HOW TO START
a Unified Sports® Program at your school
10 easy steps

Feature:
What can Unified Sports® do for your school?
Special Olympics’ Mission Statement:
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 Kansas’ Mission Statement:
Special Olympics Kansas is dedicated to empowering individuals with intellectual disabilities to become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports competitions, health and nutrition programs and leadership development. Offering year-round initiatives to children and adults with intellectual disabilities, Special Olympics Kansas is a platform for acceptance and inclusion as well as one of the largest advocates for healthy lifestyles in the state – regardless of race, religion, ethnicity or cultural differences.
Hello fellow student!

Just like you, I am passionate about acceptance for all people, regardless of their abilities. Growing up I was bullied often. I didn’t want anyone else in my school to feel the same isolation and hurt feelings that I did in elementary school and junior high. I knew I wanted to make a difference, and you can too!

If you are reading this guide, that probably means you want to see your school be more accepting of people’s differences. Great job, you’ve taken the first step needed to be an agent of change!

Throughout this guide, you will find step-by-step instructions to start a Special Olympics Unified Sports® Program at your school. You will also find helpful tips and inspirational stories to help you along your journey. You will soon see how beneficial this program will be to you and your friends, with and without disabilities.

Now, go out there and make a difference in your school and community! I know you can do it!

In Friendship,

— Austin Rector
Special Olympics Arizona
Youth Activation Committee Member

4 Steps to Starting Special Olympics Unified Sports®:
Hit the ground running with 10 easy-to-follow steps to guide you. Use the convenient checklist on the next page to track your progress as you build a program for your school.

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What can Unified Sports® do for your school?
A collection of inspiring stories from real students and participants in the program.

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COVER PHOTO: Rod Mar
Steps to Starting Special Olympics Unified Sports®:

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In this guide you will find specific tips to help you. Here is the key for these tips:

**Inclusion Tip**  
Idea to assist you with including all students in a meaningful way

**Adult Allies Tip**  
Idea to assist you in working with adults along the way

**Education Tip**  
Idea to help educate others and spread awareness for Unified Sports®

**Funding Tip**  
Idea to assist you in getting your program started and to ensure it will be there to stay for years to come

Keep an eye out for the did you know? talk bubble throughout this magazine to learn about events that led to the founding of Special Olympics and the exciting history of the organization. If you’re interested in learning more, go to [www.kssso.org/history](http://www.kssso.org/history).
What is Unified Sports®?

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive program which combines individuals with intellectual disabilities (athletes) and individuals without intellectual disabilities (partners) on sports teams for training and competition. Athletes and partners compete alongside one another, each in a meaningful and integral role on the Unified Sports® team.

Why School-Based Unified Sports®?

Special Olympics Unified Sports® creates unique teammate bonds through sports experiences just like any other sports team. These experiences create a culture of inclusion and foster understanding in schools and communities.

Participation in Unified Sports® leads to new friendships, improved self-esteem and positive changes in attitude, behavior and performance for all students involved. The program creates a lasting impact on all those participating and is a great addition to any education environment.

Using the Guide

It is recommended that you read through this entire guide before getting started so you can obtain the best foundation of knowledge and resources to start a successful program. Also, keep in mind that the sequence of steps may be different when you start your program, but all steps outlined in this guide are relevant and important keys to follow.
Why should I help start a Unified Sports® program at my school? 
The answer is simple! Young people all across the world can be agents of change in their communities! Starting a Unified Sports® program in your school will help create a better school experience for your classmates with and without disabilities. The experience can be life changing for everyone involved…including you!

How would I start a Unified Sports program? It sounds like a lot of work! 
Starting a Unified Sports® program is easy! All you need to do is follow a few simple steps and you will be on your way to helping create a fun, inclusive environment for you and your peers. This guide will break it down into simple steps! You will not be alone in this process; we will discuss finding “adult allies” who are teachers, staff and other adult volunteers. Additionally, you will work with other student leaders with and without intellectual disabilities, who will support you along the way. Your leadership skills will be critical to identifying key people to help you. Now let’s get started!

Inclusion Tip
Unified Sports® brings new opportunities for students to be involved and recognized in their schools. In some schools, Unified Sports® participants can earn the opportunity to “letter” in their sport. “Lettering” is when the school recognizes a student’s athletic and/or student activities achievements by awarding them a “letter” to display on a school “letter jacket.”

1950s to early 1960s
Soon, her vision began to take shape, as she held a summer day camp for young people with intellectual disabilities in her own backyard. The goal was to learn what these children could do in sports and other activities – and not dwell on what they could not do.

Throughout the 1960s, Eunice Kennedy Shriver continued her pioneering work -- both as the driving force behind President John F. Kennedy’s White House panel on people with intellectual disabilities and as the director of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation. Her vision and drive for justice eventually grew into the Special Olympics movement.
Get the Unified Sports® Knowledge

The more educated you, your fellow students and adult allies become about Unified Sports®, the more success you will achieve. Special Olympics has teamed up with the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) to bring you a 90-minute interactive online training at no cost!

Simply log-on to www.NFHSLearn.com to take this course. You can complete this all at one time, or start and stop at your convenience.

The Foundation of Unified Sports®

The Principle of Meaningful Involvement
This is the most important concept of Unified Sports® that the coach and all of the players must understand and implement. Fundamentally, the principle of meaningful involvement ensures that every player is given an opportunity to contribute to the success of his or her team through one’s unique skills and qualities.

Indicators of Meaningful Involvement
- Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- Teammates participate according to the rules of competition.
- Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.

Meaningful involvement is not achieved when certain team members:
- Display superior sports skills without involving their teammates.
- Serve predominantly as on-field coaches rather than teammates or mentors.
- Control most aspects of the game, especially during the most critical periods.
- Do not train or practice regularly and only show up on the day of competition.
- Lower their level of ability dramatically so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.
The Three Unified Sports® Models

Everyone involved in organizing your school’s Unified Sports® team should understand that there are three Unified Sports® Models: Player Development, Competitive and Recreation.

Adhering to the principle of meaningful involvement, Special Olympics Kansas will de facto provide competitions under the Player Development Model. Should there be enough teams, SOKS will provide Competitive Model competitions.

The Player Development Model
- Approximately equal number of athletes and partners.
- Similar age of all teammates; however, they are not required to have similar sports ability.
- Teammates of higher ability serve as mentors to assist players of lower ability.
- Lower ability teammates may not have the necessary sports skills and understanding of the rules.
- Rules modifications are made to define players’ roles and prevent higher-ability players from dominating the game.
- Scheduled training & competition season. (typically 8-12 weeks)
- Certified adult coach for all teams.

The Competitive Model
- Approximately equal number of athletes and partners.
- Similar sports ability and age of athletes and partners.
- All teammates expected to put forth their full effort.
- Teammates have the necessary sports skills and understanding of the rules.
- No modifications are made to the sports rules.
- Scheduled training & competition season (typically 8-12 weeks).
- Certified adult coach for all teams.

Note: These are ‘models’ not ‘divisions.’ SOKS may still division teams based upon overall team ability; i.e., a Competitive Model team does not need to be overall a highly-skilled team. Players must just have a similar level of ability.

