to existing volunteer jobs. It also will help you think of new volunteer opportunities that expand engagement for the wide range of family members we want to reach. Refer to these sections if this is your focus area:

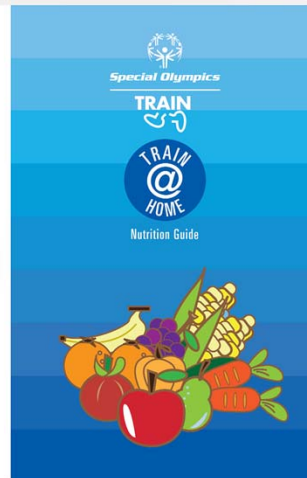
Section 3: Welcoming Families

Section 4: Family Volunteer Recruitment

Healthy Families



 **Special Olympics**
1133 19th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036-5604 USA



11 Special Olympics

Special Olympics works to support athletes in being physically fit and healthy, so promoting healthy lifestyles with families is a focus that is easy to incorporate into your Program. For example, coaches can provide tips, information can be included in newsletters, families can attend Healthy Athletes screenings and Family Health Forums. It is also a good starting place for engaging families because they naturally want what is best for athletes and appreciate getting ideas and help from Special Olympics to do more at home with athletes. To work in this area you can use:

Section 5: Promoting Healthy Lifestyles

Young Athlete Leaders



“We have the ability to change the lives of our athletes through encouraging families with Young Athletes to Join the Movement...”

Sydney Fox, Global Family Leader



Special Olympics

Families who have experience with Special Olympics athletes are powerful recruiters for young athletes and support to families without any experience with a child who has special needs. In many places of the world families are stigmatized because of their child and “hide them at home”. Yet Young Athletes provides an easy format for bringing children out into an inclusive program that is fun and supportive. The Toolkit provides the background information needed to understand the program goals and recruit new participants. In addition, a full training for new families is included. See:

Section 6: Engaging Families of Young Athletes

Section 7: Resources Section

Community Builders



- Families can be passionate spokespersons and advocates for change
- To build community we need committed family leaders with defined roles

Special Olympics

The fourth focus area is community building. All families who learn about Special Olympics and have a positive story to tell about athletes success and/or their family experience can be spokespersons for the movement and those most passionate can advance the goal of expanding Young Athletes by 100%. While our measures of success focus on community builders who are trained leaders, this area also includes simple things every family can do to help build communities that are accepting and inclusive. Sharing stories and photos with media, in social media venues are simple. Mentoring athletes is an example of a larger commitment. The first step to supporting families in this role is making sure that everyone has been fully oriented to Special Olympics. See

Section 3: Welcoming Families

Section 6: Engaging Families of Young Athletes

e-Library Launched



- Interactive site allows families to post their stories and photos
- Highlights Program successes to support best practice sharing
- Provides access to both the Family Toolkit and Young Athletes Toolkit
- <http://resources.specialolympics.org>

KS Day in Nassau, Bahamas
A Smashing Success
By Vashti Thompson. 14 years



"I carry on Eunice Kennedy Shriver's legacy as I spread the word at every opportunity that persons with Intellectual Disabilities are no different from anyone else."

14 Special Olympics

The Toolkit is linked to our new online Family Support Network e-Library. Key features include:

- Interactive site allows families to post their stories and photos
- Highlights Program successes to support best practice sharing
- Provides access to both the Family Toolkit and Young Athletes Toolkit

Go to <http://resources.specialolympics.org> and select "Families" to access the e-Library

What Works, What Helps



Family Success Stories



Sample Materials and Reports



15 Special Olympics

Each Section of the Community Builder Toolkit for Family Leaders links participants to a few of the key materials that correspond to the content of the PowerPoint presentations. Family success stories from other Regions provide different perspectives on how to implement programs and there are also sample materials and reports to give more details. In addition, the core Family Toolkit and Young Athletes Toolkits are key to developing and implementing successful programs.

Action and Commitment



رائعة هي الأسر التي تتمتع بصحة جيدة!

I'm In! Healthy Families

When families choose to make healthy living a priority, athletes are more successful in their sports and motivated to make healthy choices on their own.

I pledge to:

- Practice coach-recommended sports skills with athletes every week.
- Turn off the TV during meals and share some family time.
- Shut down my computer and go outside to play for an hour a day.
- Play active games with your children aged 2-7 years old using the Young Athletes Activity Guide.
- Use the TRAIN @ Home Nutrition and Exercise Guides.
- Get athletes and siblings involved in preparing healthy well-balanced meals and snacks.
- Drink water when I am thirsty.
- Make sure all family members have regular health check-ups.
- Try new things in the community to develop hobbies, friendships and independence.
- Wash my hands after using the latrine and before and after meals.

Name _____

Program _____

e-mail address or phone number _____

للإعلان والتعهد

1. مارس العادات الرياضية التي تود ممارستها مع أفراد عائلتك.

2. أطفئ جهاز التلفزيون خلال تناول الطعام وخصص وقتاً لنفسك مع أفرادك.

3. أطفئ جهاز الكمبيوتر الخاص بك و اخرج للتحرك لمدة ساعة كل يوم.

4. قد الألعاب الرياضية مع أولادك أثناء التواجد معهم في ساحة أو حديقة.

5. استعمل برنامج الغذاء والتغذية الرياضي المصمم للتحرك [@ home nutrition](#)

6. اترك اللاعبين واجتهد في إعداد وجبات صحية ومتوازنة.

7. قد الفحوصات الطبية مع أفرادك أثناء قضاء وقتك مع العائلة.

8. اكد على أفراد الأسرة بضرورة غسل يديهم جيداً بعد تناول الطعام.

9. قد تجارب جديدة في المجتمع لتطوير المهارات وبناء الصداقات وتغيير الاستقلالية.

10. احرص على غسل يديك جيداً بعد كل وجبة.








Special Olympics

Action Tips and Commitment Cards for each of the 4 areas can be found in the Family Toolkit section of the online e-Library in multiple languages.

Action Tips piloted in Athens at the World Summer Games in 2011 provide a template for family leaders to use in recruiting family engagement. *Commitment Cards* provide a complimentary tool that family leaders can customize for events, outreach meetings, trainings and campaigns. These cards were designed to ask families to make a commitment to support athletes at home, in the Special Olympics Program or the community by selecting at least one action they agree to take. Programs collect the cards with contact information and follow up to encourage and support families in taking the action, as well as to document engagement.

Break into 4 small groups and discuss the ideas suggested for engaging families. Then have them share their thoughts with the full group.

What actions are families already doing in your program?

What are the top 3 actions you would like to promote with families in your Program?

How might you use or adapt the *Action Tips* and *Commitment Cards* ?

Who else in your Program could benefit from this *Session 1: Orientation to Family Engagement*?

Wrap up the Session by asking each participant to share one thing they are committed to do for the Program to engage more families in more roles.