

UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

Special
Olympics
Ontario



Special Olympics
Unified Champion
Schools®

2025-2026
Elementary Program Booklet



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

Our Highlights from Last Year:

12,000

Participating students from across Ontario

55

School boards

450

Participating schools from across Ontario

165

In-person and virtual events

3,601

Unified Participants

1,200

Athletes, coaches and volunteers attended the 2025 Ottawa School Championships



THE NEW VISION: UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

We are not just a sport; Special Olympics Ontario is excited to continue offering the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) inclusive school strategy, creating a foundation for inclusive school cultures and communities across the province.

Unified Champion Schools is revolutionizing the school experience by fostering environments of inclusion and acceptance for all students. Our program integrates three key pillars that work to create a culture where every student is valued and included:

- 1. Inclusive Sport and Health:** This program promotes social engagement and development by integrating students with and without intellectual disabilities into sports.
- 2. Youth Leadership:** UCS also works to develop youth leadership by empowering students to advocate for inclusion and change within their communities.
- 3. Whole-School Engagement:** Through activities and initiatives involving the entire school, we ensure that inclusion is a core value embedded in the school's daily life.

Join us to create lasting change and foster a Unified, accepting, and positive school community. Click the button to become a Unified Champion School today!

APPLY NOW



What's New!

Regional Inclusive Schools Conference Series – Coming This Fall, October 18th – November 1st

Special Olympics Ontario is launching the **UCS Regional Inclusive Conference Saturday Series**—a FREE, one-day professional development event designed for educators who are passionate about inclusion.

Hosted at Champion Schools across Ontario, the conference offers hands-on learning and practical strategies to help teachers foster inclusive classrooms and school communities. Connect with fellow educators, student leaders, and SOO staff while gaining tools to support student well-being, leadership, and equity through Unified programming.

[Click here to learn more!](#)

Click the button to register!

APPLY NOW 

Participation & Fees Update

There are no fees to join or be part of Special Olympics. Going forward, all Elementary event fees will be waived. Elementary schools will participate without any cost.

Monthly Movement Virtual Program

Special Olympics Ontario offers **monthly themed activity packages** for Grades K–8! These fun, inclusive activities promote movement, teamwork, and wellness—and fit easily into your school day.

- Complete 5 flexible activities each month
- Track progress with a BINGO card
- Earn points and join the school leaderboard
- Submit scores by the last Friday of each month

Activities support the Ontario Health & Physical Education Curriculum, including:

- Social-Emotional Learning
- Active Living
- Movement Skills
- Healthy Living

[Learn more and access resources here](#)

Cool Schools - Whole School Engagement Meets Fundraising for Inclusion

Cool Schools is a province-wide challenge and fundraiser that brings the entire school community together to support Unified Champion Schools. Through fun, inclusive activities and school spirit, students and staff unite to raise awareness and funds that directly support athletes across Ontario.

This year, we're launching **Cool Schools Day on May 1st**—a celebration to wrap up Inclusion Week and showcase your school's commitment to inclusion, leadership, and community impact.



OUR CORE PROGRAMMING: UNIFIED SPORTS

With a record number of events on the horizon, there's something for everyone! Special Olympics Ontario is thrilled to expand our offerings with **Champions in Motion** events in bocce and basketball across the province—new for this year.

Plus, our beloved **Sport Festivals** are BACK, now available in both traditional and Unified formats. Schools can bring Unified partners by following a 1:1 athlete-to-partner ratio.

Explore the full range of opportunities on our [Events Calendar](#) and start planning your participation today!



UNIFIED SPORTS: ACTIVE START, FUNDAMENTALS & MULTI SPORT PROGRAMS

Active Sport

Introduces foundational movement skills like running, jumping, and throwing. Designed for younger students to build confidence and physical literacy through play-based activities.

FUNDamentals

Builds on Active Start by enhancing sport-specific skills and promoting daily physical activity. Focuses on coordination, teamwork, and basic sport techniques.

Youth Multi-Sport

Expands on FUNDamentals with sport-specific lesson plans in basketball, bocce, soccer, and track & field. Each sport includes 9–12 progressive lessons from skill development to gameplay.

New schools receive program booklets and t-shirts to support implementation.



UNIFIED SPORTS: SPORT FESTIVALS

Our **one-day inclusive events are back**—bringing students together through movement stations and sport activities in a fun, non-competitive environment. These festivals are ideal for engaging new athletes, celebrating participation, and building school spirit.

NEW!

New resources and program information are available this year to help schools run and participate in festivals more effectively.

All programs align with the **Ontario Health & Physical Education Curriculum** and are designed to be inclusive, adaptable, and engaging for students of all abilities.



UNIFIED SPORTS: CHAMPIONS IN MOTION

Champions in Motion is our intermediate Unified program designed for students in Grades 6–8. It focuses on skill development in a specific sport—bocce or basketball (new this year!)—while teaching teamwork and progressing toward gameplay.

These events offer a Unified experience, where students with and without intellectual disabilities train and compete together, promoting inclusion and collaboration through sport.

Champions in Motion supports both physical literacy and social connection in a structured, supportive environment.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP UNIFIED ORIENTATION WORKSHOP SERIES

New schools can kickstart their journey with an in-person interactive workshop that introduces students to the Unified movement and keys to leadership.

Host An Event

Hosting a **Sport Festival** or **Champions in Motion** event offers your school a unique opportunity to take on an exciting and meaningful project. It's a chance for classes to lead, organize, and create an inclusive experience for their peers.

All you need is a facility (gym or field and a team of passionate volunteers —we'll support you with resources and guidance to make it a success).

