

# Everyone benefits from Young Athletes.

**Motor skills.** Children with intellectual disabilities (ID) who took part in an eight-week Young Athletes curriculum saw seven month's development in motor skills. This is compared to a three month gain in motor skills for children who did not participate.

**Social, emotional and learning skills.** Parents and teachers of children who took part in the Young Athletes curriculum said the children learned skills that they will use in pre-primary school. The children were more enthusiastic, confident and played better with others.

**Expectations.** Family members say that Young Athletes raised their hopes for their child's future.

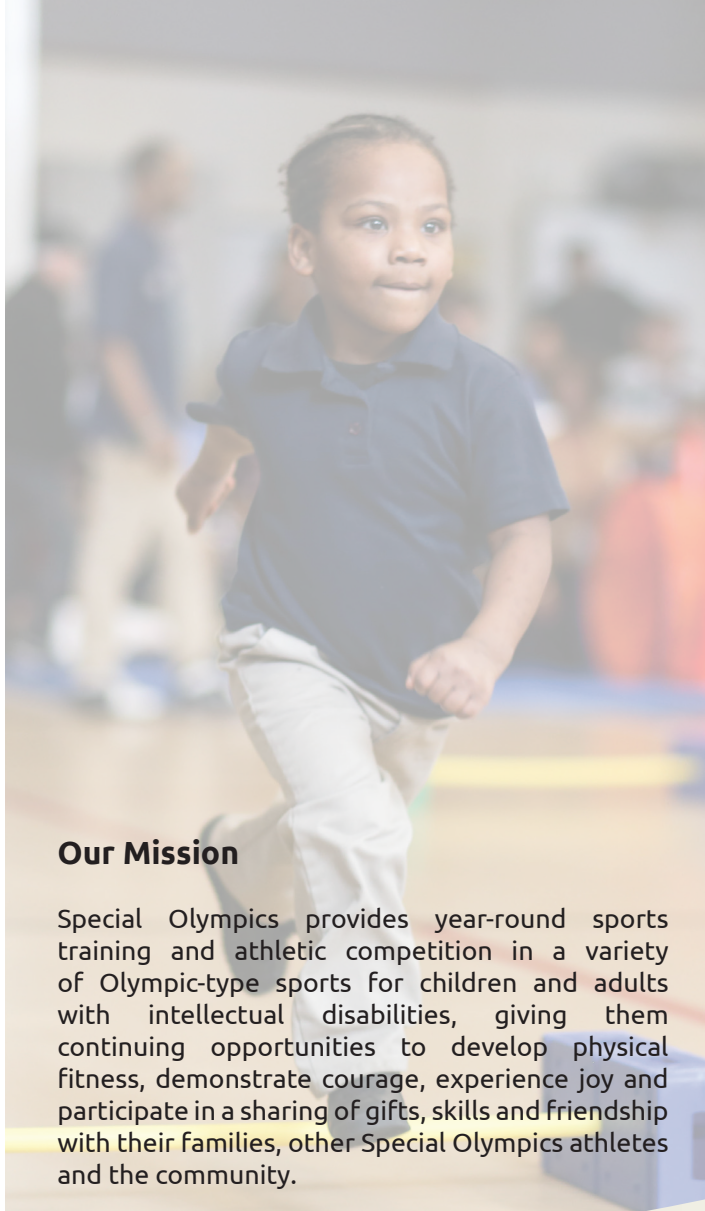
**Sport readiness.** Young Athletes helps all children to develop important movement and sport skills. These skills get them ready to take part in sports and recreational activities when they are older.

**Acceptance.** Inclusive play has a benefit for children without ID as well. It helps them to better understand and accept others.

## 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.

A sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 7 years old.



Special Olympics  
**Young Athletes**

[www.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)

# Special Olympics Young Athletes



Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Young Athletes offers families, teachers, caregivers and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children. Children of all abilities take part, and they all benefit.

## Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning.

Children also learn to share, take turns and follow directions. These skills help children in family, community and school activities.

## Young Athletes is a fun way for children to get fit.

It is important to teach children healthy habits while they are young. This can set the stage for a life of physical activity, friendships and learning.

## Young Athletes is easy to do and fun for all.

It can be done at home, in schools or in the community using the Young Athletes Activity Guide and basic equipment.

Through Young Athletes, all children, their families and people in the community can be part of an inclusive team.

Young Athletes welcomes children and their families into the world of Special Olympics. Activities are designed to support children of all ability levels and can be run inclusive of children with and without intellectual disabilities.

Young Athletes is run one of three different settings - schools, communities and homes.

### Young Athletes in Schools...

Teachers and therapists can use Young Athletes in the classroom to support children in developing important motor, communication and learning skills.

### Young Athletes in the Community...

Young Athletes provides an opportunity for children with and without intellectual disabilities to come together with a coach for organized play. In community programs, family members can share in the fun with their child.

### Young Athletes at Home...

Parents, grandparents, siblings and friends play together at home with children using Young Athletes for activities and ideas.



“When my baby was born and I found out that he had an intellectual disability,  
*my world fell apart.*”

At Young Athletes, I see him move about, smiling, mixing freely with others and not holding on to the tail end of my skirt. It makes me cry tears of happiness and restores my hope that he can be independent one day.

## NOW I DARE TO DREAM

and plan to play baseball with my son when he grows up.”

-- Misae Katsumata, Japan