



Special Olympics
Texas

Young Athletes Program (YAP)



special olympics texas **young athletes program**

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What is YAP?

The Young Athletes Program (YAP) is a sports play program designed to introduce children ages two to seven to the world of physical activity. Children with and without intellectual disabilities participate together, prior to and regardless of Special Olympics eligibility at age eight. The program utilizes physical activities to develop fundamental motor tracking and eye-hand coordination play. Children build these skills by participating in specific activities on a regular basis. The program concentrates on applying the skills learned through these activities in preparation for Special Olympics or traditional sports competitions.

YAP was developed in direct response to requests from families wanting to engage their young children in physical fitness. The program is solely based on participation; there is no competition. The skills these children learn will improve all areas of their lives, including participating in future sports competitions.

What is the Focus of YAP?

Students will work on skills as part of their school day. These skills may be in line with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. One to two times a year there will be a culminating day called the Future Stars Sports Day, during which the students will demonstrate the skills they have learned for family and friends.

Physical Activities for YAP



- Foundational skills
- Walking and running
- Balance and jumping
- Trapping and catching
- Throwing
- Striking
- Kicking
- Advanced skills

Children will learn these skills through a series of activities like bunny hop, obstacle course and bean bag throw.

Who Benefits?

Benefits to Athletes

- Socialization: the YAP is a foundation for Project UNIFY - Meet in the Middle, a school-based program that promotes acceptance and inclusion between students with and without intellectual disabilities. To learn more, visit www.mimtexas.org.
- Coordination and strength building
- Awareness of self worth and self confidence
- Introduction to sports and preparation for competitions when they are of age

Benefits for Families

- Introduces families to the resources and support available within Special Olympics
- Offers families the opportunity to share in the success of their future athlete

How to Get Involved

Contact your area office for more information, or you can contact the Director of Outreach and Families at 1.800.876.5646.

