

***Special  
Olympics***  
*Prince Edward Island*



***Coach Handbook***

Community Partner



Founding Partner



PROTECTING EACH OTHER  
SINCE 1885

Government Partner





# Welcome

As a critical member of Special Olympics PEI, the role of Coach and Program Volunteer is vital in the overall development and advancement of the athletes in our organization. You will develop and implement sport skills training and competitive opportunities for your athletes. With this rewarding opportunity will come responsibilities and challenges. This book is designed to offer you guidance and direction during the experience. The contents should help provide a clear understanding of the principles and expectations of the organization and give you insight into your role and the athletes' role.

Your time and dedication are the greatest gifts that you can give, and it is greatly appreciated!

## Mission Statement of Special Olympics PEI

*Special Olympics PEI is dedicated to enriching the lives of Islanders with an intellectual disability through sport.*

## The Oaths of Special Olympics

### **ATHLETE OATH**

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

### **COACH OATH**

In the name of all coaches, we shall follow written and verbal instructions of Special Olympics officials at all times, have our athletes at the appropriate events and activities at the proper time and abide by the rules and policies, in the spirit of sportsmanship.

### **OFFICIAL OATH**

In the name of all judges and officials, I promise that we shall officiate in these Special Olympics Games with complete with impartiality, respecting and abiding by the rules which govern them, in the spirit of sportsmanship.

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# Athlete Eligibility

The mandate of Special Olympics is to provide sports programs for people with intellectual disabilities. See Pan-Canadian Eligibility for Participation Policy for more details.

An individual is considered to have an intellectual disability based on the following three criteria\*:

- i. Intellectual functioning level (IQ) is generally below 70-75;
- ii. Significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas;
- iii. The condition generally manifests itself before the age of 18.

(\* based on the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) definition)

Adaptive skills are assessed in the person's every day environment across all aspects of their life. A person with limits in intellectual functioning who does not have limits in adaptive skill areas may not be diagnosed as having an intellectual disability.

## Frequently Asked Questions

*Please direct any questions you are uncomfortable or uncertain answering to the SOPEI Office  
(902) 368-8919 / [sopei@sopei.com](mailto:sopei@sopei.com)*

### **Do coaches/staff require proof that the person has an intellectual disability?**

Special Olympics in Canada has an inclusive approach and does not ask for medical documentation to be eligible for participation in programs. If the person has an intellectual disability, then they are eligible to participate in Special Olympics

### **If there are athletes currently in a program who may have an IQ above 70, what should a coach/staff do?**

Those athletes who are enrolled in Special Olympics programs in Canada who have an IQ above 70 are eligible to continue participating in Special Olympics weekly programming

### **What diagnoses are typically associated with an intellectual disability?**

Down Syndrome and Fragile X Syndrome are the most common intellectual disabilities of athletes in Special Olympics. Only some individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders or Fetal Alcohol Syndrome will also have an intellectual disability. Commonly, an athlete may have a dual diagnosis. For example, an athlete may have an Intellectual Disability along with learning, physical, or other diagnosed disabilities.

Typically learning disabilities, Attention Deficit Disorder (with or without hyperactivity), a mental illness, Tourette Syndrome, and Conduct Disorder are not associated with intellectual disabilities.

### **At what age can an athlete participate in Special Olympics programs/competitions?**

At Special Olympics PEI, athletes cannot compete at Provincial and National competitions before the age of 13. However, they are permitted to attend weekly programs under the supervision of a caregiver along with the mutual consent of the Special Olympics PEI office and Program Leader under the age of 13. In addition, Special Olympics youth Active Start and Fundamentals programs are designed for athletes 2-12 years of age.



## 1 Leadership and professionalism

*This principle considers the inherent power and authority that a coach holds.*

### Ethical standards of behaviour

- ▶ Understand the authority that comes with your position and make decisions that are in the best interest of all participants
- ▶ Share your knowledge and experience openly
- ▶ Maintain the athlete-centered approach to coaching so that every participant's well being is a priority
- ▶ Be a positive role model
- ▶ Maintain confidentiality and privacy of participants' personal information



## 2 Health and safety

*This principle considers the mental, emotional, physical health and safety of all participants.*

### Ethical standards of behaviour

- ▶ Recognize and minimize vulnerable situations to ensure the safety of participants
- ▶ Prioritize a holistic approach when planning and delivering training and competition
- ▶ Advocate for, and ensure appropriate supervision of participants, including the Rule of Two
- ▶ Participate in education and training to stay current on practices to ensure the continued safety of your participants
- ▶ Understand the scope of your role and skills and call upon others with specialized skills when needed to support your participants



## 3 Respect and integrity

*This principle considers respect and integrity, which are the rights of all participants.*

### Ethical standards of behaviour

- ▶ Provide equitable opportunity and access for all
- ▶ Establish a respectful and inclusive sport environment where all participants can raise questions or concerns
- ▶ Obey the rules and participate honestly and respectfully
- ▶ Be open, transparent and accountable for your actions
- ▶ Maintain objectivity when interacting with all participants



### Rule of two

The goal of the Rule of Two is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable and justifiable. The purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present. There may be exceptions for emergency situations.



