



***Special  
Olympics***  
*Texas*

# A Comprehensive Study of Special Olympics Texas Athletes and Their Families

Final Report  
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## Acknowledgements from Special Olympics Texas President and CEO

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Over the past forty years, following the vision of founder Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics (SO) has become the largest sports organization for people with disabilities in the world, with over 4.7 million athletes in 169 countries. In 1969, one year after the first SO World Summer Games, Special Olympics Texas (SOTX) was founded. Recently, SOTX staff have become interested in learning more about the athletes and families that make up their State SO Program so they can better understand and serve their constituents. To this end, SOTX approached the Center for Social Development and Education (CSDE) at the University of Massachusetts Boston, a research institute with over 20 years of experience conducting research and program evaluation with Special Olympics International (SOI).

The CSDE first became involved with SOI during the 1995 World Summer Games in New Haven, Connecticut. Tim Shriver approached Gary Siperstein, the director of the CSDE, for his assistance examining the impact of the Games on the attitudes of participating volunteers. In 1998, a SOI research summit took place in North Carolina, which planned the next decade of research for SOI. The CSDE played a major role in the establishment of the research objectives for the coming century, and subsequently became a SO Global Collaborating Center to carry out national and international research and evaluation projects. The years of work resulting from this longstanding collaboration include research on Unified Sports, Young Athletes, and SO's impact on and benefits for families (including military families); an international study conducted in more than 12 countries examining societal attitudes toward individuals with intellectual disabilities; and, most recently, a partnership with Gallup to conduct the most comprehensive national study of SO athletes and families.<sup>1,2</sup> The work the CSDE has conducted as the Global Collaborating Center can be found in the Special Olympics Research Overview.<sup>3</sup> Presently, the CSDE is conducting program evaluation for the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools program (also known as Project UNIFY/Meet in the Middle), which has been ongoing since 2008.

Prior to the current study, the CSDE's evaluation of SO programming has had a national-level focus and, for the most part, has not involved direct work with individual State SO Programs. However, the CSDE understands the value of state-specific information and the importance of evidence-based program development, and was eager to work with SOTX to develop a model for working with State Programs at a local level. This study is the first of its kind in which the CSDE has partnered directly with a State Program to collect data specifically about the athletes and families in one state.

As one of the biggest State SO Programs in North America, SOTX currently serves 53,446 athletes and their families, from children as young as two years old to seniors in their mid-80s. See Table 1 for more information about SOTX athletes.

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<sup>1</sup> See Siperstein, G. N., Parker, R. C., & Drascher, M. (2013). National snapshot of adults with intellectual disabilities in the labor force. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 39*, 157-165. doi: 10.3233/JVR-130658.

<sup>2</sup> See Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center. (2012). *Special Olympics participation, community connections, and vocational outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston.

<sup>3</sup> To access the Special Olympics Research Overview, visit <http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/research/Special-Olympics-Research-Overview.pdf>.

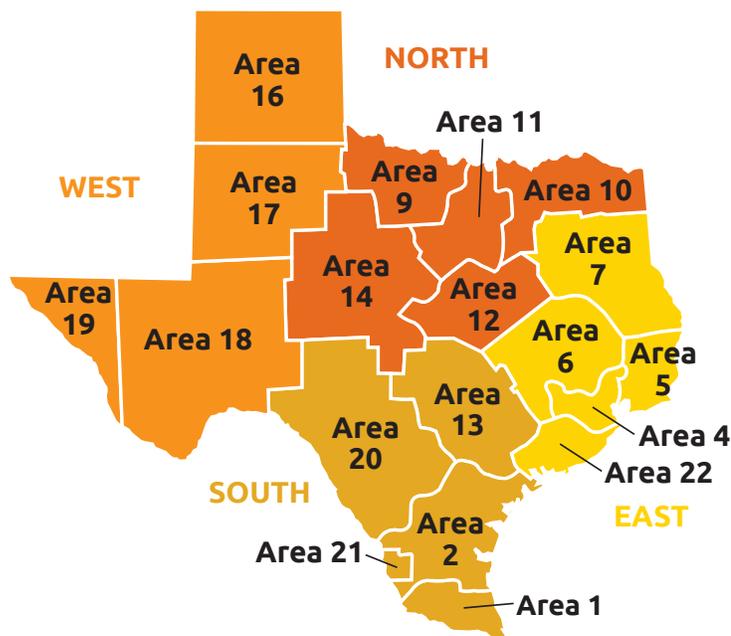


Table 1. SOTX athletes, by category

Type of athlete	Description	Number of athletes (percentage of total athletes) <sup>4</sup>
Competing athletes	Compete in local events	31,730 (59%)
Participating athletes	Practice but do not compete	10,201 (19%)
Young Athletes	Participate in the Young Athletes Program	9,932 (19%)
Motor Activities Training Program athletes	Participate in the Motor Activities Training Program	1,583 (3%)
		<b>53,446 (100%)</b>

SOTX is divided into four regions that encompass 19 smaller “Areas” across the state. Of the 300 SOTX competitions held each year, most are local Area competitions, and six are statewide competitions, which bring together athletes from all parts of Texas. See Figure 1 for a map of the regions and Areas, and see Table 2 for more information about the athletes in each region and Area.

Figure 1. Map of SOTX regions and Areas



<sup>4</sup>The numbers in this column are based on information collected about SOTX athletes in 2014. Although more recent data are now available, the information from 2014 was the most recent information available at the beginning of the study and was used as a reference point throughout.



Table 2. SOTX athletes, by region and Area

Region	Area number	Area name	Number of athletes (percentage of total athletes) <sup>4</sup>
North	9	North Texas	692
	10	Greater Dallas	6,973
	11	Greater Fort Worth	3,832
	12	Heart of Texas	1,052
	14	Big Country	1,173
			<b>13,722 (26%)</b>
South	1	Rio Grande Valley	4,652
	2	South Texas	1,214
	13	Central Texas	2,794
	20	San Antonio	9,330
	21	Laredo	1,840
			<b>19,830 (37%)</b>
East	4	Greater Houston	10,176
	5	Beaumont	1,070
	6	Heart of East Texas	1,096
	7	East Texas	825
	22	Gulf Coast	2,010
			<b>15,177 (28%)</b>
West	16	Panhandle	1,061
	17	South Plains	1,281
	18	Permian Basin/Big Bend	361
	19	El Paso	2,014
			<b>4,717 (9%)</b>
			<b>53,446 (100%)</b>

The purpose of this study was to create a comprehensive description of SOTX athletes and families, and to serve as a platform for future research and program evaluation at SOTX. A multi-source approach targeting both athletes and families was used to answer the following research questions:

1. Who are the SOTX athletes and their families?
2. What is the nature and extent of athlete and family involvement in SOTX?
3. What are the benefits of participation in SOTX to the athlete and family?

The methods used to address these research questions are explained in detail in the following section. The participants (SOTX athletes and families) are outlined first, followed by a description of the instruments used to collect information and the procedures for interacting with participants.



## Methods

### Participants

Participants for this study were recruited from the population of competing athletes, as this group makes up the majority of all SOTX athletes (59%, see Table 1 above). Thus, all participants were athletes or families of athletes who competed in major local or statewide competitions. In order to ensure the samples of athletes and families were representative of all four SOTX regions (North, South, East, and West), “target numbers” were determined for each Area and region. Athlete and family target numbers were calculated based on the number of athletes who competed in each Area’s 2015 Spring Games, as all Areas planned to recruit most heavily for the current study at their 2016 Spring Games.

- For athletes, the target numbers were approximately 2.5% of all athletes who competed in the 2015 Spring Games events in each region.
- For family members, a “target range” was determined, consisting of lower and upper target numbers. One of these target numbers was approximately 20% of all families of athletes who competed in the 2015 Spring Games events in each region. The other target number reflected a total of 2,000 family members divided proportionally across the four regions based on each region’s representation at the 2015 Spring Games events.

All target numbers were adjusted by SOTX staff as needed, based on their knowledge of the athletes and families in each region and the resources available in each region for administering surveys and conducting interviews (i.e., staff/volunteers).

Staff and volunteers in all 19 Areas in the four regions recruited athletes and families at SOTX competitions between April 2, 2016 and May 29, 2016. A total of 329 athletes were randomly selected to participate in an interview, out of 8,931 athletes at 21 competitions (see Appendix A). This sample of athletes represents 4% of the athletes who competed in the 21 competitions. A total of 2,050 family members of SOTX athletes were randomly selected to participate in a survey, out of 13,054 families who attended 29 competitions. This sample of family members represents 16% of the families who attended the 29 competitions (see Appendix A). Overall, the samples represent 1% of all competing SOTX athletes and 6% of their families. Notably, with 2,050 participating family members, this study is larger than all other national studies of Special Olympics families. All four regions met or exceeded their target numbers for athletes, and fell within or above their target ranges for families. See Table 3 for more information about the regional target numbers/ranges and final sample sizes of SOTX athletes and families.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The confidence interval for the final family sample was  $\pm 2.2\%$ , and ranged from  $\pm 3.4\%$  to  $\pm 6.0\%$  for the specific regions. A confidence interval is the range of values that we can be reasonably certain contains the true value for the population (i.e., all SOTX families). Confidence intervals are used because the actual value of the population of all SOTX families is unknown and values calculated using a sample of SOTX families are influenced by some error. The most common confidence level, 95%, was used here, meaning we can be 95% certain that the actual population value lies within the range of each confidence interval.



