



MEDIA GUIDE



Special Olympics Canada
Summer Games

Medicine Hat 2026

Jeux d'été d'Olympiques
spéciaux Canada





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An overview of Medicine Hat 2026

We're proud to host athletes, coaches, families, and fans from across the country for a celebration of sport, inclusion, and community spirit. Set against the natural beauty and warm hospitality of Medicine Hat, these Games will showcase the incredible talents and inspiring stories of athletes with an intellectual or developmental disability from August 11-15, 2026. Together, we'll create unforgettable moments of competition, connection, and pride as Canada comes together for this extraordinary event.

Our mission

To shape an impactful Games that honour the voices of Special Olympics athletes, while celebrating community collaboration, and expanding awareness that inclusion matters.

Our vision

To create an inclusive and memorable experience for all participants, while igniting our community spirit, and leaving a lifelong legacy for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities.





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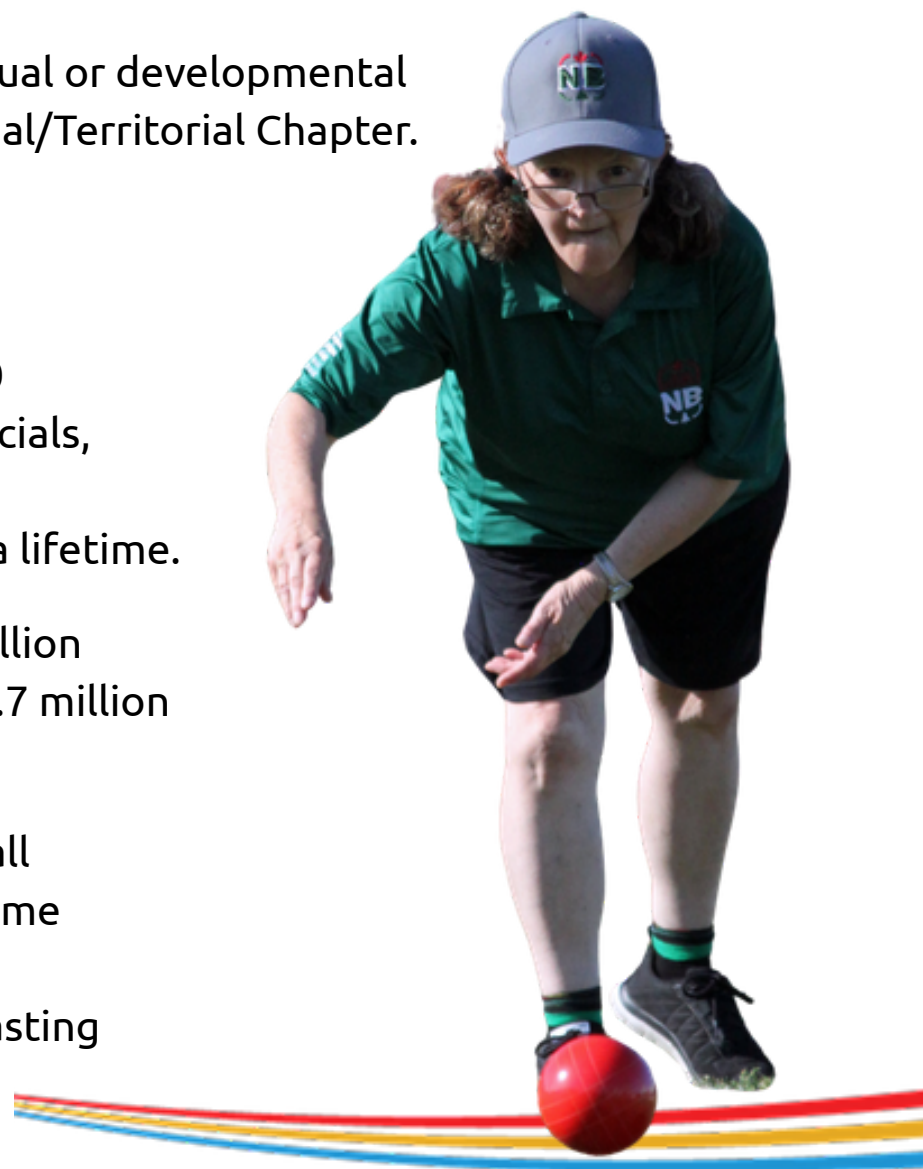


