

# General Orientation Participation Guide

***Special Olympics***  
*Michigan*





Dear Volunteer:

You are about to embark on a challenge that will bring you into contact with some very talented athletes. These athletes train year-round for the opportunity to compete in Olympic-type sports. These are the athletes within Special Olympics.

Volunteers are key to the success of Special Olympics athletes. Whether your volunteer responsibility is to coach, raise funds, provide medical assistance, distribute lunches or perform any number of other volunteer jobs, we could not conduct quality athlete training or competition without you.

Your commitment to the well being of Special Olympics athletes is evidenced by your participation in this General Orientation. You have come forward to accept the challenge to make the lives of our athletes better through sports. Whether at a one-day event or with a year-round program, the contributions you make will affect the lives of our athletes for years to come.

Thank you for your commitment to the athletes of Special Olympics.

# Why is General Orientation Important?



- ✓ A knowledgeable volunteer is important to the success and promotion of Special Olympics. As a volunteer in Special Olympics, we hope you will become an ambassador of the program and an advocate for the athletes.

In order to accomplish this, we feel it is our responsibility to deliver the information about Special Olympics to you through this orientation

# Orientation Goals



- ✓ Describe global Special Olympics mission and philosophy and vision
- ✓ Describe developmental disabilities as a concept and its environmental expression or characteristics
- ✓ Cite the importance of sports and physical activity
- ✓ Identify Special Olympics current challenges and opportunities
- ✓ Advocate for persons with developmental disabilities
- ✓ Become a dedicated, impassioned volunteer

# Mission Statement



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

# Philosophy



- ✓ Special Olympics is founded on the belief that people with learning disabilities can, with proper instruction and encouragement, learn, enjoy, and benefit from participation in individual and team sports. These must be adapted only as necessary to meet the need of those with mental and physical limitations.
- ✓ Special Olympics believe that consistent training is indispensable to the development of and individual's sports skills. In addition, competition among those of equal abilities is the most appropriate means of testing these skills, measuring progress, and providing incentives for personal growth.

# Special Olympics Athlete's Oath



**“Let me win; but if I  
cannot win, let me  
be brave in the  
attempt.”**

# Official Logo



***Special Olympics***  
*Michigan*





# Special Olympics Participants



## What are Intellectual Disabilities?

- ✓ Individual with a slower rate of learning and a limited capacity to learn
- ✓ Such individuals also may have difficulty managing the ordinary activities of daily living, understanding the behavior of others, and determining their own appropriate social responses
- ✓ In different parts of the world, intellectual disabilities are referred to people who have:

Intellectual disability

Mental handicap

Developmental disability

Mental impairment

# Facts about Intellectual Disabilities



## Incidence

- ✓ Over 300 million worldwide
- ✓ 7.5 million in the United States

## Prevalence

- ✓ 7 times more prevalent than deafness
- ✓ 9 times more prevalent than cerebral palsy
- ✓ 15 times more prevalent than total blindness
- ✓ 35 times more prevalent than muscular dystrophy

# Classifications of Limitations



## Mild (90%)

- ✓ Learn more slowly than peers
- ✓ Walk and talk later
- ✓ Generally slightly shorter
- ✓ More susceptible to illnesses
- ✓ More difficulties in appropriate behavior

## Severe (10%)

- ✓ Usually incapable of traditional schooling
- ✓ Need to master life skills and communication skills

# Causes of Intellectual Disabilities



- ✓ Over 500 known causes
- ✓ Half have more than one causal factor
- ✓ Most prevalent known causes are fetal alcohol syndrome and iodine deficiency
- ✓ Most prevalent genetic cause is X-linked disorder
- ✓ Disorder can be biomedical, social, behavioral or educational

# Special Olympics History



- **June 1963** Eunice Kennedy Shriver starts a summer day camp for children and adults with intellectual disabilities at her home in Maryland, revealing their capabilities in a variety of sports and physical activities.
- **19-20 July 1968** The First International Special Olympics Games are held in Chicago's Soldier Field where 1,000 individuals with intellectual disabilities from 26 states and Canada compete in track and field, swimming, and floor hockey.
- **December 1971** The United States Olympic Committee gives Special Olympics official approval to use the name "Olympics," one of only two organizations.
- **5-11 February 1977** The first International Special Olympics Winter Games are held in Steamboat Springs, Colorado. Two hundred eighty-five athletes, from 35 US Programs and Canada participate in alpine and cross country skiing and figure skating.

# History continued...



- ✓ **February 1988** The International Olympic Committee (IOC) signs a historic agreement officially endorsing and recognizing Special Olympics.
- ✓ **20-27 July 1990** The third European Special Olympics Games are held in Strathclyde, Scotland. Twenty-four thousand athletes from more than 30 countries participate in eight official sports and five demonstration sports.
- ✓ **1-9 July 1995** The ninth Special Olympics World Summer Games are held in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. Over 7,000 athletes from 143 countries participate in 21 sports.
- ✓ **1-8 February 1997** The sixth Special Olympics World Winter Games are held in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Nearly 2000 athletes from 73 countries participate in five official and one nationally popular sports.

