



Special Olympics

Alaska

Be a fan™

***General Orientation to
Special Olympics***

General Orientation Goals

at the completion of this course, you should be able to. . .

- Describe the Special Olympics mission, philosophy, and vision.
- Describe intellectual disabilities/mental retardation as a concept.
- Cite importance of sports and physical activity.
- Identify Special Olympics challenges and opportunities.
- Advocate for persons with ID/MR.

Mission of Special Olympics

The mission of Special Olympics is 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.

Mission of Special Olympics

Components

- Year-round sports training and competition
- Olympic-type sports
- Open to individuals with intellectual disabilities

Outcomes

- *Physical fitness*
- *Courage and joy*
- *Sharing of gifts and skills*
- *Friendship*
- *Community Inclusion*

Philosophy of Special Olympics

Individuals with intellectual disabilities will...

- Receive appropriate coaching, instruction, and encouragement
- Receive consistent training
- Compete with other athletes of equal abilities

Result = Personal Growth

Vision of Special Olympics

To help bring persons with intellectual disabilities into larger society under conditions whereby they are:

- Accepted
- Respected
- Given a chance to become useful and productive citizens

Organizational Structure of Special Olympics

- **Local**
 - ✓ 18 Alaska Community Chapters
- **State**
 - ✓ Alaska is 1 of 52 state-level programs
- **National**
 - ✓ Special Olympics North America; Canada; Caribbean; Mexico
- **Regional**
 - ✓ Africa, Asia/Pacific, East Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East/North Africa, North America
- **Global**
 - ✓ Special Olympics, Inc. Board of Directors

Organizational Structure of Special Olympics

- **Athletes**
 - ✓ More than 1400 statewide
- **SO-AK Board of Directors**
 - ✓ Set policy and procedures
- **President/CEO**
 - ✓ Implements Board directives
- **SO-AK Staff**
 - ✓ Oversee implementation of policies and procedures
- **Volunteer Community Directors**
 - ✓ Oversee Community Management Teams
- **Volunteers**
 - ✓ Implement sports and other programs

Special Olympics Alaska

Initiatives

Unique from Other Sports Organizations

- Sports opportunities for all ability levels
- Divisioning for equitable competition
- Awards for all participants
- Random draw for advancement to higher levels of competition
- No fees or costs charged to athletes or family members for training or competition

Special Olympics Alaska Goals

- **Increase** the number of Athletes and volunteers
- **Improve** the quality of coaching
- Provide inclusive sports opportunities
- **Create** Family Opportunities
- **Increase** Public Awareness
- **Focus** on ability of athletes

Incidence and Prevalence of Intellectual Disabilities

- *Incidence*
 - 300 million worldwide
 - 7.5 million in US
- *Prevalence*
 - 7 times more than deafness
 - 9 times more than cerebral palsy
 - 15 times more than total blindness
 - 35 times more than muscular dystrophy

SO-AK Athletes are individuals who

Demonstrate substantial limitations in present functioning characterized by:

- Sub-average intellectual functioning
- Limitations in two or more areas of adaptive behavior*
- Usually manifested before age 18

**Adapted behavior areas include: communication, self care, home living, social skills, leisure, health and safety, work, academics*

Eligibility Guidelines

Special Olympics training and competition are provided for:

1. Persons with an identified Intellectual Disability
 - ✓ Identified by agency or professional
 - ✓ Have a cognitive delay
 - ✓ Have a closely-related developmental disability
2. Aged 8 years or older
3. Has completed registration forms with Special Olympics to participate

