



Unified Sports

Unified Sports is a program where students with and without disabilities can practice and compete as teammates. Both athletes and partners will have meaningful involvement on their teams, which helps to increase campus inclusion and opportunities for friendships to be built.



Who Can Participate in Unified Sports?

Any student is able to compete in a Unified Sports program. There are three different models your school can participate in:

- **Recreation Model:** athletes and partners practice a specific sport together for 6-8 weeks, with a culminating event (exhibition or tournament) which can have both games and skill stations.
- **Competitive Model:** athletes and partners are of similar age and ability level, and all must possess the relevant skills to play the specific sport without modification of Special Olympic Unified rules. Like the Recreation Model, teams practice during the season, and compete in tournaments or a league with other Unified schools.
- **Player Development Model:** partners are of a higher skill level for the specific sport, and serve as mentors and teammates to the athletes throughout the season. Rules modification is often necessary, and the culminating event is equally split between skill stations and games.

Ways to Form a Unified Team

- **Inclusive Campus Clubs:** Special and general education students meeting weekly. Sports are a great activity for meetings, and clubs can compete as a Unified team at competitions.
- **Lunch sports:** Lunch is a great time to have a Unified exhibition. No issues of getting students released from class, and the entire campus can come out to watch the game.
- **Inclusive PE:** Collaborating with general education PE class to have inclusive PE time where students can practice as a Unified team
- **Unified Fitness:** A 30-45 minute workout session involving everyone. Choose different exercises to keep the blood flowing. Have fun, be creative and keep moving. See an example of a Unified Fitness challenge [here](#).
- **Athletic teams:** Involving a group of student-athletes from the school team to be Unified teammates. Student-athletes are great for teaching their sport
- **Leadership:** Partner with a leadership class. Students can come into the special education classes to practice sports in the weeks leading up to a competition.