### Contact

Questions related to the NCCP Code of Ethics design may be directed to the Chief Operating Officer at the Coaching Association of Canada. Send an email to [coach@coach.ca](mailto:coach@coach.ca) or call 613-235-5000 ext. 1.

For complaints related to Registered Coaches or Chartered Professional Coaches, refer to the Coaching Association of Canada's Code of Conduct.

# Safe Sport Training



Safe Sport training is highly recommended by Special Olympics PEI because it provides education on types of harassment and abuse for everyone involved in sport: decision-makers, those with direct athlete contact (including caregivers), and those with no direct athlete contact.

Certified coaches are also eligible for Professional Development points toward the maintenance of their certification.

This course will help you:

- Understand that everyone has a role to play in keeping sport safe, how the misuse of power leads to maltreatment and the Universal Code of Conduct principles.
- Understand the various types of maltreatment, the conditions that enable them, and how to recognize signs that they may be happening.
- Know what to do if you suspect maltreatment and how you can create a culture that protects all participants

If you have taken this training in one of the streams offered by another sports organization, you will not be required to complete it again. Safe Sport Training can be found at <https://thelocker.coach.ca/> under the eLearning tab.

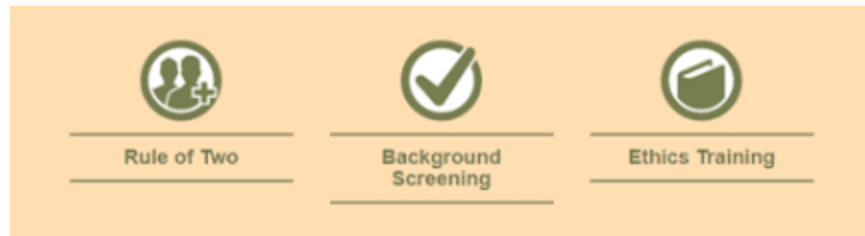
You will need an NCCP number to access, but this can be created at no cost. If you have an NCCP number and need your password, please email [mmcnally@sopei.com](mailto:mmcnally@sopei.com). This training is free.

A step by step example is below:

1. Complete the Login with your NCCP# or email and password.
2. Find the "E-Learning" section from the list of Profile Tabs.
3. Select "Safe Sport Training" from the list on the left-hand side
4. Select "Sport"
5. Select "Special Olympics" from the list of sports (it may be at the top and not listed alphabetically)
6. Select the Role(s) for which you hold in sport. Your selection will automatically trigger the appropriate version of the training. Then click continue

# Responsible Coaching Movement

Special Olympics PEI is proud to declare we have taken the Responsible Coaching Movement (RCM) pledge, which is a call to action for sport organizations, parents, and coaches to enact responsible coaching across Canada – on and off the field. Our organization is committed to the Three Steps to Responsible Coaching by practicing the Rule of Two, completing Background Checks, and ensuring coaches/volunteers complete Ethics Training. The Responsible Coaching Movement helps participants and coaches benefit fully from sport participation in a safe, healthy, and fun environment.



## Rule of Two

The goal of the **Rule of Two** is to ensure all interactions and communications are open, observable and justifiable. Its purpose is to protect participants (especially minors) and coaches in potentially vulnerable situations by ensuring more than one adult is present. There may be exceptions for emergency situations.



## GOOD RULE OF TWO IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES

- The coach is never alone and out of sight with a participant without another screened coach or screened adult (parent or volunteer) present.
- Allow training environment to be open to observation.
- Ensure a participant rides in a coach's vehicle with another adult present.
- Consider the gender of the participant(s) when selecting the screened coaches and volunteers who are present.
- Eliminate one-to-one electronic messaging. Ensure that all communications are sent to the group and/or include parents.

Learn more: [coach.ca/responsiblecoaching](http://coach.ca/responsiblecoaching)





# Recommendations for working with Special Olympics Athletes

- Use the term intellectual disability instead of any other term. People with intellectual disabilities are not sick or infectious. Also, it is not “unfortunate,” or the individual is not “suffering from” an intellectual disability. Celebrate each individual's abilities and support inclusiveness in all activities.
- Position yourself in a central location when leading. Speaking louder may not necessarily make everyone understand you better. However, using the following cues can be helpful:
  - a. Verbal cues: clear, concise, and consistent messages while slowing the pace at which you speak if needed
  - b. Visual cues: coach-demonstrated physical movements that remind athletes of the correct way to perform a skill (often paired with verbal cues)
  - c. Touch cues: taps on the athletes’ bodies to elicit movement. Be sure the athlete is comfortable being touched before using touch cues
- Approach everyone with patience, understanding, and respect while being enthusiastic and upbeat about the skills and provide positive feedback. Be prepared to explain a task multiple times and ask if you can help before assuming someone needs help.
- Consider using some adaptations to the activity lesson plans when needed.
- Many athletes need to know ahead of time what will happen. So, as you go through your procedures, describe what you will be doing now and perhaps the next one or two steps that will follow as well.
- Treat athletes as you would your peers. Do not speak down to athletes. Athletes love a good joke, tease or challenge just like anyone else. Do not call athletes ‘kids’ or use the “R” word! <http://www.r-word.org/>
- Ask athletes their thoughts and allow them to answer – don’t put words in their mouths. However, be prepared for potential bluntness; some athletes can be very honest.
- Communicate behavior expectations and do not reward continual poor behavior. This is when you need to be the authority figure – athletes will be respectful. *Also, see APPENDIX II (Page 23)*
- Ask if you can help before acting and assuming they need help.
- Expect to get many questions; many of our athletes are very curious about you and what you are doing. If the questions get too invasive, it’s okay to say, ‘I’m not comfortable with answering that.’

