



**Maryland State Department of Education**  
**Service-Learning Unit**  
**Special Olympics**

**Primary Subject:** Health/PE

**Grade Level:** High School

**Additional Subject Area Connections:** Language Arts & Visual Arts

**Unit Title:** Special Olympics

**Type(s) of Service:** Indirect &/or Direct

**Unit Description:** Through SO Get Into It, students will learn about the Special Olympics experience and all its positive messages. They will come to understand the athletes' ability to contribute to society through leadership roles both on and off the playing field. They will come to appreciate the critical role of service-learning. Most importantly, they will be invited to make a difference themselves.

**Potential Service-Learning Action Experiences:**

- Create resumes so students can volunteer as "spotters" for a Special Olympians.
- Design informational brochures about the purpose of Special Olympics for distribution in the community.
- Create publicity posters for events.
- Write a letter of encouragement and support to the Olympian sponsored.

**Maryland State Curriculum Indicators Met**

**Physical Education:**

3.0 Health Social Psychological Principles - Students will demonstrate the ability to use skills essential for developing self-efficacy, fostering a sense of community, and working effectively with others in physical activity settings.

A. Social Psychological Principles

1. Initiate responsible personal and social behavior.

a. Follow safe practices, rules, procedures and etiquette in a physical activity setting.

b. Participate in fitness or lifelong and/or leisure activities for personal enjoyment.

2. Demonstrate leadership qualities.

a. Model a mature and positive attitude while participating in lifelong activities.

b. Assist and resolve in diffusing conflict during competition.

3. Synthesize and evaluate knowledge regarding the role of physical activity in a culturally diverse society.

a. Model compassion that reflects concern and well-being for others.

b. Participate successfully in a group with a wide range of diverse members.

4. Build and maintain relationships which develop a sense of community and a safe, healthy environment for all.

a. Employ strategies to resolve conflict and make healthy, responsible decisions.

b. Display respect for others.

**Additional course MSCI follows:**

# Alignment with Maryland's Best Practices of Service-Learning: *Special Olympics*

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## 1. **Meet a recognized community need**

Students will be involved in learning about those who are different but who can nonetheless inspire the world with the lesson that we all have gifts to contribute no matter what our limitations.

## 2. **Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning**

- Address academic standards and benchmarks in order to improve student achievement;
- Research genetic diseases and share findings;
- Enhance school and classroom climate by helping students to develop understanding and acceptance of individual differences;
- Enhance the school's character education efforts;
- Involve students in service-learning projects in the school and community;
- Meet the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by including students with disabilities in a variety of activities in regular education classrooms;
- Learn about and become involved in Special Olympics.
- Become involved in a service-learning project or activity related to Special Olympics, including participation in Special Olympics sports and events.



## 3. **Reflect throughout the service-learning experience**

Create a photographic reflection of the project and discuss the impact the project had on students and those they served.

## 4. **Develop student responsibility (Students have opportunities to make decisions about the service-learning project.)**

Students will learn about developmental disabilities, the purpose and importance of Special Olympics, and how they can contribute funds, time and athletic experiences as part of Special Olympics.

## 5. **Establish community partnerships**

Solicit local businesses for financial support for the Special Olympics.

**6. Plan ahead for service-learning**

Conduct research to find information about Special Olympics. Download lessons on Special Olympics and writing to inform for resume development.

**7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service**

- Define and discuss intellectual disability.
- Define and discuss service-learning.
- Complete lessons on Special Olympics.
- Learn physical education activities and training skills needed to volunteer as a spotter/trainer for the Olympians.

**Additional Maryland State Curriculum Indicators Met**

**Health:**

4.0 Writing: Students will compose in a variety of modes by developing content, employing specific forms and selecting language appropriate for a particular audience and purpose.

2. Compose written presentations to express personal ideas, inform and persuade.

## Procedures with Resources: *Special Olympics*

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These procedures represent an example of a service-learning lesson on this specific topic, but can be changed to meet individual classroom interests or varying community needs. You are encouraged to adapt this unit to fit your unique classroom and community and to solicit student input in planning and decision making.

1. Introduce the service-learning project by discussing service-learning and citizenship with students and engaging in activities to explore those themes. A resource to support this topic can be found at [http://www.servicelearning.org/lsa/bring\\_learning/fullvideo.php](http://www.servicelearning.org/lsa/bring_learning/fullvideo.php).
2. Define and review *Maryland's 7 Best Practices of Service-Learning*.
3. Log on and register to download information/lesson plans from Special Olympics site. There is no cost/fee to register. This site refers to service-learning and how the Special Olympics meet curriculum objectives for various subjects. This is an excellent site to assist teachers with knowledge on Special Olympics. Download FREE all lesson plans. They are excellent and easy to follow: [www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Initiatives/Schools\\_and\\_Youth/SO+Get+Into+It](http://www.specialolympics.org/Special+Olympics+Public+Website/English/Initiatives/Schools_and_Youth/SO+Get+Into+It).
4. Carry out the project. Websites for research on developmental disabilities include:
  - Kids' Health for Kids: Down Syndrome [www.kidshealth.org/kid/health\\_problems/down\\_syndrome.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/health_problems/down_syndrome.html)
  - The Arc: Frequently Asked Questions [www.thearc.org/faqs.htm](http://www.thearc.org/faqs.htm)
5. Reflection possibilities might include:
  - Creating a photographic reflection on the project.
  - Holding class discussion about the project.
  - Creating a collage on people with disabilities.

Multiple intelligence reflection cards maybe purchased through:  
Institute for Global Education & Service Learning  
2222 Trenton Rd.

### Additional Interdisciplinary Connections



- **Reading / Writing:** resume writing, informational brochures
- **Art:** designing advertising posters, flyers

Lower Left Suite,  
Levittown, PA 19054  
(215) 945-8118  
[www.igesl.org](http://www.igesl.org)

These cards are super for multiple intelligence ideas for reflection pieces across the curriculum.

6. Reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of the project by completing the *Rubric for Assessing the Use of the Maryland's Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning* which can be found at [www.mdservice-learning.org](http://www.mdservice-learning.org).

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