Table 3. Target numbers/ranges and sample sizes of athletes and families, by region

Region	Athlete target number	Final athlete sample	Family target range	Final family sample
North	83	111	605-688	615
South	94	125	713-781	851
East	40	54	322-369	319
West	33	39	243-279	265
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>1883-2117</b>	<b>2050</b>

## Survey/interview instruments

Information was collected from participating SOTX athletes through in-person interviews and from participating family members through paper-and-pencil surveys. All interviews and surveys were conducted at the competitions where the participants were recruited. The interview protocol for athletes (*Athlete Interview*) and the survey instrument for families (*Family Member Survey*) were both designed using:

1. Input from SOTX staff,
2. Questions from relevant instruments used by the CSDE in past studies, and
3. Pilot testing.

Though led by the CSDE, the development process was highly collaborative and was guided by SOTX’s objectives, interests, and potential uses for the findings. Together, the CSDE and SOTX:

- Developed topic areas under SOTX’s research objectives, and designed a *Ranking Sheet* that allowed SOTX staff and Board Members to identify the topics they felt would be most important in creating a comprehensive description of their athletes and families (see Appendix B);
- Established an Advisory Committee—consisting of the SOTX President/CEO, a former SOTX Board Member, and staff members from Field Services, Advancement, and the Family Support Network—to provide multiple perspectives throughout the development process and ensure that the information collected would be useful to SOTX in a variety of ways;
- Created question pools and then pilot instruments (pilot *Athlete Interview* and pilot *Family Member Survey*) based on SOTX staff members’ priorities and input from the Advisory Committee, using a combination of preexisting survey/interview questions (from past CSDE projects with similar objectives) and new questions developed specifically for the current study;
- Adapted the wording and format of all questions included in the pilot instruments to fit SOTX’s terminology and constituents; and
- Developed guidelines with specific instructions for the SOTX staff/volunteers conducting *Athlete Interviews* and distributing *Family Member Surveys*.



These instruments and guidelines were then pilot tested at the SOTX 2016 Winter Games, a statewide competition held from February 4-7, 2016. Sixty-three athletes who competed in Winter Games were randomly selected to participate in the *Athlete Interview* and 207 attending family members were randomly selected to participate in the *Family Member Survey*. Using the provided guidelines, SOTX staff/volunteers at Winter Games recruited athletes and families, conducted the interviews, and distributed the surveys.

Following Winter Games, the pilot instruments and guidelines were revised based on feedback from families who participated in the *Family Member Survey*, and SOTX staff/volunteers who distributed the surveys and conducted *Athlete Interviews*. To improve the instruments, some option choices and questions were removed, and changes were made to the wording of option choices and questions, as necessary, to maximize clarity. The guidelines were also modified to address unforeseen issues that occurred during the pilot process, such as families responding about more than one athlete in the *Family Member Survey*.

The final *Athlete Interview* (see Appendix C) and *Family Member Survey* (see Appendix D) included questions about athlete and family characteristics, the nature and extent of participation in SOTX, the benefits of participation for the athlete and family, and the athlete's community engagement outside of SOTX. The *Athlete Interview* protocol also included cues and instructions for the interviewer. In the *Athlete Interview*, multiple questions were sometimes asked about the same topic to provide athletes with as many opportunities as possible to share their thoughts. The final *Athlete Interviewer Guidelines* included scripts that explained how staff/volunteers should approach and engage with an athlete or the parent/guardian of an athlete when recruiting participants (see Appendix E). Based on a recommendation from SOTX staff after the pilot process, the final *Family Member Survey* was translated into Spanish to ensure that it was accessible to all SOTX families. Family members who were selected to participate in the *Family Member Survey* had the option of completing the English or Spanish version, and could respond to the questions in either English or Spanish. The final *Family Member Survey Administration Guidelines & FAQs* included reminders for the staff/volunteers distributing the surveys and answers to questions that families might ask when approached about participating in the survey (see Appendix F).

## Procedures

SOTX staff/volunteers assumed total responsibility for interviewing and surveying athletes and families, with guidance from CSDE staff. As mentioned above, *Athlete Interviews* and *Family Member Surveys* were completed at major competitions—both local and statewide—across the four regions of SOTX. During each competition, SOTX staff members/volunteers recruited athletes and families to participate, most often by walking around the Athletes' Village, the bleachers/stands, and the registration areas/tables.

Using the *Athlete Interview* protocol, SOTX staff/volunteers conducted in-person interviews with athletes during the competitions. As explained in the *Athlete Interview Guidelines*, when recruiting athletes to participate, staff/volunteers either approached an athlete directly or first spoke with an athlete's parent/guardian. After introducing themselves, the staff member/volunteer briefly explained the purpose of the interview and asked for the athlete's age. If the athlete was over the age of 18, the interviewer found a comfortable place to talk with the athlete and began the interview. If the athlete was under age 18, the interviewer asked the athlete's parent/guardian for their consent before beginning the interview.

SOTX staff/volunteers also distributed the *Family Member Survey* to athletes' families who were attending the competitions. After the staff member/volunteer introduced themselves and explained the purpose of the survey, they instructed families to complete one survey, and to respond about only one athlete if they had multiple athletes participating in the competition



that day. Participants were informed that their responses were voluntary and confidential. Families completed the surveys at their leisure during the competition, and returned the surveys to staff members/volunteers when they were finished. At some of the competitions, incentives (e.g., free t-shirts) were provided to participants who successfully completed and returned a survey.

Hard copies of the completed *Athlete Interviews* and *Family Member Surveys* were collected by SOTX staff/volunteers at the competitions and then sent back to SOTX headquarters on a rolling basis. Following the detailed instructions in the codebooks provided by the CSDE, SOTX staff/volunteers entered data from the interviews and surveys into Microsoft Excel (see Appendix G). Spanish responses to the *Family Member Survey* were translated to English before being entered into the datasets. The datasets were sent electronically to the CSDE, and CSDE staff cleaned and analyzed the data using IBM SPSS Software 23.0.

In the next section, the results of the interviews with athletes and surveys of family members are organized into the following topic areas, which reflect SOTX's objectives:

- What do we know about the SOTX athlete?
- What do we know about the SOTX family?
- What do we know about athlete participation in SOTX?
- What do we know about family participation in SOTX?
- What do we know about the benefits of participation in SOTX for the athlete and the family?
- What do we know about SOTX athletes beyond the playing field?

The reported findings are primarily based on information collected from families and are confirmed by data from athletes when possible. It is also important to note that these results are based on the sample of actively competing athletes and their families, who were recruited to participate in this study at major competitions, as described above. Therefore, this information may not accurately represent the characteristics of non-competing athletes and their families, or athletes who have dropped out of SOTX due to factors like transportation problems or high school graduation.



## Results

### What do we know about the SOTX athlete?

**Age.** SOTX serves athletes of all ages. Those in the sample of competing athletes ranged from 7 to 64 years old, with a median age of 17 years.<sup>6</sup> As might be expected, the age distribution is heaviest among school-aged athletes. Two-thirds of competing athletes (66%) are children and adolescents between the ages of 7 and 20, 22% of athletes are adults between the ages of 21 and 30, and only 12% are adults over age 30. There is a notable difference in the age distributions of athletes in the four regions of SOTX. Specifically, it appears that there are twice as many children in the South (30%) than in the other three regions combined (14%) and significantly fewer adults in the South (23%) than in the other three regions combined (42%). This discrepancy is likely due to the fact that several Areas in the South region collected information from athletes and families at Athletics competitions, which primarily attract school-aged athletes. See Table 4 below for a breakdown of the age groups across all four regions.

Table 4. Athlete’s age

Age group	Percentage of athletes n = 2012
Child (7-12 years old)	20%
Adolescent (13-20 years old)	46%
<b>Adult (21+ years old)</b>	<b>34%</b>

**Disability.** Athletes have a variety of disabilities, and there is little variation in disability type across the four regions of SOTX. More than one-third of athletes (36%) have an intellectual disability (ID), like Down Syndrome, and almost 3 in 10 athletes (28%) have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There is clearly an increasing prevalence of children and adolescents with ASD participating in SOTX across all regions, as 35% of athletes under age 21 have ASD, compared to 13% of athletes over 21. This finding is consistent with SOTX’s vision statement, which references serving the “changing face and needs” of the SOTX athlete.

**Race/ethnicity.** While the disabilities of competing SOTX athletes are similar across regions, there are some regional differences in race/ethnicity. Athletes in the South and West are predominantly Hispanic/Latino (66% and 58%, respectively), and athletes in the North are predominantly White (66%). There are also more Black/African American athletes in the North (14%) and East (21%) compared to the South (4%) and West (5%). See Table 5 below for a complete breakdown of race/ethnicity by region.

<sup>6</sup>This is the age range of the sample of actively competing athletes. SOTX serves athletes both younger and older than those in this sample.



Table 5. Athlete’s race/ethnicity, by region

Race/ethnicity	North n = 608	South n = 837	East n = 319	West n = 265
White	66%	33%	55%	39%
Black or African American	14%	4%	21%	5%
Hispanic or Latino	20%	66%	26%	58%
Other <sup>7</sup>	5%	4%	5%	3%

**Living arrangement.** Irrespective of age, almost all actively competing SOTX athletes live with family members/relatives (94%), and most reside with the family member who attended the competition where they were surveyed (80%). However, in the West region, almost one-quarter of all athletes (22%) live with other family members/relatives, and 17% of adult athletes live in a group home or supported living arrangement.

## What do we know about the SOTX family?

Like the typical American family, most families of SOTX athletes (87%) have at least two children. Interestingly, for athletes with ASD who have siblings, almost one-third (29%) have a sibling with a disability, while for athletes with ID who have siblings, only 13% have a sibling with a disability. This trend seems to reflect a national finding of the prevalence of multiple siblings with disabilities.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the characteristics of SOTX families reflect stability, as most athletes’ legal guardians are married (71%), and most are employed (64%). Of those legal guardians who are married and employed, 81% have spouses/partners who are also employed.<sup>9</sup> Families of athletes represent all income levels, although families in the South and West regions have slightly lower incomes than those in the North and East. See Table 6 below for a breakdown of family income by region.