# Head Coach Position Description

## DESCRIPTION:

The Head Coach position in a Special Olympics program can be overwhelming to some, but we encourage you to have confidence that Special Olympics PEI is prepared to be a resource at any time you need. Our athletes need to have fun and enjoy their time at weekly youth, community, and competitive programs. Every athlete deserves a well-trained coach. The Head Coach must continually assess your coach education resume to determine what training could benefit both you and our athletes.

In the role of Head Coach, it is expected that you are:

1. Instructing athletes the proper sport skills,
2. Attending competition(s) at an appropriate level for each athlete in your program
3. Modeling and instilling socially appropriated behavior, including fair play and fun
4. Mentoring Program Volunteers and Assistant Coaches on the role of Head Coach

## QUALIFICATIONS:

- ✓ Must be at least 18 years of age
- ✓ Must Adhere to the Pan-Canadian Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
- ✓ Must Adhere to Special Olympics Prince Edward Island Constitution & By-Laws
- ✓ Must comply with the philosophy of Special Olympics Prince Edward Island as presented in the Mission statement
- ✓ Must complete and submit a Volunteer Application Form or Criminal Record Check as described in SOPEI Policy 5000-15
- ✓ Reasonable knowledge of the chosen sport

## COACH EDUCATION PATHWAYS

1. Special Olympics Online Orientation (within 3 months)
2. Emergency First Aid and CPR (within 3 months)
3. NCCP Coach Education Pathway appropriate for your involvement (within 1<sup>st</sup> year)

*Will remain as a **Program Volunteer** until step three is completed  
See APPENDIX V (Page 26)*

### Youth Head Coach

**NCCP Multisport  
Fundamental  
Movement Skills  
and  
Special Olympics  
Canada Coaching  
Young Athletes**

### Community Sport Coach

**Special Olympics Canada  
Competition Sport  
Coach Workshop  
and  
Make Ethical Decisions  
Online Evaluation**

### Competition Sport Coach

**Special Olympics Canada Competition  
Sport Coach Workshop  
and  
Make Ethical Decisions  
Online Evaluation  
And for National/International Games:  
NCCP Minimum Sport Specific Technical  
training or Coaching Hours  
See APPENDIX V (Page 26)**

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

*A) Training and Competition*

1. Plan the club activities for the season (weekly lesson plans and yearly goals)
2. Regularly communicate with Assistant Coaches, parents/guardians, and athletes
3. Facilitate practices putting safety and the well-being of the athletes first
4. Ensure that all athletes/volunteers in your program are registered members of SOPEI and have a list of emergency information
5. Attend regularly scheduled provincial coaches meetings
6. Know all safety concerns of athletes in your program (Atlanto-axial instability, epilepsy, asthma, etc.)
7. Devote adequate time to prepare athletes for events
8. Coaches are not responsible for transportation to/from practices/competitions but are permitted to do so with permission from the athlete's legal guardian
9. If an incident occurs, follow the incident reports procedure  
*See APPENDIX IV (Page 25)*

*B) Administrative*

1. Submit program and equipment budget requests annually
2. Update coach and athlete participant lists regularly throughout the season
3. Be a positive ambassador for Special Olympics
4. Ensure an Emergency Action Plan is in place
5. Communicate regularly with SOPEI staff

*C) Support, Supervision, and Program Evaluation*

1. Attend coaches meeting to review policies and procedures
2. Support, inform and encourage all volunteers to be certified and trained
3. Participate with SOPEI staff in program visits if requested
4. Participate in an exit interview upon completion of volunteer position if requested

**DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO:** SOPEI Program Director and Program Coordinator

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the above position description.  
(Print Name)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Assistant Coach and Program Volunteer Position Description

## DESCRIPTION:

The Assistant Coach or Program Volunteer in a Special Olympics program can be overwhelming to some. Still, we encourage you to have confidence that Special Olympics PEI is prepared to be a resource at any time you need. Our athletes need to have fun and enjoy their time at weekly youth, community, and competitive programs. Every athlete deserves a well-trained coach. Therefore, it is essential that the Assistant Coach or Program Volunteer role continually assess your coach education resume to determine what training could benefit both you and our athletes.

