

Code of Conduct for Families, Caregivers and Spectators

The Code of Conduct for families, caregivers, and spectators was a recommendation from the Indiana Athlete Leadership Council and approved by the SOIN Board of Directors in 2022. There is no form for families, caregivers, or spectators to sign. Announcements will be made regarding sportsmanship and respect during ceremonies and during competition. Additionally, signage will be posted throughout competition venues to communicate expectations of good sportsmanship and respect.

A. RESPECT FOR OTHERS

1. Always treat others (coaches, parents, officials, and players) the same way that you would want you and your child to be treated. Set the example by showing respect, dignity, and total sportsmanship at all times.
2. Special Olympics sports are for the athletes. If you find yourself becoming too emotionally involved in what's happening in the contest, take a step back and relax.
3. Don't question an official's call. While you may not agree with a call, trust that the volunteers who officiate Special Olympics competition are doing their best and are using impartial judgment.

B. ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

1. Few things are better for a Special Olympics athlete than having their parents, friends, and fans on hand to watch them compete. Offer applause and cheers of encouragement for both teams following a good play or a great effort.
2. Identify positives from every game or practice to help build confidence. A Special Olympics athlete's sense of achievement is the greatest motivator.
3. Sports are supposed to be fun. Stay positive. Encourage enjoyment and participation over results. Special Olympics is not about being the best, it's about doing your best.

C. BE A TEAM PLAYER

1. Help, if you can, to ensure athletes arrive at practice and games on time, dress appropriately for sports, train in the off-season, and develop good nutrition habits. This support translates into athletes becoming more capable in all parts of their life.
2. Most coaches are open to communication about how to make the experience better for an athlete. Avoid seeking to communicate in the heat of the moment, during or immediately after a competition.
3. Don't analyze an athlete's performance following a competition. Make sure the coach is the voice of leadership for an athlete's performance. If you know sports, why not volunteer to be a coach next season?