Table 6. Family’s annual income, by region

Family income level	North n = 544	South n = 745	East n = 268	West n = 240
Less than \$25,000	19%	34%	18%	37%
\$25,000 to less than \$50,000	27%	27%	25%	26%
\$50,000 to less than \$100,000	35%	27%	35%	29%
\$100,000 or more	19%	12%	22%	8%

<sup>7</sup> “Other” races/ethnicities include Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Ozonoff, S., Young, G. S., Carter, A., Messinger, D., Yirmiya, N., Zwaigenbaum, L., ... Stone, W. L. (2011). Recurrence risk for autism spectrum disorders: A Baby Siblings Research Consortium study. *Pediatrics*, 128(3), e1-e8. doi: 10.1542/peds.2010-2825.

<sup>9</sup> These statistics may underestimate the number of athletes with legal guardians who are married or employed, as the frequencies do not include athletes whose legal guardians did not complete the *Family Member Survey*.



## What do we know about athlete participation in SOTX?

**First involvement.** Athletes usually enter SOTX at an early age, staying through school and often beyond school. Most athletes (79%) first get involved in SOTX through a school-based program, and over half of these athletes (57%) start participating in elementary school, between the ages of 2 and 10. As expected, given the changing incidence rate of ASD in the last decade, almost all athletes with ASD (97%) joined SOTX before age 21. Of the athletes who joined in their adult years, only 13% have ASD.

**Length of involvement.** By the time SOTX athletes reach adulthood,<sup>10</sup> they have participated in SOTX for more than 14 years (14.4 years). Notably, the average length of involvement in SOTX by adult athletes with ID is almost five years higher than involvement by Special Olympics athletes with ID nationally (9.9 years).<sup>11,12</sup> There is little variation in length of involvement across the four regions of SOTX, except in the West region, where athletes have been involved in SOTX for significantly longer (17.9 years), particularly those who first got involved between the ages of 2 and 10 (22.1 years). Few athletes (10%) have stopped participating in SOTX for more than one year, but those who have most often took a break because their family moved (20%), they had health problems (20%), or they graduated from high school (19%).

**Current involvement.** Given the age distribution of athletes, most (64%) are currently involved in SOTX through a school-based program, though as expected, 82% of adult athletes are involved in other ways. Over half of adult athletes (52%) belong to an independent SOTX team, and over one-quarter of adult athletes (27%) participate in SOTX through a community-based program. Almost all athletes practice at least once a week for both individual sports (83%) and team sports (95%),<sup>13</sup> and this trend is similar for athletes in all four regions.

**Transportation.** Finding transportation to and from practice is not a challenge for most actively competing athletes (88%)—most are able to get rides from family members or caregivers (71%) and practice somewhere close to their home (75%).<sup>14</sup> It is important to note, however, that transportation may be more of a challenge for other groups of athletes, such as those who do not attend competitions regularly. Interestingly, athletes in the South rely slightly more on school-based transportation (22%) than athletes in the other three regions of SOTX combined (8%). This is consistent with regional differences in family involvement, as only 36% of families in the South report that they provide transportation to practice for their athletes, compared to 54% of families in the North, East, and West.

**Other SOTX programs.** Since entering SOTX, 42% of athletes have taken advantage of other programs that SOTX provides outside of Traditional Sports. The most popular of these programs is Unified Sports, though only 2 out of 10 SOTX athletes (21%) have been involved. Almost half (46%) of the athletes who have participated in Unified Sports have already completed school, and some of these athletes may have been involved in Unified Sports through their schools as part of the Unified Champion Schools program. Similar to Unified Sports, 2 out of 10 SOTX athletes (19%) have been involved in Young Athletes, which is a program for athletes between the ages of 2 and 7. Even when focusing on athletes who first got involved in SOTX within this age range, less than one-third (31%) have participated in Young Athletes. Young Athletes is a relatively new Special Olympics program (launched in 2005), which may explain why more athletes were not involved when they were younger. See Table 7 below for more information about athlete participation in other SOTX programs.

<sup>10</sup> All findings about length of involvement in SOTX only include adult athletes (21+ years old).

<sup>11</sup> This national-level data comes from a study conducted by the CSDE based on phone interviews with parents of adults (21+ years old) with ID, some of whom were Special Olympics athletes. See Siperstein, G. N., Parker, R. C., & Drascher, M. (2013). National snapshot of adults with intellectual disabilities in the labor force. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 39*, 157-165. doi: 10.3233/JVR-130658.

<sup>12</sup> See Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center. (2012). *Special Olympics participation, community connections, and vocational outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston.

<sup>13</sup> Individual sports include athletics, cycling, gymnastics, and tennis. Team sports include basketball and soccer.

<sup>14</sup> "Close to home" is defined as 30 minutes or less.



Table 7. Athlete participation in SOTX programs outside of Traditional Sports

SOTX program	n	Percentage of athletes who have participated
Unified Sports	1782	21%
Young Athletes	1773	19%
Meet in the Middle	1755	12%
Healthy Athletes	1745	10%
Athlete Leadership	1753	8%
Motor Activities Training	1715	6%
Adult Transition	1771	6%

### What do we know about family participation in SOTX?

Reflecting family members' strong support for their athletes, most families are active in SOTX by attending practices (50%) and competitions (85%), and providing transportation for their athletes to practices (47%) and competitions (50%). Even in dual-working families, almost all family members attend their athlete's competitions (89%), and over half attend practices (52%) or provide transportation for their athletes (60%). However, only one-third of family members (34%) volunteer for their athlete's SOTX team or local program (e.g., be a team chaperone or help out at local competitions) and less than one-third (25%) personally donate to SOTX or assist in fundraising. See Table 8 below for more information about family participation in SOTX.



Table 8. Family involvement in SOTX

Type of involvement	Percentage of family members who participate n = 1869
Attend competitions	85%
Attend practices	50%
Provide transportation to competitions	50%
Provide transportation to practices	47%
Volunteer for the team or local program	34%
Donate to SOTX	25%
Assist in fundraising, publicity, or recruitment activities	22%
Coach the athlete’s team	17%

Across the four regions of SOTX, there are some differences in family participation, with particularly less involvement in SOTX by families in the South region. For example, 26% of families in the South volunteer for their athlete’s team or local program, as compared to 40% of families in the North, East, and West. Furthermore, family involvement varies based on the age of the athlete, with family members of adult athletes significantly more active in SOTX than other families. For example, 30% of family members have coached their adult athlete’s SOTX team, while only 11% of family members have coached their younger athlete’s team. It is important to note that family members in different regions or with athletes of different ages may be given more or less opportunity to become formally involved in SOTX—as coaches or volunteers, for example—which could influence these results. In regards to disability type, family involvement in SOTX is not a function of the athlete’s disability, though it may play a role in the family’s likelihood to donate to SOTX. Almost one-third (32%) of families whose athletes have ID donate to SOTX, compared to only 18% of families whose athletes have ASD. This difference may be due to the fact that most athletes with ASD are under the age of 21, and families of younger athletes are not as involved in SOTX as families of adult athletes.

Complex statistical analyses (multiple linear regressions) revealed that several other factors significantly predict family involvement in SOTX, particularly income level. Upper-income families are more likely to attend their athlete’s practices (65%) and competitions (93%), donate to SOTX (47%), and assist in fundraising (31%), when compared to lower-income families.<sup>15</sup> In fact, the higher a family’s income ( $\beta = 0.27, p < .01$ ), and the longer their athlete has been active in SOTX ( $\beta = 0.28, p < .01$ ), the more likely the family is to donate to SOTX. Similarly, the higher a family’s income ( $\beta = 0.17, p < .01$ ), and the longer their athlete has been participating in SOTX ( $\beta = 0.23, p < .01$ ), the more likely the family is to volunteer for SOTX. See Table 9 below for a complete breakdown of family involvement by income level.

<sup>15</sup> “Upper-income families” are defined as having an annual income of \$100,000 or more. “Lower-income families” are defined as having an annual income of less than \$25,000.



Table 9. Family involvement in SOTX, by income level

Type of involvement	Less than \$25,000 n = 439	\$25,000 to less than \$50,000 n = 455	\$50,000 to less than \$100,000 n = 527	\$100,000 or more n = 259
Attend competitions	78%	85%	88%	93%
Attend practices	39%	48%	53%	65%
Provide transportation to competitions	34%	48%	58%	68%
Provide transportation to practices	33%	46%	53%	62%
Volunteer for the team or local program	25%	30%	39%	48%
Donate to SOTX	11%	19%	29%	47%
Assist in fundraising, publicity, or recruitment activities	13%	20%	26%	31%
Coach the athlete's team	11%	15%	20%	24%

## What do we know about the benefits of participation in SOTX for the athlete and the family?

**Goals for the athlete.** When describing the benefits of participation in SOTX for athletes, it is important to start with family members' goals for their athletes. These goals clearly reflect family members' view of SOTX as a socializing agent, and less as a skill-builder. Their highest-ranked goal for their athletes is improved self-esteem and self-confidence (ranked most or second most important by 61% of families), and this is particularly true of families with younger athletes (ranked most or second most important by 66% of families with athletes between 7 and 12 years old). Family members also view improved relationships with others as a top goal. Their lowest-ranked goals are improved language skills (ranked most or second most important by only 11% of families) and improved sport skills (ranked most or second most important by 24% of families). These trends are consistent for families from all four regions and for athletes with all types of disabilities. See Table 10 below for a comparison of family members' goals and the improvement they saw in their athletes.

**Benefits for the athlete.** Overall, family members' goals for their athletes, particularly in social areas, are matched by the improvement they see in their athletes as a result of participating in SOTX. Most families (70%) report "a lot" of improvement in their athlete's self-esteem and self-confidence, particularly for adult athletes (77%), and almost two-thirds of families (63%) report "a lot" of improvement in their athlete's relationships with others. While it was not an important goal for them, family members also note significant improvement in their athlete's sport skills (65%), improvement that is to be both desired and expected given athletes' active involvement in practices and competitions for a decade or more. See Table 10 below for a comparison of family members' goals and the improvement they saw in their athletes.