In the role of Assistant Coach or Program Volunteer, it is expected that you are:

1. Instructing athletes on the proper sport skills,
2. Attending competition(s) at an appropriate level for each athlete in your program
3. Modeling and instilling socially appropriated behavior, including fair play and fun
4. Actively being mentored by a Head Coach

## QUALIFICATIONS:

- ✓ Must Adhere to the Pan-Canadian Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy Must be at least 18 years of age to travel with the team as the only volunteer from the program
- ✓ Must Adhere to Special Olympics Prince Edward Island Constitution & By-Laws
- ✓ Must comply with the philosophy of Special Olympics Prince Edward Island as presented in the Mission statement
- ✓ Must complete and submit a Volunteer Application Form or Criminal Record Check as described in SOPEI Policy 5000-15

## COACH EDUCATION PATHWAYS

1. Special Olympics Online Orientation (within 3 months)
2. Emergency First Aid and CPR (within 3 months)
3. NCCP Coach Education Pathway appropriate for your involvement (within 2 years)

*Will remain as a **Program Volunteer** until step three is completed.  
See APPENDIX V (Page 26)*

### Youth

NCCP Multisport  
Fundamental  
Movement Skills  
*and*  
Special Olympics  
Canada Coaching  
Young Athletes

### Community Sport Coach

Special Olympics Canada  
Competition Sport  
Coach Workshop  
*and*  
Make Ethical Decisions  
Online Evaluation

### Competition Sport Coach

Special Olympics Canada Competition  
Sport Coach Workshop  
*and*  
Make Ethical Decisions  
Online Evaluation  
*And for National/International Games:*  
NCCP Minimum Sport Specific Technical  
training or Coaching Hour  
*See APPENDIX V (Page 26)*

**RESPONSIBILITIES:**

*A) Training and Competition*

1. Attend practice and competition regularly
2. Communicate with the Head Coach regarding practices and events
3. Assist in facilitating practices, putting safety and the well-being of the athletes first
4. Know all safety concerns of athletes in your program (Atlantoaxial instability, epilepsy, asthma, etc.)
5. Supervise activities when deemed necessary by the Head Coach
6. Coaches are not responsible for transportation to/from practices/competitions but are permitted to do so with permission from the athlete's legal guardian
7. If an incident occurs, ensure to follow the incident reports procedure  
*See APPENDIX IV (Page 25)*

*B) Administrative*

1. Assist the Head Coach in preparing program and equipment budget requests annually
2. Be a positive ambassador for Special Olympics
3. Assist the Head Coach to ensure an Emergency Action Plan is in place
4. Communicate regularly with Head Coach

*C) Support, Supervision, and Program Evaluation*

1. Support, inform and encourage all volunteers to be certified and trained
2. Participate with SOPEI staff in program visits if requested
3. Participate in an exit interview upon completion of volunteer position if requested

**DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO:** Program Head Coach

**INDIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO:** SOPEI Program Director and Program Coordinator

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and agree to the above position description.  
(Print Name)

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Head Coach Checklist

The following is a checklist of things that should be accounted for by the Head Coach and their team of volunteers each program season.

## **Pre-Season Meeting with Program Volunteers:**

Even if you are a coach with years of experience, every season should be a fresh start. Holding a pre-season meeting with the other coaches and volunteers in the program creates a time to discuss the upcoming season. Going through these topics and others you deem essential will provide a clearer understanding of what's to come.

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Introductions   | <input type="checkbox"/> Athlete roster and medical needs                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Season plan/schedule                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOPEI Mission and team philosophy                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Parental issues  | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitions and Events                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SOPEI Staff responsibilities and roles                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel procedures  | <input type="checkbox"/> New Information (resources, training opportunities) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) [APPENDIX III (Page 24)] | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss behavior/incident protocol [APPENDIX II & IV] (Page 23 & 25) | <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment needs                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facility needs  |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Create Team rules/expectations                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer needs   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets (funds, equipment, travel, etc.)            |
- \*Ratio 1:4 Summer  
1:3 Winter

*\*Please note that our Policies and Procedures are being reviewed so that ratios could change.*

## **Opening Sessions with Athletes:**

Even if many of the athletes are returning, it is important to have every season start fresh. Holding a meeting with the athletes in the program creates a time to discuss the upcoming season.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol for athletes when missing a practice or competition | <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss protocol for behavior & incident reports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol for athletes attire for practice and games          | <input type="checkbox"/> Review seasonal plan (training & competition)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review and practice the Emergency Action Plan                | <input type="checkbox"/> Phone list for athletes and coaches              |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Create team & individual goals                   |

## **Each Training Session:**

- Create a practice plan [see APPENDIX I (Page 21)]. Then, share the plan with other coaches and assign specific tasks to each coach.
- Safety check equipment and facility
- Take attendance
- Bring First Aid kit, notepad, and instructor materials
- Encourage athletic attire appropriate for the sport (proper footwear, track pants, shorts, t-shirts, etc.) If an athlete is not dressed in suitable gym attire, the coach should speak to the parents/caregivers to ensure that the problem is rectified.