# History continued...



- ✓ **April 1997** Twenty-five athletes compete in the first South and East Africa 10K run. Fifteen athletes representing seven countries and each speaking a different language participate in the first African Regional Athlete Congress.
- ✓ **July 2015** The Special Olympics World Summer Games were held in the United States for the first time in 16 years. Los Angeles, California hosted the Summer Games with 7,000 athletes from 177 different countries attending!
- ✓ **History of Athlete Participation**
  - 2013    4,427,447 Athletes from 177 countries
  - 2000    About 1.2 Million from 156 countries, representing every continent
  - 1990    750,000 athletes
  - 1988    588,500 athletes
  - 1968    1000 athletes



# Who is Eunice Kennedy Shriver?

- ✓ Founder of Special Olympics
- ✓ Born in Brookline, Massachusetts
- ✓ Daughter of Joseph P. Kennedy and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy
- ✓ Recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom
- ✓ Inducted into the National Woman's Hall of Fame in 1998



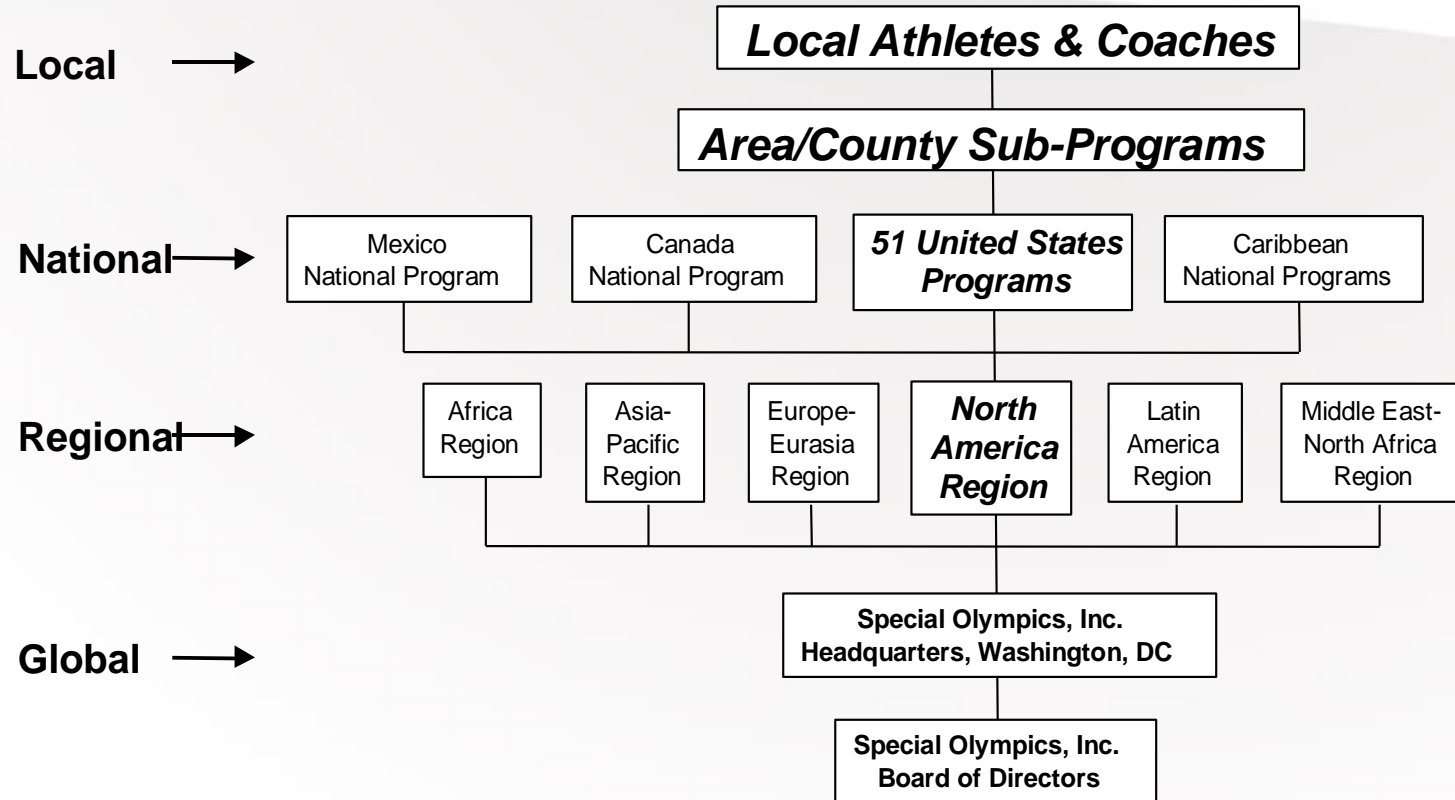


# Special Olympics Structure

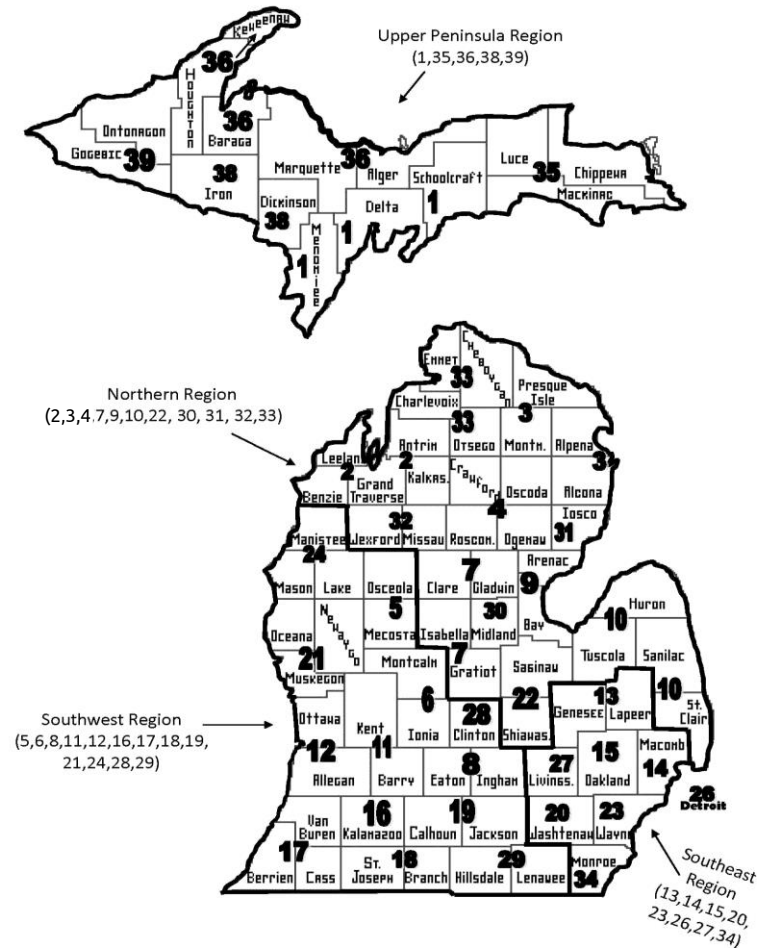


- ✓ Special Olympics International. is the world governing body of Special Olympics
- ✓ Based in Washington D.C.
- ✓ Headquarters is staffed by approximately 80 people in 8 different departments
- ✓ Special Olympic headquarters oversees the management of all World and Multi-National Games and coaching education

