

SPORTS PROGRAMS

We offer traditional sports programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities (ID) and Special Olympics Unified Sports®, which combines athletes with and without ID on the same team to train and compete.

14,000

**Athletes &
Unified Sports® Partners**

10,000+ 69

Coaches & Volunteers Local Programs

26 Sports Offered 5 State Competitions

We partner with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) to offer **Unified Sports®**. This program is not just about including students with disabilities, but unifying all students and shifting the norm in schools from sports as recreation to sports as a catalyst for social inclusion and attitude and behavioral change.

GLOBAL REACH

Special Olympics is the largest sports organization and the largest public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

4+ Million

**Athletes &
Unified Sports® Partners**

1+ Million 170+

Coaches & Volunteers Countries

**Special
Olympics**
Connecticut



HEALTHY ATHLETES®

We aim to improve the overall health and well-being of the athletes by providing access to healthcare services and resources that they may not otherwise have access to. We offer free screenings, health education, and resources for follow-up care (i.e. prescription eyeglasses, hearing aids, referrals) for athletes through 8 disciplines.

1,045

Free health screenings in 2024

272

**Health professionals &
students trained in
treating people in ID**

ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

13

**Health
Messengers**

60

**Global
Messengers**

Athletes receive training to serve as spokespersons, ambassadors, and decision-makers for our organization. They inform and educate the public about our mission, programs, and impact, train health practitioners, and serve on our Board of Directors.





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 (ID); 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 is the largest sports organization and the largest public health organization dedicated to serving people with intellectual disabilities (ID). Worldwide, Special Olympics supports over 4 million athletes and Unified Sports® partners, one million coaches and volunteers, and holds over 100,000 competitions a year in 170-plus countries. Special Olympics Connecticut offers sports, health, and fitness programs to individuals of all ages and abilities throughout the state.

Sports Programs

We offer traditional sports programs for individuals with ID and Special Olympics Unified Sports®, which combines athletes with and without ID together on the same team to train and compete. Nearly 14,000 athletes and Unified partners participate year-round in one or more of our 26 sports offered.

Unified Sports®

We partner with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) to offer Unified Sports®. Unified Schools is not just about including students with disabilities, but unifying all students and shifting the norm in schools from sports as recreation to sports as a catalyst for social inclusion and attitude and behavioral change.

Athlete Leadership

60 Global Messengers are trained to serve as Special Olympics spokespersons and ambassadors. In addition, 13 Health Messengers serve as spokespersons and ambassadors for our Healthy Athletes® program. Athletes also serve on our Board of Directors and sit on our CT Law Enforcement Torch Run® Executive Council.

Healthy Athletes®

This program provides free health screenings and education to athletes with ID who participate in Special Olympics events. The program aims to improve the overall health and well-being of the athletes by providing access to healthcare services and resources that they may not otherwise have access to. Screenings are offered in vision, hearing, dental care, podiatry, fitness, nutrition, and mental health.

Why this program is so critical...

- 80% of athletes are either overweight or obese
- 85% have flexibility problems
- 59% have balance problems
- 57% need new prescription glasses (which we provide at no cost)