Table 10. Family members’ top-ranked goals for their athletes and observed improvement

Goal/area of improvement	n <sup>16</sup>	Family members who ranked goal as most or second most important	Family members who ranked goal as most or second most important
Improved self-esteem and self-confidence	1915	61%	61%
Improved relationships with others	1906	40%	40%
Improved health	1864	31%	31%
Improved adaptive behavior	1871	25%	25%
Improved sport skills	1927	24%	24%
Improved language skills	1853	11%	11%

Interestingly, though understandably, an athlete’s improvement is driven in part by their length of involvement in SOTX. There is a significant yet small relationship between improvement in the areas discussed above and length of involvement,  $r(1465) = 0.14, p < .01$ . Family members see the largest improvement when their athletes participate in SOTX for the longest amount of time, over 14 years. This relationship is most likely due to the fact that family members report the most improvement in their adult athletes, and adult athletes participate in SOTX for the longest, oftentimes for most of their lives.

While family members’ goals for their athletes clearly have a social focus and they perceive the greatest improvement in social areas, athletes themselves most like the specific activities and skills that go along with playing sports (56%), such as running or kicking a soccer ball, as well as the competition aspects of SOTX (43%). Adult athletes in particular discuss enjoying the social elements of SOTX (58%), like making new friends, whereas younger athletes do not mention these social aspects as often (23%). This is to be expected—adults are no longer in school, so they do not have opportunities for social interaction facilitated by the school and classroom settings. For adult athletes, SOTX may be the main provider of social experiences.

**Benefits for the family.** The benefits of participation in SOTX for the athlete are matched by the benefits of participation for the family. For example, as a result of their athlete’s improvement, family members expand their expectations for their athlete and become more positive about their athlete’s future. There is a strong, significant relationship between athlete improvement (as perceived by their families) and family members’ expectations for their athletes’ futures,  $r(1731) = 0.55, p < .01$ . In other words, the greater an athlete’s improvement, the more positive are the family’s expectations. Involvement in SOTX also benefits families more directly by enhancing their community connections. Because of their athlete’s participation in SOTX, more than half of family members increase their involvement in the community (55%), increase their knowledge about available resources and services for their athlete (58%), and expand their support network (55%). This is consistent for family members with athletes of all ages and disabilities.

<sup>16</sup>A total of 1293 family members responded to the question about goals for their athlete. The sample sizes listed in this column indicate the number of family members who responded to the questions about each area of improvement.



## What do we know about SOTX athletes beyond the playing field?

**Socialization.** The social aspects of SOTX are quite clear. Family members’ most prominent goal is the improvement of their athlete’s self-esteem and self-confidence, and they see significant gains in this area. This reported improvement in sense of self is understandable given that athletes frequently socially interact with their teammates beyond the playing field. As expected of any child, adolescent, or adult, the nature of these interactions varies depending on the athlete’s age. Children most often hang out with teammates at one of their houses (30%), though almost all school-aged athletes (between 8 and 20 years old) also see their teammates in school (87%) and in the community (64%). Adolescents and adults most often interact with teammates by talking on the phone, texting, or connecting through social media (45% and 54%, respectively). Adult athletes also see their teammates at places like movie theaters, malls, or restaurants (85%) and attend day habilitation programs together (45%). With regard to the frequency of athletes’ social interactions beyond the playing field, over half of athletes (51%) interact with their teammates on a weekly basis outside of SOTX practices and competitions, irrespective of whether they play an individual or team sport. See Table 11 below for a breakdown of athletes’ social activities by age group.

Table 11. Athlete’s social activities with teammates, by age group

Social activity	Children (7-12 years old) n = 198	Adolescents (13-20 years old) n = 515	Adults (21+ years old) n = 482
Talk on the phone, text, or connect through social media	19%	45%	54%
Go to a day habilitation program together	5%	8%	45%
Hang out together at someone’s house	30%	34%	27%
Go out together	22%	32%	47%
Attend school or school activities together	23%	13%	2%
Other <sup>17</sup>	18%	13%	15%

Lastly, athletes receive support in establishing and maintaining their social worlds. For both school-aged and adult athletes, family members usually organize their social activities (47% and 48%, respectively). As expected, school-aged athletes rely more on coaches to do this (29%) as compared to adult athletes (19%), while adult athletes are more likely to organize their own social activities (19%) than school-aged athletes (7%). These trends are consistent across all four regions of SOTX. Athletes’ social activities, led by different adults and occurring in a variety of community contexts, take place regularly.

<sup>17</sup>“Other” social activities included attending church or religious groups/events together, participating in other organized sports together, and participating in art, dance, or music classes together.



**Other community programs/services.** Clearly, athletes experience the social benefits of interacting with their teammates in a wide array of community settings. Outside of SOTX, athletes also engage in other programs and services that their community offers. Adult athletes are more involved in the community than younger athletes, which is understandable since most younger athletes attend school during the day. For example, more than one-third of adult athletes (38%) participate in community service or volunteer work, compared to less than one-quarter of adolescents (20%) and even fewer children (7%). Focusing specifically on adult athletes, almost half (49%) are involved in religious or spiritual groups, one-third (32%) participate in recreational activities like art or music programs, and one-quarter (26%) take advantage of disability service agencies like Community Mental Health Centers. See Table 12 below for a breakdown of athletes’ community engagement by age group.

Table 12. Athlete’s community involvement, by age group

Community group/activity <sup>18</sup>	Children (7-12 years old)	Adolescents (13-20 years old)	Adults (21+ years old)
Disability service agency (n = 390/n = 832/n = 585)	6%	10%	26%
Recreational activities in the community (n = 390/n = 853/n = 579)	16%	22%	32%
Community service or volunteer work (n = 384/n = 846/n = 583)	7%	20%	38%
Religious or spiritual group (n = 394/n = 858/n = 603)	31%	36%	49%

In terms of sports, however, few athletes (17%) are currently involved in organized sports outside of SOTX. This is true for athletes of all regions, ages, and disability types, and suggests that SOTX is likely the main sports provider for people with disabilities in Texas. Despite the fact that most athletes do not belong to other sports teams, they do engage in physical activity outside of SOTX. Athletes themselves report exercising in a variety of ways, both formally and informally, as almost one-third (27%) go to the gym or attend exercise classes, and over half (52%) walk or run to get exercise.

Similar to the community programs that attract athletes of different ages, the types of services received by athletes also vary by age. The most popular services for children and adolescents—occupational therapy, speech therapy, and life skills training—are likely provided through schools (received by 67% of children and 43% of adolescents). Some adolescents (30%), although less than expected, receive vocational or job skills training at school. Adults are most often involved in day habilitation programs (42%).

<sup>18</sup> For each community group/activity, the three sample sizes indicate the number of family members who responded about their child athletes, adolescent athletes, and adult athletes, respectively.



**Employment.** Beyond attending day habilitation programs, some adult athletes<sup>19</sup> are active members of their community as part of the labor force. One-third of SOTX athletes (34%) are currently employed, and when focusing on athletes with ID specifically, SOTX athletes have a slightly higher rate of employment than non-Special Olympics athletes nationally (35% and 27%, respectively).<sup>20,21</sup> Of the SOTX athletes who are employed, almost three-quarters (72%) work in integrated or competitive settings, while only 24% work in facility-based or sheltered settings. There is some variation in employment setting across regions, as athletes in the West region are more employed in facility-based/sheltered settings than athletes in the other three regions combined (38% and 22%, respectively), and less employed in integrated/competitive settings than athletes in the other three regions combined (59% and 74%, respectively). These differences may be influenced by the number and locations of sheltered workshops in Texas, as well as how competitive these facilities are to get into. Aside from employment, across the four regions, most athletes (80%) receive supplementary income (e.g., SSI/SSDI) due to their disability.

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<sup>19</sup> Findings related to employment only reflect information collected about adult athletes (21+ years old).

<sup>20</sup> This national-level data comes from a study conducted by the CSDE based on phone interviews with parents of adults (21+ years old) with ID, some of whom were Special Olympics athletes. See Siperstein, G. N., Parker, R. C., & Drascher, M. (2013). National snapshot of adults with intellectual disabilities in the labor force. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 39, 157-165. doi: 10.3233/JVR-130658.

<sup>21</sup> See Special Olympics Global Collaborating Center. (2012). *Special Olympics participation, community connections, and vocational outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities*. Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Boston.



## Next Steps

Beyond providing a comprehensive description of SOTX athletes and families, the results discussed above highlight the many successes of the programming that SOTX offers, while also elucidating specific areas that need improvement or need to be explored further. There are three main areas of data-driven next steps for SOTX: program improvement, fundraising, and future research.

### Program improvement

The points below outline several ways that SOTX might consider improving their programs and services for athletes and their families.

- **Expand communication with families about the variety of programs and services that SOTX offers.**
  - To sustain existing programs and expand into new areas of support for athletes and families, greater communication and channels of communication are needed so that families are educated about the different ways that SOTX can engage, support, and assist them. For example, SOTX could increase communication about Young Athletes, and better utilize this program as a portal to future participation in SOTX.
  - To increase family involvement, SOTX could consider new ways to incentivize families to donate not only financially, but also in terms of their time and effort (i.e., volunteering). Families clearly support their own athletes (e.g., attending competitions, providing transportation), but greater effort is needed in demonstrating to families the benefits of supporting all athletes, and the organization as a whole.
  - To expand and improve the Family Support Network, SOTX could review the goals of this program and consider targeting families who may need more support, like families of athletes who are just joining SOTX or transitioning out of high school. Furthermore, SOTX might consider identifying community partners that have the same goals that the Family Support Network was envisioned to accomplish (e.g., ARC) and coordinating with these other organizations, as they may be better positioned to support families of individuals with disabilities (i.e., have a larger existing base of families).
- **Set long-term goals that focus on attracting athletes and their families from racially and ethnically diverse populations.**
  - There is every indication that SOTX—particularly in the South and West regions—has successfully reached out to and attracted racially and ethnically diverse athletes and families. As the populations of minorities in Texas and across the country fluctuate, SOTX should ensure that their programs and services are welcoming of and accessible to all families, particularly those with English as a second language, and that their population of athletes reflects the makeup of the communities they serve.
- **Help sustain and expand SOTX athletes' socialization on and off the playing field.**
  - Clearly, SOTX can be viewed as a social mechanism for bringing athletes together during practices, competitions, and beyond. SOTX should continue to identify ways that both coaches and family members can work together to build and sustain the social networks created by SOTX teams. Coordination between coaches on the playing field and family members off the playing field will ensure a comprehensive approach to facilitating the growth of the athlete's social world.



