



# Understanding Parental Intentions to Support Child Involvement in Special Olympics Programs Following the use of the SOC Stay Health at Home Activity Kit

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## PROJECT SUMMARY

The Special Olympics **Home Activity Kit** was designed to help children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) stay active, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when in-person programs were unavailable. The kit included items like bean bags, balls, bands, and pilons, along with activity sheets and video resources to guide caregivers in supporting their child's physical activity at home.

**This project aimed to understand:** 1) Why caregivers ordered the Activity Kit. 2) How families used and interacted with the items. 3) Whether caregivers were interested in future SOC programs for their child.

Caregivers of children who received an Activity Kit participated in **surveys and follow-up interviews** to share their experiences.

**Findings:** Most caregivers said physical activity is important for their child's health, but over 40% didn't know how much exercise is recommended. More than half had never participated in SOC programs before COVID-19, though many recognized benefits like better physical and mental health, social skills, and self-confidence. Over 60% planned to enroll their child in SOC programs. Families continued using the Home Activity Kit beyond the pandemic for play, obstacle courses, physiotherapy, and virtual programs. However, over 50% of caregivers said they lacked information about SOC programs in their communities, showing a need for better outreach.

**Conclusion:** The **Home Activity Kit** provided families with meaningful ways to engage their children in physical activity while programs were shut down. Many caregivers appreciated the kit and continued using it beyond the pandemic, reinforcing its long-term value. Encouraging participation in SOC programs is essential, but better **communication and outreach** are needed so more families can access these opportunities.

## KEY MESSAGES

**Improve Outreach:** Strengthening communication with caregivers can increase awareness and engagement in SOC programs.

**Provide Clear Guidelines:** Educating caregivers on **recommended physical activity levels** for children with IDD will support informed decision-making.

**Encourage Continued Engagement:** Offering additional resources and adapting kits for **physiotherapy, structured play, and future virtual programming** can enhance long-term benefits.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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