

Thoughts on the Program

"Once we brought the Young Athlete Program into our school, we watched children take action with other children with special needs of their age appropriate peers. We saw growth and friendship amongst all students. The children were eager to participate in Special Olympics. Children utilized their physical education time to practice and even gave up time during their recess to play with their special education peer."

~Mrs. Catherine Reidy, Principal of Mt. Greenwood School



"Young Athletes makes it their mission to personally get to know every athlete and their family. My most precious memories are of the Young Athlete event hosted by Northwestern University where college athletes helped teach the kids different sport skills. We got involved in Young Athletes and our lives have changed."

~Jody Chisholm, Parent of Young Athlete



Special Olympics Young Athletes™

The mission of Special Olympics Illinois is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

For More Information Visit

www.soill.org

Glen Ellyn Office

Phone: 630-942-5610

Normal Office

Phone: 309-888-2551

E-mail: youngathletes@soill.org

Special Olympics Young Athletes™

Start Early, Finish Strong





Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age 8. The Young

Athletes program was created to meet the physical and developmental needs of children ages 2-7. The Program will also offer families the opportunity to share in the success of their future athlete and will provide an appreciation of fitness and sport for the entire family. Through preparation for participation in sports, families will see the potential for their child.



“I have ribbons and pictures and friends. We have fun and we go everywhere!”

Audrey, Special Olympics Illinois Young Athlete

Young Athletes introduces children with intellectual disabilities, their peers and families to the world of Special Olympics by pursuing the following goals:

- Engage children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive and social development.
- Welcome family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support.
- Raise awareness about the abilities of children with disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events.

Young Athletes is a versatile program that can work in various learning situations. The program is designed for families to play with their young athletes at home in a fun atmosphere. It is also appropriate for preschools, schools and play-groups to use with small groups of young children with and without disabilities. The flexibility of Young Athletes ensures the opportunity to welcome everyone into the Special Olympics family.



Activities

- Foundational Skills
- Walking and Running
- Balance and Jumping
- Trapping and Catching
- Throwing
- Striking
- Kicking
- Advanced Skills



Young Athletes Program Activity Kit includes the following items at no cost:

- Activity Guide
- Training
- Equipment: Balls, Cones, Poles, Hoops, Floor Markers, Balance Beams, Rackets, Scarves and other fun items!

