

FAMILIES

Families with children who have intellectual disabilities are like other families; however, having a child with special needs often thrusts them into situations that may make their everyday lives more challenging. Special Olympics Texas allows families the opportunities to be a part of a year-round sports training and competition program which provides the entire family with opportunities for sports, social interaction and fun.

Special Olympics Texas provides an opportunity:

- for families to share in the accomplishments of their children.
- to share the Special Olympics joy with other families.
- to allow the extended family the opportunity to be part of a year-round sports training and competition program.

Families are Special Olympics Texas' most powerful resource. Families help coach, transport, fundraise, officiate, chaperone and train other volunteers. Families are Special Olympics' most highly motivated and enthusiastic goodwill ambassadors. The Special Olympics Texas families program provides educational and legal information, support and compassion to families of children with intellectual disabilities.

The Special Olympics Texas families program offers support through:

- newsletters.
- Families Handbook (downloaded from our website).
- fun area family activities like picnics and banquets.
- family line of souvenirs (look for the family welcome wagon at chapter events).
- family hospitality booths/tables at Special Olympics events.
- family receptions at Special Olympics events.
- the area and chapter family of the year awards.
- family home training programs which assist in sports training and physical conditioning.
- family camp.
- educational tracks for families at annual conference.
- family resource guide.
- area network directories.
- adult outreach focus area experts.

Since families are such an integral part of SOTX, we are trying to capture the family information of new and existing families. The Family Registration Form can be found on page T-4. This form should be filled out by all family members and submitted to the area or chapter office. This information will help us to disperse Special Olympics information to all families of SOTX athletes.

If you would like to provide activities for families in your area and promote family involvement, Special Olympics Texas will provide you with a families manual (produced by Special Olympics, Inc.).

The title of the families manual is "The Power Behind the Glory That is Special Olympics: Families."

The manual gives activity ideas for the following topics:

- Family Involvement
- Utilizing Families Effectively
- Family Committees
- Families and Games
- Developing a Family Involvement Action Plan
- Family Camps and Family Days
- Family Home Training
- Family Members Becoming Coaches





Special Olympics Texas encourages you to find support through the many organizations that exist for family members such as:

- National Parent Teachers Association (PTA)
- Parent to Parent Network
- Exceptional Parent Magazine
- National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHY)
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education
- President's Committee on Employment of the Handicapped
- Administration of Developmental Disabilities
- Family Resource Coalition
- National Parent Network on Disabilities
- The Arc (formerly the Association for Retarded Citizens)
- Beach Center on Families and Disability
- Texas Project First
- Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)
- Texas Parent 2 Parent

Family/Guardian Code of Conduct

The Family/Guardian Code of Conduct is designed to assist parents and friends in abiding by the mission and philosophy of Special Olympics. Respect for all persons associated with Special Olympics Texas will be expected.

This code will be used on an as-needed basis. Its intended purpose is to clarify expected behaviors of family and friends attending Special Olympics events.

Family/Guardian Code of Conduct Agreement

I understand and agree that I will:

1. Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person in Special Olympics. Within the context of the activity, I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
2. Ensure that athletes' time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
3. Accept responsibility for my actions:
 - Language, manner, punctuality and interaction with others should display control, respect and dignity to all involved in the sport (athletes, coaches, opponents, officials, administrators, family members, spectators, media, volunteers, etc.).
 - Encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
4. Not consume alcohol or mind altering drugs while representing Special Olympics at trainings, competitions or while attending Special Olympics events.
5. Refrain from any form of verbal, physical or emotional abuse toward athletes and others. Notify a Special Olympics Texas (SOTX) staff member immediately if you witness this behavior.
6. Be a positive role model for all athletes and the sport.
7. Will learn the rules of the game and the SOTX policies before I take the complaint to my head coach.
8. Will never engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct, such as booing and taunting, refusing to shake hands, or using profane language and gestures, with any official, coach, staff, or family member.
9. Will teach my athlete that doing one's best is more important than winning so that my athlete will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
10. Will praise my athlete for competing fairly and trying hard, and I will make my athlete feel like a winner every time.
11. Will never ridicule or yell at my athlete, or other participants, for making a mistake or losing a competition.
12. Will respect the officials and their authority during games and competitions, and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches during competitions. Instead, I will take time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.

If a perceived breach of the Code of Conduct is suspected, please follow these steps:

1. Notify the Head of Delegation (HoD). The HoD should discuss inappropriate behavior with the person and resolve the issue. A verbal warning will be issued. If a resolution is not reached...
2. Notify a SOTX staff member. SOTX staff and the HoD will work together to control the situation and redirect if needed. Possible outcomes may be suspension and a written warning.
3. Notify security if the need arises. If security is called, the area director shall bring this event to the Area Management/Area Sports Management Team for review and possible sanctions. Outcomes may be a season suspension or longer depending on the infraction.

Note: Continued inappropriate behavior by a family member or guardian may result in the parent being banned from attending SOTX activities indefinitely. It could also jeopardize the athletes' continued participation with the delegation.

I hereby certify that I have reviewed, understand and agreed to this Code of Conduct.

Signature of Family Member

Date

Print Name

Delegation

Athlete Name

Special Olympics Texas Family Registration Form

1. Have you completed a Family Registration Form in the past? [Circle one] Yes No
Special Olympics Texas Area: _____ (See directory for areas)

2. If your answer to number 1 was "No," please fill out all of the information below.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Cell Phone: (_____) _____ Home Phone: (_____) _____

Work Phone: (_____) _____

Athlete(s) Name and Age(s):

1) _____ Age: _____

2) _____ Age: _____

3) _____ Age: _____

Would you be interested in the following? [Circle one]

Special Olympics Texas Information Yes No

Serving on an Area Family Committee Yes No

Helping at Area Games Yes No

Being a Coach or Assistant Yes No

Other: _____

3. Is your athlete a child or an adult? [Circle one] Child Adult

4. Is your athlete on a school-based or area adult team? [Circle one] School-Based Area Adult Team

5. When looking for information about a community program/service, do you prefer printed materials or use of the internet? [Circle one] Printed Internet

6. What type of information do you want a Resource Center to provide? [Check all that apply]

Transition Services

Advocacy/Self-Advocacy

Financial Resources

Legal Resources

Special Education in School

Recreation and Leisure

Other: _____

Please submit your completed form ATTN. Director of Families and Outreach.

Email: dir_familyoutr.chp@sotx.org

Fax: 512.835.7756

Mail: Special Olympics Texas, 7715 Chevy Chase Drive, Suite 120 Austin, Texas 78752