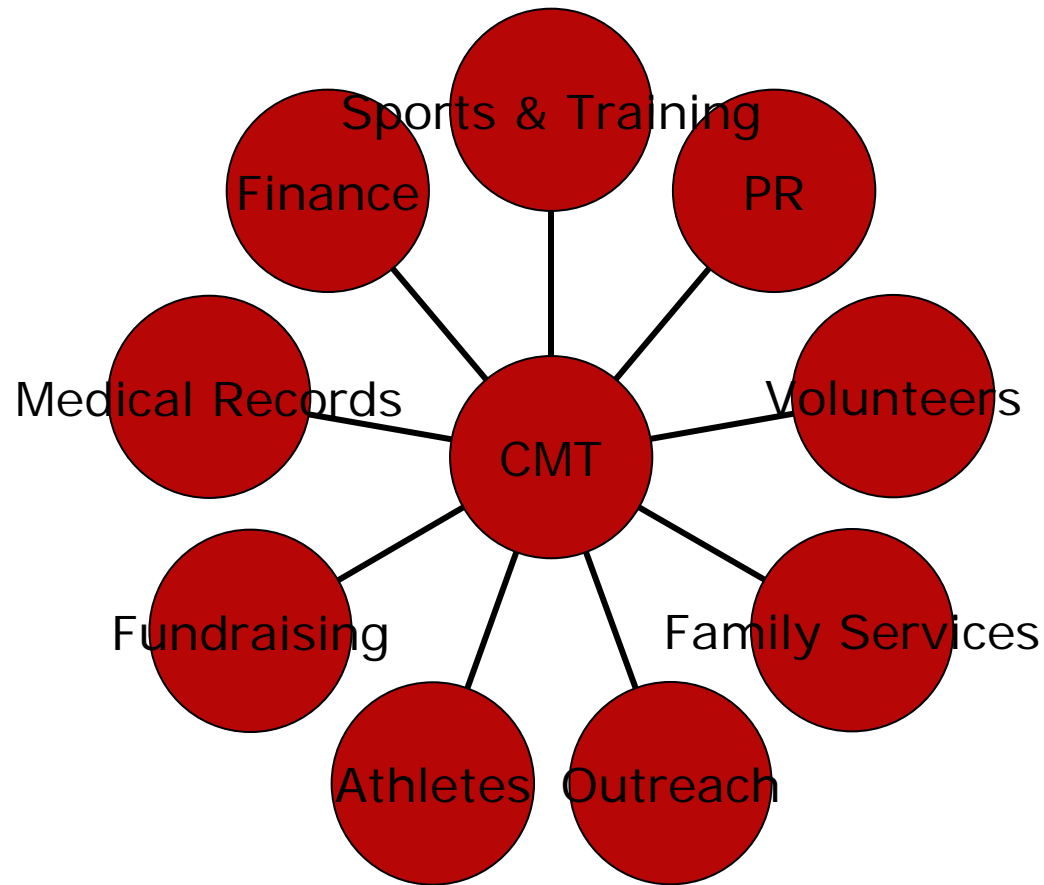
Sports Offered in Special Olympics Alaska

- Winter Sports Season (7)
 - ✓ Alpine Skiing, Cross Country Skiing, Figure Skating, Floor Hockey, Snowshoeing, Snowboarding, Speed Skating
- Summer Sports Season (5)
 - ✓ Athletics, Aquatics, Basketball, Gymnastics, Powerlifting
- Fall Sports Season (3)
 - ✓ Bocce, Golf, Equestrian
- Bowling Season

Community Level Organization

Community Director

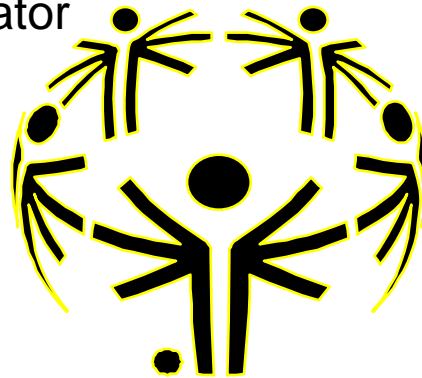
Community Management Team



Volunteer Opportunities

Officiating
Unified Sports Partner
School Program Coordinator

Coaching
Training Buddy
Partners Club Member



Torch Run
Games Volunteer
Medical Support
Office Support

Training Considerations for Special Olympics Athletes

- Frequent repetition and reinforcement
- Consistent use of a few action-oriented key words
- Appropriate levels of instruction
- Continuous assessment

Special Olympics Alaska Resources

- www.specialolympicsalaska.org
 - Program Support
- Sport-specific Skills Program Guides
- SOI Official Sports Rules
- International/ National Governing Body Rules

Sports Rules

SO-AK offers competitions in 16 sports

- Based on International and National Governing Body Rules
- Contain few modifications
- Provide sports and events for all ability levels
- Govern all Special Olympics competitions
- All rules may be found at:

www.specialolympicsalaska.org

Divisioning Athletes for Competition Guidelines

Providing all competitors a chance to excel!

