

Frequently Asked Questions

I am a special education teacher servicing students with multiple disabilities. Which students are considered “athletes” and which students are considered “partners?”

An athlete is a student with an intellectual disability. Partners are students without an intellectual disability and may include students with physical, sensory, emotional or learning disabilities in addition to general education students.

What about students with autism?

Students with autism may be athletes or partners depending on their cognitive abilities. Students with cognitive delays are considered athletes.

I am a physical education teacher that leads an adapted PE class comprised only of students with intellectual disabilities. Can my students participate?

Yes! Anyone can use the Unified Fitness Challenge curriculum. In order to request free equipment for students, however, athletes and partners are required to participate together. Be creative and make your class inclusive:

- Invite a small number of students from another PE class meeting at the same time to participate in the Unified Fitness Challenge with your students during part of the class period.
- Partner with the players on a sports team at your school to participate in the Unified Fitness Challenge. Have the players make videos demonstrating the lessons and providing encouragement for the students in your class.
- Implement the Unified Fitness Challenge during a homeroom period or lunch break. The lesson activities do not have to be done in one 30-minute block.

How do I implement the Unified Fitness Challenge?

The program is designed to be flexible to meet your specific needs:

- Start your 8-week training in January, February or March after your equipment arrives.
- There are three lessons for grades 3rd – 12th each week, with the third lesson being optional. (Students in Pre-K – 2nd grade participate in our Young Athletes program.)
- Each lesson consists of differentiated activities to meet the needs of various student skill levels. Teachers can assign all activities to students or select specific activities for each student based on their skill level. Teachers can also mix and match activities from multiple lessons if they wish.

What about students with physical limitations? How can they participate?

Teachers may modify activities to meet the needs of individual students. There is also a Fitness Combine Adapted Playbook under Resources at the bottom of the page with adapted exercises for students with physical limitations.

Do you have other resources available for PE teachers?

Yes! Our Unified Champions Schools Physical Education Resource Guide is a great place to start with information on how to start a Unified PE class and curriculum suggestions. Our Unified Champion Schools Fitness Guide is another good resource for PE teachers. Check-out these and other resources at the bottom of the Unified Fitness Challenge website page.

Are there other inclusive sports opportunities for my students?

Yes! Visit <https://www.specialolympicsva.org/beyond-sports/unified-champion-schools> to learn about other Unified Sports, inclusive youth leadership, whole school engagement and collaborative fundraising opportunities.

I have another question or need assistance.

We are here to help! Contact Val Reinford at vreinford@specialolympicsva.org or 804-726-3036.