

MCPSS

**SPECIAL
OLYMPICS**

**INTRODUCTORY
PACKET**

Hello, Parents:

My name is Sheryl Thomas, and I am an Adaptive Physical Education (APE) Teacher and Special Olympic Coach and Coordinator for the Mobile County School System. Although much of my work week involves APE at various schools, it is very exciting to be in a position to increase involvement and participation in Special Olympics for our athletes, coaches, and volunteers. I love what I do, and I consider myself truly blessed to be able to work with such extraordinary individuals.

The chief purpose of this letter is to familiarize you with a few important procedures for participation in Special Olympic sports, as well as to give you an idea of some of the plans that are in the works for this school year.

- 1. It is a Special Olympic requirement that all athletes be at least 8 years of age, have a signed permission (release) form, and complete a medical form (physical) from a doctor for participation. These forms (3 page carbons) are provided by Special Olympics, and only those specific forms will be accepted—*no copies.***
- 2. The physical form is in two parts. The top section is a medical history that must be completed by the parent AND SIGNED, and the lower section must be filled out and signed by the MEDICAL DOCTOR performing the physical. If your child has visited his/her doctor within the last year, the office will frequently fill out the bottom portion of the form without having to see the child again. This is the best method for handling the physical form, since your child's doctor is most familiar with his/her health. The physical is valid for a period of 3 years unless conditions change in the health of the athlete.**
- 3. In addition to our large Track and Field Meet in Mar/Apr, we are training coaches and various athletes and schools in such sports as Bocce, Basketball, Golf, Bowling, Equestrian, and Rhythmic Gymnastics. Swimming is also a sport that some of our athletes compete in through outside sources, since our school system does not have the facilities. The MATP (Motor Activity Training Program) is also offered to students that need more sensory/motor development. From time to time, your child may be bringing home field trip permission forms for Special Olympic activities or competitions.**

Naturally, not every athlete will participate in all of the sports mentioned. However, by expanding the number of sports and increasing training for everyone involved, it is my determined goal to broaden the knowledge, skills, and enjoyment of all our participants. Please feel free to join in the fun!

*Sheryl Thomas 221-3351
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SPECIAL OLYMPICS

General Information

What is Special Olympics?

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by promoting understanding, acceptance and inclusion between people with and without intellectual disabilities. Through year-round sports training and athletic competition and other related programming for more than 2.25 million children and adults with intellectual disabilities in more than 160 countries, Special Olympics has created a model community that celebrates people's diverse gifts. Founded in 1968 by **Eunice Kennedy Shriver**, Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship.

How many people does Special Olympics serve?

Special Olympics serves more than 2.25 million persons with intellectual disabilities in more than **200 Programs** in more than 160 countries.

What is the Special Olympics Athlete Oath?

"Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt."

What is Special Olympics' mission?

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.

What impact does Special Olympics have on athletes?

Children and adults with intellectual disabilities who participate in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills, greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image. They grow mentally, socially and spiritually and, through their activities, exhibit boundless courage and enthusiasm, enjoy the rewards of friendship and ultimately discover not only new abilities and talents but "their voices" as well.

Who is eligible to participate in Special Olympics?

To be eligible to participate in Special Olympics, you must be at least 8 years old and identified by an agency or professional as having one of the following conditions: intellectual disabilities, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that require or have required specially designed instruction.

Can individuals with profound disabilities participate in Special Olympics?

Yes, through Special Olympics Motor Activities Training Program (MATP), developed by physical educators, physical therapists and recreation therapists. MATP emphasizes training and participation rather than competition.

For More Information Contact, Dara Chinnis, Area Director for Special Olympics of Mobile County, 510-7300, d.chinnis@mcspecialolympics.org, or Sheryl Thomas, MCPSS Special Olympic Coordinator, 221-3351, sdthomas@mcpss.com

Special Olympics of Mobile County

Dara Chinnis, Area Chairman

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SPECIAL OLYMPICS INTEREST FORM

Date: _____

School Attending: _____ Phone #: _____

LEA: _____ Phone #: _____

Case Manager's Name: _____ Phone #: _____

Student Name: _____ DOB: ____/____/____ Grade: _____

Parents Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: (____) _____ Cell: (____) _____ Email: _____

Has student participated in Special Olympics previously? YES___ NO___

What event(s)? _____

_____ I AM INTERESTED IN MY CHILD PARTICIPATING IN SPECIAL OLYMPICS IF
THEY MEET SCHOOL & SPECIAL OLYMPICS GUIDELINES.

_____ I AM NOT INTERESTED IN MY CHILD PARTICIPATING

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

**Please fill form out and return to LEA or Case Manager or fax directly to:
Sheryl Thomas at Theodore High School at 251-221-3355**