

Wellness Wednesday

MISSION:
FITNESS!



Middle/High School

Let's read the Special Olympics Mission Statement:

Special Olympics' mission is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the community.

When we think about Special Olympics, we instantly think SPORTS! Of course! Sports are at the core of the Special Olympics mission, but there are other things that Special Olympics does. Based on the mission statement, can you name other focuses of Special Olympics?

If you said "develop physical fitness", you're right! Of the many ways that Special Olympics tries to serve, empower, and inspire, an important focus is on helping to develop healthy lifestyles. Physical Fitness is an important part of that mission!

Today is Wellness Wednesday and it's important to learn why physical fitness is so important for us.

Here are 10 reasons why exercise is important:

1. Children who are active 60 minutes per day demonstrate lower rates of obesity.
2. Greater rates of activity in children have been associated with higher test scores in reading and math.
3. Physical (body) and cognitive (brain)

development go hand-in-hand. While this continues for life, this relationship is most critical at a young age. When kids are active, their brain develops, allowing for new types of activity.

4. Play-based activity that requires a high degree of sensory input (sight, sound, touch, etc.) helps develop a broad array of skills that make physical activity more enjoyable later in life.
5. Frequent physical activity has been associated with improved behavior in the classroom and beyond.
6. It appears that active children are more likely to become active adults.
7. Aerobic activity has been shown to increase the size of essential brain structures and number of neural connections...again, tying physical activity to improved focus!
8. Frequent activities requiring a high degree of balance and coordination have been associated with improved emotional response.
9. Frequent exercise decreases symptoms of depression and anxiety in children.
10. Regular exercise with children promotes self-efficacy regarding health and self-image.

Why is Health so important to the mission of Special Olympics?

[Inclusive Health: Bridging the Gap - YouTube](#) (3:22)

[Special Olympics Is ... Health - YouTube](#) (2:06)

Beyond just improving physical and mental well-being, it's important to lay a foundation for your health that will carry you past graduation. It's important to learn how to advocate for your own healthcare and let the physicians know how you want to be treated. Make sure they take the time to really listen and if you feel you need a second opinion,

