



Training For Life

**Special
Olympics**
Great Britain



Special Olympics began in Great Britain in 1978 as part of the global Special Olympics Movement founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver – sister to US President John F Kennedy. Today, Special Olympics supports over 4 million athletes in 200 countries worldwide.

The Movement is founded on the belief that all people with intellectual disabilities can, with proper instruction and encouragement, enjoy and benefit from sport. The value of sport lies in its ability to instil self-confidence and self-belief and is a gateway to personal development, empowerment and acceptance.



Special Olympics Great Britain is the country's largest provider of a year-round coaching and competition programme for all people with intellectual (learning) disabilities. We have a network of clubs across England, Scotland and Wales which provide a coaching programme for all levels of ability including those with profound and multiple disabilities. We offer 26 sports ranging from athletics, swimming and football to equestrian, judo and figure Skating.

The training is carried out by qualified coaches and a dedicated army of volunteers within local communities on a daily basis.





Special Olympics athletes have intellectual disabilities (IQ below 75) and can participate in a regular coaching programme from the age of 7 and compete from the age of 8 – there is no upper age limit. Our Young Athletes Programme® caters for children between the ages of 2 and 7 and is a play based activity supporting development of cognitive, motor skills and hand-eye coordination.

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“It’s been a brilliant seven weeks. The structured programme provided by Special Olympics has worked well for our children, who all have additional needs, and they have really enjoyed it. It has also inspired our staff to be more creative and provided great ideas for physical activities, and it has also encouraged families to get their children more involved in activities regardless of their needs”. Michelle Kimberley, Bath Opportunity Pre-School Manager.
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Competition is an integral part of our work.

We provide a unique competition pathway that enables our athletes to progress from local to international level. All Special Olympics competition is “banded” which allows all athletes the opportunity for achievement based on their own level of ability and also ensures that only athletes of similar ability compete against each other. Special Olympics celebrates the performance of each athlete with a medal awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place and a participation ribbon is awarded to 4-8th place.



What is special about Special Olympics?

We know that through sport anyone with an intellectual disability can benefit physically mentally, socially and spiritually. Families and local communities are strengthened through participation and observation, and ultimately united in an environment of equality, respect and acceptance.

Participation in sport helps people with intellectual disabilities become more confident, active citizens and learn important physical and emotional life skills. But we offer more than just sport – we run education, early intervention training and health screening programmes to create more inclusive communities and improve general health and wellbeing of our athletes.

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Special Olympics is a global Movement creating a new world of inclusion and community, where every single person is accepted and welcomed, regardless of ability or disability. We are helping to make the world a better, healthier and more joyful place - one athlete, one volunteer, one family member at a time.
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Special Olympics GB is helping to foster a more inclusive society by highlighting ability over disability, allowing people with intellectual disabilities to realise their potential whilst also breaking down inaccurate and negative perceptions about intellectual disability amongst the wider community.



The charity is committed to improving the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities and promotes Unified Sports® a programme promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences; joining people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: **training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.**

Helping to transform lives through the power of sport.

If you want to get involved,
or need more information,
please visit our website:
www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk

If you want to keep in touch
with ongoing developments you
can join our on-line community via
Twitter and Facebook.

 facebook.com/SpecialOlympicsGB
 [@sogreatbritain](https://twitter.com/sogreatbritain)

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