Some facts about Medicine Hat 2026

- The Games are a culmination of years of training for Special Olympics athletes from across Canada.
- Athletes qualify from their Provincial/Territorial Games to compete at the National Games and for many athletes this is the pinnacle of their competitive experience.
- Medicine Hat 2026 is a qualifying event for the Special Olympics Team Canada 2027 (Santiago, Chile)
- The brand communicates personality traits identified by Special Olympics Canada's Canadian Athlete Leadership Council (CALC) – Medicine Hat's sunshine (the sunniest place in Canada), the endless prairie skies that reflect limitless opportunity and growth, and the South Saskatchewan River that represents connection and unity, along with the tagline:

WE SHINE TOGETHER

- CALC is comprised of athlete leaders with an intellectual or developmental disability and their mentors who represent their Provincial/Territorial Chapter.
- Medicine Hat is projecting an injection of more than \$12 million into the local economy.
- The Games are expected to welcome more than 3,500 visitors including more than 1,700 athletes, coaches, officials, and mission staff, along with their families and friends. Together, we can give all participants the experience of a lifetime.
- The budget for the games is \$3.8 million, with \$2.1 million coming from sponsors and fundraising, and the other \$1.7 million from government and other sources
- To help ensure an exceptional Games experience for all participants, we're looking for more than 1,500 Games-time volunteers to help create a welcoming environment that will inspire everyone who visits Medicine Hat to create lasting memories — and a legacy of inclusive change for individuals with intellectual disabilities.





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Supporting information

Participants who qualified through their Provincial and Territorial Games, will compete in 10 sports at six venues throughout Medicine Hat:

- Athletics - Rotary Track (at Crescent Heights High School)
- Basketball - Medicine Hat High School
- Bocce - Big Marble Go Centre
- Golf - Medicine Hat Golf and Country Club
- Powerlifting - Medicine Hat College
- Rhythmic gymnastics - Big Marble Go Centre
- Soccer - Big Marble Go Centre
- Softball - Big Marble Go Centre
- Swimming - Big Marble Go Centre
- Tenpin Bowling - Panorama Lanes

In addition to the sporting competitions, various programs and events will take place prior and during the Games:

- Opening Ceremony & Closing Ceremony - Co-op Place
- Family & Friends Reception - Medalta
- Athlete Ambassadors Program
- Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR)
- Healthy Athletes - Medicine Hat College
- High Five Fest - Medicine Hat College

Bringing Canadians together

In Canada, more than 40,000 children, youth and adults with an intellectual or developmental disability participated in programs run with the support of local sport clubs across 12 Provincial and Territorial Chapters. They are supported by an extraordinary network of more than 17,500 volunteers – Canadians who are committed to help accomplish something remarkable





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Overall schedule (as of July 28, 2026)

