

Purpose of the Guide

This guide has been written in order to assist people who are providing training to Young Athletes coaches who may not have attended a full-day training through their program. It is based on our experiences of training trainers in relation to early childhood education and adult learning, and draws from those experiences, but the methodology has also been used in the training of trainers on a broad range of issues.

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 veterans of the Special Olympics or Young Athletes programs. Also, consider those who may be new to coaching or teaching early learners so that you are appropriately addressing their needs.

Use of Language

Throughout this training, we use the term “coaches” to refer to any adults who are regularly leading Young Athletes.

Required Materials

We frequently reference materials featured in the Young Athletes Binder that accompanies the training. Please make sure one is available for each participant. Additionally, you will need a computer, projector, and the accompanying Power Point Presentation.

A Note About Timing

Strict timing guidelines are not provided, as facilitators may want to adapt this training for coaches based on specific needs of their participants. In general, the training takes 2 hours.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Colorado and Illinois for 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™.



A special thanks to...

**Colorado and Illinois
for so graciously sharing the
materials they have developed, used and refined over
the years.**

**Gary Siperstein, Ph.D. and Paddy Favazza, Ed.D. for the
Evaluation of Young Athletes™**

**Barbara Warman, Chris Hoyles, and Janelle Nanavatti for
their guidance, perspective, and vision for the
expansion of Young Athletes™.**



Agenda:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview of Objectives
3. Mission of Special Olympics and Young Athletes™
4. Motor development and its connection to other areas of a child's development
5. Being a part of the USA Field Test Project
6. Creating a community for our youngest athletes
7. Closing, questions and information about breakout sessions

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Facilitator will review agenda.

Script:

We know that Young Athletes will be implemented in a lot of different spaces, sites, and ways, and that we are providing general guidance. Today we are providing you with ample time for sharing and practice with the lessons and materials with the goal that you will work together to make it work for your athletes. Throughout the day, we will be circulating and offer lots of support, answer questions, etc. After today, you will continue to receive support, for we plan to touch base with you, and the Program Coordinators, to learn what is working, where you need support, and what your best practices are.

Thank you in advance for taking the time today to learn more about Young Athletes.

There are many important experiences and pieces of knowledge that participants bring to the training, and many important questions that they will raise about the issue.

Let participants know that anything that you are not able to cover in the session can be answered at a later time. Also let participants know that they can add ideas or questions to the “want to know” chart throughout the training (remind them that they have post-its on their table for this purpose). Let them know you will check in with the “want to know” chart again at the end of the training.

We will now move into the content of our work together.

Our team



- Program Coordinator
- Site liaisons
- Local Colorado Special Education resources
- Teachers and coaches
- Families
- School Readiness Consulting
- Warm up activity: Please introduce yourself, and your role

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Use the warm up activity as vehicle for introductions.

Script:

Introduce yourself to those at your table and answer this question, “What experience do you have with either young children, sports, or people with intellectual disabilities?”

Depending on the group size, the facilitator may ask participants to go around the room, or, if working with a larger group, share with those around you and a few representatives share with the whole group.

Objectives



Understand the mission of Special Olympics and become familiar with Young Athletes™

Understand motor development and its connection to other areas of a child's development

Understand the value of this field test and the expectation for participant feedback

Set goals to create a community for our youngest athletes

Facilitator notes:

Review the training objectives for the day. We will begin with the first objective, written in blue font.

Mission Statement of Special Olympics



The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympic athletes and the community.

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Facilitator notes: This is the official mission statement of Special Olympics.
What personal experiences do you have that resonate with this mission?

History of Special Olympics



- 1963-Eunice Kennedy Shriver had a vision
- 1968-The first International Olympic Summer Games was held at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois
- Today, Special Olympics is an international organization with efforts going well beyond athletics to include initiatives around health care, attitudes, and even policy change.

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Bullet 1: In the early 1960s, Ms. Shriver saw that people with intellectual disabilities were treated unfairly and she noticed that children with intellectual disabilities didn't have places to play. She started a camp where people focused on the strengths of the children.

