



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 Curriculum Standards 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.

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

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.



Procedures with Resources:

Special Olympics

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 [Bringing Learning To Life](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2-eoEi6FCo) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2-eoEi6FCo>).
2. Define and review *Maryland's 7 Best Practices of Service-Learning*.
3. Visit the [Special Olympics](https://www.specialolympics.org/) (<https://www.specialolympics.org/>) website to select the best way for your class and school to become involved. You could become a Unified School or assist with Sports and Games.
4. Carry out the project. Websites for research on developmental disabilities include:
 - [Kids' Health: Down Syndrome](https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/down-syndrome.html) (<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/down-syndrome.html>)
 - [Disability and Health Information for People with Disabilities](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/people.html) (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/people.html>)
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.
6. Upon completion, analyze the plan to evaluate the successful completion of the objective and overall success of the project. Also, reflect on the project using various reflection activities 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](http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/rubric_best.pdf) (http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/rubric_best.pdf).

Additional Interdisciplinary Connections



Reading / Writing: resume writing, informational brochures

Additional Maryland Curriculum Standards 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.

Updated: October 2019, December 2014; Created: July 2007

Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy
Youth Development Branch
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-767-0357

[Maryland Public Schools Service-Learning Website](http://www.mdservice-learning.org) (www.mdservice-learning.org)
[Maryland Public Schools](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org) (www.marylandpublicschools.org)



**This material is based upon a template for service-learning experiences created by the Maryland State Department of Education. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Maryland State Department of Education or constitute an endorsement.*