

# What Parents and Caregivers need to know

## What is Active Start?

Active Start, a program offered by Special Olympics Canada was designed to help develop basic motor and movement skills in children ages two to six years old with an intellectual disability.

Active Start is the first stage in the Long Term Athlete Development Model (LTAD), a framework for developing physical literacy, physical fitness, and competitive ability, using a stage-by-stage approach. The LTAD allows participants the flexibility to move between competitive and recreational streams so that they are active and healthy throughout their lives. Special Olympics Canada supports development opportunities for young athletes on the road to becoming active for life.



*“The program leader / child ratio is excellent. I like the energy level and the parental involvement.”*

Sandra Weeks,  
James' mother

EDMONTON ACTIVE START

## How is the program structured?

Through play, the sessions offer children an excellent opportunity to improve physical, social, and cognitive abilities to prepare them for successful participation in future athletic endeavours and in everyday activities. Sessions are facilitated by trained coaches and take place in a safe environment. Parent and caregiver involvement is encouraged during each session.

## What are the benefits to parents?

The Active Start program educates parents and caregivers about the value of sport in their child's life. Participation in the program expands networks and support systems. Parents have piece of mind that their child is in the hands of trained coaches in a social environment.

## What are the benefits of the Active Start program for children?

- Applies sport-specific activities aimed at improving basic motor skills
- Provides opportunities for children to develop physical, cognitive, and social skills
- Promotes children having an opportunity to be happy, active, and laughing alongside their peers
- Builds self-esteem while developing a sense of belonging
- Is all about having fun and being active in an amazing program



*“Rebecca started in the program at the age of two and began to develop her gross motor skills. It was important to our family to have her learn how to live a healthy and physically active lifestyle. Her social skills have improved which has helped her interact with her peers at school and daycare. She has improved muscle tone, coordination, and listening skills from the structured play.”*

Michelle Birss,  
Rebecca's mother

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Special Olympics Canada is dedicated to enriching the lives of Canadians with an intellectual disability through sport.

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