Additional Unified Sports® information, documents and research can be found on the Special Olympics International Resources Page:

http://resources.specialolympics.org/Topics/Sports/Unified_Sports.aspx
Develop Your Vision

Now that you have the knowledge, it’s time to combine that with your creativity to develop your Special Olympics Unified Sports® program. After reading about Unified Sports® and the stories in this guide, you probably have a reason why you want Unified Sports® at your school. It’s now time to inspire others to help you achieve this vision by sharing it with them.

Begin with the end in mind!
Create an action plan of what type of Unified Sports® program you want for your school.

Be a leader, but realize that you will need help along the way!
You will need a team of people to help you reach your goal of having a Unified Sports® program in your school. In the next two steps, you will share your vision with key student leaders, teachers and administrators. Then recruit the ones who are passionate about making this happen to help you plan and execute.

Education Tip
When sharing your vision, focus on the impact it will have on school climate/culture. For example, Unified Sports® will include students with disabilities in new, meaningful ways, and it will educate general education students on people with disabilities through interactions and teaching tools. It will help with anti-bullying initiatives!

Funding & Sustainability Tip
You want all your bases covered when it comes to funding and costs, as that will concern school administration. Talk with your Special Olympics allies about possible fundraising opportunities or seed money available to start your program. It will be important to get the school supporting Unified Sports® as much as possible from the start, which may include: uniforms, transportation, facilities and coach stipends as necessary.
Find Your Adult Allies

Work with school administration to schedule a meeting with key adult allies to start planning the Unified Sports® program. For example, this could include your Athletic Director, Special Education Director, and a Special Olympics staff member. It is important that representatives from Athletics/Physical Education and Special Education are working together from the start. Encourage them to view the online Unified Sports® Course and/or other Unified Sports® resources prior to your meeting.

Schedule a meeting or phone call with Special Olympics Kansas staff in your state to discuss your vision and discover what local resources are available to support your new Unified Sports® team, including how to join an existing Local Program in your community. Contact Clint Armistead, Director of Sports, at 913.236.9290 x111 or armisteadc@ksso.org.

Schedule a meeting with school administration to share your vision. The administration typically has their own meetings; try to schedule a time slot to get in front of as many people as possible. If one administrator is hesitant, then another one might be willing to jump on board and help you. If possible, try to include a Special Olympics staff member and/or a Local Program Coordinator in your area or within your school district.

Now that you have administration support, it’s time to really get started planning your Unified Sports® program!

Adult Allies Tip
Local Program Coordinators are leaders of Special Olympics team delegations. There may already be a team near you!

Find your Local Program online at: www.ksso.org/find-a-local-program
Find Your Student Leadership Team

Where do I find student leaders to help?

1. **Team up with an existing inclusive club in your school**, such as a Partner’s Club. A Partner’s Club includes students of all abilities through sports activities and/or social and recreational opportunities and is officially recognized by school administration.

2. **Create your own Youth Activation Committee (YAC)** or club with the help of your adult allies. A YAC is students with and without disabilities working together to lead Special Olympics and plan inclusive activities. A YAC could be its own club, or a committee within an existing leadership group. Youth Activation is about mobilizing youth to promote school communities where all young people are agents of change – fostering respect, dignity and advocacy for people with intellectual disabilities.

3. **Look for student leaders** that are involved in other clubs on campus and are looking for acceptance themselves.

4. **Partner with your Student Council.**

5. **Ask your friends to join in!**

**Inclusion Tip**
Pair up students with and without disabilities and delegate certain responsibilities to the pairs based on your plan.

**Sustainability Tip**
Keep in mind that not everyone is passionate about the same things. Just because someone is a student leader, it doesn’t mean they will be interested in Special Olympics.

For more information on inclusive student clubs and creating a YAC, check out the Youth Leadership Guide:

Develop and Share Your Plan

What is the difference between your vision and your action plan? Your vision is simply your original thoughts on how your school’s Unified Sports® program will look. Once you read through this guide, you will work with your adult allies and fellow student leaders to come up with a detailed step-by-step plan to follow through with your vision.

Here is a sample agenda of items to address during this meeting:

**Who will be the Unified Sports® adult advisor?**
Each school’s Unified Sports® program must have an identified adult leader who is responsible for communication with Special Olympics Kansas. The advisor will be responsible for ensuring the program is meeting all standards/rules.

**Which Unified Sports® Model(s) will you conduct?**
- Competitive, Player Development or Recreation: this will primarily depend on the ability level of the students with disabilities at your school. See page 31 for an overview of these models.
- Schools should strive for Player Development or Competitive models as they involve structured, ongoing training and competition. Currently, Special Olympics Kansas only offers Player Development competitions due to current team registrations.

**When will Unified Sports® practice take place?**
- After school as an extracurricular or club team?
- During an existing PE class?
- As a new Unified Sports® PE class?

**What does the Principle of Meaningful Involvement mean?**
This is the most important concept of Unified Sports®—the coach and all of the players must understand it.

**Sustainability Tip**
Why re-create the wheel? Over 90 Local Programs train and compete across Kansas. Rather than register as a new program, integrate your team into an existing Local Program, share resources, fundraising efforts, and open doors to Special Olympics involvement after graduation. [www.kssso.org/find-a-local-program](http://www.kssso.org/find-a-local-program)
On July 19–20, 1968, the 1st International Special Olympics Summer Games were held at Soldier Field in Chicago, Illinois, USA. 1,000 people with intellectual disabilities from 26 U.S. states and Canada competed in track & field and swimming.

The U.S. Olympic Committee gives Special Olympics official approval as one of only two organizations authorized to use the name “Olympics” in the United States.

Sargent Shriver was more than Eunice Kennedy Shriver’s husband. As a team, they steered Special Olympics in new directions. A new biography of Sargent Shriver, written by his son Mark, provides insights about the man and his long history of public service.

Steamboat Springs, Colorado, USA hosts the 1st International Special Olympics Winter Games. More than 500 athletes compete in skiing and skating events. CBS, ABC and NBC television networks cover the Games.

Wichita, Kansas (USA) Police Chief Richard LaMunyon launches a Special Olympics awareness campaign that becomes the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics. The Torch Run grows into the movement’s largest grassroots fundraiser, raising $30 million each year.

In January 1997, Healthy Athletes becomes an official Special Olympics initiative, providing health-care services to Special Olympics athletes worldwide. The program includes free vision, hearing and dental screening, injury prevention clinics and nutrition education.

Want to learn more?
The history of the Special Olympics is so rich, we just couldn’t fit it all here. Learn the rest of the story at www.kssso.org/history.

What paperwork is required for the participants?
- **Partner:** Youth Unified Partner Application and Youth Class A Application
- **Athlete:** Medical Release Form with Physical
- **Coach/Advisors:** Adult Class A Form and Protective Behaviors Training

More information and copies of these forms are available in the “Resources” section of this guide (p. 34-38)

**Education Tip**
Getting students to return the required paperwork often takes longer than expected. It is important to start the education process with potential teammates and their parents as soon as you can. One idea is organizing a “parent night” to discuss the program and answer their questions.