Bullet 2: The movement to foster the acceptance and inclusion of all people. Special Olympics, Inc. has been in existence for 44 years; 1000 athletes attended these games and participated in track and field and swimming events.

Bullet 3: 180 countries and over 4 million athletes. Austria hosted the first winter games held outside of North America. There are plans for Korea to host the winter games in 2012 and the U.S. to host the summer games in 2015. Initiatives beyond athletics include: *Healthy Athletes*, which provides health care services to Special Olympics athletes and "So get into it," which promotes values of inclusion, acceptance, and respect; and Special Olympics even released a comprehensive global study of attitudes towards individuals with intellectual disabilities.

History of Special Olympics Colorado (SOCO)



- SOCO held its first event in 1969 at Aurora Hinkley High School with four hundred athletes
 - We currently serve over 12,000 athletes in Colorado
 - We also have over 2,000 athletes in our school based programs
- 6,600 Volunteers serve at all levels including coaches, unified partners, fundraisers, law enforcement, officials, committee members and day of volunteers
- Over 100 competitions and events throughout the year including 6 State level competitions
 - 22 sports offered throughout 4 seasons

SPORTS BY SEASON

Winter- Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Snowboarding, Snowshoeing, Figure Skating, Speed Skating, Basketball

Spring- Aquatics, Athletics, Gymnastics, Powerlifting, Soccer

Summer- Bocce, Golf, Cycling, Tennis, Softball

Fall- Bowling, Volleyball, Flag Football

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Facilitator notes: The purpose of this slide is to provide each Program the opportunity to share some of the unique qualities of their Program and really talk about what Special Olympics feels like on a day-to-day or season-to-season basis. This slide includes a list of questions just as a guide as to some facts or information to include in the comments to the large group. This is a good time to pass around any brochures with local and Program contact information.

"Unique" refers to what is special about that state's program- do they ski in Colorado? Swim in Virginia? etc.

Project UNIFY in Colorado



- Special Olympics Colorado is proud to be one of eight states chosen as a High Activation Program for Project UNIFY. SOCO has activated schools and youth around the state promoting the importance of inclusive school activities that change perspectives, enhance relationships, and boost acceptance among students with and without intellectual disabilities by utilizing the existing sports and education related initiatives of Special Olympics such as Unified Sports and Inclusive Youth Leadership

Project UNIFY® in Colorado for 2011-2012:

54 Project UNIFY Schools in CO

12 school districts involved with Project UNIFY

1st Annual Project UNIFY Youth Activation Summit

3 Colorado PU School Liaisons Chosen for the 2011-2012 Teacher Awards

3rd Year of Statewide Youth Activation Committee with 28 members

3rd Youth Leadership Global Messenger Training

24 Unified Sports Teams

275 athletes, and 325 partners involved in PU for the 2011-2012 School Year

Young Athletes Program in Colorado



- Began in 2008-09 with five preschools within the Cherry Creek School District
- 24 individual classrooms serving approximately 297 young athletes and unified sports partners
- 2009-10 expanded to 8 preschools 9 preschools within the state
- 57 individual classrooms serving approximately 677 young athletes and unified sports partners
- 2010-11 expanded to 12 preschools and 3 local programs across the state
- 80 individual classrooms serving approximately 1,027 young athletes and unified sports partners
- 2011-12 expanded to 15 preschools and 6 local programs across the state
- 138 individual classrooms/groups serving approximately 1,500 young athletes and unified sports partners
- 6 Current Local Programs including Highlands Ranch, Greeley, Denver (2), Grand Junction, and Evergreen
- New Local Programs starting in the fall in Castle Rock, Colorado Springs & Aurora

What makes Special Olympics unique?



1. Free to all athletes
2. Opportunities for all abilities
3. Division by abilities
4. Awards for all
5. Criteria for advancement

Script:

There are five unique features of Special Olympics that are important to know. (*read through list*).

Young Athletes... 

