Dear Family Members,

Welcome! Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) is excited to have you involved in the Special Olympics movement. Your energy, enthusiasm, and dedication are crucial to the success and the fulfillment of dreams for many Special Olympics athletes across our state. It is our hope that you will feel welcome and become involved as volunteers, committee members, coaches, fans and supporters in the program.

Our focus is on the athlete, ensuring that each athlete participates in the movement at a level that is both meaningful and challenging. We know that family members are often the greatest supporters of athletes, and are essential to having a successful program. We welcome you and encourage you to make a difference in the life of your family member involved in our program, as well as the countless others who benefit from their involvement with Special Olympics Delaware.

To participate in Special Olympics, you may start by contacting the Special Olympics Delaware office at 302-831-4653 or via email at info@sode.org.

For further information, please visit our website at www.sode.org.

Special Olympics Delaware
619 S. College Ave.
Newark, DE 19716
Phone: 302-831-4653
FAX: 302-831-3483

Special Olympics Athlete Oath:
“Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.”
About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is a global organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports.

Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities around the world through programming in sports, health, education and community building. Today, Special Olympics is more than an event - it is one of the world’s most powerful and effective social movements.

OUR MISSION

Special Olympics provides 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.
We believe in the power of sport

Special Olympics Inc. represents nearly 5 million athletes worldwide, and is the only program that utilizes the unique benefits of sports to improve the lives of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) is an accredited program of Special Olympics Inc. As part of the global effort, Special Olympics Delaware has been serving people with intellectual disabilities in our state for more than 40 years and uses sports as a platform to create life-changing experiences for those involved in our program.

We offer community-based programs in five geographical areas throughout the state. School-based programs for Special Olympics athletes ages 2 and older are also offered in more than 100 schools.

There is no upper age limit, and athletes are encouraged to be involved in both school-based and community-based programs to maximize their sports involvement.

Special Olympics Delaware continues to grow thanks to the financial support from individuals and families, businesses, civic organizations and corporate sponsors. There is no fee to participate and uniforms are provided.
Who we are

Special Olympics Delaware is a 501c(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions from individuals, corporate sponsors, grants and community fundraising provide the annual resources necessary to run programs for Special Olympics athletes at no cost to the families.

Special Olympics is based on the belief that people with intellectual disabilities can enjoy a better quality of life through participation in individual and team sports. Regular training, which includes physical conditioning, nutrition and wellness activities, is important to the development of sports skills. Competition among athletes of the same ability level is a great way to test those skills, measure progress and provide encouragement for personal growth.

Through sports training and competition, people with intellectual disabilities benefit physically, mentally and socially. Families and communities are strengthened through their participation and involvement.

Special Olympics creates a program where people with intellectual disabilities can practice and compete in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

**SODE numbers at a glance:**

- 4,200+ Special Olympics Delaware athletes who train and compete every year
- 19 Olympic-type sports offered to athletes of all ability levels
- 4,000+ Coaches, Unified Partners and Volunteers who help year-round
Benefits of participation

Our athletes — your loved ones — are the heart and soul of Special Olympics Delaware. Our programs provide critical opportunities to forge friendships, learn new skills, build confidence and discover independence through the social interaction of sports.

Involvement on sports teams provides significant benefits to people with intellectual disabilities of all ages and abilities. Special Olympics athletes and their family members also enjoy an opportunity to participate in a sports environment that encourages individuals to reach their personal best and experience success through achievement.

Some of these benefits of participation are:
- Promotes positive self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Encourages a healthy, active lifestyle through fitness.
- Provides opportunities for social interaction and social skills development.
- Teaches responsibility and self-discipline.
- Gives athletes opportunities to develop life skills. Provides inclusive activities for athletes to interact with their friends and family members through Unified Sports®.
- Develops employment skills through involvement and teamwork.
- Provides opportunities to make new friends and experience the fun of playing, competing and socializing.
- These benefits result in a richer, more rewarding life, improved skills and increased confidence in school, work, home and social life.