[Learn more here](#)

[Request to Host Here](#)



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT - IN ACTION DONUT DAY – COMING THIS WINTER

Donut Day is a powerful **Whole School Engagement** initiative designed to unite students, staff, and families in a shared challenge to promote inclusion and raise awareness for Special Olympics Ontario. Through creative activities and school-wide participation, Donut Day encourages meaningful conversations and celebrates the power of inclusive communities.

[Learn more and access resources here](#)



WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT - IN ACTION INCLUSION WEEK - COMING THIS APRIL

Introducing: **Inclusion Week** a dynamic initiative created by students, for students. Developed by the Unified Leadership Council, it empowers schools to come together through student-led activities that celebrate diversity, promote acceptance, and build inclusive school communities.

With ready-to-use resources and flexible ideas, schools can activate Inclusion Week in their own way at any time during the month of April—sparking awareness, connection, and school-wide impact.

[Access resources and planning tools on the Secondary Hub](#)



HEALTHY SCHOOLS UNIFIED ORIENTATION WORKSHOP SERIES

New schools can kickstart their journey with an in-person interactive workshop that introduces students to the Unified movement and keys to leadership.

Host An Event

Hosting a **Sport Festival** or **Champions in Motion** event offers your school a unique opportunity to take on an exciting and meaningful project. It's a chance for classes to lead, organize, and create an inclusive experience for their peers.

All you need is a facility (gym or field and a team of passionate volunteers—we'll support you with resources and guidance to make it a success).

[Learn more here](#)

[Request to Host Here](#)



HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Our expanded Health programs and resources are designed to enhance the physical health, social skills, and emotional well-being of Special Olympics athletes. The SOFitNow app allows athletes to engage in fun challenges, track their progress, and work towards personalized fitness goals. Access the App Here: [SOFitNow Information Package and User Guide](#)

Program Highlights:

- **Physical Health:** Focus on nutritious eating, improving fitness, and adopting an active lifestyle.
- **Social & Emotional Well-being:** Strengthen social skills and overall mental health.
- **Challenges:** Participate in exciting challenges like the Fit5 and Step Challenges, designed to keep athletes motivated.
- **Events:** Stay tuned to our events calendar for FREE health screenings and healthy schools events throughout the year
- Click here for more information: [Healthy Athletes Info Booklet](#)

Healthy Schools Series

Special Olympics Ontario is excited to re-launch our live, virtual, and completely free weekly dance and fitness series, starting September 18th.

- **Dance Wednesdays:** Join us every Wednesday from **1:00–1:30 PM** for high-energy dance sessions that are fun, inclusive, and perfect for all skill levels.
- **Fitness Thursdays:** Every Thursday from **1:00–1:30 PM**, build strength, boost energy with our guided fitness classes.
- All sessions, live links and recordings will be available through the [Secondary Hub Events section](#)

2026 Young Champions Day

Special Olympics Ontario is proud to present the second annual **Young Champions Day**, a vibrant celebration of inclusion, sport, and youth leadership. Taking place on May 25th at Western University in London, this free event welcomes students in grades 6–8 from schools within a 100km radius.

What's in store?

- Unified Bocce Tournament– Students of all abilities
- Fun Zone
- Dance

Cost? Zero. Special Olympics Ontario covers transportation and meals, making it easy for schools to participate and celebrate together.

Key Updates & Resources

New All-In-One Registration & Payment System

All schools will now use individual Google Sheets as the registration platform for all in-person events, including Sport Festivals and Champions & Motion Events.

What Information Is Required?

We're keeping it simple. You'll only need to provide:

- School name
- Educator email
- Number of participating athletes
- Gender & classification of athletes

Your region's form will be sent out in our event invites. Visit our updated [School Hub](#) to learn more about the process.

Your Go-To Resource: The Secondary Hub

Everything you need — resources, updates, communications, and event info — all in one place. [The Elementary Hub](#) remains your central platform for all things Special Olympics Ontario Schools, and it's updated regularly with the latest tools, news, and program developments.

WhatsApp Groups

Join our official WhatsApp group for educators to connect with teachers across the province. This platform promotes collaboration, engagement, and communication within the Special Olympics community. It's where SOO shares updates, resources, and news, and gathers feedback.

[Click here](#) to join the Special Olympics Educator WhatsApp Community
The Community Includes:

- **General Announcements (One-Way)** – Key updates from SOO.
- **Province-Wide & Regional/District Chats (Two-Way)** – Connect with fellow teachers in specific areas; check descriptions for city details.



UNIFIED CHAMPION SCHOOLS

UCS Grants

a) Host Grants

For the third year in a row, Special Olympics Ontario is offering a hosting grant for a school that chooses to host an unstaffed event (an event where staff are not on-site to support). Depending on the scale of the event, schools can expect to receive \$300- \$500 in funding.

Note: SOO is committed to touching every community; not all unstaffed requests will be granted.

If you are interested in hosting a staffed or unstaffed event this year, please fill out our [hosting form](#).

b) Transportation Grants

SOO will provide transportation funding support to schools traveling over 35km to attend an event, as well as to schools requiring financial assistance. [Click here to apply](#).

c) Equipment Grants – New

SOO will continue to offer its 1 Free bocce kit program to all schools that have not received one in the past. [Click here to apply](#).

Note: Limited funds are available for all grants. Applications will be reviewed and accepted based on merit.





Please contact us for more information!

Are you a new school?
[Click Here](#) to get involved now!



schools@specialolympicsontario.com



specialolympicsontario.com/schools



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Special Olympics Ontario would like to acknowledge that with the funding support of the Ontario Ministry of Education, SOO has been able to bring this Inclusive Strategy to Ontario schools.