



Teacher Guide:

Integrating Unified Champion Schools Programs into IEP Goals

What is Unified Champion Schools (UCS)?

Unified Champion Schools is a Special Olympics Ontario initiative that promotes inclusive school environments by bringing students with and without intellectual disabilities together through:

1. Inclusive Sports, Fitness & Health
2. Youth Leadership & Advocacy
3. Whole School Engagement

Why Integrate UCS into IEPs?

Incorporating UCS programs into IEPs:

- Aligns with inclusive education goals in Ontario.
- Builds real-world social, communication, physical, and leadership skills.
- Enhances student engagement, confidence, and belonging.
- Helps meet transition planning, life skills, and community integration goals.



Step-by-Step Integration Process

1. Understand the Student's Strengths and Needs

Use the student profile, assessments, and conversations with the student and family to identify:

- Interests (sports, peer interaction, leadership)
- Needs (social communication, teamwork, mobility, self-regulation)
- Current support levels (EA involvement, accessibility, accommodations)

2. Choose UCS Program Components That Fit

UCS Pillars You Can Integrate:

UCS Pillar	Activities/Examples	Focus Area
Inclusive Sports & Health	Unified sports teams, intramurals, recreational games, Health-related resources (Healthy Athletes)	Physical literacy, cooperation, motor skills, health literacy, health screenings
Youth Leadership	Leadership teams, peer mentors, event planning	Communication, advocacy, organization
Whole School Engagement	Assemblies, Respect Campaigns, Spirit Days	Social inclusion, initiative, community

3. Write SMART IEP Goals Using UCS Activities

Here are some sample goals aligned with UCS activities and IEP categories:

Area: Social Skills / Communication

Goal: *By June, [Student] will initiate and respond to peer interaction during Unified Sports practice, using appropriate greetings and 1–2 sentence responses, in 4/5 opportunities, with minimal prompting.*

UCS Link: Inclusive Sports

Area: Physical Development / Motor Skills

Goal: [Student] will participate in weekly Unified physical activities, improving cardiovascular endurance by walking/jogging 10 minutes continuously by the end of term.

UCS Link: Inclusive Fitness/Recreational Programs

Area: Independence / Self-Advocacy

Goal: During UCS leadership meetings, [Student] will express their opinion or make a suggestion during group discussions, with adult facilitation, in 3/4 meetings per term.

UCS Link: Youth Leadership & Advocacy

Area: Transition Planning

Goal: [Student] will collaborate with peers to plan and deliver one inclusive school-wide activity (e.g., Unity Day), identifying roles and completing assigned tasks with support.

UCS Link: Whole School Engagement

Area: Behaviour / Regulation

Goal: When participating in Unified Sports, [Student] will demonstrate self-regulation strategies (e.g., breathing, requesting breaks) to manage frustration, in 4/5 situations.

UCS Link: Inclusive Sports & Social Interaction

Accommodations & Support Strategies

Area	Example Strategies
Communication	Visual supports, sentence starters, AAC devices
Behaviour Regulation	Visual schedules, choice boards, coaching during conflict
Mobility/Access	Adaptive equipment, accessible venues
Peer Interaction	Trained peer buddies, social scripting, pre-teaching scenarios
Assessment	Observation checklists, reflection sheets, photo documentation

Tracking & Reporting Progress

- Use participation logs, teacher/peer observations, and student self-assessments
- Collect photos/videos (with permission) to show engagement and success
- Include student reflections (written, oral, or visual) in IEP review meetings
- Document growth in leadership, social-emotional learning, and self-confidence

4. Collaborate with:

- Special Olympics Ontario UCS Coordinators – for resources, event support, training
- Educational Assistants – for implementation and prompting
- Parents/Guardians – for insight into student motivation and interests
- Student Support Teams – for integrating OT/PT/SLP goals
- Peer Leaders – to model inclusive practices

Final Tips

- Start small: One activity per month can make a big impact.
- Celebrate all forms of progress – not just performance.
- Invite peers as partners, not helpers – true inclusion matters.
- Share success stories at IEP reviews or school staff meetings.
- Make UCS part of your classroom culture, not just an event.