For family members of athletes, there are also many benefits including:
- Social interaction and support networks with other families who can relate to issues you face.
- Opportunities to see your athlete excel in a sport and as a person.
- Unified Sports® provides opportunities for family members to participate with their Special Olympics athlete.
- Opportunities to get more involved and impact the lives of other athletes and family members.
- Chances to get involved in community activities.
- Participating in sports provides your family with endless opportunities for fun and recreation.
How to join

Special Olympics Delaware (SODE) is a statewide organization divided into five Area (community-based) programs. Each Area is responsible for recruiting and training athletes in that area. SODE’s five Area programs are as follows:

1. Wilmington Area
2. Newark Area
3. MOT Area (Middletown, Odessa, Townsend, Smyrna)
4. Kent Area
5. Sussex Area

There is no upper age limit, and there is no cost to the athlete or family to join Special Olympics Delaware.

School-based programs for Special Olympics athletes ages 2 and older are also offered in more than 100 schools statewide. **Athletes are encouraged to become involved in both school-based and Area-based programs to maximize their sports involvement.**

MEDICAL FORMS

Athletes are required to submit a medical form if they are age 8 and older. This form must be signed by a physician or other certified medical personnel. **Athletes may not train or compete unless this form has been submitted to our office. Once the form is submitted, it is good for 3 years.**

Young Athletes ages 2-7 are required to submit an SODE Young Athlete Participation form, but do not need a signed medical release form until they turn 8 yrs. old. Young Athletes must have a signed medical release form on file by their 8th birthday before training and competing in Special Olympics sports. All Special Olympics Delaware forms may be downloaded from our website at www.sode.org.

To get started in Special Olympics, please contact our office at 302-831-4653 or send an email to info@sode.org. We will follow up and get you registered to join, depending on where you currently reside.
Special Olympics was created to give individuals with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to train and compete in year-round sports activities. To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, a person must meet the following criteria:

1. **Be identified by an agency or professional as having:**
   a. Intellectual disability; or
   b. Cognitive delay as determined by standardized measures such as intelligence quotient (IQ) or other generally acceptable measures; or
   c. A closely related developmental disability. This means having functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills such as recreation, work, independent living, self-direction or self-care.

2. **Be at least 2 years old to participate in Young Athletes (ages 2-7) or be at least 8 years old to compete in traditional SODE sports programs.**
   
   A completed SODE Athlete Participation Form (medical release) with a doctor’s signature on the form is required for athletes ages 8 and older.
   
   A completed SODE Young Athletes Participation form (does NOT require a doctor’s signature) is required for athletes ages 2 - 7.

3. **Agree to abide by the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the SODE Code of Conduct.**
SODE Training and Competition

Special Olympics athletes of all abilities practice for at least eight weeks under the guidance of trained coaches in preparation for their final competition. Local competition opportunities will also be offered during the training season.

Athletes and teams are divisioned based on ability (and age and gender whenever possible) for all competitions. Delaware Law Enforcement officers have a presence at all local and state competitions, bestowing honor and dignity to medal presentations at each competition.

Competitions of all sizes are held across the state throughout the year, highlighted by SODE’s signature events: State Summer Games, Fall Sports Festival, State Basketball Tournament and State Bowling Tournaments.

Special Olympics Delaware competition opportunities are:
- Scrimmages
- Mid-season Area tournaments
- Area Tournaments
- State Competitions
- Special Olympics USA Games (every 4 years)
- Special Olympics World Games (every 2 years)
- SODE school competitions and skills demonstrations
- SODE-DIAA interscholastic Unified Sports competitions

All coaches complete a coaches certification program, as well as the Class A Volunteer requirements, the Protective Behaviors Training online course, and pass a background check prior to training and competition.

Special Olympics is unique from other sports organizations in that we offer:
- Sports opportunities for all ability levels
- Divisioning for equitable competition
- Awards for all participants
- Eligible for advancement to higher levels of competition
- No fees charged to athletes and family members
Special Olympics Delaware offers year-round sports training and athletic competition in 19 Olympic-type sports to children and adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Athletes may compete in team and individual sports. Participation is open to any eligible athlete ages 2 and older, and programs are designed to serve all ability levels. Special Olympics athletes train for at least eight weeks under the guidance of trained coaches in preparation for their final competition. In all Special Olympics sports, athletes are grouped in competition divisions according to ability level and age, and gender, when appropriate. Special Olympics Delaware also offers events for lower ability level athletes to train and compete in basic skills. The development of these key skills is necessary prior to advancing to competitive events.