Sport or Event <i>Sport ou événement</i>		August 2026 août								Venue <i>Site</i>
		Sunday <i>dimanche</i> 9	Monday <i>lundi</i> 10	Tuesday <i>mardi</i> 11	Wednesday <i>mercredi</i> 12	Thursday <i>jeudi</i> 13	Friday <i>vendredi</i> 14	Saturday <i>samedi</i> 15	Sunday <i>dimanche</i> 16	
	Athletes Arrive <i>Arrivée des athlètes</i>	●								
	Head Coaches Meeting <i>Assemblée des entraîneurs.euses principaux/pales</i>		7:00							Medicine Hat College (299 College Drive SE)
	Healthy Athletes Program <i>Programme athlètes en santé</i>		08:00-12:00 16:00-21:00	08:00-13:00	16:00-21:00	08:00-12:00 16:00-21:00	08:00-12:00 16:00-21:00	08:00-13:00		Medicine Hat College (299 College Drive SE)
	Opening Ceremony <i>Cérémonie d'ouverture</i>			18:00						Co-op Place (2802 Box Springs Way NW)
	VIP Reception <i>Réception VIP</i>			16:00						Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre (401 1 Street SE)
	Family and Friends Reception <i>Réception pour la famille et les amis</i>				18:00					Medalta in the Historic Clay District (713 Medalta Ave SE)
	Athletics <i>L'athlétisme</i>		(T) 10:00-18:00	(T) 09:00-12:00	08:30-14:45 ☼ 15:30	08:30-14:25 ☼ 15:30	08:30-15:00 ☼ 15:30	(w)		Medicine Hat Rotary Track (1201 Division Ave N)
	Basketball <i>Le basketball</i>		(T) 10:00-17:00	(D) 08:00-12:00	08:00-17:30	08:00-17:30	08:00-16:30 ☼ 12:00	8:00-12:30 ☼ 12:00		Medicine Hat High School (200 7th Street SE)
	Bocce <i>Boccia</i>		(T) 10:00-17:30	(D) 09:00-12:00	08:00-18:30	08:00-18:30	08:00-16:00 ☼ 11:30	08:00-11:00 ☼ 11:30		Big Marble Go Centre (2000 Division Ave N)
	Tenpin Bowling <i>Les dix-quilles</i>		(T)/(D) 10:00-18:00	(D) 08:00-13:00	08:30-18:30 ☼	08:30-18:30 ☼	08:30-18:30	☼		Panorama Lanes (820 6A Avenue SE)
	Golf <i>Le golf</i>		(T) 13:30-14:30	(T) 07:30-09:40	08:00-11:20	07:30-11:20	07:30-11:20	(w) ☼ 09:00		Medicine Hat Golf & Country Club (947 Pigeon Street NE)
	Powerlifting <i>La dynamophilie</i>			(T) 09:00-12:45	(T) 09:00-15:00	08:30-19:30 ☼ 19:30				Medicine Hat College (299 College Drive SE)
	Rhythmic Gymnastics <i>Gymnastique rythmique</i>			(T) 08:30-13:00	(D) 09:00-18:00	09:00-16:05 ☼ 16:35	09:00-15:35 ☼ 16:05			Big Marble Go Centre (2000 Division Ave N)
	Soccer <i>Le soccer</i>		(T) 10:00-16:00	(T)/(D) 08:30-11:30	08:30-16:30	08:30-16:30	08:30-14:00 ☼ 12:15	08:00-11:45 ☼ 12:15		Big Marble Go Centre (2000 Division Ave N)
	Softball <i>Le softball balle lente</i>		(T)/(D) 10:00-18:30	08:30-12:30	08:30-17:00	08:30-17:00	08:30-12:30 ☼ 13:00	(w)		Big Marble Go Centre (2000 Division Ave N)
	Swimming <i>La natation</i>		(T) 09:00-15:00	(T) 09:00-12:00	07:30-16:00 ☼ 17:00	07:30-16:00 ☼ 17:00	07:30-16:00 ☼ 17:00			Big Marble Go Centre (2000 Division Ave N)
	High Five Fest <i>Festival tops là</i>							09:00-12:00		Medicine Hat College (299 College Drive SE)
	Closing Ceremony <i>Cérémonie de clôture</i>							18:00		Co-op Place (2802 Box Springs Way NW)
	Athletes' Dance <i>Danse des athlètes</i>							18:00		Co-op Place (2802 Box Springs Way NW)
	Athletes Depart <i>Départ des athlètes</i>								●	

T = Training | Formation

D = Divisioning | Formation des divisions

W = Weather Day | Journée météo

☼ = Medal Presentation | Les remises de médailles

July 28, 2026 | 28 juillet 2026



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Photography

Official photos will be available for media to download during the Games:

specialolympics.ca.canto.com/v/SOCSummerGames2026

Live streaming

Streams for most sports are being produced by SportsCanada.TV and will be accessible via the main Games website, www.socmedhat2026.ca

Results

Results will be available on the Games' website, www.socmedhat2026.ca

Media work rooms

There will be a media work area available for accredited media at Big Marble Go Centre staffed with volunteers from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. daily.