**How will transportation be arranged after school and to competitions?**
Transportation often needs to be requested well in advance, so it will be important to plan ahead based on your schedule.

If transportation is not available, you can still start Unified Sports® and focus on training at the school, or host a competition against a neighboring school.
In which sport(s) will the school participate?

- The sport(s) you select will determine which students can participate and how many. This is a very important decision.
- Special Olympics Kansas currently offers Unified Soccer competitions for schools. With enough interest from school teams, other sports like flag football, basketball, tennis, golf, volleyball and bowling could be offered.
- What are the ability levels of the potential participants?
- What types of disabilities do the potential participants have? (For example, can someone in a wheelchair experience meaningful sports involvement?)
- Which sports facilities will you be able to use and when?
- Which sports are students interested in?

**Important Note:** If composing competitive Unified Sports® teams, athletes and partners must be closely matched in ability in order to achieve meaningful involvement for all teammates and so there are no significant safety risks.

Who will be the qualified coach?

- Coaching requires more than just sports knowledge. So don’t pick just one. Adults from your school and community can combine their skills to coach and manage a team. At least one coach will need to be sport certified.
- Your coaches will need to commit to the requirements established by SOKS and the school.

Develop a schedule of when the sport season will take place looking at practice times and competitions. You want to start Unified Sports® today, but be patient as the better planning that takes place, the better the experience will be for your team participants!
Recruit Your Teammates

Work with your student leadership team and adult allies to create a one-page overview of your school’s Unified Sports® program based on your plan. This will be used to educate students, parents and teachers. Keep it simple and answer the basic questions: What? Who? When? Where? How? It will be important to address required paperwork, projected schedules and transportation. Your adult allies will be able to assist you with distributing this information sheet to the parents of prospective teammates.

What is a Unified partner?
A Unified partner is a student without an intellectual disability, who actively participates with the athletes in a fun and meaningful way for training and competition.

If you are conducting competitive team sports, Unified partners should match as closely as possible to the Special Olympics athlete’s age and ability. For example, Varsity football players would typically not be a good match as Unified partners on a Flag Football team. Plus, if you recruit students who are not involved in high school sports, this gives them their chance!

“In Unified Sports® teams should never be composed solely of people with disabilities.”
– Tim Shriver, Chairman and CEO, Special Olympics

Inclusion Tip
The Player Development Model of Unified Sports® does not require ability matching, which allows students of any ability level to participate.
A valuable outcome of Unified Sports® is that people with disabilities are given the chance to interact with their peers who do not have a disability. Unified Sports® does, however, allow students with other types of disabilities (such as a physical or learning disability) to participate as Unified partners as long as it does not pose a health or safety risk.

**Who is a Special Olympics athlete?**
Athletes are the heart of Special Olympics Unified Sports®! A Special Olympics athlete is a student with an intellectual disability.

**How do I recruit athletes?**
Work with your Special Olympics advisor to identify students who would qualify as Special Olympics athletes. Plan a presentation with your student leadership team (students with and without disabilities) to these potential athletes.

**Where to find Unified partners?**
A great place to find partners is recruiting those who are already working with students with disabilities, such as a Partner’s Club or buddies club or student aids in the Special Education Department. This is one method to help ensure your partners are in it for the right reasons and already have a friendship with the athletes. But don’t stop there!

**Remember...Think outside the box**
Just because a student is interested in Student Council or is on their school’s sport team, it doesn’t necessarily mean they are interested in being super involved in disability awareness or Special Olympics.

**Inclusion Tip**
If your school does not have a Partner’s Club or buddies club, try to find clubs/students at your school that are fighting for acceptance and inclusion themselves. Don’t assume a student is a good option for Unified Sports® because they are telling you they are. Check Facebook and Twitter; pictures and posts can tell a thousand words. Look for younger students who will be in it for the long haul…it takes time to make a difference and earn respect from teachers and peers.

Never give up even if it seems like no one is listening. All your hard work will pay off, and because of YOU, hundreds of athletes will be more accepted and included in their school and community!
Commitment and Education of Teammates

1. Have all Unified Sports® participants and their parents/guardians sign a commitment letter outlining the expectations of being on a Unified Sports® team (see example letter on p. 31).


   Recruit a teacher or specialist who is knowledgeable about working with students with disabilities to discuss proper ways to communicate and interact with Special Olympics athletes. Interactive learning lessons are available using “Get Into It” (see Step 8 for more details).

3. Ensure that all teammates and parents know the sports schedule.

4. Encourage teammates to take the online coaching course.

5. Educate partners about their role based on the team structure. (Will they be completely interacting in the competitive model, or facilitators in the player development model?) Regardless of the model, Unified partners are there to be teammates and friends. They are not there to “serve” Special Olympics athletes. This is a critical concept for the partners to understand in order for true friendships to be made between teammates. Note: you may not know the Unified Sports® model that best fits your school until after the first practice.
I have been involved with Special Olympics and my school’s Friendship Club program for a while, and I’ve formed so many amazing friendships.

I realized at an early age that we were all more alike than different, and regardless of our differences we all want the same thing...to be accepted for who we are.

When my school started Unified Soccer, it was very important to me that everyone involved realized that we were a team. I didn’t want to recruit my peers that thought of Unified Sports® as “charity” or “community service.” I made sure I recruited students that were interested in being part of a “team.” I chose students from our Friendship Club, some were varsity football players; others, like me, had no athletic experience. The Unified partners on my school’s team came to every practice and every game. Our team hung out after practice and on the weekends. We became friends on and off the field/court. We worked hard and we played hard.

Not only did we become a “team,” we became friends, and that made all the difference. Being a partner for my school’s Unified Sports® team was life changing and helped me have an incredible high school experience!

— Unified Partner

Remember...we are all more alike than different!
Enjoy Your Unified Sports® Program

Remember...things don’t happen overnight. Great things like this take time. You may only have a few students involved at first and that’s okay; before you know it, your program will grow!

Your First Practice:
The first training session should include “get to know each other activities” and “ice-breakers” so all teammates start feeling comfortable with each other. Additionally, all teammates should take “Skills Assessment Tests” (SATs) if your school has decided to participate in “team” sports such as basketball, soccer or flag football. These assessments will be scored by the coach(es) to ensure that all teammates have the appropriate skill level to participate on the team. SATs are listed in the Sports Rules and Coaches Guides for each sport at www.SpecialOlympics.org.


7 Criteria for Success
Special Olympics adopted Unified Sports® in 1988 to expand sports opportunities for athletes seeking new challenges while dramatically increasing their inclusion in the community.

Extensive field-testing has shown that Unified Sports® teams are most likely to accomplish the goals of the program when these 7 criteria are met.

Incorporating all 7 criteria is critical to success. Use this as your final checklist to ensure you have all your bases covered. A detailed description of each of these 7 criteria can be found in the “Resources” section.

1 Principle of Meaningful Involvement
2 Selection of Appropriate Sport
3 Qualified Coaches Lead the Program
4 Selection of Appropriate Teammates
5 Quality Training and Frequent Competition Leads to a Culminating Event
6 Unified Sports® Rules are Followed
7 Commitment of Support
Explore Project UNIFY

Special Olympics Project UNIFY® is an education and sports-based program started by Special Olympics in 2008 designed to build an inclusive environment among youth with and without intellectual disabilities, as well as empower them to become youth leaders and speak up for change in their community.

