



Special Olympics is an international organization whose mission is to provide sports training and athletic competitions in Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Participants are given the opportunity to become more physically fit, to demonstrate courage, to experience lifelong friendships, and to showcase their personal skills. Special Olympics has 36 chapters and over 16,000 athletes in the state of Tennessee. Special Olympics TN offers 17 different sports to participants.

What services or resources does this agency provide?

Special Olympics provides athletes with volunteer coaches who spend their time helping athletes train for various athletic competitions locally, nationally and world-wide, in individual and team competitions.

What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

With 33 chapters, almost all of TN is served by Special Olympics.

Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

There is no cost to join your local Special Olympics chapter. Competitions are FREE for all athletes.



For which students might this organization be appropriate?

Special Olympics is a great organization individuals age 2+ with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Special Olympics starts with our Young Athletes program (ages 2-7) and continues through elementary, middle and high school with school programs and Unified Champions Schools, and then offers adult aged programs. The goal of Special Olympics is to offer children and adults lifelong sports opportunities to participate and compete.

Who is eligible to receive their services/ supports and when?

Anyone with an intellectual disability that is 2 years of age and up can join their local Special Olympics chapter. To do so, reach out to your county's area director for more information or visit



www.specialolympicstn.org to get connected.

What is the family's responsibility?

Joining a local Special Olympics chapter can be a great source of community and support for parents and students alike. After joining a chapter, it would be the family's responsibility to regularly attend events, practices, and competitions.

What is the student's responsibility?

Once a student commits to a team or sport, it is up to the student to fulfill the expectations of participating in that activity.

What is the responsibility of an educator?

Teachers should emphasize the importance of physical activity, learning sportsmanship in a fun yet competitive environment, and the social benefits of Special Olympics. Special Olympics can also give athletes a sense of pride and accomplishment when they achieve goals. Teachers can suggest joining a Special Olympics chapter sometime in high school, so that as the student transitions out of school, they have a network of friends and community already built up. Without the consistency of seeing friends at school, it can be challenging for students that are no longer in school to socialize.

How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?

- Special Olympics does not need to be directly involved with the student's transition planning process. There are ways that joining Special Olympics can help students with disabilities reach certain goals.

Where can I learn more?

Visit the Special Olympics TN website at:
www.specialolympicstn.org

- Teachers can suggest Special Olympics as a means to meet social, community, or fitness goals for students. When developing goals for independent living or social/leisure skills, Special Olympics or other special recreation programs should be considered.
- Create a packet of information about Special Olympics that can be shared with parents.
- If a student is already involved with Special Olympics, coaches or leaders in the organization may be able to provide perspective and input about the student's abilities and goals and help guide planning for the future.

What questions should I ask of my local Special Olympics Chapter?

- What sports are offered at my local chapter?
- What types of accommodations are used with certain activities?
- If a sport or activity is not offered, what is needed to start this sport or activity (often times all it takes is one passionate teacher, parent, or coach)?
- How often are athletes expected to attend practice, and is there a way for my child to get to practice?



Where can I learn more?

Give them a call at: 615-329-1375

Find a local program at:

<http://specialolympicstn.org/get-involved/find-a-local-program>