

# Volunteer General Orientation



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# General Orientation Goals

- Describe global Special Olympics mission, philosophy and vision
- Describe intellectual disabilities and developmental disabilities as a concept
- Cite importance of sports & physical activity
- Identify Special Olympics challenges/opportunities
- Advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities
- Become a dedicated, impassioned volunteer



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# Mission

**The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 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.**



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# Purpose

- By using sport as a vehicle for social change, Special Olympics Rhode Island strives to create opportunities for meaningful interaction and self discovery for every member of the community.



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# Core Values

- **Respect** - Our athletes need to be looked at as viable people in the community.
- **Inclusion** - Can you put aside the misperceptions and meaningfully include people with intellectual disabilities? Not just tolerate them, but accept them and include them?
- **Unity** - Our athletes don't want to be **one among you**, they want to be **one of you**.



# Guiding Principles

- Build relationships through fun.
- Unify communities through sport.
- Show respect through meaningful inclusion.
- Support athlete and volunteer leadership development.
- Provide high quality experiences for fans of our movement.



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# Philosophy

## Individuals with intellectual disabilities who:

- Receive appropriate instruction and encouragement
- Receive consistent training and quality coaching
- Compete among those of **equal** abilities
- Experience new opportunities



**Achieve personal growth**



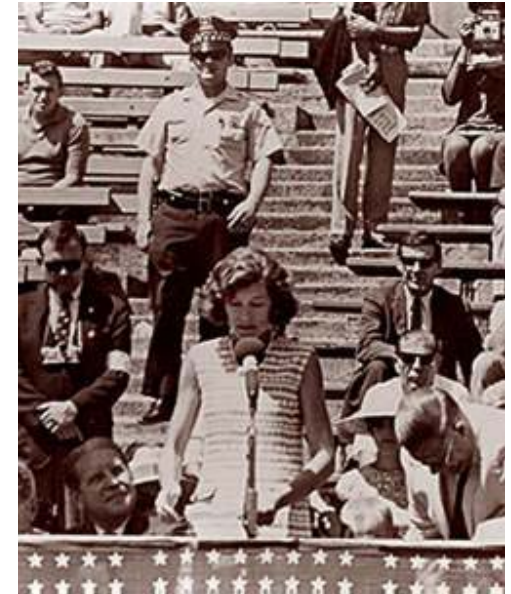
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# History

- Eunice Kennedy Shriver started a day camp in her backyard for individuals with intellectual disabilities in 1960.
- Special Olympics was incorporated in 1968 and the first World Games were held in Chicago.
- Special Olympics Rhode Island was incorporated in 1979.
- There are currently 180 countries and nearly 3 million athletes participating in Special Olympics.



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# Organizational Structure



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# Special Olympics RI Structure

- The athletes are served by all.
- The Board of Directors sets policies.
- The Executive Director, Dennis DeJesus. implements Board directives and oversees the SORI staff.
- Program staff oversee the implementation of policies and procedures.
- Development staff raise funds for the organization
- Marketing/Communications staff is responsible for protecting the brand and logo of SORI and for educating internal & external public about the mission & impact of SO.
- Local programs are individual teams (schools, adult service providers, community based) that provide programming for athletes and raise funds for their local programs.



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# Volunteer Opportunities

**Coach or Assistant Coach**

**Public Speaking**

**Public Relations**

**School Partners**

**Fundraising**

**Unified Sports™ Partner**

**School/Agency Coordinator**

**Games Management  
Team Member**

**Sport Directors**

**Sports Official**

**Board Member**

**Event Volunteer**

**Sports Manager**

**Medical Support**

**Office Support**

**Recruiting Athletes,  
Families & Volunteers**



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# Volunteer Code of Conduct

- Provide health & safety (athletes, volunteers, & spectators)
- Dress & act appropriately
- Follow all rules & guidelines
- Report emergencies to appropriate authorities
- Abstain from alcohol, tobacco & illegal substances while volunteering
- Abstain from inappropriate contact or relationships with athletes, volunteers or others



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# Special Olympics Rhode Island is:

- Athlete Focused
- Volunteer Driven
- Staff Supported

**You** make it happen!

Special Olympics Rhode Island uses 5,000 volunteers annually.



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# Statement of Eligibility

## Special Olympics services:

- Persons with Intellectual Disabilities and/or Developmental Disability
- Ages 8 years or older may train and compete
- Ages 2 – 7 may train as part of the Young Athletes program



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# Persons with ID/DD are:

- Identified by an agency or professional
- Have a cognitive delay
- Have a closely related developmental disability



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# Incidence & Prevalence of ID

- Incidence
  - 300 million worldwide
  - 7.5 million in U.S.
- Prevalence
  - 7 times more likely than deafness
  - 9 times more likely than cerebral palsy
  - 15 times more likely than total blindness
  - 35 times more likely than muscular dystrophy



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# How Special Olympics is the Same as Other Sports Organizations

- Special Olympics follows the National Governing Body rules of each sport.
- Athletes train prior to competition.
- Competitions are held locally (Area or Region) allowing athletes to qualify to advance to higher levels of competition (State, National or World Games).