Through Project UNIFY, Unified Sports® is offered to schools around the country and it is the main vehicle through which sports teams are started.

**Project UNIFY includes:**

**Unified Sports®**
Takes the great thrill of competition that has fueled Special Olympics for many years and allows student athletes with and without disabilities to compete on the same field together.

**Youth Leadership & Advocacy**
Students can become leaders by joining Partners Clubs, joining a Youth Activation Committee, and attending Youth Summits to share with others what they have done and learn new ways to make their program stronger.

**Whole School Engagement**
Uses lessons and resources from SO Get Into It, R-Word campaigns and Youth Rallies.

For more information about Project UNIFY, visit [www.specialolympics.org/putoolkit](http://www.specialolympics.org/putoolkit). In the PU Toolkit, there are many great resources on how to get Project UNIFY into your school or to better an existing program.

**Also check out...** “Get Into It Active” that can be integrated into your Unified Sports® practice or inclusive club. Use “Get Into It Active” on-the-go with the free App! Simply search for “Get Into It” in the App Store.

**Education Tip:**
Register as a student on the Get Into It® website: [www.getintoit.specialolympics.org](http://www.getintoit.specialolympics.org). Special Olympics Get Into It® program consists of online resources that include lessons, activities, videos, athlete stories and supplemental materials. This is a great way to educate the entire school or specific classes about Special Olympics and disability.

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**Project UNIFY is acceptance.** Project UNIFY is a collaboration of all abilities working to create an inclusive environment.

**EDUCATE! MOTIVATE! ACTIVATE!**
Make it Sustainable

Work with your adult allies to contact other schools in your district and ask them to jump on board with Unified Sports®! For example, you can present about Unified Sports® to the middle schools and/or elementary schools in your district to help start Special Olympics Unified Sports®

Getting younger students involved in leadership roles ensures the program will be around for many years. It is important to pass along knowledge and responsibilities to these younger students well in advance of the current leaders graduating.

- **Start “Fans in the Stands”** at your school by gathering a group of friends, design big posters, and cheer like crazy for your school’s Unified Sports® team! As Unified Sports® positively impacts more and more students, it will become part of the school culture, which increases sustainability.

- **Be an advocate** by asking your administrator to include Unified Sports® in your school assemblies and pep rallies. Hold Unified Sports® games or exhibitions in front of large school crowds so everyone can see the talents of the teammates.

- **Find fun and innovative ways** to fundraise for Special Olympics; invite other students and clubs to participate.

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**Sustainability Tip**
The more integrated Unified Sports® is into the community, the more sustainable it will become.
Reach out to a Special Olympics Kansas Local Program.

**Funding Tip**
Work with your Special Olympics contact to explore student fundraising options, like Polar Plunge®, Cool Schools or the Miracle Minute.
Your Next Step in Special Olympics

What Happens when I Graduate from Middle School?
Hopefully, your new high school will already have a Special Olympics program established for you to join. You will be able to find out by contacting the Athletic Director and/or the administration of your future high school.

If your future school does not yet have Special Olympics, you can help start it by utilizing your leadership skills and this guide. One strategy to assist you with this process is working with your middle school’s Adult allies to set up a meeting with the administration and/or teachers at your future high school. They will be able to help you communicate the importance of the program and discuss how it can work.

What Happens when I Graduate from High School?
Special Olympics Kansas has many community-based Local Programs that you can be a part of through your parks and recreation department or local disability service providers! If you didn’t already integrate your school Unified team with these Local Programs, now you can become a coach with traditional Special Olympics or adult Unified Sports® teams. If you enjoyed being a Unified Sports® athlete in high school, get out there and join the Special Olympics sports teams in your community! If you plan on attending college, keep reading this section... the possibilities are endless!

Have you loved your experience with Unified Sports® in high school? Are you continuing your education within a community college or university? Do you want to continue your involvement with Unified Sports® all while creating a college campus of acceptance and inclusion? Then you should start a SO College chapter!

SO College is a program that incorporates all three components of Project UNIFY:

- Inclusive Sports
- Youth Leadership & Advocacy
- Whole-school Engagement

This program works to empower students to create a campus and community where all people are valued and accepted for their abilities.

To find out if your future college has a SO College chapter already, please visit www.specialolympics.org/socollege. If you are interested in starting a SO College chapter, please email socollege@specialolympics.org to gain more information and useful resources!
What can Unified Sports® do for your school?

Unified Sports® allows all students, regardless of ability level, the opportunity to share their skills and talents with the school and community. On the court, the partners and athletes learn the value of teamwork and the importance of inclusion in all aspects of life. Off the court, the students build friendships and lasting relationships that will impact their overall school experience. These feature stories highlight real-life examples of the impact of Unified Sports® on all participants!

What can Unified Sports® do for students with intellectual disabilities?

Unified Sports® gives students with intellectual disabilities an opportunity to have a “typical” school experience. The program helps build confidence and important social skills while giving students with intellectual disabilities a chance to create new friendships.

Dylan Clark’s nervousness was not hard to notice. In front of a crowd at David Jaynes Stadium, Clark held his hands tightly intertwined, at the point of turning to white. It was, after all, Clark’s first chance to represent his school in an athletic competition. When the game ended, though, Clark could not resist cheering his loudest and high-fiving anyone standing within reach—even the other team. This behavior is rarely seen from Clark in the crowded hallways of Bonner Springs High School, but during the halftime showcase of Unified Soccer, it became Clark’s time to shine. “I think he was kind of scared at first, but once we talked it over with
him and he knew it was going to be fun, I think he really settled into it,” Clark’s mom, Stacy Clark, said. “The interaction part of [the Unified Soccer team] was a huge step for Dylan, I only saw about one or two times where he would try to hide and that was amazing.” Dylan typically kept to himself when passing through the halls.

“Now Dylan’s whole demeanor at school has changed since doing soccer,” Unified Coach, Denise Chowning said, “You see his smiles in the hall and he approaches groups of friends.” Stacy said he is excited to start soccer again and is even in the process of teaching his little brother.

—Special Olympics athlete, Dylan Clark
What can Unified Sports® do for Unified partners?
Unified Sports® gives students an opportunity to be agents of change in their communities. It helps partners realize that everyone is more alike than different and encourages students to be accepting of others. It also allows Unified partners an opportunity to fit into something at school, feel acceptance, be active and most importantly have fun!

“Starting a team” for the Kansas Unified Soccer League has not only changed my community but has also changed me in major ways. I had the opportunity to bring something new to my school but what it brought me was life changing. Seeing the students grow and improve so much showed me what a big difference someone can make in their community. I received phone calls from parents about how much the students loved it and looked forward to practice and how they started having more confidence in school. Just hearing that something I did made that happen was very humbling. I look forward to the future as our community adopts this as a tradition so we can become more accepting as one. I will forever be thankful for getting this opportunity because it has changed me forever.”