Internet connectivity

Secure Wifi will be available at all sports venues
- on-site media will be given access instructions.

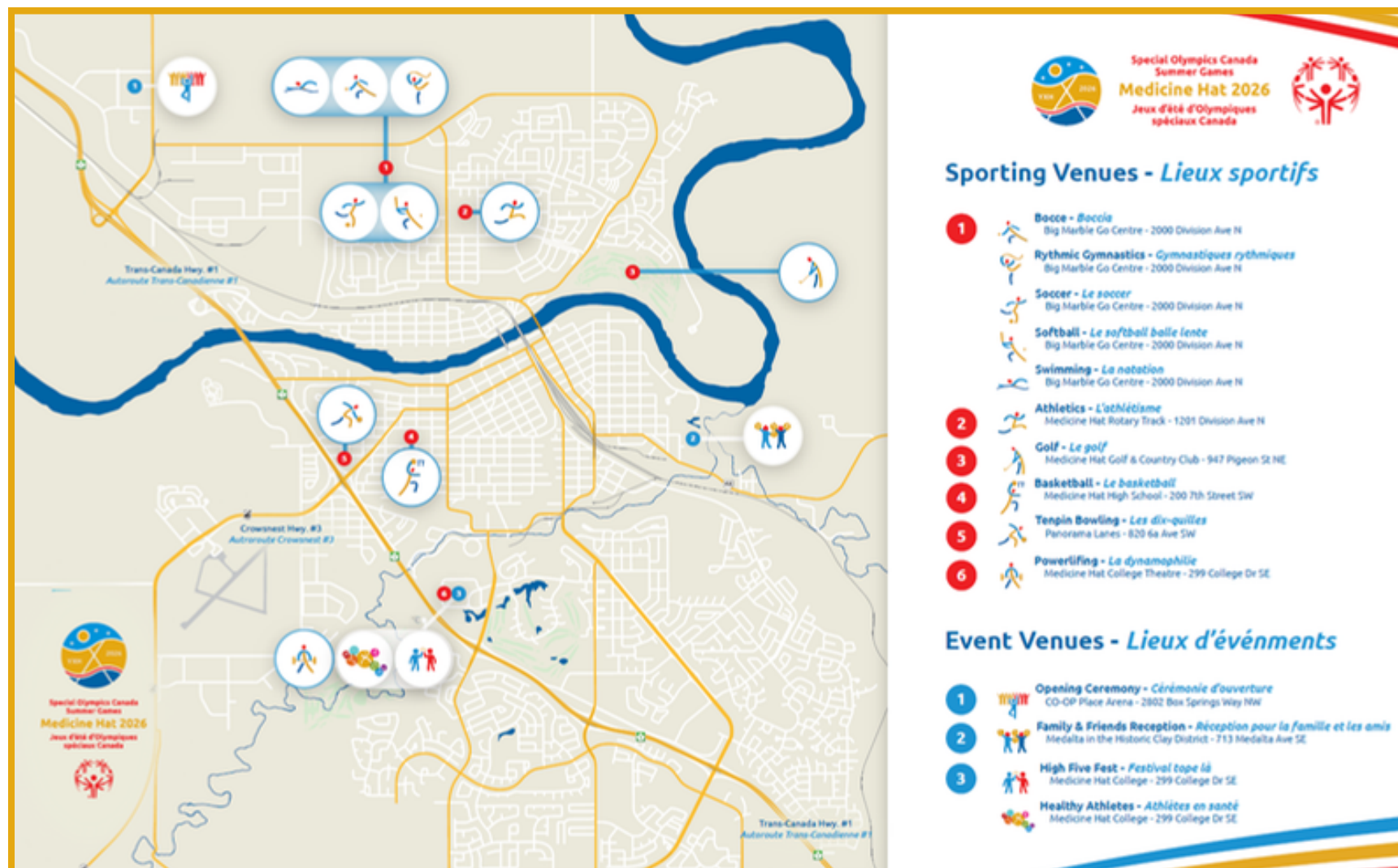




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Venue map



Connect

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Creating a **lasting legacy**

Through the Legacy Fund, 100% of net proceeds from Games goes back to community programs and initiatives, with 70% staying within the local community and 30% supporting Special Olympics national programs.

