What is the Young Athletes Program?

The Special Olympics Young Athletes Program (YAP) is an innovative inclusive play program for children ages 2 - 7 with and without intellectual disabilities. The focus is on fun activities that help stimulate mental and physical growth, developing motor skills and hand-eye coordination, as well as introducing young children to sports skills that can prepare them for the world of Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Delaware is proud to offer this exciting program where Young Athletes can experience the beginning of a lifetime of achievement and success through fun activities, inclusive play, fitness and sports.

For more information about enrolling your child in Special Olympics Young Athletes contact info@sode.org or 302-831-4653.

About 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.

To learn more about Special Olympics Delaware and the Young Athletes Program, please visit our website at www.sode.org.

About the sponsor

In Fall 2014, the Judi Marvel Charities Foundation became the sponsor of the Special Olympics Delaware Young Athletes Program. Judi Marvel Charities Foundation is focused on empowering people through education, helping others to realize their potential, and nurturing strong family relationships.

The Judi Marvel Charities Foundation selected Special Olympics in honor of Bob Marvel, founder of the Special Olympics chapter in Delaware more than 40 years ago. His compassion and dedication to our organization lives on in his legacy, ensuring that all those who want to be a part of this life-changing movement have every opportunity to do so.

www.judimarvelcharities.com

An early introduction to sports and the world of Special Olympics.

Sponsored by

www.sode.org
The Young Athletes Program (YAP) is designed to introduce children with and without intellectual disabilities to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age 8.

Special Olympics YAP was created to meet the physical and developmental needs of children ages 2-7. The program also offers families the opportunity to share in the success of their future athlete and will provide an appreciation of fitness and sport for the entire family. Through preparation for and participation in sports, families will see the potential for their child.

**BENEFITS TO ATHLETES:**
- Socialization with peers
- Coordination and strength-building
- Awareness of self-worth and self-confidence
- Introduction to sports and preparation for Special Olympics competitions when they turn 8 yrs. old

Young Athletes™ introduces children with intellectual disabilities, their peers and families to the world of Special Olympics by pursuing the following goals:

- Engage children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive and social development.
- Welcome family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support.
- Raise awareness about the abilities of children with disabilities through inclusive peer participation.

Young Athletes™ is a versatile program that can work in various learning situations. The program is designed for families to play with their young athletes at home in a fun atmosphere. It is also appropriate for preschools, schools and play-groups to use with small groups of young children with and without disabilities. The flexibility of Young Athletes™ ensures the opportunity to welcome everyone into the Special Olympics family.

**Young Athletes™ activities**
- Foundational skills
- Walking and running
- Balancing and jumping
- Trapping and catching
- Throwing
- Striking
- Kicking
- Advanced skills (biking, skipping, etc.)

Resources are available to help siblings and other family members continue to help Young Athletes at home with “play-to-grow” skills.