**Team and Individual Sports**

The official team and individual sports include those competition-level sports (see p. 19) that are currently offered by Special Olympics Delaware. Special Olympics athletes train and compete in these individual or team sports with other Special Olympics athletes of similar age and performance capabilities.

**Individual Skills**

Individual Skills competition allows Special Olympics athletes to develop sports skills in a competitive format. This program is designed to serve as a stepping stone for athletes to become a member of a team as they master skills, learn team concepts and work toward the goal of team participation. This enables every athlete to develop skills, and encourages participation and competition in an appropriate and meaningful manner.
Motor Activities Training Program (MATP)
The Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Program is designed for people with severe disabilities whose physical and/or behavioral limitations preclude participation in team or individual sports in traditional Special Olympics competitions. Emphasis is on training and participation, rather than competition. Activities can be conducted in schools and large residential facilities, as well as in community-based settings.

Young Athletes™ Program
The Young Athletes Program is an innovative sports play program for children ages 2-7 with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities and their peers, designed to introduce them into the world of sports. It also prepares them for Special Olympics training and competition, which can start at the age of 8.

The Young Athletes Program focuses on developing motor skills and hand-eye coordination through physical play. The program also serves as an introduction to the resources and support available within Special Olympics Delaware to families, agencies and schools.
Unified Sports®

Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that brings together Special Olympics athletes (individuals with disabilities) and Unified Partners (individuals without disabilities) through sports and friendship. Unified Sports promotes social inclusion through shared sport training and/or competition experiences. By providing the opportunity to participate together, Unified Sports® helps to develop increased understanding of persons with differing abilities. Unified Sports® are ideal ways for siblings and SODE athletes to become involved in Special Olympics together. Adults and other family members may also participate as a Unified Partner.

Interscholastic Unified Sports®

The Interscholastic Unified Sports® program is a partnership that was launched in 2013 between Special Olympics Delaware and the Delaware Interscholastic Athletic Association (DIAA) to promote Unified Sports® teams in high schools statewide, with the goal of providing opportunities for students with special needs to experience the benefits of participating in high school sports.

Unified Champion Schools Program

The Unified Champion Schools program is a dynamic collaboration between Special Olympics and school communities, engaging young people with and without disabilities to join together through a variety of sports experiences. This becomes a pathway to promoting attitudes and behaviors of acceptance and inclusion in schools.

Unified Champion Schools also build on youth leadership and social advocacy within the schools, helping to bring greater awareness for respecting people with intellectual disabilities through efforts such as the Respect campaigns (Spread the Word to End the Word). Youth engagement, Unified Sports and whole-school awareness are cornerstones of the Unified Champion Schools program.
Additional Opportunities for Athlete Involvement

Healthy Athletes

The Healthy Athletes program is dedicated to providing health services and education to Special Olympics athletes, and changing the way health systems interact with people with intellectual disabilities. The components of the Healthy Athletes Program may include screenings, health education, activities and/or personal and preventive products to enhance the sports training and, ultimately, the lives of all athletes.

Athlete Leadership Programs (ALPs)

Athlete Leadership Programs are a series of programs created to get athletes involved in the Special Olympics movement beyond sports training and competition. The programs are designed to help athletes participate meaningfully in leadership roles by becoming public speakers, Area Input Council members, Board members and event volunteers. Athletes are offered training and opportunities to support them in becoming effective leaders, and to create an environment that values their contributions to the organization.

Summer Camp

Special Olympics Delaware’s summer camp is a three-day, two-night camp featuring traditional camp activities at Camp Barnes, located near Bethany Beach in southern Delaware. The camp features opportunities to enjoy recreational and camp-type activities including swimming, crafts, non-competitive games, fishing, crabbing and canoeing. In addition, Special Olympics athletes are joined by student counselors from high schools and local colleges who share the camp experience.