- **Expand SOTX's community connections.**

- SOTX should continue to forge community connections in an effort to create a network of organizations that serve individuals with disabilities, particularly adults. To do this, SOTX staff in each Area may consider building on existing relationships with local groups (i.e., MHMR, ARC) that have been developed through their outreach task force. In becoming the center of this kind of network, SOTX could play a more prominent role in preparing athletes for future interaction with and involvement in the community.

## Fundraising

The points below encompass important findings that clearly demonstrate the benefits of participation in SOTX for both athletes and families, and may be valuable in attracting and securing support from a variety of funders.

- **Athletes have a high average length of involvement in SOTX.**

- Competing athletes have participated in SOTX for an average of 14.4 years, almost five more years than Special Olympics athletes nationally.

- **SOTX athletes come from all age groups, from children to seniors.**

- SOTX supports and provides for athletes throughout the lifespan.

- **SOTX is meeting the challenge of the changing landscape of children and adolescents with disabilities.**

- SOTX has opened its doors to the increasing prevalence of children and adolescents with a wide range of intellectual and developmental disabilities, including a growing population of athletes with ASD.

- **SOTX families are representative of families in Texas in general.**

- The SOTX family is an important constituent, as they appear to be no different than the typical American family. Businesses and corporations are taking note of the political, social, and economic capital that families of individuals with disabilities possess.

- **Schools are the portal to participation in SOTX for athletes.**

- In general, athletes first get involved in SOTX during elementary school and continue participating through high school, graduation, and beyond.

- **SOTX is a major socializing agent for school-aged athletes outside of school, fulfilling their families' goals.**

- By giving athletes regular (i.e., weekly) opportunities to socialize, both on and off the playing field, SOTX clearly provides a needed service for athletes and their families. For adult athletes especially, SOTX is the gateway to an expanded social world.

- **Improvement in an athlete's sense of self, relationships with others, and sport skills are major benefits of SOTX participation.**

- Athletes with all types of disabilities show improvement in these areas, providing evidence that SOTX can serve and benefit all athletes.

- **SOTX is not just for the athletes' benefit—families benefit as well.**

- Family involvement in SOTX is a pathway to greater participation in the community, increased knowledge of available services, and an expanded support network.



- **Athlete improvement leads to families' increased expectations for their athletes' future.**
  - Beyond the expected improvement in sport skills, athlete improvement in other areas—like their sense of self and friendships—contributes to families having more positive feelings about their athlete's future.
- **SOTX athletes can be successful in competitive jobs.**
  - In a difficult job market, one-quarter of adult athletes are successfully employed in competitive settings.

## Future research

The points below identify specific areas of future research that follow up on the major findings of this study.

- **Collect additional information about athlete improvement as a result of SOTX participation, especially for new athletes.**
  - Instead of relying on family report, measure each athlete's social progress between the time they join SOTX and several time points afterwards.
- **Explore the role of SOTX in helping athletes transition out of school and into the work force.**
  - Identify the factors that contribute to adults maintaining their participation in SOTX through graduation and after high school, since almost all athletes enter SOTX through school.
  - Identify the factors that contribute to adults successfully initiating and sustaining employment in competitive settings after high school.
- **Expand upon the family perspective by reaching out to coaches, teachers, and other stakeholders in the lives of SOTX athletes.**
  - Add other voices to the story of how SOTX benefits athletes in all facets of their lives.
- **Document the value of an athlete's participation in SOTX in the school/classroom setting.**
  - The improvements that families observe in their athletes as a result of SOTX participation do not have to remain localized to the playing field. With the shift towards inclusion in schools, more and more teachers, administrators, and families would benefit from knowing how SOTX programs and services can help athletes at school.
- **Build on the new knowledge about actively competing athletes by expanding the understanding of the SOTX athlete.**
  - By identifying methods to collect information from non-competing athletes and their families, as well as athletes who have dropped out of SOTX, SOTX can document the characteristics of current non-competing athletes or former athletes and the obstacles they face(d) in their participation in SOTX.
- **Identify methods that staff in the four regions of SOTX can use to collect their own data.**
  - By collecting data on a regular basis, regional staff can help SOTX as a whole monitor the "changing face and needs" of their athletes and families.



## Appendix A: SOTX Competitions

<b>Name of SOTX competition</b>	<b><i>Athlete Interviews were conducted at this competition</i></b>	<b><i>Family Member Surveys were distributed at this competition</i></b>
Area 1 Spring Games	X	X
Area 2 Spring Games	X	X
Area 4 Spring Games	X	X
Area 5 Spring Games	X	X
Area 6 Spring Games	X	X
Area 7 Spring Games	X	X
Area 9 Spring Games	X	X
Area 10 Spring Games	X	X
Area 11 Spring Games	X	X
Area 12 Spring Games	X	X
Area 13 Spring Games	X	X
Area 14 Spring Games	X	X
Area 16 Spring Games	X	X
Area 17 Spring Games	X	X
Area 18 Spring Games	X	X
Area 19 Spring Games	X	X
Area 20 Spring Games	X	X
Area 21 Spring Games	X	X
Area 22 Spring Games	X	X
Summer Games		X
Area 2 Tennis Competition		X
Area 7 Athletics Competition		X
Area 10/11 Cycling Competition		X
Area 11 Tennis Competition		X
Area 13 Athletics Competition		X
Area 13 Soccer Competition	X	X
Area 13 Tennis Competition		X
Area 19 Basketball Team Competition	X	
Area 20 Soccer Competition		X
Area 21 Athletics Competition		X



## Appendix B: Ranking Sheet

Note: Prior to its use, the CSDE must give permission in writing for use of this instrument or any modification. If you are interested in using this instrument, please contact the Director of the CSDE, Gary Siperstein, at 617-287-7250 for more information.

**For each of the four categories below (in blue), please put a checkmark next to the top items that you feel will be most important in creating a comprehensive description of SOTX's athletes and families.**

### 1) Who is the SOTX athlete and his/her family? (choose 5)

- Athlete's disability and comorbidity
- Athlete's age
- Athlete's gender
- Athlete's ethnicity/race
- Athlete's residential information
- Athlete's educational information
- Athlete's employment status/nature of employment
- Athlete's community engagement
- Athlete's adaptive behavior
- Athlete's health information
- Nature and frequency of special services received by athlete and family from local/state/national agencies
- Athlete's access of SSI
- Family composition (presence of disability)
- Family education level
- Family employment status and income level
- Parents' marital status

### 2) What are the benefits of athlete and family participation in SOTX? (choose 3)

- Athlete's enjoyment of SOTX
- Importance of SOTX to athlete and family
- Positive impact of SOTX on athlete's social skills/behavior, sense of self, sports skills, and health
- Positive impact of SOTX on family (e.g., increased community involvement, increased knowledge about available resources/services, stronger support network)



- Parents' expectations of athlete's present and future functioning in his/her school and community
- Athlete's level of achievement of parents' goals/objectives

**3) What is the nature and extent of athlete and family involvement in SOTX? (choose 5)**

- Athlete's age at which he/she began participating in SOTX
- Athlete's pathways to becoming involved in SOTX
- Athlete's reasons for participating in SOTX/parents' goals and objectives for their child
- Athlete's level of participation in SOTX
- Athlete's length of involvement in SOTX
- Type(s) of SOTX sports program(s) athlete is active in
- Athlete's participation in the sports offered by SOTX
- Nature of athlete's participation in each sport and level of competition
- Athlete's mode of transportation to practices, competitions, and other SOTX events
- Athlete's social connections with teammates beyond the playing field
- Athlete's participation in SOTX programs/events outside of competition (e.g., volunteering, coaching, officiating)
- Athlete's participation in SOTX programs other than Traditional and/or Unified Sports
- Athlete's participation in non-SOTX sports programs
- Family's level of participation and roles in SOTX (e.g., attending practices/competitions, volunteering, fundraising)
- Family's sustained participation
- Other family members' (e.g., siblings) participation in SOTX

**4) Topics that were not addressed in the categories above (choose 4)**

- Athlete's past participation/periods of inactivity/training outside of SOTX practices
- Athlete's social interactions outside of SOTX
- Importance to athlete of parent/family participation in SOTX
- Family participation in the SOTX Family Support Network
- Parents' challenges in accessing SOTX programs and services
- Parents' expectations about athlete's future participation in SOTX
- Organizational aspects of SOTX teams



## Appendix C: Athlete Interview

Note: Prior to its use, the CSDE must give permission in writing for use of this instrument or any modification. If you are interested in using this instrument, please contact the Director of the CSDE, Gary Siperstein, at 617-287-7250 for more information.

