

2023-2024



**Special  
Olympics**  
Ontario



 **School Programs**  
2023-2024 Booklet



# School Programs 2023-2024

Welcome to a new year of competition and life-changing opportunities!

## 2022-2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- 170 participating schools from across Ontario
- 42 school boards
- 46 communities served
- 102 in-person and virtual qualifying events (matching the largest # of events run in a school year)
- 1000 athletes, coaches, volunteers attended 2023 Kingston School Championships

## PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Special Olympics Ontario (SOO) school programs and events are available for students aged 2-25. Our programs assist student-athletes, with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), develop physical literacy, develop and practice social skills, learn about teamwork and inclusion, and be a part of their school's sports teams. The programs we offer span all levels of education, from elementary schools, intermediate schools, and secondary schools, as well as universities and colleges. Notably, our programs are available to all Public and Catholic school boards Province wide.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

This school year, SOO Sports Festivals will offer Active Start and FUNdamentals activities. Athletes in the Active Start Program will take part in exercises designed to teach essential movement skills and lay the groundwork for physical literacy. FUNdamentals athletes will participate in programs that introduce them to a variety of sports and skills. The Sports Festival's purpose is to provide an entry point for athletes to advance toward future participation in structured and/or competitive programs.

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Secondary School Qualifiers provide quality competition opportunities to student-athletes aged 13-21 in five sports: basketball, soccer, bocce, floorball, and virtual track & field. Teams are divisioned prior to each event to ensure fair and balanced competition. Our events accommodate a wide range of skill levels from never playing the sport to being highly skilled. Registration for each qualifying event is only \$5 per student. All competitions offer both a Traditional Division, where all athletes have an intellectual disability, as well as a Unified Division, where teams are comprised of athletes with AND without an intellectual disability.

## UNIVERSITY / COLLEGE

The SOO University and College Programs deliver unified intramural sports to college and university campuses throughout the province. Athletes who have graduated from secondary programs (ages 18-25) can participate in competitive sports through unified campus programs. SO Athletes will be paired with Unified Partners from local universities and colleges to compete as teammates in intramural programs at the schools.

**The Athlete Leadership Program (ALPs)** is a free all-day or afternoon session designed to educate secondary students on the tools and actions required to take on significant leadership roles within Special Olympics and beyond. Any student who wishes to study and develop new talents is welcome to participate in the program.



# WHAT'S NEW?

## VIRTUAL SPORTS PROGRAMMING IS BACK!

This school year, in an effort to provide more opportunities and engagement SOO so will be launching 3 new week-long virtual events! All events will be free of charge and open to all schools and athletes in the Province.

- **WELCOME WEEK:** To kick off the year, we will be running our second-ever Welcome Week Event from September 11th – 15th, featuring 5 days of sports challenges and a throwback fun day that includes trivia, zumba, a dance party and more.
- **FUN FITNESS WEEK:** From January 15-19th Special Olympics will welcome everyone back from the holidays with 5 days straight of fitness challenges.
- **MULTI-SPORT WEEK:** And finally, starting on May 13th, we will introduce our first-ever multi-sport week, where SOO will introduce our schools to a series of new sports and skills!

## THE ATHLETE SHOW CASE

On October 28th, SOO will launch a unified athlete showcase event in Toronto. The event will be open to all schools, individual participants and athletes ages 16-23. The event will feature an SOO basketball tournament, a unified workshop event, prizes and more. Parents, don't miss the opportunity to watch your son or daughter compete!

## WE HAVE A NEW SPORT!

**Our School Programs will transition to floorball as our new floor hockey sport in the spring of 2024.** Floorball is an up-and-coming new sport that is taking the world by storm by creating greater opportunities for participation in lowering equipment barriers, creating more scoring opportunities and improving teamwork. All new equipment and materials to learn about the sport will be funded and provided by Special Olympics.

## SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Our 3-day Secondary School Championships will be back and better than ever this year. Taking place June 10 – 12, the 2024 School Championships will bring hundreds of qualifying athletes from across the Province together for three days of competition and excitement. The five sports will include Athletics, Basketball, Bocce, Floorball, and Soccer.



## TEACHER COUNCIL

SOO will introduce our 13-member advisory educator council for the first time. Each major district in the province is represented on this council. Its objective will be to advise and provide feedback to Special Olympics Staff on Secondary School Programing and to better connect our operations to the needs of our key stakeholders.

# UNIFIED PROGRAMMING

The Unified School Program aims to promote a more inclusive and Unified community within elementary, secondary, and post-secondary academic institutions in Ontario.

Unified programming brings athletes with intellectual challenges and generic athletes together on the same field of play.

The program is intended to remove social and systemic barriers, create lasting relationships and memories, and create meaningful competition and involvement for our participating unified partners and SOO athletes.



## HOW TO GET INVOLVED

**How to join the movement? It's simple, just form a team!**

Athletes without intellectual disabilities can join by becoming unified partners and competing alongside our athletes. SOO Athletes and Parents can speak to their schools about starting a team. Schools can start by registering for unified sporting events and create additional sport/recreation, social, advocacy and awareness opportunities within the school.

## UNIFIED AWARENESS WEEK

This year, we will be introducing an awareness week. The week will include a unified resource and content launch, athlete spotlights, a unified forum, and a workshop, culminating with our unified athlete showcase event.

The week is intended to spread greater awareness, understanding, and application for the unified model across the Province. As well as grow participation and engagement within the program and beyond!

[Click here](#) to watch our 2023 SOO School Programs video







## EDUCATOR RESOURCES

### SCHOOL PROGRAMS HOSTING GRANT

For the second year in a row, Special Olympics Ontario is offering a hosting grant for any school that chooses to host an unstaffed event (an event where staff are not on-site to support). Schools can expect to receive \$300 - \$500 in funding based on the scale of the event. Staff from Special Olympics will continue to provide central support for your event, including registration, scheduling, securing officials and medical, communications, and equipment. If you would like to host your own school event, please contact [schools@specialolympicsontario.com](mailto:schools@specialolympicsontario.com).

In order to qualify for the School Programs Hosting Grant, events must be open to both catholic and public school boards and host at least two additional schools.

### UPDATED WEBPAGE RESOURCES

The School Programs website now has an updated resources tab that includes: our school programs one-pager, unstaffed and staffed event hosting booklets, coaching guides, sport development resources, rules and technical packages and unified programming/awareness supports. Go to our [Secondary School Educator Resources Webpage](#).

#### Active Start

Ages 2 - 6

SOO provides Active Start resource guides and t-shirts to anyone wanting to start or participate in a program. The Active Start guide introduces physical literacy and fundamental movement skills (kicking, running, throwing, balance, etc.) through structured and unstructured play. Your youngest/lower functioning students will benefit from play-based activities that teach basic skills.

#### FUNDamentals

Ages 7 - 12

The FUNDamentals program guide provides a platform for building sport-specific skills in a non-competitive environment. It incorporates learning skills without introducing the dynamics of how the sport works in a competitive environment. The focus is still on fun and inclusion.

#### Multi-Sport

Ages 10 - 21

The Youth Multi-Sport guide breaks down each sport into 9 weeks of lesson plans, from introducing each sport to a complete game setting. This guide is a great lead-in to our Intermediate and Secondary school programs for educators looking to prepare students for competition.

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School Programs

Please contact us for more information!



[schools@specialolympicsontario.com](mailto:schools@specialolympicsontario.com)



[specialolympicsontario.com/schools](https://specialolympicsontario.com/schools)



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