Families Day at the Beach

Special Olympics provides “Families Day at the Beach” as a venue for family engagement and support in a fun and relaxing environment. Typically held on a Saturday in September at Cape Henlopen State Park in Lewes, this event is an opportunity for athletes and families to gather and enjoy a day together while fishing off the pier.
Opportunities for Family Involvement

Special Olympics Delaware is dependent upon the tireless efforts of thousands of dedicated volunteers, the financial support of hundreds of businesses and companies, and the generous individual donations of friends of the organization. Whether it’s coaching our athletes, volunteering at an event, or financially supporting the organization, your contribution positively impacts our athletes and families.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Special Olympics would not exist today — and could not have been created — without the time, energy, commitment and enthusiasm of people just like you who choose to take a little time from busy schedules to make the world a better place.

As a family member, we encourage you to support your athlete by attending practices, competitions and events to cheer for your athlete and encourage growth and development. There are also many other volunteer opportunities for you to be involved with to support Special Olympics.

The impact of volunteering for Special Olympics Delaware is immediate; and your contribution, whether it is time, money, expertise, or goods and services, directly affects our athletes and strengthens our program.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Special Olympics does not charge its athletes a fee to participate and also provides uniforms and equipment at no cost. Financial support comes from funds raised from individuals and families, organizations, corporations, foundations and special events.

The Lewes Polar Bear Plunge, Reindeer Run, and Over the Edge are just some of the fundraisers unique to SODE. Delaware Law Enforcement for Special Olympics (LESO) also provides valuable support by raising funds and awareness for SODE through law enforcement events such as the Torch Run, ad solicitation campaigns, Truck Convoy and Ride to the Tide.

To learn more, please visit www.sode.org.
# Sports Offered

## SODE OFFERS 19 SPORTS YEAR-ROUND

### SPRING
- Training: March-May
- Competition: May-June
- Aquatics ★
- Bocce
- Powerlifting
- Softball ★
- Tennis ★
- Track & Field ★
- Roller Skating

### FALL
- Training: August-October
- Competition: September-October
- Bocce
- Flag Football ★
- Long-Distance Running/Walking
- Soccer ★
- Volleyball ★
- Cycling ★
- Golf ★

### WINTER
- Training: October-March
- Competition: December-March
- Bowling ★
- Alpine Skiing
- Nordic Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Figure Skating
- Basketball ★

★ Also offered as Unified Sports  
❖ Much of training occurs during summer months
Basketball

TRAINING SEASON: Winter
COMPETITION TIME: March/April (State Basketball Tournaments)

As one of the world’s most popular sports, basketball is a big favorite in Special Olympics. In addition to team competition, Special Olympics basketball offers individual skills and team skills competition which allows Special Olympics athletes to develop sports skills in a competitive format.

Unified teams may also train and compete in basketball. As in all Special Olympic sports, basketball teams are grouped in competition divisions according to the athletes’ and teams’ ability levels.

Bocce

TRAINING SEASON: Spring and Fall
COMPETITION TIME: June (Summer Games) and October (Fall Sports Festival)

Bocce is a game of skill and strategy. Anyone who can roll a ball can play.

There are two or four players in a game. Requiring concentration, finesse, and a good eye, the sport is played on a 12’ wide by 60’ long court. Depending on the event, players take a turn rolling a bocce ball toward the smallest ball (pallina), which has already been thrown onto the field. The players are given points for the balls thrown closest to the pallina.

Doubles and foursome team competitions are offered at Summer Games and at Fall Festival.
**Bowling**

**TRAINING SEASON:** Winter  
**COMPETITION TIME:** January/February (Area and State Bowling Tournaments)

Bowling is one of the largest Special Olympics sports. Bowling competition is conducted using a traditional format; however for those of lower abilities or with physical disabilities, bowling has been modified by utilizing a ramp on the approach.

As in all Special Olympics sports, athletes are grouped into competition divisions according to ability level and age and gender when appropriate.