### SOTX Athlete Interview Record Sheet Spring/Summer 2016

#### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERVIEWER:

1. What is your name (the interviewer's name)? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is today's date (the date you are conducting this interview)? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Is the athlete you are interviewing male or female?
  - Male
  - Female

#### TO BE READ BY THE INTERVIEWER TO THE ATHLETE:

*Thanks for agreeing to talk with me today! Before we start, I want you to know that your answers are private and will not be shared with your family, your teammates, or your coaches. If you don't want to answer a question, just tell me and we will go on to the next question.*

***My first questions are just about you.***

4. How old are you?

\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

5. Which Special Olympics Texas Area do you live in?

- |                              |                               |                               |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Area 1 | <input type="radio"/> Area 7  | <input type="radio"/> Area 13 | <input type="radio"/> Area 19 |
| <input type="radio"/> Area 2 | <input type="radio"/> Area 9  | <input type="radio"/> Area 14 | <input type="radio"/> Area 20 |
| <input type="radio"/> Area 4 | <input type="radio"/> Area 10 | <input type="radio"/> Area 16 | <input type="radio"/> Area 21 |
| <input type="radio"/> Area 5 | <input type="radio"/> Area 11 | <input type="radio"/> Area 17 | <input type="radio"/> Area 22 |
| <input type="radio"/> Area 6 | <input type="radio"/> Area 12 | <input type="radio"/> Area 18 |                               |

- Don't know → *If the athlete doesn't know, read: "What is the name of the city or town that you live in?"*

\_\_\_\_\_



**Next, I want to ask you some questions about your participation in Special Olympics Texas.**

**6. What is the best thing about being part of Special Olympics Texas?**

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**7. How old were you when you first started participating in Special Olympics Texas?**

\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

**8. Please name all of the Special Olympics Texas sports that you have ever participated in.**

*(As the athlete names sports, mark the corresponding option choices below. If the athlete names a sport that is not on this list, mark "Other".)*

- |                                      |                                      |                                     |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Aquatics       | <input type="radio"/> Flag Football  | <input type="radio"/> Softball      |
| <input type="radio"/> Athletics      | <input type="radio"/> Golf           | <input type="radio"/> Speed Skating |
| <input type="radio"/> Basketball     | <input type="radio"/> Gymnastics     | <input type="radio"/> Table Tennis  |
| <input type="radio"/> Bocce          | <input type="radio"/> Kayaking       | <input type="radio"/> Tennis        |
| <input type="radio"/> Bowling        | <input type="radio"/> Powerlifting   | <input type="radio"/> Triathlon     |
| <input type="radio"/> Cycling        | <input type="radio"/> Roller Skating | <input type="radio"/> Volleyball    |
| <input type="radio"/> Equestrian     | <input type="radio"/> Sailing        | <input type="radio"/> Other         |
| <input type="radio"/> Figure Skating | <input type="radio"/> Soccer         |                                     |



**Now I want to ask you some questions about the Special Olympics Texas sport that you are participating in here today.**

- 9. At the competition today, are you participating in athletics, basketball, cycling, gymnastics, soccer, or tennis?** *(Only mark one. Athletes can only participate in one sport at Spring/Summer Games.)*
- Athletics → If Athletics, skip to **Question 11**
  - Basketball
  - Cycling → If Cycling, skip to **Question 13**
  - Gymnastics → If Gymnastics, skip to **Question 13**
  - Soccer
  - Tennis
- 10. Is [basketball/soccer/tennis] a Unified Sport?** *(If the athlete seems confused, you can say: "Remember, Unified Sports have athletes with and without disabilities playing together. Is [basketball/soccer/tennis] a Unified Sport?")*
- Yes → If Yes, skip to **Question 13**
  - No → If No, skip to **Question 13**
- 11. At the Athletics competition today, are you participating in a relay?**
- Yes
  - No → If No, skip to **Question 13**
- 12. Is the relay you are participating in today a Unified Relay?** *(If the athlete seems confused, you can say: "Remember, Unified Relays have athletes with and without disabilities running together. Is the relay you are participating in today a Unified Relay?")*
- Yes
  - No
- 13. What do you like about participating in [SPORT FROM Q9]?**

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**14. Do you attend [SPORT FROM Q9] practices every day, 4-6 days per week, 2-3 days per week, once a week, or 1-3 times a month?**

- Every day (7 days per week)
- 4-6 days per week
- 2-3 days per week
- Once a week
- 1-3 times a month

**15. Since you started participating in [SPORT FROM Q9], have your [SPORT FROM Q9] skills improved a lot, improved a little, or stayed the same?**

- Improved a lot
- Improved a little
- Stayed the same

**Next, I want to ask you about your Special Olympics Texas teammates, like the other athletes you participate in [SPORT FROM Q9] with.**

**16. For each item, read: "When you are not at Special Olympics practices or competitions, do you see your teammates [insert item]? Yes, no, or you don't know?" (If the athlete does not have the opportunity to see teammates in the given context, mark "N/A". For example, if the athlete says he/she is not in school, you would mark "N/A".)**

When you are not at Special Olympics practices or competitions, do you see your teammates...		Yes	No	Don't Know	N/A
a.	At school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	At work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	At your house?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
d.	At your teammate's house?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
e.	In the community, like at a restaurant, the movie theater, or the mall?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	



***We're almost done! For these last questions, think about what you do when you are not participating in Special Olympics Texas.***

**17. Do you go to school?**

- Yes
- No → If No, skip to Question 19

**18. What type of school do you go to?**

- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- College

**19. Outside of Special Olympics Texas, what other activities do you do to get exercise?**

*(If the athlete seems confused, you can say: "To get exercise, some athletes go to the gym, go running, or play other sports outside of Special Olympics. What activities do you do to get exercise?")*

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***Ok, we are done! You did a great job. This helps us make Special Olympics Texas even better. Thanks for talking with me! You can find your family or get back to the competition now.***

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE INTERVIEWER:**

**20. Think about the interview you just conducted with this athlete. How much difficulty did the athlete have understanding and/or answering the questions in the interview?**

- No difficulty at all
- Some difficulty
- A lot of difficulty



## Appendix D: Family Member Survey

Note: Prior to its use, the CSDE must give permission in writing for use of this instrument or any modification. If you are interested in using this instrument, please contact the Director of the CSDE, Gary Siperstein, at 617-287-7250 for more information.

### SOTX Family Member Survey Spring/Summer 2016

**Your participation in this survey will help us learn more about the athletes and families served by Special Olympics Texas. By knowing more about you, we will be able to better target and expand the services we provide. Thank you for your help!**

#### ***Before you begin, there are a few important things you need to know.***

- You should only complete this survey if you are a family member of a Special Olympics Texas athlete.
- If you are a family member of more than one SOTX athlete, please only think about one athlete when responding to the questions in this survey.
- Your participation is voluntary. You have the right to skip any questions that you do not want to answer, and you can stop taking the survey at any time.
- Your answers are confidential. Your name will never appear anywhere as having participated in this survey.
- Throughout the survey, you may be told to skip over some questions. You will see an arrow with a note that tells you which question to answer next, like this:
  - Yes
  - No → If No, skip to Question 1

***When you are finished, please return the survey to whoever gave it to you.***



**To begin, we would like to know when you are taking this survey.**

1. What is today's date (the date you are taking this survey)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Next, we would like to know what your relationship is to the SOTX athlete. If you are a family member of more than one SOTX athlete, please only think about one athlete when responding to this survey.**

2. What is your relation to the athlete?

- Mother
- Father
- Brother/sister
- Other family member (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are you the athlete's legal guardian?

- Yes
- No

**We would now like to ask you some general questions about your athlete.**

4. Is your athlete male or female?

- Male
- Female

5. How old is your athlete?

\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD



**6. What is your athlete's race/ethnicity?** *(Check all that apply.)*

- Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Pacific Islander (including Native Hawaiian)
- White (including people of European, Middle Eastern, or North African descent)
- Hispanic or Latino (including Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or other Spanish background)

**7. Please indicate whether your athlete has been diagnosed with any of the following.** *(Check all that apply.)*

- Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Behavioral/emotional disorder
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual disability (such as Down Syndrome)
- Learning disability
- Physical impairment/disability
- Visual impairment
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**8. How many siblings does your athlete have?**

- None → If None, skip to **Question 10**
- 1
- 2
- 3 or more

**9. Do any of your athlete's siblings have a disability or special needs?**

- Yes
- No

**10. What is your athlete's current living arrangement?**

- With you
- With other family members/relatives
- Independently (with friends/roommates or alone)
- In a group home or supported living arrangement
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



**11. We would like to know where in Texas your athlete lives. Which SOTX Area does your athlete currently live in?**

- Area 1
- Area 2
- Area 4
- Area 5
- Area 6
- Area 7
- Area 9
- Area 10
- Area 11
- Area 12
- Area 13
- Area 14
- Area 16
- Area 17
- Area 18
- Area 19
- Area 20
- Area 21
- Area 22
- Don't know (please specify your athlete's city/town): \_\_\_\_\_

***Next, we would like to ask you several questions about your athlete's participation in SOTX.***

**12. How old was your athlete when he/she started participating in SOTX?**

\_\_\_\_ YEARS OLD

**13. How did your athlete first get involved in SOTX?**

- Through a school-based program
- Through a community-based program (such as Parks and Recreation)
- Through an independent SOTX team
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**14. How is your athlete currently involved in SOTX?**

- Through a school-based program
- Through a community-based program (such as Parks and Recreation)
- Through an independent SOTX team
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**15. Was there ever a time when your athlete stopped participating in SOTX for more than one year?**

- Yes
- No → If No, skip to **Question 17 on page 5**
- Don't know → If Don't know, skip to **Question 17 on page 5**



**16. Why did your athlete stop participating in SOTX during this time?** *(Check all that apply.)*

- Transportation challenges
- Moved
- Limited availability of SOTX options
- Social issues (with team, coach, etc.)
- Graduated from high school
- Work commitments
- Health problems
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**17. During the past year, which SOTX sport(s) has your athlete participated in?** *(Check all that apply.)*

- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Bocce
- Bowling
- Cycling
- Equestrian
- Figure Skating
- Flag Football
- Golf
- Gymnastics
- Kayaking
- Powerlifting
- Roller Skating
- Sailing
- Soccer
- Softball
- Speed Skating
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
- Triathlon
- Volleyball
- Other

