

Special Olympics, The Global Movement

With sports at the core, Special Olympics is a leader in the field of intellectual disability, making incredible strides in the areas of health, education, family support, research and policy change in over 150 countries worldwide. Today, Special Olympics has...

- More than **2.25 million** athletes
- More than **200** Special Olympics Programs in more than **150** countries
- **30** Olympic-type summer and winter sports
- **7** regional offices around the world, including Belgium, Egypt, South Africa, India, China, Panama, and USA
- More than **700,000** volunteers
- More than **500,000** coaches
- Nearly **25,000** competitions around the world each year

Special Olympics Mission

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 friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics Vision

The Special Olympics movement will transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

What is Intellectual Disability?

The World Health Organization estimates that 3 percent of the world's population has intellectual disabilities, which means there are up to 190 million people in the world with intellectual disabilities, making it the largest disability population on earth.

According to the definition by the American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR), an individual is considered to have intellectual disabilities based on the following three criteria:

1. Intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75
2. Significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas; and
3. The condition manifests itself before the age of 18.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, an athlete must be at least eight years of age and identified by an agency or professional as having one of the following conditions: intellectual disability, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that have required specially designed instruction.

History and Leadership

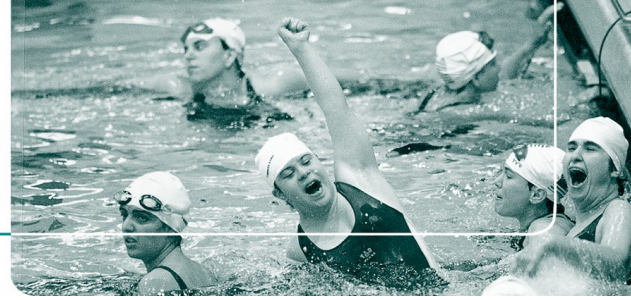
Special Olympics began in 1968 with the First International Special Olympics Games at Soldier Field in Chicago. Since then, millions have benefited from the movement.

Bruce Pasternack is President and CEO of Special Olympics.

Timothy P. Shriver is the Chairman of Special Olympics Board of Directors.

The Board Vice Chairs are **Nadia Comaneci**, Olympic Gymnastics Gold Medalist; and **Raymond J. Lane**, Partner, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

Eunice Kennedy Shriver is the Founder of Special Olympics and its Honorary Chairperson.



Special Olympics Initiatives

Special Olympics Healthy Athletes™ is an initiative designed to help Special Olympics athletes improve their health and fitness, leading to an enhanced sports experience and improved well-being. Athletes receive health services at Special Olympics competitions, while healthcare professionals learn about the health needs of Special Olympics athletes, gaining confidence in volunteering their skills to an underserved population. Special Olympics Healthy Athletes includes these disciplines: Fit Feet - podiatric screening and treatment; FUNfitness - comprehensive physical therapy; Health Promotion - health and wellness (disease prevention); Healthy Hearing - audiological screenings; Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes® - quality vision screenings and eye health care; and Special Smiles® - dental screening, education and referrals.

Special Olympics Get Into It™ is a K-12 service-learning curriculum developed to introduce Special Olympics and explain intellectual disabilities to young people and encourage them to become involved in the Movement and work to dispel the myths and stereotypes that surround people with intellectual disabilities in 60 countries in 14 languages.

Special Olympics Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs) offer athletes the opportunity to take active leadership roles both on and off the playing field. Athletes serve on the Boards of Directors, officiate competitions, coach other athletes, act as spokespersons and make decisions about the future of Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Unified Sports™ is a program that brings together people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same athletic team.

Family Support Network gives families support in communities within Special Olympics. Understanding the challenges of raising a special needs child, Special Olympics has created the Family Support Network to provide a connection for families of Special Olympics athletes. There are more than 100 networks in more than 60 countries.

Special Olympics Young Athlete Program provides opportunities for young athletes between the ages of 2 ½ and 7 years of age to learn basic sports skills and motor activities to prepare them for Special Olympics competition.

Benefits of Special Olympics

Individuals who compete in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills and greater self confidence. They exhibit courage and enthusiasm and build lasting friendships. These life skills enhance their ability to live normal productive lives.

More than ever, Special Olympics athletes hold jobs, own homes, go to school and successfully confront life challenges on a daily basis.

Through millions of individual acts of inclusion where people with and without intellectual disabilities are brought together through Special Olympics programs, longstanding myths are dispelled, negative attitudes changed, and new opportunities to embrace and celebrate the giftedness of people with intellectual disabilities are created.

Special Olympics movement can ultimately transform communities by inspiring people throughout the world to open their minds, accept and include people with intellectual disabilities and thereby celebrate the similarities common to all people.

Funding

Special Olympics receives funding in support of the movement from individuals, corporations, foundations, government and restricted grants. The vast majority of funding received is from individuals through the Special Olympics direct mail program.

The Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics is the largest grass-roots fundraiser and public awareness vehicle for Special Olympics in the world, made up of more than 75,000 law enforcement officers in all 50 U.S. states, all Canadian provinces and 35 countries. For 25 years, the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics has raised more than US\$125 million, with a record US\$21 million raised in 2005 alone.