# Organizational Structure

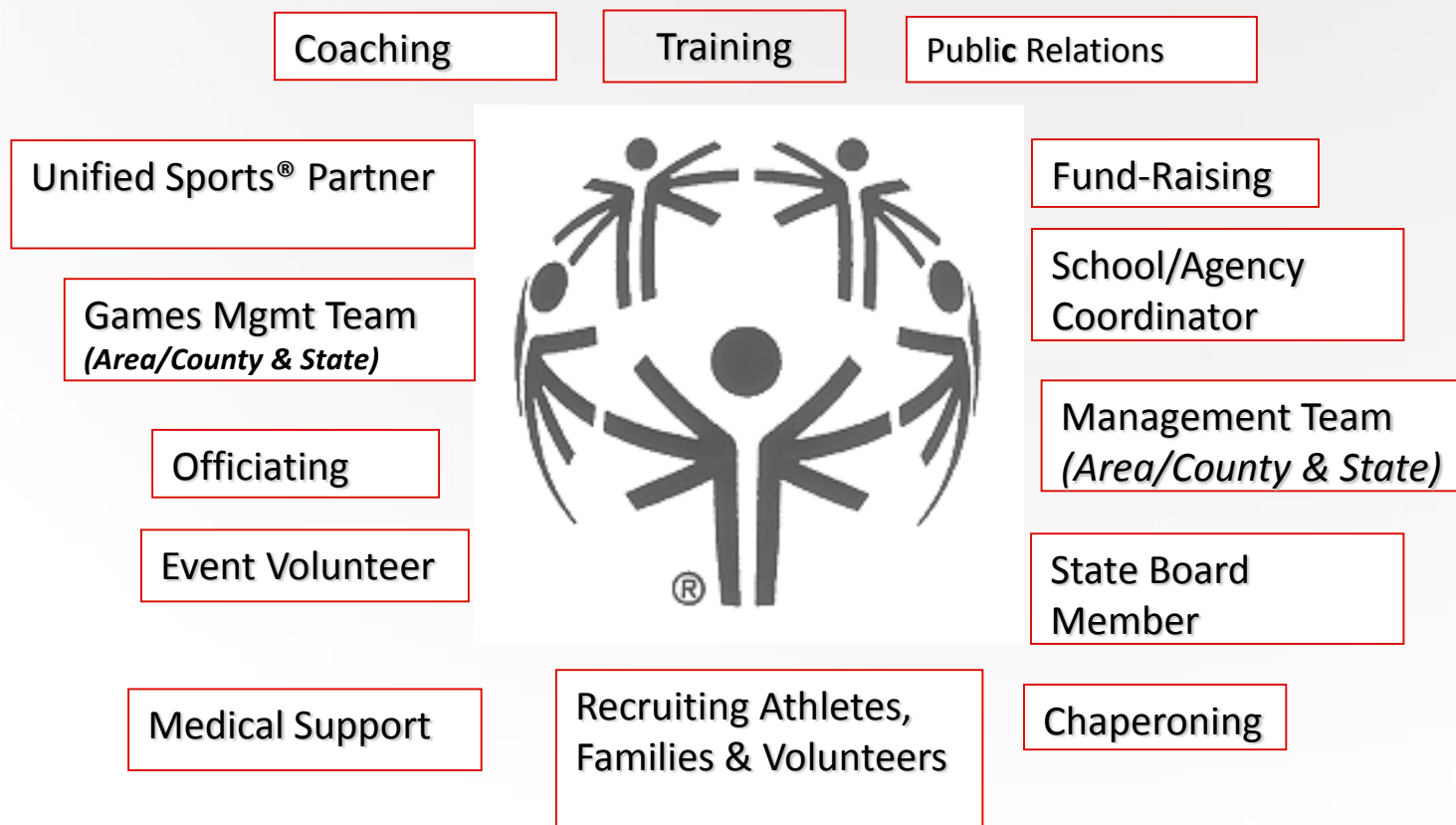


# Michigan Area Structure





# Roles for the Special Olympic Volunteer



# Special Olympics Participants



## Who can participate in Special Olympics?

- ✓ Persons eight years of age or older
- ✓ Those who have been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability
- ✓ Those who have registered to participate in Special Olympics

# Special Olympics Participants



Participants with Down Syndrome and Atlanto-axial Instability are prohibited from the following activities:

- ✓ Squat lifts
- ✓ Artistic gymnastics
- ✓ Soccer
- ✓ Flag Football
- ✓ Basketball
- ✓ Pentathlon
- ✓ Alpine Skiing
- ✓ Snowboarding

# Special Olympics Participants



## **Participants that are Blood-Borne Contagious Infection Carriers**

No Accredited Program or Games Organizing Committee may exclude, isolate, or discriminate from participation in any Special Olympics training or competition any athlete who is known to be a carrier of a blood-borne contagious infection or virus.

