

"We hope that the Young Athletes activities become embedded in family life. The activities not only facilitate growth in a child, but also offer parents and other children tools to grow, to play together, and to become stronger in many ways."

Timothy P. Shriver, Ph.D.
Special Olympics, Inc.
Chairman of the Board



Special Olympics
Oklahoma

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young athletes

"Stars of the Future"

Sponsored by



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SPECIALOLYMPICS**OKLAHOMA**

Created by the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation
Authorized and Accredited by Special Olympics, Inc., for the
Benefit of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities.



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Oklahoma
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ABOUT YOUNG ATHLETES

Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" is an innovative sports play program for children with intellectual disabilities, designed to introduce them to the world of sports prior to Special Olympics eligibility at age eight. Since its inception in 1968, Special Olympics has established itself as a preeminent global organization offering sports training and competition opportunities to people with intellectual disabilities ages eight and above. Over the years, families of children too young to compete looked for avenues to join the movement. Special Olympics can now welcome these future athletes and families through Young Athletes "Stars of the Future"--a developmentally appropriate play program for children, with intellectual disabilities, ages **three** through **seven**.

Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" introduces children with intellectual disabilities and their families to the world of Special Olympics by:

- Engaging children with intellectual disabilities through developmentally appropriate play activities designed to foster physical, cognitive, and social development;
- Welcoming family members of children with intellectual disabilities to the Special Olympics network of support;
- Raising awareness about the abilities of children with intellectual disabilities through inclusive peer participation, demonstrations and other events.

The Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" program gives children ages **three** through **seven** the opportunity to experience the atmosphere of Special Olympics events.

"STARS" MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" program is to identify children with intellectual disabilities, ages **three** through **seven** and to get them and their families involved early with Special Olympics. Early involvement will help the area and state program grow at a consistent pace over the years and ensure that the mission of Special Olympics Oklahoma is achieved at all levels.



WINTER & SUMMER GAMES

At **WINTER GAMES** in January, these young "Stars" go through play stations, receiving training in basketball, volleyball and bowling events. At the end of the day, the "Stars" receive an award for their participation.

At **SUMMER GAMES** in May, these young "Stars" go through several play stations participating in activities designed to improve athletic skills. At the end of the day, the "Stars" take to the *Big Track* to show off what they have learned and to say, "Watch for us in the future!"

At **AREA EVENTS** leading up to Winter or Summer Games, these young "Stars" have an opportunity to participate in events offered throughout Oklahoma.



Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" is a versatile program that can work in various learning situations. The program is designed to be simple enough for families to play with their young athletes at home in a fun atmosphere.

Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" helps the community to gain an understanding of children with special needs.

- Teacher

The "Stars" program is also appropriate for preschools, schools and playgroups to use with small groups of young children with and without intellectual disabilities. The flexibility of Young Athletes "Stars of the Future" ensures the opportunity to welcome families and their young children into the Special Olympics Oklahoma family.

I have changed my expectations about my child.

- Parent

To learn more about Young Athletes "Stars of the Future," call 918-481-1234 or visit www.sook.org.