- No more than 3-8 athletes or teams per division
- Grouped by age and gender
- Further separated by *ABILITY*:
 - For individual competition –
 - 10-15% range from training/assessment scores within groups
 - For team competition -
 - Skills Assessment Tests and
 - Classification rounds of competition

Progression of Special Olympics Competitions

- Local
- State
- Regional
 - National
 - World

Criteria for Athlete Advancement

Process

- Athlete must have completed training requirement: 10 hours within 2 months prior to culminating competition.
- Previous competition: May only advance in same sport.
- Quota driven
- Random draw by event:
 - ✓ All first place finishers
 - ✓ If quota not filled, 2nd place finishers

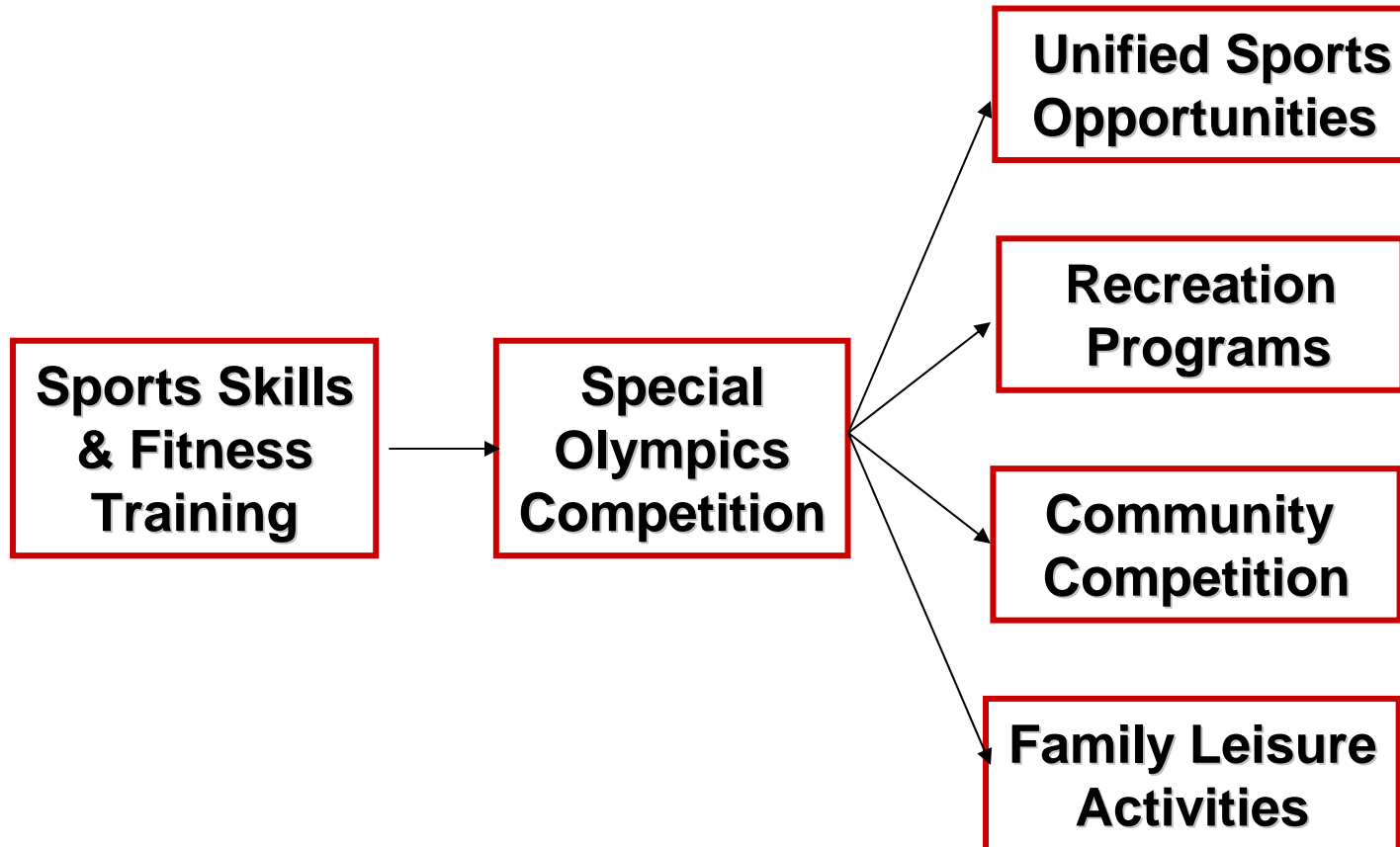
Other considerations

- Athlete not barred, due to prior competition experience at higher level of competition
- Additional criteria from Program, approved by appropriate governing body