- is a developmentally appropriate play program for children 2 1/2 to 7 years of age with intellectual disabilities;
- takes place in such inclusive settings as schools, community settings, and homes;
- promotes physical, cognitive, and social development, even school readiness;
- and, develops motor skills through sports play activities, linking and preparing young athletes for future participation in Special Olympics sports training and competition.

Facilitator note:

Underscore that Young Athletes offers instruction that is responsive and celebrates all abilities. Emphasize that Young Athletes works and was developed by a research team. (see below for more details).

Illustrate the program by showing a short clip of a video and have the Lessons, Activity Guide, and equipment available for participants to browse. Explain that the breakout groups will work specifically from the Lessons, Activity Guide, the DVD and the equipment. You can also add that the Lessons are now the primary resource and were developed specifically to provide more guidance and structure in the implementation of Young Athletes.™

Include comments on Young Athletes™ in the Program where the training occurs. Numbers of participants and any unique features. ***(The Program Coordinator will share these details.)***

More details on the background of Young Athletes: Young Athletes came about at the request of parents who wanted a program for younger children with intellectual disabilities, prior to when they were eligible of Special Olympics. The program was created in consultation with University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey. In partnership with Center for Social Development and Education of University of Massachusetts Boston, 151 preschools across 6 states were part of an evaluation study. In the first study in 2006, 75% of the teacher reported positive impact on motor skill development. And, 50% of the teacher perceived gains in social and adaptive behaviors. In the preliminary evaluation of Young Athletes (Favazza & Siperstien, 2006), teachers indicated they needed more information about how to implement Young Athletes. Specifically, they requested detailed lessons and information about how to structure the lesson when using Young Athletes with a group of children. In addition to the feedback received from teachers from the preliminary evaluation, a thorough review of the literature was conducted to ensure the YA-C represented the best practices for designing curricula for young children. This most recent evaluation of 2009 yielded the more scripted Lessons that are now to be used as the primary source of implementation. These lessons are grounded in the most current research on motor development.

Script:

This field test aims to provide this opportunity for growth and progress in school settings, community settings and homes.

Our Mission



Activity

Divide into small groups and share your personal version of a mission statement that includes your goals for Young Athletes in your school, community or home.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendships with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics

Facilitator Notes:

Each group should include representatives from various constituent groups in order to capture the range of experiences tied to this international organization and their vision and goals for Young Athletes in their school, community and home.

Individuals can develop their own personal mission statements or write down their goals as they pertain to Young Athletes. Be sure to cover the aims and values of the organization and relate them to your local community.

After individuals have time to share with their small groups, we will 'pass the torch' to the regional Program affiliates to share organizational information about Special Olympics as it pertains to their region/Program.

Alternatively, the local program staff could do this activity and then lead into their presentation of Special Olympics.

Allow participants 10 minutes for this activity.

Objectives



- Understand the mission of Special Olympics and become familiar with Project Unify and Young Athletes
- Understand the value of this field test and the expectation for feedback
- Understand motor development and its connection to other areas of a child's development
- Set goals to create a community for our youngest athletes

Facilitator Notes:

This slide is to remind the participants of our objectives and highlight the objective we are about to discuss.

Field Test Essentials



- Implement Young Athletes for 30 minutes
- 3 times a week
- Use lessons as primary source, teach in sequence
- Reporting requirements:
 - Turn in Young Athletes Weekly Reflection sheet to Mandi regularly
 - Record 1 observation per child per week
 - Mandi will do some site visits

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Use the warm up activity as vehicle for introductions.

Script:

Introduce yourself to those at your table and answer this question, “What experience do you have with either young children, sports, or people with intellectual disabilities?”

Depending on the group size, the facilitator may ask participants to go around the room, or, if working with a larger group, share with those around you and a few representatives share with the whole group.

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What's the goal of this field test?



- Special Olympics wants to support the growth of Young Athletes™ so that its implementation is successful
- The evaluation yielded valuable insights into how well it works in a preschool setting
- This field test explores the possibilities in three new settings
- This field test offers a unique opportunity to share what worked, identify what could have been done differently, and record innovative strategies

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

This is an important opportunity to share with all those involved that Special Olympics has a vision to make Young Athletes available to more and more young children in the future. Each participating Program has a unique responsibility to record their efforts, strategies and outcomes (big and small).

