



FACT SHEET

Special Olympics provides year-round sports training, crucial health screenings, and life-changing leadership programs for people with intellectual disabilities. We have activities for all ability levels and serve both children and adults. Through the joy of sport, we transform lives every day and everywhere.

We transform lives through the joy of sport for people with intellectual disabilities.

The Games

Special Olympics Florida offers training and sports competitions across the state, with county and area competitions culminating in the State Games. The State Games feature Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the lighting of the “Flame of Hope,” awards ceremonies, and a host of social activities that are modeled after the Olympic Games.

Sports

Fall Classic:

- Flag Football
- Gymnastics
- Pickleball
- Powerlifting
- Softball

Summer Games:

- Athletics (Track & Field)
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Cheerleading
- Cycling
- Soccer
- Tennis

Sports with separate competitions:

- Bowling
- Cornhole
- Equestrian
- Golf
- Stand Up Paddle
- Surfing
- Swimming
- Volleyball

Sports offered at County/Area Levels:

- Alpine Skiing
- Figure Skating
- Open Water Swim
- Speed & Roller Skating
- Sailing
- Triathlon

Special Olympics Florida also provides the non-competitive **Motor Activities Training Program** (MATP) for athletes with profound challenges.

Unified Champion Schools use sports and education to encourage young people – both with and without intellectual disabilities – to create schools and communities where everyone is treated with respect and dignity.

Healthy Athletes® provides free health screenings and referrals. Healthy Athletes offers health assessments, health education, and, in some cases, corrective health care for Special Olympics athletes. Programs include: Special Smiles, Opening Eyes, Healthy Hearing, FUNfitness, Health Promotion, Fit Feet, Strong Minds, and MedFest.

Healthy Community focuses on a “whole-person” approach to health care, helping to coordinate care for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Services offered include: screenings and follow-up care; access to quality vision wear; hearing aids; insoles; family health forums; training on caring for people with ID/DD; opportunities to participate in sports fitness and Special Olympics programs; tracking of health care records; care through community and medical partners; advocacy for all participants; and health care mentors through university and hospital partners.

Athlete Leadership encourages athletes to explore roles previously considered “non-traditional.” They serve as board members, staff members, local/area committee members, officials, assistant coaches, volunteers, community ambassadors and more!

Unified Leadership teaches leaders without disabilities to learn from and value the input and experiences of people with ID, so people with ID are given opportunities work, lead, and excel.

Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children 2-7 with intellectual disabilities along with their siblings and peers, designed to introduce them to the world of sport. This program helps children improve fundamental physical, cognitive and social skills. Programs may be implemented in a group setting (agency, school, etc.) or conducted at home by parents.

Little ELITES (*Elementary Level Introduction To Entry-level Sports*)

A sports program for grades 2-5 that bridges the gap between Special Olympics Young Athletes (ages 2-7) and competitive Special Olympics sports (ages 8+) that works on skills through structured, school-based activities.

Rising Stars is a sports training program for ages 13+ focusing on player development and recreation play. Any skill ability can participate and mentor. Training is followed by a celebration event. Special Olympics Florida provides equipment kits, sports training guides, banners, shirts, and ribbons.

Camp Shriver brings together young people – both with and without intellectual disabilities -- who participate in camp activities alongside each other. The camp promotes inclusion and gives young people with and without ID the chance to interact.



Special Olympics athletes can participate without regard to economic, demographic, religious, or social factors, so they can improve physical fitness, self-esteem and the skills necessary to lead healthy, productive lives. Athletes or their parents are never charged a fee to take part in Special Olympics programs. This is crucial, as some of our participants live at or below the poverty level. We rely upon the generosity of individual and corporate contributions. Founded in 1972, Special Olympics Florida is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.