## **Periodically through the Season:**

- Review both team & individual goals
- Liaise with Program Coordinator or Program Director
- Give out reminder notices for special events and competitions
- Attain evaluation from coaches, families, and athletes on the program
- Review and practice the Emergency Action Plan
- Check the medical kit for appropriate materials
- NOTE:** SOPEI staff may attend practices to observe best practices throughout the season but will try to provide notice when doing so.

# Goal Setting

One of the most important things you can do with your athletes is to help everyone set goals. When athletes set goals, they take ownership of their training and their progress. The result is that athletes will be able to achieve their personal best performance. A great time to talk about, and establish goals, is at the pre-season meeting. Then, have athletes write down their goals and review them as the season evolves.

Athletes may set both individual and team goals. Goals may also be long-term, intermediate, or short-term, depending on what they are trying to achieve. Long-term goals may include those they would like to reach by the end of a year or even a few years. Intermediate goals would be those attainable within a few months or throughout the sport season. Short-term goals may be specific to one week or even one practice. Listen to the athletes and help them realize their goals. Discuss why they come to Special Olympic programs- it will assist in helping define goals for the individual and the whole group.

When setting team goals, try to focus more on collaborative goals as opposed to unilateral goals.

## **Collaborative goals:**

- Involves the athletes
- Increase commitment and motivation to accomplish goals
- More centered around successes
- Increase confidence

## **Unilateral goals:**

- Athletes are told what their goals will be (i.e., we will win ten games), which may not be positive if they are not what the athletes want to achieve.

## **Other things to consider when setting goals:**

- Set performance goals as opposed to outcome goals (i.e., winning the game)
- Set goals that are challenging yet realistic
- Set specific goals versus general goals so that athletes have a clear understanding of their expectations
- Set more short term versus long term goals because they are more realistic

# Planning Effective Training Sessions

*Also, see APPENDIX I (Page 21)*

It can be challenging to facilitate a practice without a lesson plan; therefore, a coach should prepare an outline of activities for each practice. A plan is crucial for running an effective and productive practice. It will ensure that your practice doesn't run off track, it will allow you to feel more organized and productive, and it will show your athletes you have put thought into their development.

To have an effective practice plan, you have to know what you are trying to accomplish and incorporate your program and athlete goals. Create a list of what you want to achieve each month and break it down, so each practice accomplishes one piece of your overall goal.

A practice plan can be broken down into 5 W's:

- **WHO:** every individual (coach, volunteer, athlete, parent/caregiver) should be assigned a role, and it is the Head Coach's role to ensure that every individual understands their role and responsibility for the practice.
- **WHAT:** refers to the actual content of practice. Clarity is crucial; the simpler the explanation, the better the understanding, and repetition is important; athletes need to see how the technique is performed, hear how it should be done, then practice it repeatedly until it is mastered.
- **WHEN:** the importance of time must not be underestimated. Although attendance and punctuality are important, effective time management is also dependent on the flow of a sequence of activities and the total time for practice.
- **WHERE:** ensure athletes are clear about the facility where the practice is held. If the weather determines whether you are inside or outside, ensure your athletes know what is required (i.e., Sunscreen, hats, jackets, etc.).
- **WHY:** athletes must be told the reasons for doing an activity, which includes understanding the basic concept of the skill and the coach's expectations. A quick explanation of 'Here's why it is important to do it this way' may prove greater acceptance from your athletes.

**Remember:** every practice should have a specific objective followed by a sequence of related activities. By the end of practice, that objective should be accomplished, and it should be emphasized into a game/scrimmage played nearing the end of a practice. It is also important to remember that practice plans are guides and that sometimes you will need to be prepared to implement a Plan B (or Plan C or even Plan D) when something doesn't go according to the original plan.

Specific Sport Technical and Coaching resources:

<http://www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx>

\*NSO/PSO websites could also have valuable information for coaches

Special Olympics Canada Rules:

<http://www.specialolympics.ca/learn/official-sports-and-rules>



<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Keep all athletes active and provide variety	Athletes need to be active participants; vary exercises – prevent boredom
Create clear, concise goals and instructions	Learning improves when athletes are aware of what is expected of them. Demonstrate – increase the accuracy of instruction
Give positive feedback	Emphasize and reward things the athlete is doing well. Training and competition is fun – help keep it this way for you and your athletes
Create progressions	Learning is increased when information progresses from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Known to unknown – discovering new things</li> <li>▪ Simple to complex – seeing that ‘I’ can do it</li> <li>▪ General to specific – this is why ‘I am’ working so hard</li> </ul>
Plan maximum use of resources	Ensure that athletes have equipment that is appropriate for their ability level and up to current safety standards
Allow for individual differences	Different athletes, different learning rates, different capacities

## **Recommendations for Conducting Successful Training Sessions**

- Assign Assistant Coaches/Program Volunteers their roles and responsibilities in accordance with your training plan.
- When possible, have training stations prepared before the athletes arrive.
- Introduce and acknowledge coaches and athletes.
- Review the intended program with everyone. Keep athletes informed of changes in schedule or activities.
- Have a weather contingency plan.
- Keep drills and activities brief, so athletes do not get bored. Keep everyone busy with an exercise, even if it is rest. Finally, summarize the session and announce arrangements for the next session.
- Make sure you keep fun as an element of your training session.