As a result, there will be forms to fill out, surveys to complete, pictures to take, and stories to tell. Everyone's perspective and feedback is important to a successful field test. Special Olympics wants to hear from each of you and sincerely appreciates your willingness to share your personal experiences so that we can learn how to continue meeting the needs of young children and their families in the best way possible.

We look forward to your feedback



- Evaluation of today's training
- Young Athletes weekly reflection sheets
- Coach surveys and some interviews
- Family surveys and some interviews
- Interviews with site liaisons where applicable
- Interviews with Program Coordinators

Special Olympics

Script:

At each important juncture, we will be collecting information and feedback to support future Young Athletes expansion. For example, before you leave today, please complete a brief evaluation of the training you participated in today. Other examples of tools that will be used to learn from this field test include teacher logs, parent satisfaction surveys, interviews those coordinating the various sites, in addition to those coordinating on the Program level.

Objectives



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Facilitator Notes:

This slide is just a reminder where we are as a group in terms of reaching the objectives for the whole group training.

How do gross motor skills develop?



Activity

1. Form small groups and the facilitator will distribute a series of movement phrases to sort.
2. Arrange the movement phrases in the order you think a child develops those skills.
 - Can you try the movements yourself?
3. Pick a team member to report your findings back to the group.

Special Olympics

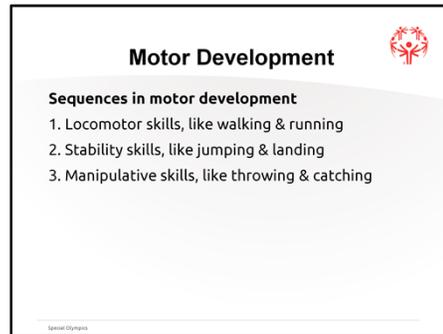
Facilitator notes:

** Have equipment nearby if participants need to test.*

To get a discussion going about motor skills and how they develop, we will start with an ice breaker activity. We will pass out Teaching Strategies GOLD progressions movement statements and have the small groups work together to put the skills (or movement phrases) in the order they think children develop, and report back to the group. Encourage the participants to try the movements in their space and see what makes sense to them.)

When groups comment, facilitator may ask, "Which of the movements seems harder, landing on 1 or 2 feet?" "What makes something like running around an obstacle more difficult than just running? (it takes more balance, motor planning, core strength and sensory perception).

Comment on how children with disabilities may develop at different rates than typically developing children and need additional support. This reinforces the idea that intentionally teaching these movements, and breaking them down into smaller steps, will support children in moving more efficiently and skillfully.



Facilitator Notes:

As a response to the recent activity, underscore that there is a general sequence of motor development.

Sequences of motor development:

Motor development happens in a particular order or sequence and, like other areas of development, development happens along a continuum. This means that the skill develops within a typical period of time, not at one particular moment in time.

The period in development we are concerned with at Young Athletes is called the Fundamental Motor Period where children are learning locomotor skills, play-game manipulative skills, and fine motor manipulative skills. The activities in Young Athletes promote development in these three areas.

Movement skills often develop in a particular order, and that's why Young Athletes was designed in a sequence. Young Athletes includes a series of activities to be delivered in a certain order to support the natural progression of motor skill development.

More specific examples of each type of skill: (if there is time, encourage people to stand up in their area and try each "type" of skill.

Locomotor skills- walking, marching, galloping, hopping, running, traveling around obstacles, skipping

Stability skills-turning, twisting, bending, stopping, rolling, balancing, transferring weight, jumping and landing, curling, swinging, swaying and dodging

Manipulative skills-throwing, catching and collecting, kicking, punting, dribbling, volleying, striking with rackets, striking with long-handed instruments like a bat



Facilitator notes:

This slide is intended only to encourage some awareness as to the intricacies of motor development. It discusses how skills develop over time, and with exposure and experience using a range of conditions and variety of challenges. Once a person has more control, they are able to perform these skills to the benefit of a sport or team experience.