— Itzel Soto, Unified Partner
**Common Roadblocks**

**Lack of Administration Support**
- Approach administrators and teachers with a specific plan to implement Unified Sports®, and provide examples of how Unified Sports® will benefit your school.
- Invite Special Olympics staff and/or a Special Olympics athlete to present to them.
- You need to show why this is important for the school culture, and that it’s not just a “nice” thing to do.
- Invite administration to a Special Olympics event or to view another school’s Unified Sports® program.

Tip: Most administrators will love the idea of Unified Sports®. Just make sure you approach them with an organized plan of action!

**Finding Volunteers**
- Ask friends at school that can’t make the time commitment to be a partner, but still want to be involved.
- Ask parents to help.
- Mention Unified Sports® to your teachers; some of them may want to get involved.
- Work with groups on campus such as the National Honor Society, Leos, Student Council, Key Club or Junior ROTC.

**Funding for Teams**
- Check with your Special Olympics contact to get your school involved in fundraisers that already exist.
- “Miracle Minute” is a school fundraiser where the school as a whole has one minute to see how much each class can raise to support Unified Sports®. It’s simple – hand out envelopes to every teacher and have each class put in as many donations as they can in one minute. This could be done during morning announcements.
- Sell concessions at a Varsity or Unified Sports® Game.
- Host a “Restaurant Night” where local businesses offer a percentage of sales to go back to your program.
- Delegate fundraising responsibilities to a highly-motivated student. Check with Special Olympics Kansas to clarify fundraising policies.

**Finding Quality Partners That Care**
To ensure students are serious and ready to make the commitment to Unified Sports®, you may consider using an application and interview process as well as the Unified Sports® Teammate Agreement (see pg. 29).

**Lack of Overall School Support**
- Hang up flyers around school prior to game day.
- Make an announcement about upcoming events and games during your school’s morning announcements.
- Talk to teachers and ask them to encourage students to come out and be fans in the stands.
- Tell friends about how great Unified Sports® is and have them tell their friends, too.
- Ask the school newspaper to write an article about Unified Sports®.
- Contact your school’s media crew to cover games.
- Hold a rally or assembly to spread awareness and build excitement.

**Lack of Transportation/Facilities**
Look to your adult allies to pre-plan for transportation to games. If facilities are unavailable when you need them, be creative! Share space with another school team, or incorporate Unified Sports® into a school intramural program.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is Special Olympics?
Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by promoting understanding, acceptance and inclusion between people with and without intellectual disabilities. Through year-round sports training and athletic competition and other related programming for more than 3.7 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities in more than 170 countries, Special Olympics has created a model community that celebrates people’s diverse gifts. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship.

Who is eligible to participate in Special Olympics Unified Sports®?
Both students with and without intellectual disabilities are able to participate in Unified Sports®. There are several ways to participate, either by being an athlete, partner, or volunteer! Students with other types of disabilities, such as physical disabilities are eligible to participate as Unified partners as long as everyone can experience meaningful involvement without health or safety risks. Unified Sports® teams should never be comprised solely of people with disabilities.

Who can become a Unified partner?
Students without intellectual disabilities who are highly motivated and wanting to promote acceptance and inclusion for all people regardless of their abilities. Remember, in competitive team sports, the Unified partner’s ability level must be closely matched with the skills of the Special Olympics athletes.

How do I find a coach?
Finding a coach is easy! Ask Special Education teachers or aides, parents, and general education teachers who are knowledgeable in sports and willing to help.

What is an “adult ally”? 
An adult ally is an adult that helps you plan and organize your school’s Unified Sports® teams. Many will be your coaches, but others could be teachers, parents, or community members! You can have several adult allies to help you along your journey.

What if my administrator says “No”?
If administration says “no” to a Unified Sports® program, ask them what you could do to change their minds– then create a plan to address their concerns. Ask an adult ally to help work through roadblocks at your school, as well as explain all the benefits of offering the program. Your administrators will likely jump on board once they realize the benefits and your dedication to getting the program started.

How do I raise publicity?
Spread the word about how great Unified Sports® is every chance you get! Reach out to your school’s student council, yearbook staff, newspaper and your school’s media crew. They can all be valuable resources.
Unified Sports® Teammate Agreement

This agreement signed on the _____ day of _________________, 20____, between ___________________________ (Unified Sports® Coach) and ____________________________ (Unified Sports® Teammate) who agree as follows:

1. Have a positive and accepting attitude at all times, on and off the court.
2. Attend and participate in all practices, games, and events.
3. Assist in training new Unified partners and athletes.
4. Behave appropriately at practices, games and events.
5. Follow my school's athletic and sportsmanship policies.
6. Treat all teammates as my equal peers.
7. Support my fellow teammates as needed and be a team player.
8. Be a good role model on and off the court.

I understand if I do not meet my commitment for my Unified Sports® team, I will be asked to step down from my position on this team.

_______________________________________  ____________________________
Teammate                                                                        Date

_______________________________________  _____________________________________
Coach                                                                                Date

_______________________________________  _____________________________________
Parent/Guardian                                                            Date
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unified Sports® Player Development</th>
<th>Unified Sports® Competitive</th>
<th>Unified Sports® Recreation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive sports program</td>
<td>Inclusive sports program</td>
<td>Inclusive recreational sports program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximately equal number of athletes and partners train and compete</td>
<td>Approximately equal number of athletes and partners train and compete</td>
<td>Composition of teams should be at least 25% athletes or partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Similar age of athletes and partners</td>
<td>Similar ability and age of athletes and partners</td>
<td>Does not require athletes and partners to be of similar age and ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and competition scheduled for a season or class</td>
<td>Training and competition scheduled for a season or class</td>
<td>Preferably, participation is regularly scheduled; demonstration, fundraising and featured events applied as a catalyst for ongoing activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never comprised solely of individuals with disabilities</td>
<td>Never comprised solely of individuals with disabilities</td>
<td>Never comprised solely of individuals with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program has choice of providing awards based on finish or participation (same award for all)</td>
<td>Awards based on place of finish within divisions</td>
<td>No awards are provided; however, recognition can be provided on a Program-by-Program basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the difference between these models?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not required to be of similar ability; teammates of higher ability serve as mentors to assist players of lower abilities</td>
<td>Have attained sufficient &amp; necessary sport-specific skills and tactics</td>
<td>Does not follow any prescribed training, competition and/or team composition requirements established by Special Olympics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rules modifications define players’ roles, ensure meaningful involvement and prevent player dominance</td>
<td>No modification of Official Special Olympics Sports Rules</td>
<td>No advancement beyond the Local level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No advancement beyond the Program level</td>
<td>Eligible to advance to higher levels of play beyond the Program level (such as Regional and World Games)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Profile of Unified Sports Team**

- **Player Development Model**
  - **Ability Level:** Higher (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5), Lower (A1, A2, A3, A4, A5)
  - **Partners (P):** A1, A2, A3, A4, A5
  - **Athletes (A):** P1, P2, P3, P4, P5

- **Competitive Model**
  - **Ability Level:** Higher (P1, P2, P3, A1, A2, A3, A4, A5), Lower (P4, P5)
  - **Partners (P):** A1, A2, A3, A4, A5
  - **Athletes (A):** P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
Unified Sports® Recreation Guidelines

Unified Sports® Recreation
- Does not require teams to be composed of athletes and partners of similar age and ability.
- May include training (like physical education class) or competition (like intramural sports) opportunities in which athletes and partners take part together over the course of a season or a semester.
- Includes sports and other physical activities ranging from basketball to yoga. Activities must be physical. Preferably, these activities should take place over a period of time.
- Is not offered as an official competition at state, national and world games, but is an approved exhibition or demonstration at Special Olympics events.
- Fulfills the Project UNIFY criteria for inclusive sports in schools.
- All Unified Sports® Recreation events should be reported to Special Olympics Kansas.