Train to improve the general fitness level of your athletes.  
Physically fit athletes are less likely to get injured,  
Make sure your training sessions are active.

# Safety

*Also see APPENDIX II, III, and IV (Pages 23-25)*

Coaches are responsible for the safety and welfare of the athletes and other volunteers in their program. This can be an overwhelming responsibility, but you can help manage the risks appropriately with thought and preparation. It is essential to develop emergency procedures that will apply to programs as well as competitions. Everyone involved in a program should be aware of these procedures. Consider the following safety considerations:

## **1) Practice Organization**

- Warm-up - when in doubt, do a little more versus not enough
- Use clear and concise directions
- Set behavior expectations
- Try to anticipate hazardous situations
- Avoid overcrowded conditions
- Record the details of all accidents, behaviors, or other incidents on a notepad and Incident form [APPENDIX IV (Page 25)]

## **2) Equipment and facilities**

- Have a first aid kit/supplies and latex gloves for any incidents
- Check equipment regularly
- Identify the hazards at the gym, pool, playing fields, cross country trail, etc.
- Ensure that the facility is inaccessible to participants when there is no supervision available
- Supervise the facility until the last athlete leaves

## **3) Athletes**

- Know your athletes (When in doubt, ask the SOPEI office for medical/behavioral information)
- Know who is prone to seizures
- Ensure there is access to water
- Know if Down Syndrome athletes have been X-rayed for Atlanto-Axial dislocation and determine the results of the x-rays
- When traveling for competition, know the medications coaches are responsible for administering

When establishing emergency procedures for the facility you are using, make sure you include procedures for fire, missing persons, and accidents. Consider the following:

- 1. Where is the nearest accessible telephone?**
- 2. Where is the first aid kit, and how is it accessed?**
- 3. What would happen if a fire alarm were to go off during the program? Where should everyone meet?**

## **For Emergencies, Call (911)**

When calling emergency services, be sure to give the dispatcher all the information necessary to send the appropriate help to the correct location. Answer any questions the dispatcher may have, and do not hang up until the call is complete and the 911 operator has hung up!

**Following any incident, no matter how serious, contact the SOPEI office and submit an incident report [APPENDIX IV (Page 25)]**

# Incident Reporting

*Also, see APPENDIX IV (Page 25)*

Incident reports are used for specific issues that warrant documentation. For example, incident reports are required for insurance purposes. It is also essential to record these occurrences to ensure proper documentation to address concerns if issues escalate.

Incident report forms should be used for:

- First Aid related injury or treatment
- Treatment of a specific medical problem
- Behavior issues
- Breach of program Rules/Expectations
- Coach, Parent/Guardian incidents
- Bullying incidents
- Athlete to Athlete arguments or incidents

If you are questioning if an incident/issue requires documentation consult the SOPEI office as soon as possible. It is essential to inform the SOPEI office staff that an incident has occurred if there are serious ramifications. The form should be filled out soon after the incident/accident as possible and returned to the SOPEI office within 24 hours.

For serious incidents that may require considerations for discipline, please refer to the following Pan Canadian Policies:

- Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy
- Discipline and Complaints Policy
- Dispute Resolution Policy

## The Canadian Sport Helpline

The Canadian Sport Helpline, funded by the Government of Canada, is a listening and referral service for victims and witnesses monitored by live operators from 8 am to 8 pm Eastern time, 7 days a week. Users will have a choice of communicating via a toll-free phone line, email, text, or live chat in the official language of their choice. It is a safe space to share or obtain information regarding harassment, abuse, and discrimination in sport. A team of practitioners with expertise in counseling, psychology, and sport act as the helpline operators. The Helpline website (click banner below) also includes other resources to help (e.g., Kids Help Phone, the Game Plan, etc.).



The banner features a red background with white text. At the top right, it says "Special Olympics Olympiques spéciaux Canada" with a logo. The main text reads "Canadian Sport HELPLINE" with a speech bubble icon. Below this, it asks "Victim or witness of harassment, abuse or discrimination in sport?" and provides the contact information: "CALL OR TEXT 1-888-83SPORT (77678) 8 am – 8 pm (Eastern Time), 7 days a week". At the bottom, it lists the email "INFO@ABUSE-FREE-SPORT.CA" and the website "WWW.ABUSE-FREE-SPORT.CA".

# Bullying

*REMEMBER: When bullying occurs, there is a bully and a victim. The victim is not at fault.*  
There is a difference between bullying and conflict. Normal conflict is not always bullying.