Events include singles, Unified doubles and ramp bowling.

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**Cycling**

**TRAINING SEASON:** Summer  
**COMPETITION TIME:** September (State Cycling Tournament)

Cycling is an exciting sport that tones muscles and strengthens the cardiovascular system. It is also an enjoyable recreational activity that offers fun and relaxation.

Each cyclist’s goal is to cross the finish line with the fastest time.

Cyclists train using bicycles, tricycles, or tandem bikes and then compete at the annual State Cycling Event. In Unified Sports cycling, a tandem team consists of one Special Olympics athlete and one partner — the athlete or the partner may assume either the driver position (front) or the rear position on the tandem.
Figure Skating

TRAINING SEASON: Winter
COMPETITION TIME: March/April (State Figure Skating Exhibition)

Figure Skating involves weekly training which takes place under the direction of several highly qualified coaches.

Figure skating is a sport in which individuals perform footwork, spins and other intricate and challenging moves on ice skates. Figure skaters compete at various levels starting at the beginner’s level. Special Olympics athletes work individually to attain different badge levels, ranging from 1-12.

The figure skating season culminates in a skating exhibition at a host facility.

Flag Football

TRAINING SEASON: Fall
COMPETITION TIME: October (Fall Sports Festival)

Flag Football is quickly becoming one of the most popular sports in Special Olympics across the United States.

Flag Football is a 5 on 5 non-contact sport played by both males and females. The state competition is held in the fall during the SODE Fall Sports Festival. Flag Football events are held in Individual Skills, Team, and Unified Team competition.
Golf

TRAINING SEASON:  Summer
COMPETITION TIME:  September (State Golf Tournament)

Golf provides Special Olympics athletes the opportunity to develop their golf skills by participating in an individual skills competition. Golfers who have the ability to put all of the skills together can participate in 9-hole competition. Among Special Olympics sports, golf provides one of the greatest opportunities for athletes to train and compete with their peers and family members as a Unified team.

Golfers attend clinics throughout the summer and early fall before competing at the annual State Golf Tournament. Athlete/coach clinics are also offered throughout the season.

Long-Distance Running/Walking

TRAINING SEASON:  Fall
COMPETITION TIME:  October (Fall Sports Festival)

The Long-Distance Running/Walking program is a great recreational activity and a means to condition for other sports.

The culminating long-distance running/walking event takes place at the Fall Sports Festival.
Powerlifting

**TRAINING SEASON:** Spring  
**COMPETITION TIME:** June (Summer Games)

Powerlifting is officially one of SODE’s spring sports, but several athletes participate year-round to stay in shape. The powerlifting competition takes place at Summer Games.

Athletes (males and females ages 16 and over) may train with weights, dumbbells and machines, geared for each athlete’s capabilities.

Training facilities exist throughout the state. Because of the nature of the sport, training can be extended to start in the fall.

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Roller Skating

**TRAINING SEASON:** Spring  
**COMPETITION TIME:** April/May (State Roller Skating Competition)

Roller Skating athletes race against each other in this fast-paced sport with events offered for beginner and advanced skaters. Training takes place during the spring and the State Roller Skating Competition is held at the Dover Skating Center in late April/early May.

Athletes are given the option to compete in several speed events, with a variety of distances for all skill levels, as well as relay and slalom events. In addition, athletes may choose to use in-line or quad skates, depending on their strengths.
Skiing (Alpine or “Downhill”)

TRAINING SEASON: Winter
COMPETITION TIME: February (Winter Games)

Alpine skiing is an exciting winter sport that challenges the athlete’s downhill racing ability and coordination. Skiers train in the Pocono Mountains. The events offered are designed to accommodate a variety of skill levels and interests. Athletes compete in the downhill, slalom and giant slalom events. For each of these categories, the courses are set for advanced, intermediate or novice ability athletes.

Special Olympics Delaware athletes compete at Winter Games hosted by one of our neighboring states in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

Skiing (Nordic or “Cross-country”)

TRAINING SEASON: Winter
COMPETITION TIME: February (Winter Games)

Nordic skiing is a winter sport that promotes superior physical conditioning while providing enjoyment for athletes of all ages. Skiers train locally on snow when it is available or on dry land.