# Sport Training and Competition Objectives



- ✓ Identify how Special Olympics is unique from other sports organizations
- ✓ Identify Special Olympics sports and events
- ✓ Describe Special Olympic rules, ability grouping, honest effort, & divisioning.
- ✓ Describe available Special Olympics program offerings, challenges, and benefits to athletes



# Uniqueness from other Sports Organizations



1. Special Olympics does not charge a fee to athletes (or their families) to train or compete.
2. A variety of sports opportunities are provided for all ability levels.
  - a.) **MATP** (Motor Activities Training Program)
  - b.) **Individual Skills** - competition in the fundamentals of a sport
  - c.) **Modified Sports** – simple modifications made to certain events when an athlete is physically unable to participate otherwise
  - d.) **Traditional**
  - e.) **Unified Sports** – people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team

# Uniqueness from other Sports Organizations



3. Ability groupings are created through a process called divisioning to provide equitable competition (evenness) for all athletes within each ability grouping (division).
4. Awards are provided to all participants who compete.
5. The established criteria for athlete advancement to higher levels of competition is based on order of finish

# Funding



- ✓ Special Olympics Michigan is a non-profit, 501 © 3 organization.
- ✓ The program relies on the generosity of Michigan businesses, organizations, and individual donors.
- ✓ Fund-raising activities are conducted in Michigan at local, and state levels.

# Official Summer Sports



- ✓ Aquatics\*
- ✓ Athletics\*
- ✓ Basketball\*
- ✓ Bowling\*
- ✓ Cycling\*
- ✓ Equestrian Sports
- ✓ Soccer\*
- ✓ Flag Football\*

\*Sports offered in Michigan



# Official Summer Sports



- ✓ Golf\*
- ✓ Gymnastics-Artistic & Rhythmic\*
- ✓ Power lifting\*
- ✓ Roller Skating
- ✓ Softball\*
- ✓ Tennis
- ✓ Volleyball\*

\*Sports offered in Michigan



# Official Winter Sports



- ✓ Alpine Skiing\*
- ✓ Cross Country Skiing\*
- ✓ Figure Skating\*
- ✓ Floor Hockey
- ✓ Speed Skating\*
- ✓ Snowboarding\*

\*Sports offered in Michigan



# Nationally Popular Sports



- ✓ Bocce\*
- ✓ Badminton
- ✓ Sailing
- ✓ Snowshoeing\*
- ✓ Table Tennis
- ✓ Team Handball\*

\*Sports offered in Michigan



# Other Sports



✓ Horseshoes\*

✓ Poly Hockey\*

\*Sports offered in Michigan





# Special Olympic Rules



- ✓ All Special Olympics competitions follow the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. These rules have been adapted from official rules of the National Governing Body or International Federation of each sport offered by Special Olympics. Then they are approved by the Special Olympics Sports Rules Committee. After approval, the rules are set forth in the Official Special Olympics Rules books (Summer and Winter).
- ✓ Rules are based upon existing governing body and community sports organization rules in order to facilitate athletes transition into the community or school sports activities.

# Competition Opportunities for Athletes of All Abilities



- ✓ Special Olympics aims to provide a variety of competition opportunities for athletes of all abilities by offering events of various degrees of difficulty and challenge.
- ✓ The lowest ability athletes can participate in specially modified events such as the 25m Assisted Walk (athletics) or the 15m Flotation Race (aquatics).
- ✓ The Motor Activities Training Program (MATP) provides participation for individuals with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities requiring the greatest assistance and support.

# Competition Opportunities for Athletes of All Abilities



- ✓ In team sports, lower-ability athletes who are not yet ready for team play can participate in Individual Skills Competitions.
- ✓ For example, in football (soccer), athletes can earn medals for performing the skills Dribbling, Shooting, and a Run-and-Kick event.
- ✓ Most Special Olympics events have few differences from the sport played by individuals without disabilities. Higher ability athletes are now participating in events such as the marathon, or in Unified Sports events alongside athletes without disabilities.

# Special Olympics Divisioning



**Athletes or teams are divisioned using the following basic procedure:**

- 1. Divide by Gender:** Male, Female, or Combined (under some circumstances)
- 2. Divide by age:**

<u>Individual Sports</u>	<u>Team Sports</u>
8-11	15 and under
12-15	16-21
16-21	22 and over
22-29	30 and over

# Divisioning continued...



## 3. Divide by ability:

- Pre-competition information and scores are used to place individuals or teams into preliminary divisions.
- On-site preliminary events (timed heats or team observations) are conducted to verify or modify divisions for the final competition
- In individual sports, it is suggested that the difference between the fastest time and the slowest time within a final division should not vary by more than 10%

## 4. Combining groups:

- Age groups and/or males and females may be combined if this achieves a closer matching of ability
- The minimum number of athletes or teams in a division is 3. The maximum is 8

# Honest Effort



According to the Official Special Olympics Rules, athletes are to participate honestly and with maximum effort in all preliminary trials and/or finals. Athletes who fail to do so shall be disqualified from all remaining events by the relevant Sports Rules Committee at the competition.



# Good Sportsmanship

## *A Necessary Element of All Sports*



- ✓ **Redefining Winner:** In professional sports, there is only one goal: to have the most points at the end of the contest. However, in Special Olympics, the game is more about education, and there is a second goal, to teach our athletes how to be “winners in life.”
- ✓ **Winners:**
  - Make maximum effort
  - Continue to learn and improve
  - Refuse to let mistakes stop them

# Good Sportsmanship continued....



- ✓ **Athletes who are coached with this philosophy have reduced anxiety, increased self-confidence, more fun, and ultimately perform better.**

## **How to do this:**

- ✓ Reward effort with praise
- ✓ Let your athletes know that you appreciate that they tried hard, even if they were unsuccessful
- ✓ Tell your athletes that you are proud of them even if they did not win the game



# Winners



- ✓ Special Olympics provides an excellent opportunity for athletes to achieve success within their ability level.
- ✓ Individual athletes are generally placed in heats of six to eight, based on a time trial or pre-registration score.
- ✓ Athletes are awarded medals or ribbons based on the outcome of each heat.
- ✓ The emphasis that is placed on winning medals as opposed to ribbons is an important concept to look at and one that should.