## **Conflict:**

- It is when both parties are equal, and they share the blame
- It is usually a one-time event

## **Bullying:**

- Is aggressive behavior that causes mental and or physical harm
- Involves an imbalance of power
- It is repeated over time
- Direct and Indirect Bullying (see below)

## **DIRECT BULLYING:**

### **Physical Behaviors include:**

- Hitting
- Slapping
- Elbowing
- Shoving
- Kicking
- Restraining
- Pinching
- Attacking with spit wads, food, or other objects
- Stealing
- Damaging or defacing belongings

### **Verbal Examples include:**

- Name-calling
- Insulting remarks
- Put-downs
- Repeated teasing
- Racist remarks
- Threats
- Intimidation

## **INDIRECT BULLYING:**

- Turning friends against each other
- Destroying reputations
- Humiliating and embarrassing others
- Gossiping about others
- Spreading rumors and lies
- Excluding people

## **Preventing Bullying**

- You need to set the stage for a bully-free program. Tell athletes at the start of the year that bullying and teasing are unacceptable.
- Challenge athletes to help you make a bully-free program by encouraging them to help bullied athletes and tell you if they know someone is being bullied.

## **Handling Bullying Situations**

- In severe bullying situations, intervene immediately, especially if the bullying is physical.
- If fighting takes place, talk firmly that fighting is not permitted, and you will need to let them know that you will be writing an incident report.
- Please be aware of your safety when you are intervening. Try to stop the fighting without physically interfering.
- For verbal bullying, issue a verbal warning to the athlete that is doing the bullying. Take the athlete aside and explain to them that what they are saying and doing is wrong and that behavior like this will not be tolerated. Ask that athlete to apologize to the victim.
- If the bullying continues, have the bully sit out of the practice/game to cool off. After they have calmed down, speak to them and let them know that you will be writing an incident report about this.
- Always take action when you witness bullying. If you show that you will not tolerate this behavior, it will lead to athletes understanding that it is not accepted in any Special Olympics programs.

***Special  
Olympics  
Prince Edward Island***



# APPENDIX

Community Partner



Founding Partner



Government Partner



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# **Seven Components of a Practice Plan**

## **Unstructured Free Play (Suggestion: 5% of the time)**

Before the practice, athletes who have arrived early should be encouraged to participate in free play or pre-practice team-building activities.

## **Encourage appropriate attire for the sport**

(footwear, track pants, shorts, t-shirts, etc.)

### **1. Warm-Up (Suggestion: 10% of the time)**

The warm-up should be appropriate for each program and should emphasize a low-intensity activity and stretching. It prepares the athletes for physical exertion and sports performance by increasing motion and blood and oxygen flow to the soft tissues before exertion. Stretching should start slowly and gradually involve all the muscles and body parts to be utilized in the exercise related to the practice.

### **2. Basic Motor Skills (Suggestion: 5% of the time)**

Basic Motor Skills are defined as the fundamental movement skills (running, kicking, jumping, throwing, catching, etc.). In each program, athletes will have varying Basic Motor Skills. In this phase, try to keep the activity emphasizing one skill and build on it for the next step. Some programs may choose to go directly to the next phase of the practice.

### **3. Sport Specific Skills (Suggestion: 15% of the time)**

During this phase of the practice, the athletes will combine several basic motor skills and practice the skills demonstrated during the instruction. Emphasis should be placed on creating competition-like conditions (through game-like drills) during this phase.

### **4. Fitness (Suggestion: 15% of the time)**

This phase involves physical conditioning activities specific to your sport's fitness needs and is performed at a higher intensity than the warm-up. Fitness encompasses cardio, muscular strength, muscular endurance, and flexibility.

### **5. Simulated Game (Suggestion: 35% of the time)**

During this phase of the practice, athletes will compete in a competition-like setting to incorporate the skills they have learned and the sport's rules. Infractions should be called so that the athletes learn all aspects of the sport.

### **6. Cool Down (Suggestion: 10% of the time)**

Don't forget this portion. Cooldowns are a vital part of a practice as they allow the heart rate to return to normal. Static stretching should also be included at this time to prevent sore muscles.

### **7. Evaluation/Tips/Announcements (Suggestion: 5% of the time)**

Evaluation is used to assess the effectiveness of specific activities or the overall practice. It is helpful to spend a few minutes with your athletes at the end of a practice to get some feedback on the practice session. The positive topics discussed can be built into a future practice. Provide athletes with things to work on at home, and this should also encompass discussion around nutrition and/or mental training. It would help if you also used this time for announcements regarding competitions, events, or program updates.

# Seven Components of a Practice Plan

**Unstructured Free Play (Suggestion: 5% of the time)**

**Encourage appropriate attire for the sport**

(footwear, track pants, shorts, t-shirts, etc.)