**18. At the SOTX event that you are attending today, which sport is your athlete competing in?** *(Only check one.)*

- Athletics
- Basketball
- Cycling
- Gymnastics
- Soccer
- Tennis

*Please think about the one sport that you indicated your athlete is competing in today (Question 18) when responding to Questions 19-22.*

**19. During the season, how often does your athlete practice for this sport?**

- Every day (7 days per week)
- 4-6 days per week
- 2-3 days per week
- Once a week
- 1-3 times a month



**20. During the season, how does your athlete usually get to and from practice for this sport?**

- Gets a ride from a family member or caregiver
- Gets a ride with a teammate
- Gets a ride from the coach
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**21. During the season, approximately how long does it take to get to practice for this sport (one-way)?**

- Less than 15 minutes
- Between 15 and 30 minutes
- 31 minutes to 1 hour
- More than 1 hour

**22. During the season, how difficult is it for your athlete to get transportation to and from practice for this sport?**

- Very difficult
- Somewhat difficult
- Not very difficult
- Not difficult at all

**23. Has your athlete ever participated in the following SOTX programs?**

		Yes	No	Don't Know
a.	Adult Transition	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Athlete Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Healthy Athletes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	Meet in the Middle	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e.	Motor Activities Training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	Unified Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g.	Young Athletes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**24. How often does your athlete socialize or spend time with his/her SOTX teammates outside of practice and competition?**

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- 1-3 times a month
- Rarely or never → If Rarely or never, skip to **Question 27**

**25. What kinds of activities does your athlete do with his/her teammates outside of practice and competition?**  
(Check all that apply.)

- Talk on the phone, text, or connect through social media (such as Facebook)
- Go to a day habilitation (DayHab) program together
- Hang out together at someone's house
- Go out together (such as to the mall, movies, or out to eat)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**26. Who usually organizes your athlete's social activities with his/her teammates outside of practice and competition?**

- The athlete himself/herself
- You
- Another athlete
- Another family member or a caregiver
- A coach
- A staff person in a group home/supported living program/school

***Now we would like to know more about how SOTX has impacted you and your athlete.***

**27. What are your goals for your athlete's participation in SOTX? Using the numbers 1, 2, and 3, please rank your top three goals with 1 being the most important.**

- \_\_\_ Improved sport skills
- \_\_\_ Improved self-esteem and self-confidence
- \_\_\_ Improved health
- \_\_\_ Improved adaptive behavior (like self-help skills or social skills)
- \_\_\_ Improved language skills
- \_\_\_ Improved relationships with others (friendships)
- \_\_\_ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



**28. As a result of participating in SOTX, has your athlete:**

		Not At All	A Little	A Lot
a.	Improved his/her sport skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Improved his/her self-esteem and self-confidence?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Improved his/her health?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	Improved his/her adaptive behavior (like self-help skills or social skills)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e.	Improved his/her language skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	Improved his/her relationships with others (friendships)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**29. Before getting involved in SOTX, did your athlete play on other organized sports teams?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

**30. Is your athlete currently playing on other organized sports teams outside of SOTX?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know



**31. Has your athlete’s participation in SOTX:**

		Not At All	A Little	A Lot
a.	Helped you better understand what he/she is capable of doing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Raised your expectations for his/her future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Made you more hopeful about his/her future?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	Increased your involvement in the community?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e.	Increased your knowledge about resources and services available for the athlete and/or your family?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f.	Expanded your support network?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**32. What does your athlete like most about participating in SOTX? Using the numbers 1, 2, and 3, please rank your top three choices with 1 being the most important.**

- \_\_\_ Playing sports
- \_\_\_ Being active and getting exercise
- \_\_\_ Being on a team with his/her peers
- \_\_\_ Making new friends
- \_\_\_ Experiencing new things
- \_\_\_ Having fun
- \_\_\_ Winning/getting medals
- \_\_\_ Competing



**We would like to learn more about your athlete’s daily life by asking you about his/her education, community engagement, and activities outside of SOTX.**

**33. What type of school does your athlete currently attend?**

- Elementary school
- Middle school
- High school
- College or postsecondary
- My athlete does not currently attend school

**34. In the past six months, has your athlete received any of the following services? (Check all that apply.)**

- Day habilitation (DayHab) programming
- Occupational therapy, speech therapy, or life skills training
- Social work services
- Counseling or mental health services
- School-based vocational or job skills training
- On-the-job supported employment services (such as assistance in learning work assignments or help arranging transportation)
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- No services

**35. In the past six months, has your athlete been involved in any of the following groups/activities?**

		Yes	No	Don't Know
a.	A disability service agency (such as a Community Mental Health Center)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b.	Recreational activities in the community (such as an art or music program)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c.	Community service or volunteer work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d.	A religious or spiritual group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**36. Does your athlete do any physical activity outside of SOTX for recreation (such as going to the gym)?**

- Yes
- No → If No, skip to **Question 38**

**37. How often does your athlete do physical activity outside of SOTX?**

- More than once a week
- Once a week
- 1-3 times a month

***We would like to learn about your athlete's employment history. By employment, we mean any work that he/she does for pay. These questions are about athletes of working age. You will be able to indicate if these questions are not applicable to your athlete in Question 38.***

**38. Does your athlete currently have a paying job?**

- Yes
- No → If No, skip to **Question 41 on page 12**
- Not applicable → If Not applicable, skip to **Question 41 on page 12**
- Don't know → If Don't know, skip to **Question 41 on page 12**

**39. Where is your athlete currently employed?**

- In a facility-based/sheltered employment setting
- In an integrated/competitive employment setting (such as a community business)
- My athlete is self-employed
- Don't know

**40. What type of work does your athlete do at his/her current job?**

- Customer service/hospitality
- Food services
- Maintenance
- Retail
- Manufacturing
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Office/administrative work



**41. Does your athlete receive any supplementary income due to his/her disability, such as SSI or SSDI?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

***Finally, we would like to learn more about you and your spouse/partner (if applicable).***

**42. What is your current employment status?**

- Employed
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Disabled
- Unemployed

**43. What is your total annual household income, before taxes?**

- Less than \$25,000
- \$25,000 to less than \$50,000
- \$50,000 to less than \$75,000
- \$75,000 to less than \$100,000
- \$100,000 or more

**44. What is your current marital status?**

- Single/never been married → If Single/never been married, skip to **Question 46 on page 13**
- Married/domestic partner
- Separated/divorced → If Separated/divorced, skip to **Question 46 on page 13**
- Widowed → If Widowed, skip to **Question 46 on page 13**

**45. What is your spouse/partner's current employment status?**

- Employed
- Retired
- Homemaker
- Disabled
- Unemployed



**46. What involvement have you had in your athlete's SOTX participation?** *(Check all that apply.)*

- Attended training sessions
- Attended competitions
- Provided transportation to training sessions
- Provided transportation to competitions
- Volunteered for the team or local program
- Coached his/her team
- Played in SOTX as a Unified Partner
- Participated in the Family Support Network
- Assisted in fundraising, publicity, or recruitment activities
- Donated to SOTX
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for completing our survey!** Your participation is helping us provide better services to individuals with disabilities in Texas. This research is also helping us do a better job telling the SOTX story, enabling us to garner more financial support through grants from foundations and corporations—which will allow us to expand the services we provide. We value your input and look forward to sharing the results of our study in late December 2016.

**If you are interested in learning about the results, please provide us with an email address and/or phone number where you can be contacted. This information will never be released to anyone and will be used solely for the purpose of this SOTX Family Member Survey.**

Email Address (e.g., name.name@company.com): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (e.g., 555-555-5555): \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix E: Athlete Interviewer Guidelines

Note: Prior to its use, the CSDE must give permission in writing for use of this instrument or any modification. If you are interested in using this instrument, please contact the Director of the CSDE, Gary Siperstein, at 617-287-7250 for more information.

### Athlete Interviewer Guidelines: How to approach an athlete

\*Try to ask a range of athletes to participate in the interviews. We do not want most of the interviews to be conducted with athletes from the same group.

1. **Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I would like ask you a few questions about your participation in Special Olympics Texas. I am doing this to learn more about all of the athletes here and to find ways to make Special Olympics Texas better.**
2. **This will only take a few minutes and then you can get back to the competition. Is that ok?**
  - Yes → If they say yes, check the box and continue to #3.
  - No → If they say no, stop here and start over with someone else.
3. **Great! First, I need to know how old you are. How old are you?**
  - If they say 17 or younger, continue to #4.
  - If they say 18 or older, find somewhere that is comfortable for you and the athlete to talk. Follow the instructions on the Athlete Interview Record Sheet to begin the interview.
4. **Is your parent or guardian here with you today?**
  - If they say yes, continue to #5.
  - If they say no, stop here and start over with someone else.
5. **Will you show me where your parent or guardian is? I need to tell them a little bit about the interview before we start.**
  - When you find their parent/guardian, continue to #6.
  - If they can't find their parent/guardian, stop here and start over with someone else.
6. **Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am working with Special Olympics Texas to interview athletes about their experiences participating in Special Olympics. Are you the parent or guardian of this athlete?**
  - If they say yes, continue to #7.
  - If they say no, try to find the parent/guardian of the athlete you are with.
7. **Great! As I mentioned, I am working with Special Olympics Texas to ask athletes about their experiences participating in Special Olympics. We are asking about things such as what they like about Special Olympics and whether they spend time with their teammates outside of Special Olympics. We are conducting these interviews to learn more about the athletes we serve so that we can better target and expand our services.**
8. **I am interested in talking to your athlete today. He/she has already agreed to participate in the Athlete Interview, but because he/she is under age 18, we need your permission as well. Do you give your athlete permission to participate in the Athlete Interview?**
  - Yes → If they say yes, check the box. Find somewhere that is comfortable for you and the athlete to talk. Follow the instructions on the Athlete Interview Record Sheet to begin the interview.
  - No → If they say no, stop here and start over with someone else.



