



Eligibility and Compliance for Athletes and Unified Partners

ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

Age Requirements

Age 2: Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children ages 2 to 7 with and without intellectual disabilities (ID). This program helps children of all abilities enjoy physical activity, develop healthy habits, build important skills, and reach their full potential.

Age 6: An athlete can start training with his or her Local Program.

Age 8: The minimum age requirement for training and competition in Special Olympics.

Middle School: In the Unified Champion Schools Program, children in 5th through 8th grades train and compete in basketball, cornhole, soccer, candlepin bowling and track. It also includes well-rounded programming (sports, youth leadership, whole school engagement, and sustainability).

High School: In the Unified Champion Schools Program, youth in 9th through 12th grades train and compete in soccer, basketball, track and volleyball. The Program also includes youth leadership, whole school engagement, and sustainability as well as sports.

Beyond High School: There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics.

Identifying Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (ID)

Every person with an intellectual disability who is at least two years of age is eligible to participate in Special Olympics. A person has an intellectual disability (for purposes of determining his or her Special Olympics eligibility) if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

- The person has been identified by an agency or professional as having an intellectual disability.
- The person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligent quotient ("IQ") testing or other measures which are generally accepted within the professional community.
- The person has a closely related developmental disability.

ATHLETE COMPLIANCE

Compliance ensures that athletes are safe and healthy to train, compete and experience Special Olympics. Every athlete must have the following appropriate application completed to participate with their Local Program:

- Young Athletes Program Application (for athletes 2 to 7 years old) every three years
- Application for Participation (for athletes 8 years of age and older)
 - [New](#) athletes or re-registering athletes must complete the new Application for Participation and complete the Athlete Renewal Form every subsequent year.
- School Application for Participation (athletes participating in Middle School Unified Sports)
- Communicable Disease Waiver (required for all athletes) [must be on file for every participant](#)

Supplemental Forms

Atlanto-Axial Instability (AAI) Special Release Form

Only to be completed if symptoms of spinal cord compression or Atlanto-axial instability were found in pre-participation exam and a doctor then provided clearance for participation on page five of application for participation.

Emergency Medical Care Refusal Form Refusal (Parent/Guardian Signature)

Should only be completed if a legal guardian does not consent to emergency medical care on religious or other grounds and has marked a box under the Emergency Care provision on page two of application for participation.

Emergency Medical Care Refusal Form (Athlete Signature)

Should only be completed if an athlete does not consent to emergency medical care on religious or other grounds and has marked a box under the Emergency Care provision on page two of application for participation.

Medical Referral Form

Should only be completed by specialist if the athlete has been examined by a physician and was denied sports clearance based on the need for further medical evaluation.

LOCAL PROGRAM VOLUNTEER & UNIFIED PARTNER ELIGIBILITY

Age Requirement

Local Program Volunteers & Unified partners must be at least 8 years of age.

Unified Partner Eligibility

Unified Partners are individuals without intellectual disabilities who train and compete as teammates with Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities). Unified Partners go through the same process (outlined below) to become a Local Program Volunteer but participate as teammates rather than supporting athletes at practices or competitions. Athletes may not become Unified Partners but athletes who are looking to take on my responsibility on their team may do so by becoming a coach or by going through Athlete Leadership Training.

LOCAL PROGRAM VOLUNTEER & COMPLIANCE

To become a Unified Sports® Partner or Local Program Volunteer, you must complete the following:

- [Local Program Volunteer and Unified Partner Application](#) every three years.
- [Communicable Disease Waiver](#)
- A background check (required only if you are 18+) every three years
 - If you answered NO to all four questions in Section A of the LPV Application:
 - [Click here](#)
 - Enter good deed code bs0w717 if prompted
 - If you answered YES to any of the questions in Section A of the LPV Application:
 - [Click here](#)
 - Enter good deed code g7ukn1p if prompted
- [Online protective behaviors training](#) (required only if you are 18+) every three years.