Development within a particular skill. In general, the more practice and experience we have using a new skill, the more control we gain when using the skill. For instance, as we begin to learn balance skills, we have more success when we are low to the ground, moving slowly, or moving along a wider board. As we gain more control of our balance, we can move higher off the ground (say, on a balance beam), move more quickly as we move across the balance beam and maybe even face in one direction and turn our head to one side as we balance.

We help children increase their control and become proficient movers by providing time to practice and teaching them particular concepts that lead to this more controlled and refined movement. Concepts like **where** to move, **how** to move and **with whom** to move, all support children as work to gain more control of their movement and become more consistent in the way that they move. For example, walk around the cone, go through the hoop, roll the ball gently, throw the ball as hard as you can, or even throw the ball to your partner/teammate. Building the mind-body connection comes with lots of practice and experience. It is typically not until an individual has an increased level of control that they would apply these skills to a sport or team situation.

Reference: G. Graham, S.Holt/Hale, and M. Parker, Children's Moving: A Reflective Approach to Teaching Physical Education, 5th ed. (Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 2001)

Again, Young Athlete activities were developed to be played in sequence. Later today, when we start interacting with the Lessons, the supplemental Activity Guide and the equipment, you will see how motor development is targeted based on the activities. When your child practices the activities, through your observations, and the teacher's observations, with time, practice, and patience, you may begin to notice how children progress from a precontrol level to a more controlled level of movement.

Activity



Turn to your neighbor and talk about what you remember about the stages you went through while learning a new skill. Or, maybe, you are learning something new right now, so share what that's like.

Facilitator notes:

This activity provides participants the opportunity to "see" that they, too, go through a range of experiences and levels of "success" when picking up a new sport.

Motor Development and Intentional Instruction



- Motor skills do not just develop through play, especially in children with disabilities
- Findings from the Evaluation of Young Athletes (2009-2011) show that those children in a preschool setting participating in Young Athletes had significant gains in three areas of motor development:
object manipulation, locomotion, and stationary motor skills.
- These skills must be taught and practiced!

Special Olympics

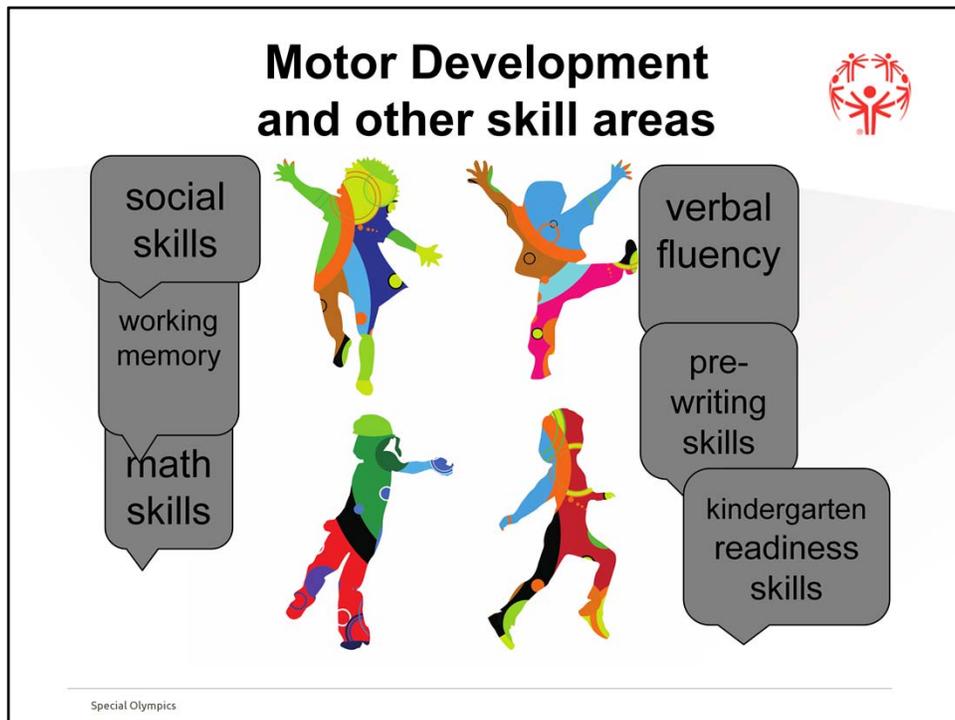
Facilitator Notes:

Research says that children with disabilities often experience challenges in the areas of balance and motor planning. And, because motor skill development is often a precursor to other areas of development, it is important to provide targeted and purposeful instruction in all areas of motor development.

Young Athletes focuses on the Fundamental Motor Skill development period of Clark's "mountain of motor development" which includes Locomotor Skills, Play-Game Manipulative Skills and Fine Motor Skills.

The Evaluation of Young Athletes (2009-2011) showed that participating 3x week for 8 weeks improved motor gains in children with varying disabilities within a short period of time.

Intentional instruction- research says that children don't necessarily develop motor skills just through play. Planning movement experiences to introduce children to a variety of motor skills is essential for skill development. Because children with developmental disabilities are more likely to experience delays in motor development, especially those motor skills that require motor planning and balance, it is important to teach these skills explicitly. So purposeful instruction around particular skills is essential for supporting motor development. Providing time and space for practicing these new skills is important, too.



Facilitator Notes:

Young children's learning is not compartmentalized. Motor development affects the development of other skills areas.

Verbal fluency- encouraged with exposure to vocabulary (body parts, spatial concepts, feelings) and open-ended questions

Pre-writing- balance, posture, grasp/release, pincer grasp, modulating variance in strength and force, shape and color recognition, patterns

Pre-math-number recognition, sequencing, counting, temporal concepts, shape and color recognition and patterns

Pre-reading- visual tracking, listening, shape recognition, vocabulary development

Kindergarten readiness- following directions, turn taking, increased attention & following a routine, approach to learning

Working memory- reinforced by doing it, and remember the motions, the routines, the sequence

Social skills- playing with others, problem solving, purposeful play, expressing emotions, sharing, physical social exchanges

Objectives



- Understand the mission of Special Olympics and become familiar with Project Unify and Young Athletes
- Understand the value of this field test and the expectation for feedback
- Understand motor development and its connection to other areas of a child's development
- **Set goals to create a community for our youngest athletes**

Script:

We move on to our final objective which focuses on creating that warm and welcoming community that meets children and families where they are and supports their engagement in Young Athletes.

Community Activity



Join the people from your site and create a flag that represents your Young Athletes community

Vision Values Hopes Dreams Action Goals

Share your flag with the whole group, and ways you may use the flag with the children and in your community

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Review the missions and goals that were created by participants when we spoke of bringing Young Athletes to our local schools, community settings, and into homes. Encourage participants to "translate" these statements into a visual representation of these dreams and hopes and plans. We respond to, remember, and gain inspiration from visual images.

Creating a flag that represents this newly formed Young Athletes community will support our efforts to make these visions and hopes into reality.

What participants will need: fabric markers, fabric scissors, pieces of cloth large enough to make a flag.

Provide 20-25 minutes for the activity.

Close and Questions



We are here because of the children.

We understand the importance of supporting the development of the whole child.

Motor development is fundamental to other areas of development.

Young Athletes is a program that we want to share with Virginia, Colorado, Nebraska and beyond. We appreciate your willingness to help us learn how to best implement Young Athletes in our schools, community settings, and in homes.

Special Olympics

Facilitator notes:

Be sure to refer back to the “Want to Know” chart, for participants may have posted questions that you could answer at this time. If time allows, and the questions will benefit from a whole-group discussion, address them now.

Script:

Be sure to let participants know that any questions not addressed today will be answered by the Program Coordinator after today.



This training was developed for Special Olympics
by School Readiness Consulting



A COLLABORATIVE ENTERPRISE OF
ALLARD AND ASSOCIATES