



Effective: April 15, 2023

Special Olympics Kansas Policy on Self-Advocacy

People with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (IDD) have the right to advocate and/or be supported to act as self-advocates.

Special Olympics Kansas (SOKS) believes:

- Self-advocacy, while important for everyone, is especially important for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- When people do not advocate for themselves, they may be pushed to do things that don't feel right to them or become depressed. They may also lack self-confidence and feel as though their life is out of their control.
- People who self-advocate are more likely to thrive in school, work, and life.
- Individuals with IDD can be effectively supported by peers, self-advocates, families, direct service providers, and other entities to learn self-advocacy skills and put them into practice. In order to continually use these skills, adults with IDD should have opportunities to use self-advocacy skills in service planning and daily decision-making.
- Self-advocates must have a meaningful role in decision-making in all areas of their daily lives and in public policy decisions that affect people with IDD.
- The goal of self-advocacy is to equip people with knowledge to make informed, authentic decisions, and to empower them to make those decisions.

SOKS values and respects our athlete's right to self-advocacy. We are committed to providing education and resources that work to ensure adults with IDD receive consistent and unrestricted access to a fully integrated experience within SOKS and in their daily lives.

What Special Olympics Kansas is committed to doing:

- Continued focus on internal and external training of the Unified Leadership approach to organization management
- Inclusion of self-advocacy training in all athlete leadership programming
- Inclusion of self-advocacy information in required general orientation for all program coaches
- Inclusion of self-advocacy information in general orientation for parents and caregivers
- Webpage on SOKS.org and informational booth at SOKS events highlighting additional self-advocacy resources