Competition Opportunities

- Community Leagues
- Local scrimmages and competition
- Tournaments
- School Sports as Unified Teams
- Community or Club Programs
- Invitational Tournaments
- Program-level games and competition

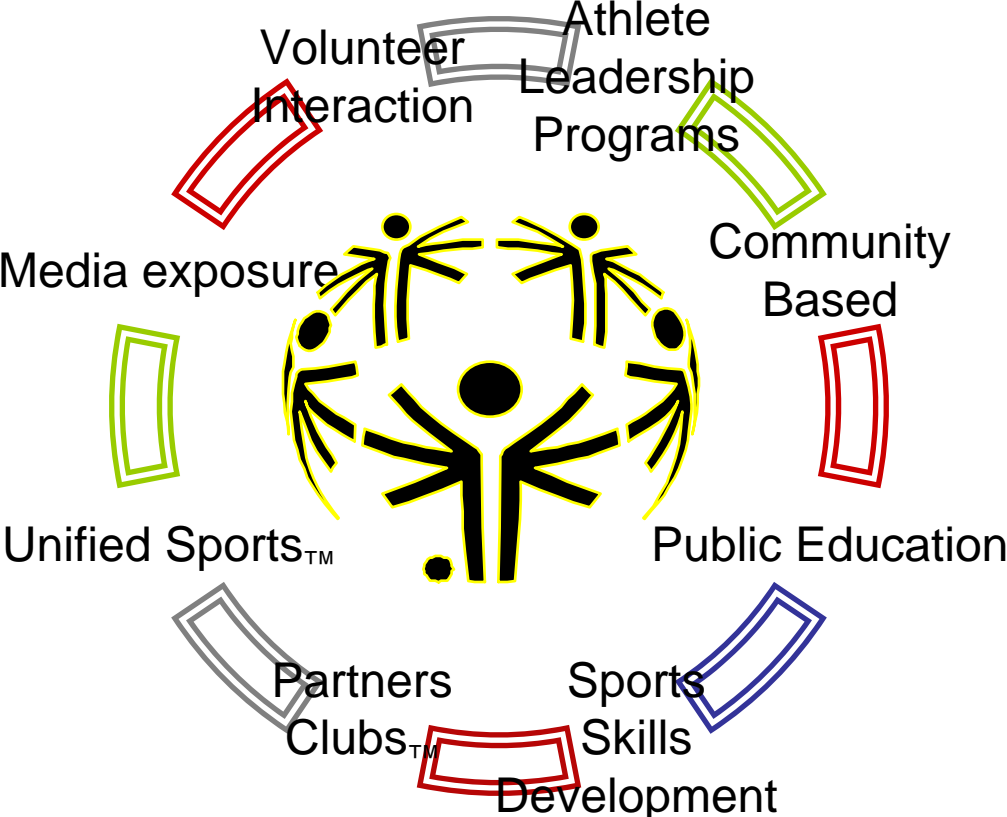
Increasing Sports Opportunities



Benefits for Athletes Participating

- Improved strength, stamina and motor skills
- Improved self-esteem and self-confidence
- Opportunities for physical activity
- Healthy, skill-dependable employees
- Greater independent participation in community
- Physical Activity

Enhancing Involvement in School and Community



Special Olympics

Challenges/Opportunities

- Recruit and train more athletes
- Recruit more Head Coaches with extensive sport backgrounds
- Increase volunteers
- Continue to improve quality of training and competition
- Provide opportunities for athlete leadership
- Increase inclusive sports opportunities
- More family involvement
- Public education

General Orientation Goals

Revisited

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

Putting It All Together

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



Special Olympics

Alaska

Be a fan™

***General Orientation to
Special Olympics
Exercise***



Special Olympics

Alaska

Be a fan™

***General Orientation to
Special Olympics***