# Winners continued....



- ✓ Many coaches have suggested that they would prefer that all athletes receive medals instead of only those who come in first through third place. It is their understanding that their athletes do not feel pride in receiving a ribbon and would prefer that medals be awarded.
- ✓ The lesson of winning and losing is an important part of life and an excellent lesson that can be taught through Special Olympics. It is not always possible to win, and athletes should understand that coming in first is not always possible or important.
- ✓ The attitude of the coach can be extremely important when winning and/or losing occurs. If an athlete is taught to feel good about their accomplishments and improvements that they have made, it truly does not matter what place they come in.
- ✓ An athlete will feel pride by a positive expression from their coach. On the other hand, if the coach emphasizes that a medal was not won, the athlete will indeed feel as though they have not achieved success.

# Winners continued.....



- ✓ Athletes will not always be able to win a medal, and it is important that they learn how to handle defeat and gain from the experience.
- ✓ Special Olympics Michigan will continue to support the official Special Olympics sports rules in awarding first through third place medals and awarding ribbons to all other competitors.
- ✓ We feel that learning to deal with winning and losing is a part of life's experiences and can contribute to the overall growth of the athletes.

# Honoring the Game



Honoring the game gets to the ROOTS:

**R- Rules-** We don't bend the rules to win. We respect the rules

**O- Opponents-** A worthy opponent is a gift that forces us to play to our best ability. We play our best to win, but not at the expense of others.

**O- Officials-** We treat officials with respect even when we disagree.

**T- Teammates-** We never do anything to embarrass our team.

**S- Self-** We try to live up to our own standards, regardless of what others do.

# Honoring the Game



## How to do this:

- ✓ Let your players know how to honor the game
- ✓ Be a good role model
- ✓ Encourage others to honor the game (i.e. parents ,coaches and assistants, chaperones)



## **COACH/CHAPERONE CODE OF CONDUCT**

Special Olympics Michigan adheres to the highest ideals of sport in the tradition of the Olympic movement. The Special Olympics Oath, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt," represents the ideal of competition that every Special Olympics athlete tries to achieve.

I understand that my participation in Special Olympics as a coach/chaperone is a call to excellence for me to teach in ways that bring honor to the athletes, to my family, and to Special Olympics. I pledge to uphold the spirit of this Code of Conduct, which is only a general guide for my conduct and does not describe all types of good behavior and bad behavior. If I do not obey this Code of Conduct, my Program or a Games Organizing Committee may suspend me from Special Olympics, either temporarily or permanently. If I am suspended from Special Olympics, I can appeal the decision in accordance with the attached Special Olympics Appeal Process.

### **I pledge that:**

#### **Sportsmanship**

- I will practice and instruct the athletes to have good sportsmanship and act in ways that will bring respect to the athletes, my team, Special Olympics and me.
- I will not use abusive language or behavior towards other persons. I will be a good role model and have a positive attitude.

#### **Training & Competition**

- I will conduct regular training sessions and meet training criteria set by Special Olympics Michigan. I will instruct the athletes to always try their best during training/practice and competitions.
- I will instruct the athletes to follow the rules of the sport, and I will encourage and support them inspite of their abilities.
- I will not allow the athletes to hold back in divisioning preliminaries in order to get into an easier heat in the finals.

#### **Personal Responsibility**

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual advances on others in person or through social media.
- I will not bully or harass any other person. Harassment or bullying is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts via internet, cell phone, or electronic communication device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any sexual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off the field, at any Special Olympics event, or in a vehicle.
- I will not drink alcohol or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics events. I will not smoke in non-smoking areas.
- I will not mishandle or abuse Special Olympics Michigan Funds
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy on the prohibition of dating athletes.
- I will obey all federal, state, and local laws and Special Olympics rules.
- I will always hold the athletes' well-being and safety as my utmost responsibility.

By signing below, I am saying that I have read, or have had read to me, this Coach/Chaperone Code of Conduct and that I agree to obey this Code of Conduct. If I violate this Code of Conduct and disagree with my punishment, I agree to follow the Special Olympics Appeal Process and I will accept their decision as final.



## **DISCIPLINARY STEPS FOR VIOLATING COACH/CHAPERONE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following progressive disciplinary steps may be taken with the program beginning at whichever step is deemed appropriate under the circumstances by the Area Director.

- Step 1** Verbal warning to the coach/chaperone with a written copy of the Incident Form to the Area Director.
- Step 2** A written Incident Report must be completed giving warning to the coach/chaperone with a copy to the Area Director.
- Step 3** The Area Director will conduct a personal meeting with the coach/chaperone to review unacceptable behavior and to agree on a plan for improvement.
- The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the Area Director and state office.
- Step 4** Suspension from coaching/chaperoning for a specific time period.
- The Area Director will discuss the circumstances and must approve/disapprove the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the coach/chaperone and a copy will be sent to the state office.
- Any further action must be referred to the Area Director. The Area Director and program staff member responsible for Area Management will approve any further action to be taken.
- Further action could be, but is not limited to:
- Suspension for a longer period
  - Permanent expulsion

## **COACH/CHAPERONE APPEAL PROCESS**

The coach/chaperone has the right to appeal any disciplinary action to the Area Director. The coach/chaperone must submit a written notice of appeal, with a copy to the Area Director and to the President/CEO of Special Olympics Michigan. This notice must include a request for a meeting within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action.

The appeal will be heard by the Area Director, the Director of Area Management or the Chief Program Officer, and the Chair from the Program Committee or designee not involved with the situation. A decision must be rendered in writing within 21 days following the meeting and may reverse, amend or affirm the disciplinary action. The decision shall be submitted to the coach/chaperone and to the Area Program and should include, if applicable, a plan of action for the coach/chaperone to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to the disciplinary action.





