



DO

DO use Special Olympics (always plural) as an identifier before a specific program **at least** the first time it is used

✓ *Correct: Volunteering for Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® was a great experience!*

More examples:
Special Olympics Unified Sports®
Special Olympics World Winter Games
Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®

DO use Special Olympics Unified Schools (for global) and Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (for United States)

✓ *Correct: My school is a Special Olympics Unified Champion School!*

Unified Schools and Unified Champion Schools replace Project UNIFY.
Unified: The U in Unified is always capitalized when used as an adjective.
partner: Not capitalized. Unified partner refers to someone without an intellectual disability.
athlete: Not capitalized. Unified athlete refers to someone with an intellectual disability.

DO use “people-first” language

✓ *Correct: The Unified basketball team is made up of students with and without intellectual disabilities.*
Correct: Jason is a high school senior with autism.

Using people-first language ensures a person is not defined by a disability. Do not use the disability as an adjective or adverb.

DO refer to participants of all ages as “athletes”

✓ *Correct: This weekend, over 200 Special Olympics athletes participated in the local Games.*

Special Olympics provides opportunities to athletes of all ages, all around the world! Referring to participants as “kids” is reductive to the adult population that is involved in Special Olympics, unless all participants are children.

DON'T

DON'T use “the” Special Olympics

✗ *Incorrect: The Special Olympics is holding an event this weekend.*

DON'T use Project UNIFY

✗ *Incorrect: Our Project UNIFY club is hosting a basketball tournament today.*

DON'T use the disability to define the person

✗ *Incorrect: The special education class is for disabled students.*
Incorrect: Jason is an autistic high school senior.

DON'T refer to athletes as “kids” or “Special Olympians”

✗ *Incorrect: The kids who participate in Special Olympics are so inspiring.*