Criteria for Unified Sports® Recreation Success

1 Partners and athletes must meaningfully participate; that is, athletes must be engaged in the sport or activity as a participant, not as a mascot or manager.

2 The selected activity must be a physical activity involving movement, coordination and basic athleticism.

3 Unified Sports® Recreation must be supervised by a coach or leader who understands the Special Olympics and Unified Sports® philosophy as set forth in the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and training.

4 Participants may be of varying ability levels; however, they must be engaged together on the same team in the activity and in a meaningful and appropriate manner. While the social inclusion objective of Unified Sports® is best met when athletes and partners are of similar ability, similar ability is not required in the Unified Sports® Recreation model.

5 The composition of teams need not conform to standard Unified Sports® guidelines/ratios; however, the social inclusion objective of Unified Sports® Recreation is met when at least 25% of the team members are athletes or partners. Thus, in Unified Sports® Recreation, Special Olympics Programs may adjust percentages to meet their needs as long as every participant is meaningfully involved.

6 Unified Sports® Recreation should occur in a consistent framework where participation is regularly scheduled. Even though the activity is less structured, the opportunities should still be of high quality.
7 Criteria for Special Olympics Unified Sports® Success

Special Olympics adopted Unified Sports® in 1989 to expand sports opportunities for athletes seeking new challenges while dramatically increasing their inclusion in the community. Extensive field testing has shown that Unified Sports® teams are most likely to accomplish the goals of the program when the following 7 criteria are met.

It is important to incorporate all seven (7) of the criteria. If you do only some of them, chances for success are greatly reduced.

1 **Principle of Meaningful Involvement** – This is the most critical determinant of success, and the coach and all of the players must follow it. Fundamentally, the principle of meaningful involvement ensures that every player is given an opportunity to contribute to the success of his or her team through their unique skills and qualities. This means that every teammate:
   (a) demonstrates sufficient sport-specific skills and game understanding; (b) plays a valued role on the team that emphasizes his or her personal talents; and (c) has an opportunity to play without a heightened risk of injury.

2 **Selection of appropriate sport** – A variety of factors influence the determination of which sport is chosen for Unified Sports® training and competition. Some of these factors include athlete and partner interest, age and ability levels of potential athletes and partners, available facilities and equipment, availability of qualified coaches, finances and, most importantly, opportunities for competition.

3 **Qualified coaches lead the program** – Unified Sports® teams should be organized under the guidance of a trained coach who understands and adopts the principles of Special Olympics and Unified Sports® and has knowledge of the rules, techniques, strategies and training regimens of the selected sport.

4 **Selection of appropriate teammates** – It is fundamental to the Special Olympics experience that each participant on a team has the ability and opportunity to contribute to the team’s success and embraces the principle of meaningful involvement. Team members should have the necessary skills to participate on a Unified Sports® team without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others. Additionally, team members should be matched by age and ability as specifically defined by the sport. All players on a Unified Sports® team make the commitment to attend every practice, support each other as equal teammates, and demonstrate respect and sportsmanship.
Quality training and frequent competition leads to a culminating event – Unified Sports® teams shall have a minimum of eight weeks of training and competition (practices, scrimmages and league competition) before the culminating championship event.

Unified Sports® rules are followed – All Unified Sports® competitions should be conducted according to Official Special Olympics Sports Rules, including placement of Unified Sports® teams in appropriate age and ability divisions.

Commitment of support – Four levels of support are critical to start and sustain the Unified Sports® program.

The Special Olympics Kansas office provides initial funding, training of coaches, competition management and a culminating event.

b The Special Olympics Local Program (school or community) is responsible for training athletes and partners; conducting local competition; securing facilities, equipment, uniforms; and transportation; and fundraising for long-term sustainability.

c Coaches are responsible for gaining knowledge; training and coaching athletes and partners; and growing the Local Program.

d Lastly, the spectator provides acknowledgment, engagement and acceptance – having cheering fans in the stands can be crucial to the motivation of a team, especially a Unified Sports® team.

Additional Resources

- Special Olympics: www.specialolympics.org
- Special Olympics Kansas: www.ksso.org
- Special Olympics Project UNIFY: www.specialolympics.org/projectunify
- Spread the Word to End the Word: www.r-word.org
- Get Into It: getintoit.specialolympics.org
- SO College: www.specialolympics.org/socollege
- NFHS Learning Center: www.NFHSLearn.com
Forms and Applications

Each person on a Unified Sports® team must submit some type of form to the Special Olympics Kansas office. For your convenience, the next few pages may be copied and used to register the members of your team.

Athlete
• **Definition:** An ‘athlete’ is a student with an intellectual disability who attends your school. Some of these students may be in a special education classroom or have an IEP; others will not. Be careful not to stereotype. Speak with a teacher or administrator to help you.
• **Necessary forms:** Athlete Medical Waiver (p. 35) with physical. The Athlete Medical Waiver form includes a basic physical form at the bottom. If a student recently had a physical (for school, sports, etc), leave the bottom portion blank and attach a copy.
• If a student at your school already participates in Special Olympics, they may already have the necessary forms completed. Check with the Special Olympics Kansas office to find out. Athletes with Down Syndrome may need to complete supplemental forms.

Partner
• **Definition:** A ‘partner’ is a student volunteer *without* an intellectual disability who attends your school. Partners do not have to be great athletes. Ideal partners are kind, empathetic and enjoy playing sports with friends.
• **Necessary forms:** Youth Class A and Youth Unified Partner Application (p. 36-37)
• Student athletes who play for the school’s interscholastic team are often ineligible during their sport season. (i.e. Girls who play varsity soccer cannot play Unified Soccer in the spring, however they can play soccer in the fall or any other sport in the spring.)
• Rarely, a partner may be 18 years old and still enrolled in school. Those students will need to complete comparable Adult forms and Protective Behaviors Training.

Coach/Certified Coach
• **Definition:** Coaches DO NOT necessarily have sports knowledge. All adults who lead, or have a major role, on a team are considered “coaches.” At least 1 coach on each team must be “certified” by Special Olympics Kansas in their sport and Unified Sports®.
• **Necessary forms:** Adult Class A Application and Protective Behaviors Training (p. 38-39); Certified Coaches need to complete online training at [www.NFHSLearn.com](http://www.NFHSLearn.com) and [www.ksso.org/training-information](http://www.ksso.org/training-information).
• In this guide, we mentioned adult allies. Some allies are not considered coaches even if they support you and help get the program started, like the principal. Ask yourself: Does this person attend practices regularly? Interact with athletes and partners at team functions? Travel with the team? Recruit participants and organize practice schedules?
Each participant MUST have a current medical / release form on file with Special Olympics Kansas, 5280 Foxridge Drive, Mission, Kansas 66202 and in the possession of the coach prior to participating in any event/training/competition.

