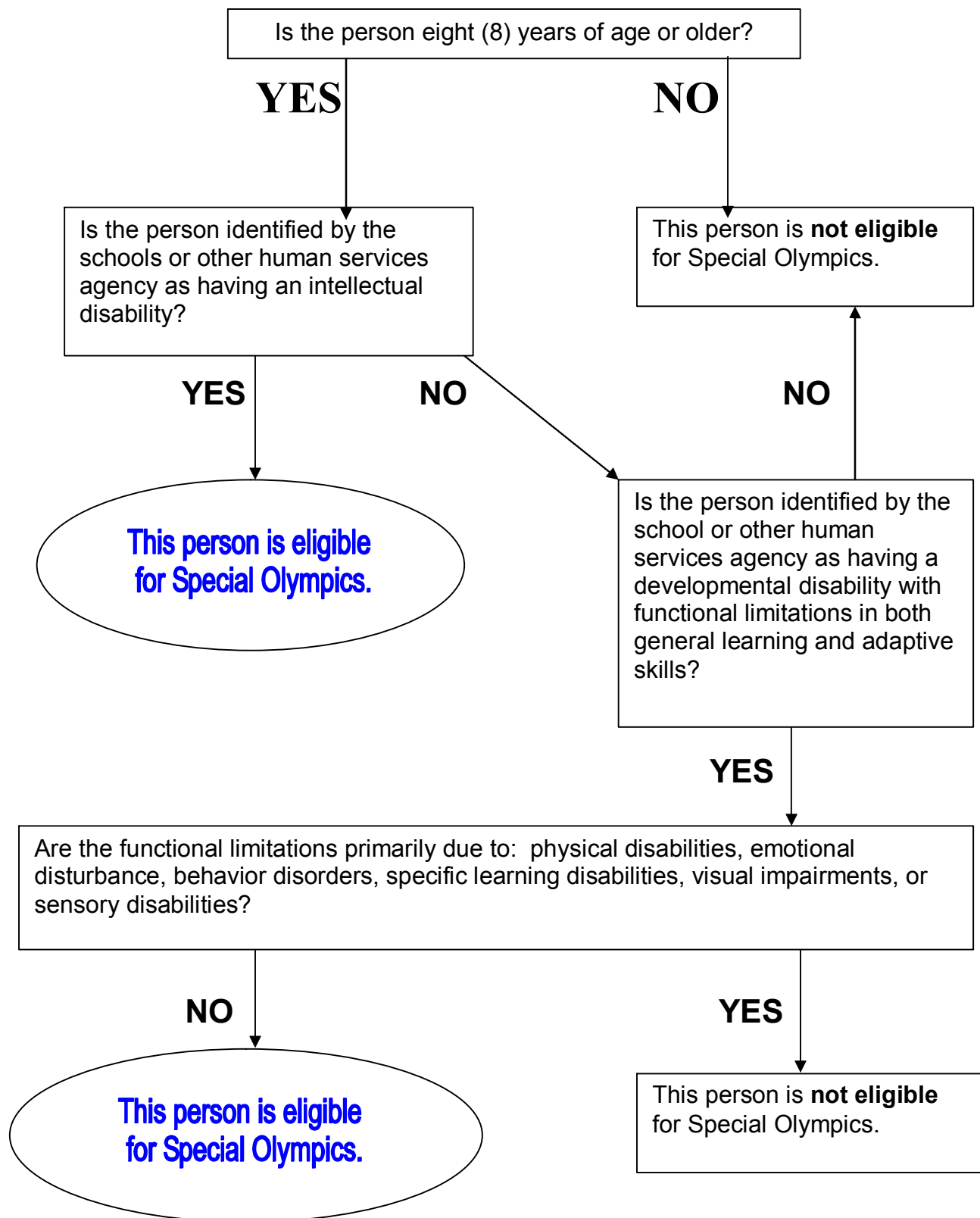


Who Is The Special Olympics Athlete?





STATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY

IV.A.3. Persons eligible for Special Olympics provided they are:

PERSONS AGE *EIGHT AND ABOVE WHO ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES* AS DETERMINED BY THEIR LOCALITIES.

PERSONS WHO HAVE CLOSELY RELATED DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES** SUCH AS THOSE WHO HAVE FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS, BOTH IN GENERAL LEARNING AND IN ADAPTIVE SKILLS SUCH AS RECREATION, WORK, INDEPENDENT LIVING, SELF-DIRECTION, OR SELF-CARE.

NOTE: PEOPLE WITH FUNCTIONAL LIMITATIONS BASED SOLELY ON A PHYSICAL, BEHAVIORAL, EMOTIONAL, SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY, OR SENSORY DISABILITY ARE NOT ELIGIBLE.

* Any person eight (8) years of age or older who is identified as having an intellectual disability by an agency or a professional in any given local area is considered eligible for Special Olympics. Other terms that may be used synonymously with intellectual disabilities include: cognitive disabilities, mental handicaps, or mental retardation.

Age Requirements: There is no maximum age limitation for participation in Special Olympics. The minimum age requirement for participation in Special Olympics competition is 8 years of age. Any **SOPA Program** may permit children who are at least 6 years old to participate in age-appropriate Special Olympics training programs offered by that Accredited Program, or in specific (and age-appropriate) cultural or social activities offered during the course of a Special Olympics event. However, no child may participate in a Special Olympics competition (or be awarded medals or ribbons associated with competition) before his or her 8th birthday.

** When the term "intellectual disabilities" or other similar descriptors is not used to identify the person in a local area, eligibility should be determined by whether or not the person has functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills. "Developmental disability" is the term most often used to describe persons with both limitations. Other terms that may be used synonymously with developmental disability are "developmental handicap," "developmentally delayed," or "severe disabilities."

General Learning Limitations refers to substantial deficits in conceptual, practical, and social intelligence that will result in performance problems in academic learning and/or general life functioning. Learning limitations may be assessed by standardized tests (e.g., intelligence or achievement tests) or through criterion-referenced measures (e.g., teacher/parent observations or actual performance samples).

Adaptive Skill Limitations refers to on-going performance deficits in skill areas considered essential to successful life functioning. These adaptive skill areas include: *communication, self-care, home-living, social skills, community use, self-direction, health and safety, functional academics, recreation/leisure, and work.* Adaptive skills limitations may be measured by standardized tests (e.g., adaptive behavior scales and checklists) or through criterion-referenced measures (e.g., teacher/parent observations or actual performance samples).

If the person is identified as having a developmental disability with functional limitations in both general learning and adaptive skills, an agency or a professional must still determine whether or not the functional limitations are solely due to an intellectual disability or a closely related developmental disability. If the functional limitations are solely due to: physical disabilities, emotional disturbance, behavioral disorders, specific learning disabilities, visual impairment, or sensory disabilities, this person is *not* eligible for Special Olympics.

Special Olympics Pennsylvania
Statement of Eligibility
Updated August 25, 2005