



Frequently Asked Questions

1. At what age can a person participate in Special Olympics?

Answer: People who are as young as 6 years old may participate in Local practices. When an athlete is 8 years or older, they are eligible to compete. Go to sonv.org to find information and download a Special Olympics Nevada athlete application with medical form.

2. Do younger athletes compete against older athletes?

Answer: They may train on the same field with their team/delegation, but Individual Sports competitions (such as Track and Field, Swimming, Bowling, and Skills Competition) are divisioned by age, gender, and qualifying score or time. Team Competition (such as Basketball, Flag Football) is based off ability.

3. Do I need to bring any equipment with me to practice?

Answer: Special Olympics provides the equipment for each practice. You can volunteer to bring your own equipment, but you are responsible for any damages or lost items.

4. Who gets to go to USA Games or World Games?

Answer: Athletes can be eligible to be chosen if they have competed in a state or regional competition. An athlete would travel with a State or National delegation, but would need to be able to care for themselves away from home.

5. How many practices can my athlete miss and still compete in the competition?

Answer: SONV allows its head coaches to determine the number of practices an athlete may miss during the season. The circumstances of the missed practice and prior notification are taken into account.



6. *Can parents/caregivers be on the field/court/lane with their athlete?*

Answer: Only if they are a registered Class A Volunteer. You can become a Class A Volunteer by completing a volunteer application and passing a Special Olympics background check. Special Olympics does not accept 3rd party background checks.

7. *How much time do I need to set aside for Special Olympics?*

Answer: If you volunteer to be a coach or become an athlete for a certain sport you should plan on attending all of the practices and the tournament for that sport. Practices range from 1-2 hours and are usually once per week for 8 weeks. Competition can be an all -day event at the conclusion of a sports season.

8. *Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about my athlete's participation in SONV sports programs?*

Answer: Your first contact should be that sport's head coach. He/she has the most direct insight as to that sport and each athlete's participation. One may also contact that program's area director. The area director in turn will contact the head coach so that any questions or concerns are addressed. Should you not receive the answers you are looking, you can always contact a Special Olympics Staff member.

9. *Do we need to resubmit a physical every year?*

Answer: Athlete Applications expire every 3 years. If there are physical or medical changes to the athlete's condition when submitting for renewal; a new physical exam is required. If there are no changes, a new physical is required every six years.

10. *Are coaches allowed to provide rides to athletes to and from practice/events?*

Answer: From a liability standpoint, no. We encourage everyone to assume the full responsibility of an athlete and provide their own transportation to practice. Sometimes parents arrange carpools to and from practices with other families, but this is not something done through the Special Olympics nor recommended. Transportation to competitions is provided by Special Olympics Nevada if competition location is outside your area.