



## OUR MISSION

Special Olympics BC is dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities through sport.

## OUR VISION

Sport will open hearts and minds towards people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and create inclusive communities all across British Columbia.

## OUR VALUES

- **Inclusion:** We foster inclusive communities.
- **Diversity:** We honour what is unique in each individual.
- **Empowerment:** We create opportunities to pursue full potential.
- **Respect:** We operate in an environment of cooperation, collaboration and dignity.
- **Excellence:** We elevate standards and performance.

## OUR NUMBERS & PROGRAMS

- 3,400+ athletes and 2,200+ volunteers throughout B.C.
- 18 summer and winter [sports programs](#)
- [Youth programs](#) for children and youth with intellectual disabilities ages 2 to 18
- [Inclusive Health](#) programs and opportunities
- [Athlete Leadership](#) programming
- Special Olympics BC programs operate year-round in [55 communities](#) throughout our province, empowering athletes from more than 152 communities

## WHAT WE DO

- Special Olympics BC is dedicated to enriching the lives of [individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities](#) and building inclusion through the power and joy of sport.
- In 55 communities around the province, we provide [high-quality year-round sport, youth, and health programs](#) and empowering competitions to more than 3,400 athletes with intellectual disabilities of [all ages and a wide range of ability levels](#).



- Athletes access Special Olympics BC's life-changing programs and competitions at low or no cost thanks to the dedicated efforts of our [2,200 coaching and organizing volunteers](#), and the generous support of our [sponsors](#) and [donors](#).
- Special Olympics BC creates social change. Our programs:
  - instill confidence, self-esteem, and other life skills in athletes,
  - improve health through lifelong physical fitness and access to education, and
  - build a more inclusive society and stronger communities by opening hearts and minds to the abilities of athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## WHO WE ARE

- Special Olympics is a charitable organization that relies on public, corporate, and government support to deliver athletic programs in B.C. communities at low or no cost for athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Special Olympics BC's programs are for athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities of all ages and all levels of experience.
  - We have programs for children, youth, and adults. The youngest Special Olympics BC athletes are two years old and the eldest is 87!
  - We provide an introduction to sport and physical activity through year-round sport and training programs.
  - We also offer opportunities to compete in local, regional, national, and international events.
- Special Olympics programs are delivered by dedicated volunteer coaches and program leaders. No experience is required to be a Special Olympics volunteer – training and support are provided to ensure high-quality and safe program operations. Volunteers bring a desire to empower athletes with intellectual and developmental disabilities, build inclusion, and change lives, including your own.

## WHY WE MATTER

- Special Olympics knows that people with intellectual disabilities succeed when given the opportunity – we are leveling the playing field.
- Special Olympics uses the transformative power and joy of sport to reveal the full potential of athletes with intellectual disabilities.

[Research shows](#) extensive personal and social benefits from Special Olympics programs.



- For every \$1 invested in Special Olympics community sport programs in Canada, \$8.76 in social benefit is created through improved athlete physical and mental health, life skills, and community impact.
- Special Olympics athletes and programs across Canada create a \$100-150M annual benefit to society, through reduced health-care costs and increased income contribute to local economies and healthier communities.
- Special Olympics athletes and programs across Canada contribute more than \$100M to local economies in incremental income. Athletes' increased employment and participation create a positive ripple effect, boosting local economies and supporting sustainable growth.

Compared with the average individual with an intellectual disability who is not engaged in Special Olympics, athletes in Canada experience significant [health and lifestyle benefits](#):

- Improved physical and mental health: Athletes experience a 15 per cent lower risk of diabetes and a 49 per cent lower risk of depression.
- Increased employment opportunities: Athletes have a 44 per cent employment rate, compared to only 28 per cent for Canadians with intellectual disabilities who do not participate in Special Olympics.
- Longer, healthier lives: Athletes engaging in regular aerobic activity gain an average of 2.5 years in life expectancy.

## OUR LANGUAGE

TERMS TO AVOID	TERMS TO USE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Olympians</li> <li>• Kids</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes</li> <li>• Participants</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The” Special Olympics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Olympics (never “the”)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Olympic athlete</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Olympics <u>s</u> athlete</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with intellectual disabilities / an individual with an intellectual disability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectually disabled</li> </ul>	



## **About intellectual and developmental disabilities**

[Find background and resources](#)

[Find Special Olympics BC athlete eligibility information](#)

## **Language and actions of inclusion matter**

We all have to remember: The language we choose directly impacts how people feel about themselves and their place in the world, and shapes the relationships we build.

The "R-word" is a term that was historically used to describe individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Over time, it has become a hurtful slur used to insult others. In response, people with disabilities and their advocates have worked tirelessly to eliminate the use of the R-word. Special Olympics campaigns like [Spread the Word](#) strive to raise awareness about its impact and emphasize the need for respectful and inclusive language.

While some may feel they use the R-word casually or without malice, its impact can be deeply harmful, perpetuating stigma and reinforcing negative stereotypes. Everyone deserves to feel respected and valued. This is about more than avoiding a single word; it's about creating a culture of understanding and empathy.

Join Special Olympics BC in [changing the world](#) with language and actions of inclusion, to end discrimination against individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



## **MEDIA INTERVIEWS**

When speaking with media as a representative of Special Olympics:

- Please do:
  - Relax and be yourself!
  - Share your stories and feelings about your sport and Special Olympics
  - Be clear and positive
  - Think about what you want to say before you start
  - Thank the reporter for their interest
  - Remember you're a representative of Special Olympics BC
- Please don't:
  - Speculate
  - Use media interviews to raise concerns
  - Comment on event or program issues
  - Use slang or profanity

## **Sample media interview questions**

- How long have you been a Special Olympics athlete? How did you get involved?
- What Special Olympics sports do you participate in? Do you have a favourite?
- What do you like most about Special Olympics? What do you like most about your sports?
- What is your proudest achievement with Special Olympics?
- How do you train in Special Olympics?
- What have your coaches taught you?
- What are your goals?



## **SOCIAL MEDIA**

When posting about Special Olympics:

- Please do:
  - Share your athletic achievements
  - Post about your hard work in training
  - Show team spirit
  - Express sportsmanship e.g. cheering for teammates and opponents
  - Use the correct names of things when possible – e.g. Special Olympics BC
- Please don't:
  - Post without thinking
  - Post incorrect information
  - Complain – think about real-life solutions instead!
- General social media etiquette:
  - Be positive
  - Be kind to yourself and others
  - Have fun!
  - Remember posts can be seen by everyone
- What makes great content:
  - Powerful photos and videos – close-up faces smiling, athletic effort, achievements, moments of friendship
  - Sharing articles and content from Special Olympics websites
  - Telling your own stories (if you are comfortable)
  - Tag and/or share from Special Olympics accounts e.g. Special Olympics BC: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube @specialolympicsbc; Twitter @sobcsociety

**Questions, feedback, ideas?** Please contact Megan Pollock, SOBC Marketing & Communications Director | 604-737-3077 | [megan@specialolympics.bc.ca](mailto:megan@specialolympics.bc.ca)