## ***ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT***

Special Olympics Michigan adheres to the highest ideals of sport in the tradition of the Olympic movement. The Special Olympics Oath, "Let me win, but if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt," represents the ideal of competition that every Special Olympics athlete tries to achieve.

I understand that my participation in Special Olympics is a call to excellence for me to train and compete in ways that bring honor to me, to my family, and to Special Olympics. I pledge to uphold the spirit of this Code of Conduct, which is only a general guide for my conduct and does not describe all types of good behavior and bad behavior. If I do not obey this Code of Conduct, my Program or a Games Organizing Committee may suspend me from Special Olympics, either temporarily or permanently. If I am suspended from Special Olympics, I can appeal the decision in accordance with the attached Special Olympics Athlete's Appeal Process.

### **I pledge that:**

#### **Sportsmanship**

- I will practice good sportsmanship and act in ways that will bring respect to my coaches, my team, Special Olympics and me.
- I will not use bad language, such as swearing or insulting other persons, and will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers or staff.
- I will show respect towards my fellow athletes, coaches and volunteers at all times. I will not make fun of other people or criticize them, but will give them praise and positive recognition.

#### **Training & Competition**

- I will train regularly and attend scheduled practices and meet training criteria set by my coaches and area. I will try my best during, training/practice, and competitions.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport, and I will ask questions when I do not understand.
- I will not hold back in divisioning preliminaries in order to get into an easier heat in the final. (alternative: I will perform in divisioning the same as I perform in competitions.)

### **Personal Responsibility**

- I will not make unwanted physical, verbal, psychological, or sexual advances on others in person or through social media.
- I will not bully or harass any other person. Harassment or bullying is any gesture or written, verbal, graphic, or physical act (including electronically transmitted acts via internet, cell phone, or electronic communication device) that is reasonably perceived as being motivated either by any sexual or perceived characteristic, such as race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression; or a mental, physical, or sensory disability or impairment; or by any other distinguishing characteristic. Such behavior is considered harassment or bullying whether it takes place on or off the field, at any Special Olympics event, or in a vehicle.
- I will not drink alcohol, smoke tobacco in non-smoking areas or use illegal drugs at Special Olympics venue sites, and I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all federal, state, and local laws and Special Olympics rules.

By signing below, I am saying that I have read, or have had read to me, this Athlete Code of Conduct and that I agree to obey this Code of Conduct. If I violate this Code of Conduct and disagree with my punishment, I agree to follow the Special Olympics Athlete's Appeal Process and I will accept their decision as final.





## **DISCIPLINARY STEPS FOR VIOLATING ATHLETE CODE OF CONDUCT**

The following progressive disciplinary steps may be taken with the program beginning at whichever step is deemed appropriate under the circumstances by a sanctioned area representative. The representative must notify the Area Director of any action that is taken.

- Step 1** Verbal warning to the athlete and to parent/guardian or caseworker with a written copy of the Incident Form to the Area Director.
- Step 2** A written Incident Report must be completed giving warning to the athlete with a copy to the Area Director and parent/guardian or caseworker.
- Step 3** The Area Director will conduct a personal meeting with the athlete to review unacceptable behavior and to agree on a plan for improvement.
- If the athlete is under 18, or over 18 and has a guardian, he/she will be accompanied by his/her parent/guardian or caseworker. If the athlete is over 18 and his/her own guardian, he/she may choose to have another adult present. The meeting will be documented in writing and copies distributed to the athlete, Area Director, state office, parent/guardian or caseworker.
- Step 4** Suspension from practices or competition for a specific time period (such as during the specific sport season).
- The Area Director must be contacted before an athlete is suspended. The Area Director will discuss the circumstances and must approve/disapprove the action. The action will be documented in writing and presented to the athlete, parent/guardian (or caseworker) and a copy will be sent to the state office.
- Any further action must be referred to the Area Director. The Area Director and program staff member responsible for Area Management will approve any further action to be taken.
- Further action could be, but is not limited to:
- Suspension for a longer period
  - Permanent expulsion

## **ATHLETE APPEAL PROCESS**

The athlete has the right to appeal any disciplinary action to the Area Director. The athlete or the athlete's representative must submit a written notice of appeal, with a copy to the Area Director and to the President/CEO of Special Olympics Michigan. This notice must include a request for a meeting within 30 days of being notified of the disciplinary action.

The appeal will be heard by the Area Director, the Director of Area Management or the Chief Program Officer, and the Chair from the Program Committee or designee not involved with the situation. A decision must be rendered in writing within 21 days following the meeting and may reverse, amend or affirm the disciplinary action. The decision shall be submitted to the athlete and to the Area Program and should include, if applicable, a plan of action for the athlete to correct the unacceptable behavior that led to the disciplinary action.

# Special Olympics World Games



- ✓ Special Olympics World Games are patterned on the principles and traditions of the Olympic Games. Special Olympics holds World Games every two years, alternating between winter and summer sports. World Games helps stimulate all levels of program growth worldwide. The Games are designed so that athletes of all ability levels have an opportunity to compete.

# Criteria for Athlete Advancement to Higher Level Competition



- ✓ *The following describes how athletes can advance to the next level of Special Olympics competition (i.e. from local Games all the way to Special Olympics World Games).*
- ✓ Athletes must have completed the minimum training requirements (including A minimum of 10 hours within two months prior to a culminating competition) and competition experiences with a certified Special Olympics coach.
- ✓ Training and competition experience must be in the same sport in which the athlete will be competing.