## **Athlete Interviewer Guidelines: How to approach a parent/guardian**

1. ***Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am working with Special Olympics Texas to interview athletes about their experiences participating in Special Olympics. Are you the parent or guardian of an athlete who is participating in the competition today?***
  - If they say yes, continue to #2.
  - If they say they are the parent/guardian of a Partner, stop here and start over with someone else.
  - If they say no, stop here and start over with someone else.
2. ***Great! As I mentioned, I am working with Special Olympics Texas to ask athletes about their experiences in Special Olympics. We are asking about things such as what they like about Special Olympics and whether they spend time with their teammates outside of Special Olympics. We are conducting these interviews to learn more about the athletes we serve so that we can better target and expand our services.***
3. ***I am interested in talking to your athlete today. How old is your athlete?***
  - If they say 18 or older, skip to #5.
  - If they say 17 or younger, continue to #4.
4. ***Because your athlete is under age 18, we need your permission to conduct an interview with him/her. Do you give your athlete permission to participate in the Athlete Interview?***
  - Yes → If they say yes, check the box and continue to #5.
  - No → If they say no, stop here and start over with someone else.
5. ***Can you show me where your athlete is?***
  - When you find the athlete, continue to #6. The parent/guardian may stay for the interview if they want, but they don't have to.
  - If they can't find their athlete, stop here and start over with someone else.
6. ***Hi! My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I would like ask you a few questions about your participation in Special Olympics Texas. I am doing this to learn more about all of the athletes here and to find ways to make Special Olympics better.***
7. ***This will only take a few minutes and then you can get back to the competition. Is that ok?***
  - Yes → If they say yes, check the box. Find somewhere that is comfortable for you and the athlete to talk. Follow the instructions on the Athlete Interview Record Sheet to begin the interview.
  - No → If they say no, stop here and start over with someone else.



## **Appendix F: Family Member Survey Administration Guidelines & FAQs**

Note: Prior to its use, the CSDE must give permission in writing for use of this instrument or any modification. If you are interested in using this instrument, please contact the Director of the CSDE, Gary Siperstein, at 617-287-7250 for more information.

### **Family Member Survey Administration Guidelines & FAQs**

\*This survey should only be completed by family members of SOTX athletes.

Even if a non-family member is the athlete's primary caregiver or the only person with the athlete at the Spring/Summer Games, they should NOT complete the survey.

\*Try to ask a range of families to take the survey. We do not want most of the surveys to come from the same group of families.

**Q: Should I take this survey?**

A: This survey should only be completed by family members of SOTX athletes. If you are not a family member of an SOTX athlete, you should not take the survey.

**Q: What if I am a family member of more than one SOTX athlete?**

A: You should only think about the athlete who is participating in the competition today when responding to this survey. If you have more than one athlete competing today, only think about one of them. Do not fill out multiple surveys—there should only be one survey filled out per family.

**Q: Why are you doing this survey/why should I take this survey?**

A: The results of this survey will help us learn more about the athletes and families served by SOTX. By knowing more about you, we will be able to better target and expand the services we provide.

**Q: Who is conducting this survey?**

A: This survey is being conducted by SOTX and the University of Massachusetts Boston.

**Q: Will my answers be shared with anyone?**

A: No. Your answers are confidential, and your name will never appear anywhere as having participated in this survey.

**Q: Do I have to give my name or contact information on the survey?**

A: We do not ask for your name anywhere on the survey. At the end of the survey, we give you the chance to provide us with contact information (email address and/or phone number) so that we can share the results of the survey with you if you are interested. This is completely optional and will only be used for the purposes of communicating the results of the survey.

**Q: When will the results of the survey be released?**

A: The results of the survey will be available in late December 2016.

**Q: What do I do when I finish the survey?**

A: When you are finished with the survey, you should return it to whoever gave it to you.

**Q: Do I get anything for participating in the survey?**

A: You will receive a free SOTX t-shirt when you return your completed survey.



## Appendix G: *Guide to Entering/Coding & Checking Data*

Note: Prior to its use, the CSDE must give permission in writing for use of this instrument or any modification. If you are interested in using this instrument, please contact the Director of the CSDE, Gary Siperstein, at 617-287-7250 for more information.

### Guide to Entering/Coding & Checking Data from each Area's Family Member Surveys/Athlete Interviews

There are two steps to this process: (1) entering/coding the data and (2) checking the data.

It is possible (and would be most efficient) to have multiple people working on entering/coding the data. The blank dataset shells for each Area can be sent to whoever is entering/coding data and saved with subsets of the data from that Area.

#### **(1) ENTERING/CODING DATA**

- Before coding a survey, write **your initials and the date** you are coding the survey in the top left corner of the survey.
- The cells in the first column of the dataset (Event) are for the **name of the SOTX competition** where the survey was administered or the interview was conducted. Find the event name on the survey that you are coding. The event name is on the ID number label, written in under the ID number. Write the full event name verbatim in the cell. **If there is no event name written under the ID number**, the survey was taken at Spring Games, and you should write in "Spring Games."
  - For the Family Member Surveys, you can find the ID number labels on the bottom of pages 2 or 13.
  - For the Athlete Interviews, you can find the ID number labels on the bottom of pages 1 or 5.
- The cells in the second column of the Family Member Survey dataset (Language) are to indicate whether each survey is in **English or Spanish**. For surveys in English, use the code "1." For surveys in Spanish, use the code "2."
- The next column of cells in the dataset (ID Number) are for the **ID number** on each survey. Find the ID number label on the survey that you are coding and enter it exactly how it appears on the label.
  - For the Family Member Surveys, the labels are on the bottom of pages 2 or 13.
  - For the Athlete Interviews, the labels are on the bottom of pages 1 or 5.
- Each cell in the dataset corresponds to a certain question/option in the survey/interview. For each cell, fill in the appropriate code based on the respondent's marks (see Code Books).
- You should code the survey almost exactly as the respondent filled it out.
  - **Do not pay attention to skip patterns.** If the respondent did not answer certain questions even if he/she was supposed to skip over them, use the code "99" to mark it as missing. We will take skip patterns into account later when we are cleaning the dataset, so you do not have to think about them as you are coding.
  - **For questions that ask for the date**, convert the respondent's answer into the format MMDDYY. You can assume that the YY digits are 16 (for 2016), even if the respondent did not write them in. If you can't read what the respondent wrote, use the code "99" (the same code you would use for a missing response).



- **When you are finished coding a survey, every cell in that row of the dataset should be filled in with a code.** Every time you finish entering data from a survey, make sure the row you were working on is completely filled in.
- **For questions that ARE NOT check-all-that-apply or ranks:**
  - Responses that are missing/left blank should be coded with “99,” as indicated in the Code Book.
- **For questions that ARE check-all-that-apply or ranks:**
  - The dataset contains a separate cell for each option choice (labeled with lowercase letters in the respective cells and in the Code Book).
  - As indicated in the Code Book, option choices that are not marked should be coded with “0” (NOT “99”).
  - For check-all-that-apply questions, option choices that are marked should be coded with “1.”
  - For rank questions, option choices that are marked should be coded with the indicated rank number (i.e., 1, 2 or 3).
- **For open-ended questions and fill-in questions** (e.g., after “please specify”):
  - Write in the respondent’s response verbatim. Include all letters, words, punctuation, etc. that the respondent wrote (even if the spelling or grammar is incorrect).
- **For option choices that ask the respondent to “please specify”:**
  - The dataset includes one cell to indicate that the respondent marked this option, and a second cell to indicate what the respondent wrote in. Make sure you’re aware that these are separate cells as you go through each survey.
  - If the respondent marks the option choice but does not write anything on the “please specify” line, you would mark the appropriate code in the first cell and mark “99” in the second cell.
  - If the respondent does not mark the option choice but does write something on the “please specify” line, you would mark “99” in the first cell and write their response verbatim in the second cell.
- **If the respondent is only asked to mark one option** (i.e., NOT check-all-that-apply, NOT rank top three) but he/she marks more than one option, use the code “99” (the same code you would use for a missing response).
- **If the respondent is asked to rank their top three choices:**
  - ...and he/she ranks more than three, code the top three and use the code “0” for the rest of the items.
  - ...and he/she uses the same number on more than one item (e.g., marks two different items with “1”), use the code “99” for all items.
  - ...and he/she does not rank three choices (e.g., only marks one item with “1” and another item with “2”), code the ranked items and use the code “0” for all other items.



- **If the respondent makes an illegible or unclear mark**, use your best judgement when deciding how to code his/her response.
  - If it is obvious that the respondent was trying to cross something out, code it as if that option was not marked or that word was not written in.
  - If you are at all unsure about what the respondent was trying to mark or can't read what the respondent wrote in, the best and safest choice is to mark it with the code "99" (the same code you would use for a missing response).

## **(2) CHECKING DATA**

- After the data from each Area is entered and coded, **the data needs to be checked**.
- Preferably, this will be done by **someone different** than the person who entered the data.
- If it is not possible to have someone different check the data, the same person who entered the data can be the one who checks it, but this needs to happen after all of the surveys from that Area have been coded. The data from a given survey should not be checked by the person who entered it immediately after coding it.
- Before checking a survey, write **your initials and the date** you are checking the survey in the top left corner of the survey, directly underneath the initials and date from the person who coded the survey.
- Go through each survey, **question by question**, to ensure that what is on the survey matches what was entered in the dataset. Make any necessary changes to the dataset.

Once both of these steps have been done for all completed Family Member Surveys and Athlete Interviews from an Area, please email the dataset files back to the CSDE to be cleaned and analyzed. If multiple people entered/coded data and there are multiple versions of the datasets, please send them all back to the CSDE separately. **The CSDE will merge them** into one composite Family Member Survey dataset and one composite Athlete Interview dataset for that Area. If you have any questions, or something comes up with a survey that is not addressed above, please don't hesitate to contact the CSDE. This will ensure that the data entry/coding process is as accurate as possible. Thank you!