**1. Warm-Up (Suggestion: 10% of the time)**

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**2. Basic Motor Skills (Suggestion: 5% of the time)**

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**3. Sport Specific Skills (Suggestion: 15% of the time)**

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**4. Fitness (Suggestion: 15% of the time)**

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**5. Simulated Game (Suggestion: 35% of the time)**

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**6. Cool Down (Suggestion: 10% of the time)**

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**7. Evaluation/Tips/Announcements (Suggestion: 5% of the time)**

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# **How to Create Program Rules/Expectations**

It is important to set out clear guidelines of expectations at practices at the very beginning of the season. Below are some tips to creating these expectations:

## **1. Involve your athletes**

Allow the athletes to be involved in creating the program expectations. Engaging the athletes in the process increases the feeling of ownership and makes it more likely for the athletes to follow these expectations.

## **2. Focus on "DO" expectations.**

DO expectations empower athletes by telling them what is expected of them.

## **3. Copy and distribute the program rules.**

Every athlete, as well as every parent/caregiver, should get a copy of the expectations. Once developed, establish a time to go through these expectations with the athletes and parents/caregivers, so everyone clearly understands them. Have a copy present during every training session and/or competition.

## **4. Identify Consequences**

What happens when an athlete misses practice or a game? What happens if an athlete misbehaves at events? When establishing the rules and consequences, use both common sense and your understanding of participation in sport. It is important to establish that Special Olympics programs are not drop-in programs and that a certain level of commitment is required from the athletes. Explain this to athletes at the beginning of the season and stress the importance of their continuous participation. All athletes are expected to act appropriately, and misbehaving may result in consequences.

## **5. Be Consistent**

Attempt to guide your team as closely as possible to the expectations you have established together. This will allow for consistency and a clear understanding of the guidelines.

## **6. Clarify any expectation changes**

Be sure that your athletes are aware of when an expectation change occurs and identify why. It is also essential to pass on this information to Assistant Coaches and other volunteers.

## **7. Review the expectations**

Look over these regulations throughout the season to refresh yourself and to make any adjustments if necessary.

# Emergency Action Plan

The purpose of an emergency action plan (EAP) is to get professional care to the injured athlete as quickly as possible. Unless you have received specialized training in advanced first-aid techniques, leave such care to professionals.

It is strongly recommended that you develop an EAP before the season begins. Such a plan consists of information on the location of the nearest telephones, direction to the site, and the name of the person who will call emergency services.

## **EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN:**

TEAM/EVENT: \_\_\_\_\_

SITE ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON IN CHARGE: \_\_\_\_\_

DESIGNATED CALL PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION OF PHONES, AED, and FIRST AID KIT: \_\_\_\_\_

### EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS:

1. **911**
2. Special Olympics PEI Office – (902) 368-8919
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

NON-EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS: \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITY CONTACT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

FACILITY PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

DETAILS OF LOCATION:

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At an appropriate time, please contact SOPEI staff and submit an

Incident Report Form in the event of an emergency:

Email: [sopei@sopei.com](mailto:sopei@sopei.com)



# National Games Coach Education Requirements

<b>Special Olympics</b>	<b>Head Coaches:</b> Special Olympics Competition-Introduction (Comp-Intro) <b>Other Coaching Staff:</b> Special Olympics Competition-Introduction (Comp-Intro) <b>All coaches must complete the Make Ethical Decisions Online Evaluation</b>
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Sport	Minimum Sport Technical Coaching Course from the National Sport Organization
<b>Summer Sports</b>	
Athletics	Sport Coach (Competition)
Swimming	Fundamentals Coach (Swimming 101)
Rhythmic Gymnastics	Rhythmic Gymnastics Foundations (Introduction, Theory, and Rhythmic)
10 pin Bowling	Community Sport Initiation
5 Pin Bowling	Community Coach
Soccer	Learn to Train or Soccer for Life (Community)
Softball	Ongoing Participation
Powerlifting	SOC Powerlifting Module
Basketball	Learn to Train (Competition-Introduction)
Golf	Special Olympics Canadian PGA Golf Course
Bocce	125 coaching hours
<b>Winter Sports</b>	
Alpine Skiing	Entry Level Coach Workshop (I-B) or CSIA Level 1
Cross Country Skiing	Community Coach (Intro to Community Coaching and Community Coaching)
Speed Skating	FUNdamentals Leader (Community) – Assistant Coach FUNdamentals Coach (Instruction) – Head Coach
Figure Skating	CanSkate (Level 1 and 2) Regional Coach In-Training (Level 3 to 6)
Floor Hockey	SOC Floor Hockey Module
Curling	Club Coach (Community)
Snowshoeing	SOC Snowshoe Module

**\*\*\*Not Required - This course is not required ONLY if coach has taken NSO Sport Technical Course in the new NCCP system**



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Olympics***  
*Prince Edward Island*



40 Enman Crescent  
Room 240  
Charlottetown, PE  
C1E 1E6

[www.sopei.com](http://www.sopei.com)  
Phone: 902-368-8919  
Fax: 902-892-4553  
E-mail: [sopei@sopei.com](mailto:sopei@sopei.com)



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