# Criteria for Athlete Advancement to Higher Level Competition



- ✓ If quotas are limited, priority is given to first place finishers from all divisions of the sport/event based on eligibility requirements. If the number of first place finishers exceeds the quota, athletes are selected to advance by random draw.
- ✓ If there are not enough first place finishers to meet the quota, all first place finishers advance. The remainder of the quota shall be met by random draw of the second place finishers. If the quota has still not been met, the process is repeated, adding each place of finish as necessary, until the quota is met.

# Criteria for Athlete Advancement to Higher Level Competition



- ✓ An athlete shall not be barred from advancement due to prior competition experience. For example, an athlete shall not be prohibited from advancing to World Games solely on the basis that he or she competed in previous World Games.
- ✓ Accredited Programs may establish additional criteria for advancement to higher-level competition based on behavior, medical, or judicial considerations. They may deviate from these advancement procedures due to the size or nature of their Programs. Requests to deviate from the established procedures must be submitted in writing as follows:

# Criteria for Athlete Advancement to Higher Level Competition



- ✓ For advancement to Multi-National and World Games, Special Olympics headquarters will consider and approve or disapprove all requests.
- ✓ For advancement to competitions up to the National or Accredited Program level, the Accredited Program will consider and approve or disapprove all requests.

# Special Olympics World Games



- ✓ *Athletes become eligible for nomination for participation in the Special Olympics World Games by winning a medal at their State Games.*
- ✓ **2017 Special Olympics World Winter Games  
Austria**

# Global Messengers



- ✓ Global Messengers are leaders and message-bearers, communicating the powerful declarations of hope, acceptance, dignity and courage of Special Olympics athletes.
- ✓ They help spread the message and vision of the movement as well as the benefits they have gained by participating in Special Olympics.
- ✓ Athletes are trained annually to become a global messenger of Special Olympics.



# Proven Benefits of Special Olympics



- ✓ Participation in sports brings significant benefits to people with intellectual disabilities of all ages and abilities. The following benefits also reflect benefits of sports for everyone.
- ✓ **Physical:** Physical fitness along with increased coordination, cardiovascular fitness, and endurance
- ✓ **Mental:** Knowledge of rules and strategy along with increased self-esteem, self-confidence, and pride
- ✓ **Social:** Teamwork, interaction with peers and people without intellectual disabilities, opportunity to travel and learn about other places and interests, family pride, and increased community awareness and acceptance

# Ways Special Olympics enhances school and community involvement



- ✓ Interaction with others through a common interest in sports
- ✓ Development of lifetime sports and skills
- ✓ Participation in community-based facilities
- ✓ Information and awareness through public education
- ✓ Media exposure
- ✓ Opportunities to be involved in leadership roles such as speakers, coaches, competition management personnel, Board Members etc.
- ✓ Development of Partners Clubs- peer coaches
- ✓ Development of Unified Sports- peer teammates

# Future Goals of Special Olympics



- ✓ Strengthen Special Olympics at the local and national levels, both programmatically and financially.
- ✓ Expand the number of athletes participating in the program at all levels.
- ✓ Develop the quality of the sports expertise involved in the management of Special Olympics at all levels.
- ✓ Enhance the quality of coaching education by improving materials and training programs.
- ✓ Offer additional training opportunities for athletes through camps, home training programs, Partners Clubs® and other training initiatives.

# Future Goals of Special Olympics continued...



- ✓ Enhance the quality of competitions within an Accredited Program, particularly at the local level.
- ✓ Expand Special Olympics Unified Sports® participation and competitive opportunities.
- ✓ Expand the Motor Activities Training Program to bring Special Olympics opportunities to more athletes with the greatest disabilities.
- ✓ Explore the possibilities for additional competition opportunities above the national level.
- ✓ Continue the active participation of Special Olympics Accredited Programs in the growth and development of the worldwide family of Special Olympics.

# Coach Education System



Special Olympics has made a commitment to coaching excellence. In support of that commitment, the Coach Education System has been developed. Through coaching education and Certification, coaches are able to enhance their skills while helping athletes reach their sport potentials.

# Benefits of Certification



## Why become certified?

- ✓ Promote the mission of Special Olympics
- ✓ Provide your athletes with the safest and most effective training sessions possible
- ✓ Enhance your coaching skills
- ✓ Keep up to date regarding current rules and training techniques
- ✓ Insure coaching consistency worldwide
- ✓ Demonstrate program credibility
- ✓ Protect yourself against liability

# General Orientation, Protective Behaviors, Concussion and Volunteer A



- ✓ All coaches and volunteers need to fill out the volunteer A form found under at <http://somi.org/sports/coaches.html> (Step 2).
- ✓ The first step for certification is to complete the online General Orientation and Protective Behaviors quizzes. These quizzes can be found at <http://somi.org/sports/coaches.html> (Step 3).
- ✓ All Coaches must complete concussion training. This training can be done online at <http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/training/index.html>. You must send your certificate of completion to the State Office
- ✓ Upon completion of a General Orientation, Protective Behaviors quizzes, concussion training and the Volunteer A form you may proceed with the certification option that is appropriate for your background and skills. Your Area Director can assist you in locating training sessions.

# Sport Skills Course



- ✓ At a sport-specific Skills Course, experienced trainers will present current training techniques along with the latest in NGB (National Governing Body) and Special Olympics sports rules.

You will learn:

- ✓ How to design a training plan
- ✓ How to lead a safe, effective practice that utilizes your time with athletes to the greatest advantage
- ✓ How to teach your athletes using basic skills progressions
- ✓ Upon completion of the sport-specific Skills Course, you will be ready for a 10-hour practicum working with Special Olympics athletes. Once the required competencies are demonstrated, you will be recognized as a Special Olympics Level 1 Certified coach in that particular sport.