DEMOGRAPHICS

TEAM NAME: ___________________________  NUMBER: ___________________________

Athlete’s Name ___________________________________________________________________________

Athlete’s Address ___________________________________________________________________________

City: ___________________________  State: ___________________________  Zip: ___________________________

Parent/Guardian’s Name ___________________________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian’s Address (if different than athlete) ___________________________________________________________________

Emergency Contact (if other than parent/guardian) ___________________________________________________________________

Health/Accident Insurance Company ___________________________________________________________________

DATE OF BIRTH (MONTH/DAY/YEAR) ___________________________

Athlete Home Phone # ( ___________ )

Parent Email Address ___________________________________________________________________

Parent Primary Phone # ( ___________ )

Parent Cell/Alternate Phone# ( ___________ )

Parent Employer ___________________________________________________________________

Emergency Phone #/Cell ( ___________ )

Policy # ___________________________________________________________________

PARTICIPATION AND CONSENT TO TREATMENT: I hereby give permission for the participant named above to participate. To the best of my knowledge, the athlete is physically and mentally able to participate and full disclosure of the participant’s medical history has been made to the physician whose signature appears below.

I acknowledge that the participant will be using facilities at his own risk and said parent/guardian, on his behalf, hereby releases, discharges and indemnifies from all liability for alleged injury to person or damage to property of himself and applicant.

I hereby irrevocably grant permission to record the above participant’s likeness and/or voice for use by television, films, radio or printed media to further the aims.

If I am not personally present at activities, in case of necessity, you are authorized, on my behalf and at my account, to take such measures and arrange for such medical and hospital treatment as you may deem advisable for the health and well-being of the participant.

HEALTH HISTORY: TO BE COMPLETED BY PARENT/CAREGIVER

Yes  No  *Heart disease / heart defect / high blood pressure
Yes  No  *Chest pain
Yes  No  *Seizures / epilepsy/fainting spells
Yes  No  *Diabetes
Yes  No  *Concussion or serious head injury
Yes  No  *Major surgery or serious illness
Yes  No  *Blindness / visual problem
Yes  No  *Asthma
Yes  No  Heat stroke / exhaustion
Yes  No  Contact lenses / glasses
Yes  No  Bone or joint problem

Date of most recent tetanus immunization ______/_____/_____

(?) Requires physical examination

Medications:

Please print medication name, amount, date prescribed and number of times per day medication is given.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medication Name</th>
<th>Dosage</th>
<th>Date Prescribed</th>
<th>Times per Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: If there is any significant change in the athlete’s health, the athlete’s condition should be reviewed by a physician before further participation.

PARENT / GUARDIAN / ADULT PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE ___________________________

DOWN SYNDROME:  YES  NO  CHECK ONE:  ATLANTO-AXIAL  NEG.  POS.

NOTE: If the athlete has Down syndrome, requires that the athlete have a full radiological examination establishing the degree, if any, of Atlanto-Axial instability before he / she may participate in any sport or event. Down syndrome forms are available from office.

MEDICAL CERTIFICATION

A physical examination can only be conducted by a Medical Doctor (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Doctor of Chiropractic (DC), Physician’s Assistant, or an Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner (ARNP).

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

Blood pressure: _____/_____/_____  Weight: _____  Height: _____

Normal/Abnormal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vision</th>
<th>Hearing</th>
<th>Oral cavity</th>
<th>Neck</th>
<th>Extremities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Normal/Abnormal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cardiovascular system</th>
<th>Respiratory system</th>
<th>Gastrointestinal system</th>
<th>Genitourinary system</th>
<th>Skin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Normal/Abnormal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cranial nerves</th>
<th>Coordination</th>
<th>Reflexes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other:

Primary MR Etiology/Category (If known): ___________________________________________________________________

I have reviewed the above health information and have performed the above examination on this athlete within the past 6 months and certify that the athlete can participate.

RESTRICTIONS:

EXAMINER’S SIGNATURE: ___________________________  DATE ______/_____/_____

EXAMINER’S NAME: ___________________________

ADDRESS: ___________________________________________________________________

PHONE: ( ___________ )
Youth Class A Volunteer Application

- Before completing this form, applicants should find a Local Program (Team Delegation) [www.kss.org/find-a-local-program](http://www.kss.org/find-a-local-program). Local Program Coordinators need to accept the Class A Volunteer Applicant.
- This form must be completed prior to participation by all persons 8 to 17 years of age who wish to serve as a Youth Class A Volunteer and/or a Youth Unified Partner for SOKS, including its Local Programs.
- To serve as a Youth Class A Volunteer for Special Olympics Kansas, you must complete the following and be approved:
  - Submit this Completed Form: Special Olympics Kansas, 5280 Foxridge Dr, Mission, KS 66202; Fax 913-236-9771; Email kso@ksso.org
  - Recommended—Protective Behaviors Training (available online at www.ksso.org) Expires every 3 years
- Youth Class A Volunteer Applications must be signed by a parent or guardian and expire at age 18.

Please Answer the Following Questions:
- Do you use illegal drugs? ___ Yes ___ No
- Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? ___ Yes ___ No
- Have you ever been charged with neglect, abuse or assault? ___ Yes ___ No
- Has your Drivers License been suspended or revoked in the past 3 years? ___ Yes ___ No

Please read the following:
- In the course of volunteering for Special Olympics, I may become aware of personal information, and I agree to keep said information in the strictest confidence.
- I grant Special Olympics Kansas permission to use my likeness, voice, and words in television, radio, film or any form to promote activities of Special Olympics.
- I understand that the relationship between Special Olympics Kansas and volunteers is an “at will” arrangement and that it may be terminated at any time, without cause, by either the volunteer or Special Olympics Kansas.
- I will notify Special Olympics Kansas of any change to the information I have provided on this Application within 90 days of its occurrence.
Youth Unified Partner Application

Only complete this side if you wish to participate as a Unified Partner. Not all Local Programs offer Unified Sports. Check with your Local Program Coordinator to start or join a team.

- This form must be completed prior to participation by all persons 8 to 17 years of age who wish to practice and compete on a Unified Team with Special Olympics Kansas athletes.
- To serve as a Youth Unified Partner for Special Olympics Kansas, you must complete the following and be approved:
  - Send this Completed Form: Special Olympics Kansas, 5280 Foxridge Dr, Mission, KS 66202; Fax 913-236-9771; Email kso@ksso.org
  - Submission of a Youth Class A Volunteer Application
  - Recommended—Protective Behaviors Training (available online at www.ksso.org) Expires every 3 years
- Youth Unified Partner Applications must be signed by a parent or guardian and expire at age 18.

