

Unit 8: Diseases and Disorders

Introduction

Special Olympics is an international, nonprofit organization that gives children and adults with intellectual disabilities a chance to train and compete in more than 30 Olympic-type sports. The Special Olympics World Games take place every two years. However, Special Olympics itself is more than an event—it is a movement. Its stated goal is to help people with intellectual disabilities become physically fit, productive and respected members of society through sports. At the same time, it helps society see them in a new way—not as people who need special help and care, but as athletes competing on their own terms. You can learn more about Special Olympics by visiting its Web site.

Links to Explore:

Special Olympics

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

Directions:

- Follow the link above to the Special Olympics home page.
 - Click on “About Us” and read the information about the Special Olympics organization.
 - From the About Us page, click on the links labeled “The Heart of Growth” and “30 Olympic-type summer and winter sports,” and read through these pages as well.
 - After you have examined all these parts of the site, answer the following questions:
1. How many countries participate in Special Olympics programs?
 2. Which three Special Olympics sports are “recognized” but not official?
 3. What are the requirements for participating in Special Olympics?
 4. Identify three ways in which taking part in Special Olympics benefits people with intellectual disabilities.
 5. Identify three ways in which Special Olympics benefits society as a whole.

Answers:

1. 165
2. Cricket, kayaking, and netball
3. Participation in Special Olympics' year-round sports training and athletic competition is open to anyone with intellectual disabilities ages 8 and older.
4. Any three: It helps them improve their physical fitness and motor skills; it gives them greater self-confidence and a more positive self-image; it enables them to grow mentally, socially and spiritually; it helps them make new friends; it gives them a chance to discover new abilities and talents; it gives them a voice (a way to make themselves known in the world).

5. Any three: It is a training ground for volunteerism, encouraging citizens to become involved in their communities; it supports the families of its athletes and helps them become stronger advocates for change; it helps spread a message of human dignity; it is a training ground for leaders in health care.

Additional Links to Explore:

Use the links below to gather additional information on the activity topic. When appropriate, have students extend their research to include important concepts contained in these Web sites.

Our-Kids

Our-Kids is a 'family' of parents, caregivers and others who are working with children with physical and/or mental disabilities and delays. It provides information and support for kids and their caregivers.

<http://www.our-kids.org/>

Family Village

The Family Village is a directory of online resources for children and adults with disabilities, their families, and their friends and allies. It provides links to information on different conditions, assistive technology, legal issues, special education, recreation, and many other topics.

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/>

Best Buddies International

Best Buddies is a nonprofit organization that aims to help people with intellectual disabilities become part of mainstream society. Best Buddies is determined to end social isolation for people with intellectual disabilities by establishing meaningful, lasting one-to-one friendships with their non-disabled peers.

<http://www.bestbuddies.org/>

Community of Caring

Community of Caring is a comprehensive, research-based character education program for grades K-12 with a unique focus on students with disabilities. Community of Caring schools weave five core values—caring, respect, responsibility, trust, and family—into every aspect of school life,

<http://www.communityofcaring.org/>

The Arc of the United States

The Arc of the United States is a grassroots organization that advocates for the rights and full participation of all people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It aims to improve support systems and services, connect families, inspire communities, and influence public policy.

<http://www.thearc.org/>