# Principles of Coaching Course



- ✓ As you become more involved with your athletes and their training program, you will receive great assistance from this 6-8 hour course. Experienced coaches and facilitators will provide you with current tips on how to prepare you athletes for competition, physically and mentally.
- ✓ You will investigate your coaching philosophy and receive helpful tips for the planning and administration of your athletes' training and competition season.
- ✓ *Upon completion of a 10-hour practicum coaching Special Olympics athletes and demonstration of required competencies, you will be recognized as a Special Olympics Level II Certified Coach.*

# Comprehensive Mentoring Program



- ✓ To help you further enhance your coaching skills and to insure that your athletes work toward their maximum potential, you can continue your education in an individualized Mentoring Program. You will be paired with an experienced coach that has been chosen to help you with your specific coaching needs. Your Area Director will work out the specifics with you and your mentor.
- ✓ Upon completion of the requirements and demonstration of competencies, you will be recognized as a Special Olympics Level IV Certified Coach.

# Continuing Education Requirements & Opportunities



✓ In keeping with the commitment to Coaching Excellence, it is necessary to continue your coaching education in order to keep your certification current or upgraded. Special Olympics headquarters requires that each coach attend an approved Special Olympics course or Continuing Education course at least one time every three years in order to remain certified at any level.

✓ Continuing Education requirements can be met by taking advantage of a variety of opportunities. Some examples follow:

- Sport-specific workshops or seminars
- First Aid
- CPR
- Officials Training
- Rules Update
- National Governing Body Courses

# Universal Precautions



- ✓ HIV (Human Immune Deficiency Virus) and Hepatitis B are a fact of life. When working with Special Olympians, the same care should be used for infection control as you would use in any similar situation. When assisting athletes as competition or other events, you must pay attention to protective measures for both you and the athlete.

# Universal Precautions continued...



Some of the precaution you should take include the following to prevent transmission of blood-borne infections:

- ✓ If there is anyone with an open bleeding wound, any blood exposure, or any body fluid (particularly saliva or urine), you should let the medical staff take care of that person if possible. A medical staff person will be equipped with rubber gloves and will be better prepared to deal with injuries.
- ✓ Always wash your hands after touching people, especially if blood or body fluids were involved (even if you wore gloves). If this is not possible, always use good hand washing techniques after coming in from activities with athletes, especially before eating.

# Universal Precautions continued...



- ✓ If you have an open wound, especially on the hands, avoid direct contact with athletes and let medical staff handle any injuries, etc. Make sure your wound is well covered.
- ✓ If there are any items that have blood or body fluids on them, ask a medical staff person to dispose of them.
- ✓ If you have any further questions or concerns, talk to the medical staff doctor.
- ✓ These are offered as general guidelines. It is expected that everyone will follow common sense guidelines.

# Unified Sports

## *What are they?*



- ✓ The Special Olympics Unified Sports initiative brings together Special Olympics athletes and individuals without intellectual disabilities who are of similar age and ability to train and compete on the same team.
- ✓ The concept of combining athletes with intellectual disabilities and those without (called Unified Sports Partners) was first introduced in the United States in the mid-1980s to provide another level of challenge for higher ability athletes and to promote equality and inclusion.
- ✓ Today, the initiative includes virtually all Special Olympics World Games, as well as local, State and National Games.

# Who can be a partner?



- ✓ Unified Sports Partners come from a variety of backgrounds and can include an athlete's siblings and other family members, friends and schoolmates. When appropriate, parents serve as Unified Sports Partners in some sports, such as golf.



# What are the benefits?



- ✓ Learn new sports
- ✓ Develop higher-level sports skills
- ✓ Have new competition experiences
- ✓ Experience meaningful inclusion as each athlete is ensured of playing a valued role on the team
- ✓ Socialize with peers and form friendships (the program provides a forum for positive social interaction between teammates and often leads to long lasting friendships)
- ✓ Participate in the communities and have choices outside of Special Olympics (Unified sports programs often are initiated by community partners, including parks and recreation departments, schools, Boy and Girls clubs of America and community sports organization. These partnerships help farther include athletes in their community)

# How it Works



- ✓ Special Olympics Unified Sports teams are coached by volunteers specially trained by Special Olympics. The coach evaluates all potential athletes to determine whether they will be able to participate safely on the team. The Unified Sports programs can be initiated by community groups, businesses, schools, churches or Special Olympics. They can be conducted in a variety of settings, including: :
  - ✓ A program organized by a Special Olympics group
  - ✓ A community or church sports program, such as an adult softball league or YMCA volleyball league
  - ✓ An interscholastic or intramural after-school league at the junior high or high school level
  - ✓ A league system at a local Bowling center or an independent league sponsored by business or civic groups
  - ✓ A program in cooperation with a local recreation and park association

# Project Unify



- ✓ Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is an education-based project that uses sports and education programs to activate young people to develop school communities where all youth are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities
- ✓ Sports that offer Project Unify include:
  - ✓ Bocce
  - ✓ Bowling
  - ✓ Golf
  - ✓ Basketball
  - ✓ Volleyball
  - ✓ Soccer
  - ✓ Flag Football

# Healthy Athletes



- ✓ At more than 1.2 million free health screening clinics in more than 100 countries, the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program offers health services and information to athletes in dire need. In the process, Special Olympics has become the largest global public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities.
- ✓ Events that offer Healthy Athletes include:
  - ✓ State Winter Games
  - ✓ State Basketball Finals
  - ✓ State Summer Games
  - ✓ State Fall Games
  - ✓ State Poly Hockey & Unified Bowling Finals

# Young Athlete Program



- ✓ Young Athletes™ is a unique sport and play program for children with intellectual disabilities. The focus is on fun activities that are important to mental and physical growth.
- ✓ Children ages 2 1/2 to 7 enjoy games and activities that develop motor skills and hand-eye coordination. Young Athletes is an early introduction to sports and to the world of Special Olympics.
- ✓ Parents say their children in Young Athletes™ also develop better social skills. The confidence boost makes it easier for them to play and talk with other children on the playground and elsewhere.

# The End

***Special Olympics***  
*Michigan*