Cross-country skiing is offered for athletes of every ability level. Individual events offered in cross-country skiing range from the 50-meter race to the 5K.
Snowshoeing

**TRAINING SEASON:** Winter  
**COMPETITION TIME:** February (Winter Games)

Snowshoeing is one of the newest SODE winter sports. Athletes train locally on snow when it is available or on dry land. Snowshoeing is a great sport for athletes of all ages and abilities. It is very similar to Track & Field events and provides the same excellent cardiovascular workout as cross-country skiing.

Special Olympics Snowshoeing offers events for athletes of every ability level. Individual events offered in snowshoeing range from the 25 meter races to the 800 meter.

Soccer

**TRAINING SEASON:** Fall  
**COMPETITION TIME:** October (Fall Festival)

Soccer is considered the world’s most popular sport for children and adults. Similarly, it is one of the most popular sports for Special Olympics athletes. Athletes are able to improve their overall physical fitness through training and competition.

In addition to offering traditional team soccer, Special Olympics soccer offers individual skills competition to allow athletes to train and compete using basic soccer skills. These skills include dribbling, shooting, and passing.
Softball

TRAINING SEASON: Spring
COMPETITION TIME: June (Summer Games)

Softball is an exciting team sport in Special Olympics. Athletes play slow-pitch softball on teams comprised of 10 members on the field.

Traditional and Unified softball teams compete at the Special Olympics Delaware Summer Games held in early June.

Swimming

TRAINING SEASON: Spring
COMPETITION TIME: June (Summer Games)

Swimming is one of the original Special Olympics sports and widely enjoyed by athletes of all ability levels and age groups. SODE offers competitions in more than 30 different events at Summer Games. Individual and relay events are offered for all strokes. SODE also offers developmental races such as walking, flotation, assisted and unassisted events for athletes of lower abilities. In addition, SODE offers Unified relay events featuring athletes with and without disabilities competing together.

The development of basic swimming skills is necessary prior to advancing to longer, competitive events. Because it is easy to learn, swimming is an appropriate sport for athletes of all ages and abilities.
Tennis

TRAINING SEASON: Spring
COMPETITION TIME: June (Summer Games)

Widely favored by millions of people as a leisure activity, tennis is a lifetime sport. Special Olympics athletes can delight in and benefit from even when not competing in an official Special Olympics competition.

Like mainstream tennis, Special Olympics tennis gives athletes the opportunity to learn and perform a variety of skills in a sport that can be played throughout life.

In addition to traditional singles and Unified doubles events, Special Olympics Delaware offers individual skills competition, allowing athletes to train and compete in basic tennis skills.

Track and Field

TRAINING SEASON: Spring
COMPETITION TIME: June (Summer Games)

Athletics (track & field) is one of the original Special Olympics sports and is the most popular world-wide. In Delaware, athletes train during the spring months prior to the track & field event at Summer Games. Events are offered for every ability level.

Track & Field events range from the 10-meter assisted walk to the 3000-meter run to the long jump, shot put, relays and wheelchair events. Special Olympics Delaware also offers events for lower ability level athletes to train and compete in basic athletics skills.
Volleyball

TRAINING SEASON: Fall
COMPETITION TIME: October (Fall Festival)

Participating in volleyball gives SODE athletes an opportunity to learn a sport often played outside Special Olympics at picnics and other community gatherings, and thus the chance to successfully participate when those opportunities arise.

SODE offers volleyball training and competition for both traditional and Unified teams.

For further details on our sports programs, or to learn more about Special Olympics Delaware, please visit our website at www.sode.org or call 302-831-4653.

To contact any of our 5 Area Programs, please email:

Special Olympics Wilmington - Email: sode.wilmington@gmail.com
Special Olympics Newark - Email: sode.newark@gmail.com
Special Olympics MOT - Email: sode.mot@gmail.com
Special Olympics Kent County - Email: sode.kent@gmail.com
Special Olympics Sussex County - Email: sode.sussex@gmail.com