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# How Special Olympics is Unique from Other Sports Organizations

- Offers sports opportunities for all ability levels.
- Divisions athletes based on ability for equitable competition.
- Present awards to all participants.
- Uses a random draw for advancement to higher levels of competition.
- Does not charge fees to athletes or family members to participate.



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# Sports

- Winter
  - Alpine Skiing
  - Basketball
  - Nordic Skiing
  - Snowboarding
  - Unified Volleyball
- Fall
  - Cross country running
  - Flag Football
  - Duck-pin Bowling
  - Unified Basketball
  - Tennis
  - Soccer
  - Project Unify Volleyball
  - Ballroom Dancing
- Spring
  - *Cycling*
  - *MATP*
  - *Powerlifting*
  - *Project Unify Basketball*
  - *Aquatics*
  - *Athletics*
  - *Unified Bowling*
  - *Unified Soccer*
- Summer
  - Unified Golf
  - Unified Sailing
  - Unified Softball



# A Place for Everyone

Special Olympics offers sports programs for all ability levels. Basketball is a great example.

- **Individual Skills** – Three skills stations (target pass, sport shot, 10M dribble) for lower skilled athletes and athletes utilizing wheelchairs.
- **Full Court** – 5 on 5 team play utilizing Rhode Island High School League rules.



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# Motor Activities Training Program

- Comprehensive motor activities and sports skills training for individuals with severe disabilities.
- Athletes participate in a non-competitive Challenge Day event to demonstrate skills learned.



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# Young Athletes Program

- Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children ages 2 -7.
- The program consists of a series of developmentally appropriate activities designed specifically for young children.
- The program seeks to strengthen physical development and self-esteem for children by building skills for future sports participation and socialization prior to Special Olympics competition eligibility (age 8).



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# Unified Sports

- Provides opportunities for athletes to participate in competitive sports on teams with peers without intellectual disabilities.
- Those involved have an opportunity to become teammates and friends.



# Training Considerations

As a coach, use:

- Frequent repetition of a skill
- Frequent reinforcement of correct behavior
- Consistent use of key action-oriented words
- Appropriate levels of instruction
- Continuous assessment



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# Levels of Instruction

**Physical Assistance** – Guide the athlete through the correct motion.

**Physical Prompt** – Help start the athlete's motion.

**Demonstration** – Show the athlete what to do.

**Verbal** – Tell the athlete what to do.



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# Sportsmanship

- Expectations apply to coaches, athletes and partners
- Respect yourself, opponents, officials and teammates
- Uphold the spirit and letter of the rules
- Set the example for others to follow



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# Coach Training Resources

- Sport Specific Skills Program Guides\*
- Special Olympics Sports Rules\*



- International/National Governing Body Rules\*
- Family Home Training\*

\*Available at Coaches' section of SORI website.



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# Sports Rules

- Special Olympics rules are based on international and national governing body rules
- Contain few modifications
- Provide sports & events for all ability levels
- Govern all Special Olympics competitions



# Divisioning

Provides all competitors a chance to excel

- No more than 3-8 athletes or teams per division
- Grouped by age & gender
- Further separated by **ABILITY** to insure fair competition



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# Competition Opportunities

- Leagues
- Local scrimmages & competition
- Tournaments
- Community or club programs
- Invitationals
- Regional & state competitions
- National & World Games



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# Progression of Games

Local  
Area  
State  
National  
World



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# Criteria for Athlete Advancement

## Process

- **Training requirement:**  
Two hours per week for eight weeks prior to the culminating competition.
- **Competition requirement:**  
Random draw from all first place finishers until quota is filled. If quota is not filled, continue with random draw of 2<sup>nd</sup> place finishers until quota is filled followed by 3<sup>rd</sup> place finishers.

## Other considerations:

- Behavior and ability to travel independently to an overnight event.
- Athlete not barred from selection process due to prior competition experience at higher level of competition
- Additional criteria approved by the Program.



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# Proven Benefits of Participation

- Improved strength, stamina & motor skills
- Improved self-esteem & self-confidence
- Healthy, skill-dependable employees
- Greater independent participation in the community



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# Special Olympics Challenges

- More athletes
- More volunteers, especially coaches and youth
- Quality training and competition
- Athlete leadership
- Inclusive sports opportunities
- More family involvement
- Public education
- Funding



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# Putting It All Together

- *TRAINING* is the key
- *COMPETITION* is the means
- Skill, confidence, courage & joy are the *OUTCOMES*
- Better preparation for life is the *GOAL*
- Lifelong skills & increased independence are the *RESULTS*



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# The Spirit of Special Olympics

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Let me win.  
But if I cannot win,  
let me be brave in the attempt.

*- Athlete Oath*



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