Using sport as a catalyst for systemic change, the Games aim to address barriers to achievement by people with intellectual or developmental disabilities. The Legacy Program will continue to uplift, educate, and inspire us all through the following initiatives:

- 1. Awareness, education & resources**
- 2. Special Olympics Alberta volunteer recruitment**
- 3. Donation of equipment**
- 4. Sustainable, disability-inclusive employment**



Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Mission

Special Olympics Canada is dedicated to enriching the lives of Canadians with an intellectual or developmental disability through sport.

\$1 = \$8.76

For every \$1 invested in Special Olympics community sport programs in Canada, \$8.76 of social benefit is created through improved physical and mental health and increased employment.

Measuring Impact Through SROI

SROI = A measure of the social, environmental, and economic value of an organization’s activities.

How is it calculated?¹

- Special Olympics Canada engaged with **Bain & Company** to research dollar-based substitutes to quantify Special Olympics Canada’s improved athlete outcomes.
- Both short and long-term estimated **financial and social outcomes** were included, divided by the cost of running the program.

(1) SROI calculations require informed assumptions and are thus a mix of art and science and are not intended to be used to compare the impact of different organizations.

Individuals with an intellectual or developmental disability...



Have a **3/4** chance being **obese or overweight**



Have a **50% higher risk of depression** vs the general population



Have **shorter lifespans** than the general population by **20 years**



Have a **28%** rate of **employment**

Involvement in Special Olympics leads to...



A **15%** reduction in **risk of diabetes**



A **49%** reduction in **risk of depression**

+ 2.5 years

increased lifespan for athletes engaging in aerobic activity **3+ times per week**



A **44%** rate of **employment**

Annual benefit to society today is...

\$100-150M

saved in healthcare spend on **Special Olympics athletes**

>\$100M

contributed to local economies in **incremental income**

Did you know?

Through the transformative power of sport, Special Olympics Canada gives individuals with intellectual disabilities the strength, determination and confidence to take on any challenge in sport and in life.

- Special Olympics has extensive programming in the areas of health, education and community building in addition to its well-established sports programs
- Special Olympics programs are available to athletes aged 2 and above. Individuals interested in participating as athletes must register with the applicable Chapter and agree to abide by the sport rules, policies, codes of conduct, philosophies and practices of Special Olympics Canada and its applicable Chapter.
- Special Olympics is specifically designed for individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities, and while some Special Olympics athletes may have co-existing disabilities, it is not to be confused with the Paralympics, which is specifically designed for individuals with physical disabilities.
- Special Olympics athletes are divided to compete in categories based on gender, age, and ability level by a process called “divisioning.”
- All Special Olympics activities reflect the values, standards, traditions, ceremonies, and events embodied in the modern Olympic movement. These Olympic-type activities have been broadened and enriched to celebrate the moral and spiritual qualities of persons with intellectual disabilities so as to enhance their dignity and self esteem.
- Individuals who compete in Special Olympics develop improved physical fitness and motor skills and greater self-confidence. They exhibit courage and enthusiasm and build lasting friendships. These life skills enhance their ability to live normal productive lives. More than ever, Special Olympics athletes hold jobs, own homes, go to school and successfully confront life’s challenges.
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Special Olympics operates worldwide in over 200 countries and jurisdictions in accordance with the following principles:

- That the goal of Special Olympics is to help bring all persons with intellectual or developmental disabilities into the larger society under conditions whereby they are accepted, respected and given the chance to become productive citizens.
- That comprehensive, year-round sports training is available to every Special Olympics athlete, conducted by well-qualified coaches in accordance with standardized Sports Rules formulated and adopted by Special Olympics. Each athlete who participates in Special Olympics will be well-trained in their sport.
- That Special Olympics provides full participation for every athlete regardless of economic circumstance and conducts training and competition under the most favourable conditions possible, including facilities, administration, training, coaching, officiating and events.
- That, to the greatest extent possible, Special Olympics activities will be run by and involve local volunteers, from school and college-age individuals to senior citizens, in order to foster greater understanding of intellectual disabilities.
- That, although Special Olympics is primarily a program of sports training and competition, efforts are made to offer athletes a full range of artistic, social and cultural experiences through activities such as dances, art exhibits, concerts, visits to historic sites, clinics, theatrical performances and similar events.
- That the “Spirit of Special Olympics” skill, courage, sharing and joy incorporates universal values that transcend all boundaries of geography, nationality, political philosophy, gender, age, race or religion.



Disability language guidelines

Words can open doors to cultivate the understanding and respect that enable people with disabilities to lead fuller, more independent lives. Words can also create barriers or stereotypes that are not only demeaning to people with disabilities, but also rob them of their individuality.

The following language guidelines have been developed by experts for use by anyone writing or speaking about people with intellectual disabilities to ensure that all people are portrayed with individuality and dignity.

Special Olympics prefers to focus on people and their gifts and accomplishments, and to dispel negative attitudes and stereotypes. As language has evolved, Special Olympics has updated its official terminology to use standard terminology that is more acceptable to our athletes. We use “people-first language” - example: refer to people with intellectual disabilities, rather than “intellectually disabled people”. See more tips below.

Appropriate terminology

- Refer to participants in Special Olympics as “Special Olympics athletes” rather than “Special Olympians” or “Special Olympic athletes.”
- Refer to individuals, persons or people with intellectual disabilities, rather than “intellectually disabled people” or “the intellectually disabled.”
- A person has intellectual disabilities, rather than is “suffering from,” is “afflicted with” or is “a victim of” mental retardation/intellectual disabilities.
- Distinguish between adults and children with intellectual disabilities. Use adults or children, or older or younger athletes.
- A person “uses” a wheelchair, rather than is “confined” or “restricted to” a wheelchair.
- “Down syndrome” has replaced “Down’s Syndrome” and “mongoloid.”
- Refer to participants in Special Olympics as athletes. In no case should the word athletes appear in quotation marks.
- In formal documents, refer to persons with a disability in the same style as persons without a disability: full name on first reference and last name on subsequent references. Do not refer to an individual with intellectual disabilities as “Bill” rather than the journalistically correct “Bill Smith” or “Smith.”
- A person has a physical disability rather than crippled.
- Use the words “Special Olympics” when referring to the worldwide Special Olympics movement.

Terminology to avoid

- Do not use the label “kids” when referring to Special Olympics athletes. Adult athletes are an integral part of the movement.
- Do not use the word “the” in front of Special Olympics unless describing a specific Special Olympics event or official.
- Do not use the adjective “unfortunate” when talking about persons with an intellectual disability. Disabling conditions do not have to be life-defining in a negative way.
- Do not sensationalize the accomplishments of persons with disabilities. While these accomplishments should be recognized and applauded; people in the disability rights movement have tried to make the public aware of the negative impact of referring to the achievements of people with physical or intellectual disabilities with excessive hyperbole.
- Use the word “special” with extreme care when talking about persons with intellectual disabilities. The term, if used excessively in references to Special Olympics athletes and activities, can become a cliché.

Special Olympics International advocates for the removal of R-Word in the public domain in order to promote acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Special Olympics Canada Summer Games Medicine Hat 2026 acknowledges that we live and work on treaty territory. We pay respect to all Indigenous Peoples and honours their past, present and future. We recognize and respect their cultural heritages and relationships to the land.

Thank you to some of our Special Olympics Canada Summer Games Medicine Hat 2026 partners who are helping to ensure an exceptional athlete experience while leaving a lasting imprint through our Legacy Fund.



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Champion Level | Niveau champion



Coach Level | Niveau d'entraîneur



Referee Level | Niveau d'arbitre



Mentor Level | Niveau de mentor

