

## ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIAL OLYMPICS

Special Olympics official general rules state the following when identifying persons with intellectual disabilities and their eligibility for participation in Special Olympics.

*General statement of eligibility:* "Special Olympics training and competition is open to every person with intellectual disabilities who is at least eight years of age and who registers to participate in Special Olympics."

*Identifying person with intellectual disabilities:* "A person is considered to have intellectual disabilities for purpose of determining his or her eligibility to participate in Special Olympics if that person satisfies any one of the following requirements:

1. Person has been identified by an agency or professional as having intellectual disabilities as determined by their localities; or
2. Person has a cognitive delay, as determined by standardized measures such as intelligent quotient or "IQ" testing or other measures which are generally accepted within the professional community in that Accredited Program's nation as being a reliable measurement of the existence of a cognitive delay; or
3. Person has a closely related developmental disability.

A 'closely related developmental disability' means having functional limitations in both general learning (such as IQ) and in adaptive skills (such as recreation, work independent living, self direction, or self care).

However, persons whose functional limitations are based solely on a physical, behavioral or emotional disability, or a specific learning disability or sensory disability are not eligible to participate as Special Olympics athletes. These individuals may be eligible to volunteer for Special Olympics as partners in Unified Sports®, if they otherwise meet the separate eligibility requirements for participation in Unified Sports® which are set forth in the SOI sports rules."

Other terms that may be used synonymously with intellectual disabilities include: cognitive disabilities, mental handicaps, or mental retardation.