Medical Information

First and Last Name: __________________________ Local Program Name: __________________________

List any allergies or other medical conditions: ____________________________________________________

Parent/Guardian Name: __________________________ Phone #: (____)__________________________

Emergency Contact: __________________________ Relationship: __________________________ Phone #: (____)__________________________

Health/Accident Insurance Company: __________________________ Policy #: __________________________

Special Olympics Release and Waiver of Liability to be a Unified Partner

In consideration of participating in Special Olympics as a Unified Partner, I represent that I understand the nature of the program and that I (and/or my minor child) am (are/is) qualified, in good health, and in proper physical condition to participate as a Unified Partner at events. I fully understand the program involves risks of serious bodily injury which may be caused by my own actions or inactions, by the actions of others participating in the event, or by the conditions in which events takes place. I fully accept and assume all such risks and all responsibility for losses, costs, and/or damages I (and/or my minor child) may incur as a result of my (and/or my minor child’s) participation. I acknowledge that, if at any time I (we) feel that the event conditions are unsafe; I (and/or my minor child) will discontinue participation immediately.

If during participation in Special Olympics activities I (and/or my minor child) need emergency medical treatment and I (and/or my minor child) am (are/is) not able to give my consent for or make my own arrangement for that treatment because of my injuries, I authorize Special Olympics to take whatever measures are necessary to protect my (my minor child’s) health and well-being, including, if necessary, hospitalization.

I (and/or my minor child) release, indemnify, covenant not to sue, and hold harmless Special Olympics, its administrators, directors, agents, officers, volunteers, employees, and other Unified Partner participants, and sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, any owners and lessors of premises on which the activity takes place (Releasees) from all liability, any losses, claims (other than that of medical accident benefits), demands, costs or damages that I (and/or my minor child) may incur as a result of participation as a Unified Partner at events and further agree that if, despite this “Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement,” I, or anyone on my behalf, makes a claim against any of the Releasees, I will indemnify, save, and hold harmless each of the Releasees from any litigation expenses, attorney fees, loss, liability, damage or cost which may incur as a result of such claim.

I have read this “Release and Waiver of Liability, Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement” and fully understand it.

☐ I affirm that I have read this Application and understand its meaning. I also affirm the information I have given is true and complete.

_________________________  ____________  ___________________________  ____________
Signature of Youth Applicant Date Signature Parent/Guardian Date
Before completing this form, applicants should find a Local Program (Team Delegation) www.kss.org/find-a-local-program. Local Program Coordinators need to accept the Class A Volunteer Applicant.

This form must be completed prior to participation by all persons 18+ years of age who wish to serve as a Class A Volunteer and/or Unified Partner for SOKS, including its Local Programs. Applicant’s name and information will be used to conduct a criminal background screening.

To serve as an Adult Class A Volunteer for Special Olympics Kansas, you must complete the following and be approved:

- Protective Behaviors Training (available online at www.kss.org) Expires every 3 years
- Submit this Completed Form: Special Olympics Kansas, 5280 Foxridge Dr, Mission, KS 66202; Fax 913-236-9771; Email kss@kss.org

Has your Drivers License been suspended or revoked in the past 3 years? ___ Yes ___ No

Do you use illegal drugs? ___ Yes ___ No

Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense? ___ Yes ___ No

Have you ever been charged with neglect, abuse or assault? ___ Yes ___ No

Has your Drivers License been suspended or revoked in the past 3 years? ___ Yes ___ No

Please read the following:

- In the course of volunteering for Special Olympics, I may become aware of personal information, and I agree to keep said information in the strictest confidence.
- I grant Special Olympics Kansas permission to use my likeness, voice, and words in television, radio, film or any form to promote activities of Special Olympics.
- I understand that the relationship between Special Olympics Kansas and volunteers is an “at will” arrangement and that it may be terminated at any time, without cause, by either the volunteer or Special Olympics Kansas.
- I will notify Special Olympics Kansas of any change to the information I have provided on this Application within 90 days of its occurrence.

AUTHORIZATION AND RELEASE FOR CRIMINAL AND OTHER BACKGROUND RECORD CHECK

I understand that in connection with my application to provide services as a volunteer, and/or for continuous volunteer services for Special Olympics Kansas (“SOKS”), Intellicorp and/or Securint, their agents, assigns or any other authorized third parties (collectively, “the Investigators”) and/or local and state law enforcement agencies may be performing, requesting, obtaining or conducting a background check on me. This background check may include an inquiry into my employment history, education, general character or reputation, work experience, driving, and/or criminal history (the “Information”).

I understand that SOKS may rely on any part or all of this Information in determining whether to extend an offer of volunteer’s duties to me. I further understand that if any adverse action is taken by SOKS or if SOKS chooses not to extend an offer of volunteer duties to me based upon the Information, that I will be provided a copy of such Information along with a summary of my rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

I have read this ADULT CLASS A VOLUNTEER APPLICATION and/or ADULT UNIFIED SPORTS PARTNER AND RELEASE FOR CRIMINAL AND OTHER BACKGROUND RECORD CHECK and by signing below, hereby authorize investigators to conduct a background check as described herein in conjunction with my application for volunteer duties. I further direct and authorize the investigators to conduct the background check and further authorize any third parties or agencies who may be the custodians of or in possession of the requested information, to disclose such information to investigators in connection with this background check. This form is intended to be, among other things, a criminal conviction release authorization as required by applicable laws, and I hereby authorize Intellicorp and/or Securint to receive my criminal record(s).

I understand that the background check as described above will be conducted again on or after the cycle date of this application and every cycle period thereafter unless I am no longer seeking Adult Class A Volunteer and/or Adult Unified Sports Partner status, in which case I will notify Special Olympics Kansas.

Printed Name: ___________________________ Social Security Number*: ___________________________

Signature: ___________________________ Most recent prior residence: ___________________________

*Furnishing your Social Security Number is NOT optional. It shall be used for NO purpose other than to make the process of conducting a background search more accurate. Your Social Security Number will not be stored or maintained in any database, nor will it be sold or transferred in any way to a third party except for the express purpose of conducting the background check. This application, with your Social Security Number will be stored in a secure filing cabinet and will be used again in three years when it is time to renew your Class A status.
Online Protective Behaviors Training

As its programs around the world have grown, Special Olympics recognizes that the treatment of people with intellectual disabilities ranges from the horrifying to the subtle. Any vulnerable person, anywhere in the world, can be abused in ways that leave no marks on the body but terrible scars on the soul.

Special Olympics requires all volunteers to participate in the Protective Behaviors Training Program. The program's goal is to provide education intended to prevent physical, emotional and sexual abuse.

http://resources.specialolympics.org/protective_behaviors_training.aspx

Coach Certification

The National Federation of State High School Associations is proud to introduce the Special Olympics Unified Sports® Course for Coaches. While many coaching challenges are similar—defining roles in line with ability and fostering teamwork—coaching a Unified Sports® team is unlike any other coaching position. Goals, motivations and even the meaning of winning are different. This course will help you understand and implement the most successful coaching strategies for this very special mix of teammates. Available FREE at www.nfhslearn.com

Special Olympics Kansas bases its rules around the sport’s National Governing Body rules with modifications and divisioning to allow all participants fair and meaningful involvement. Sport-specific rules and tests can be found online. www.kssso.org/training-information
Play Unified. Live Unified.
A big thanks to Seth Sinovic and our friends at Sporting Kansas City. Please join us in an exciting new future where people with and without intellectual disabilities come together as teammates fostering communities of acceptance and inclusion for all.

www.ksso.org