



**Special Olympics**  
*Florida*

**Memo**

**Subject: New Special Olympics Inc. Protective Behaviors Training**

**From:** Monty Castevens, President, Special Olympics Florida

**To:** Special Olympics Florida County Coordinators, FPAC Members, Area Program Directors, for dissemination to the field, Board of Directors, Staff

**Date:** June 4, 2007

Greetings:

We wish to announce that Special Olympics' new online Protective Behaviors training material is now ready for implementation by all U.S. Programs. The new training material is a critical tool for protecting Special Olympics athletes from sexual, physical, and emotional abuse. The SOI Risk Management and Insurance Task Force, numerous U.S. Programs, and experts both inside and outside Special Olympics have extensively reviewed and tested the new training material.

Per SOI, each US Program must incorporate the new Protective Behaviors training into its regular ongoing training for all Class A Volunteers (Class A Volunteers as defined in the Special Olympics US Volunteer Screening Policy) and staff members. Effective October 1, 2007, the new online version of the Protective Behaviors training will replace all previous Protective Behaviors materials (including all existing Protective Behaviors videos).

We encourage all Special Olympics Florida local programs to start directing their Class A Volunteers to take the new Protective behaviors training prior to the October 1, 2007 date communicated by SOI.

**ONLINE PROTECTIVE BEHAVIORS TRAINING**

**How does the new system work?**

- The new Protective Behaviors training is "housed" on SOI's Web site. You may access it directly at [www.specialolympics.org/protectivebehaviors](http://www.specialolympics.org/protectivebehaviors). Or you can visit Special Olympics Florida's website at [www.specialolympicsflorida.org](http://www.specialolympicsflorida.org) and links can be found on the right-hand side of the Athletes, Volunteers, Coaches and Families pages of our site which will take you to the SOI on-line training page listed above.

Each volunteer and staff member will then be able to complete the training at his/her convenience by the deadline set by the Program. Once a volunteer/staff member

completes the training, the US Program will receive e-mail notification that the individual has successfully completed the training.

### **What if a volunteer does not have internet access?**

- Most public libraries have computers with internet access for use by the general public. In addition, SOI will be providing a CD copy of the training materials for "off-line" use; the contents of which will be disseminated by Special Olympics Florida when it is available.

*Note:* as we do not know exactly when SOI will have the off-line training materials available on disk, if your program has any Protective Behaviors trainings scheduled in the upcoming weeks, please use the attached PDF file (a replica of the on-line training) and contact Peggy Korringa at [peggykorringa@sofl.org](mailto:peggykorringa@sofl.org) for further questions or assistance.

### **Can Programs meet the policy requirements via group training sessions?**

- Yes. However, each volunteer/staff member is required to take the required test (at the end of the training) and pass with 100% proficiency (for group trainings not on the Web site, 100% proficiency will exclude the question on checking the mandatory reporter site) in order to satisfy the training requirement. For those completing the training off line, each US Program will be responsible for maintaining a copy of the test results or other permanent record to demonstrate that each individual required to undergo the training has completed it.

While conducting the training in an "off-line" setting is an option, we discourage this, as the County program will need to keep a hard copy of the volunteer's completed test for a minimum of 3 years and provide a copy to the State office.

Therefore, it is HIGHLY recommended by Special Olympics Florida that if conducting a group training, that efforts be made to provide participants with internet access at the training site so that they may complete the actual quiz on-line; or conduct the training in a group setting, yet require participants to go on-line and take the quiz on their own. This will save the local programs much time and effort in scoring, collecting and documenting training completion, in addition to the necessary notification to Special Olympics Florida.

### **Can people other than volunteers/staff take the training?**

- Yes! While the Protective Behaviors training is only requisite for Class A Volunteers and staff, for the safety and health of our athletes and everyone involved with Special Olympics Florida, we are encouraging anyone interested in taking the training to do so: families, athletes, day-of volunteers, etc. It requires the assistance of everyone involved in our organization to help keep our athletes safe from abuse. Special Olympics Florida will keep a record of everyone who takes the training.

With respect to athletes taking the Protective Behaviors training: it is the sole discretion of the athlete or their parent or guardian whether or not to take this training. The subject

of the training is sensitive and athletes may need assistance from a parent or guardian in fully understanding the content so that they can be active participants in their own protection and well-being.

### **PROTECTIVE BEHAVIORS TIMELINE/FREQUENCY**

While we realize that ensuring compliance with the timeline outlined below may appear to be a challenge for some programs, we believe that the new streamlined approach to the Protective Behaviors training will facilitate the timely implementation of this policy.

#### **New Class A Volunteers/Staff**

- Per SOI, Programs shall not permit a new Class A Volunteer applicant/staff member (a person who applies after September 30, 2007) to participate as a Class A Volunteer **after October 1, 2007**, until that person has completed the online Protective Behaviors training.

- Class A Volunteers/staff registered on or after October 1, 2007, must complete the training at least once every three years and the US Program must maintain record of such completion.

#### **Existing Class A Volunteers/Staff**

- Programs must ensure that all existing Class A Volunteers/staff members (those individuals who were registered prior to October 1, 2007) receive the online Protective Behaviors training by **December 31, 2007**.

- Class A Volunteers/staff registered before October 1, 2007, must complete the training at least once every three years, and the US Program must maintain record of such completion.

Special Olympics Florida will adhere to the timelines set forth by SOI above and all Class A Volunteers will need to take the Protective Behaviors training every three years, simultaneous to their reapplication. While admittedly some Class A volunteers, due to the nature of when their reapplication is set to occur, may take the Protective Behaviors training more than once during this initial cycle, we assure you that the brevity of the training means this should be a minimal imposition.

With respect to the need to take the training every three years, it is also important to acknowledge that updates may be made to the Protective Behaviors training more frequently in the coming years than we have been accustomed to in the past, in an effort to constantly improve our movement's commitment to athlete and volunteer safety through education and training.

Any questions regarding the status of a Class A Volunteer's Protective Behaviors training completion should be directed to Peggy Korrington, Special Olympics Florida, at [peggykorrington@sofl.org](mailto:peggykorrington@sofl.org).

## **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of the new Protective Behaviors training policy is yet another step toward protecting Special Olympics athletes from sexual, emotional and physical abuse. Protecting US Programs from substantial legal liability and adverse publicity is an important byproduct of such training and crucial to the Special Olympics Mission. The new materials were developed to help Programs provide Protective Behaviors training in the most time-efficient manner possible. Prompt implementation of the Protective Behaviors training may reduce a Program's exposure to future claims and litigation.

We appreciate your cooperation and think you will enjoy this new, more efficient method of Protective Behaviors training.