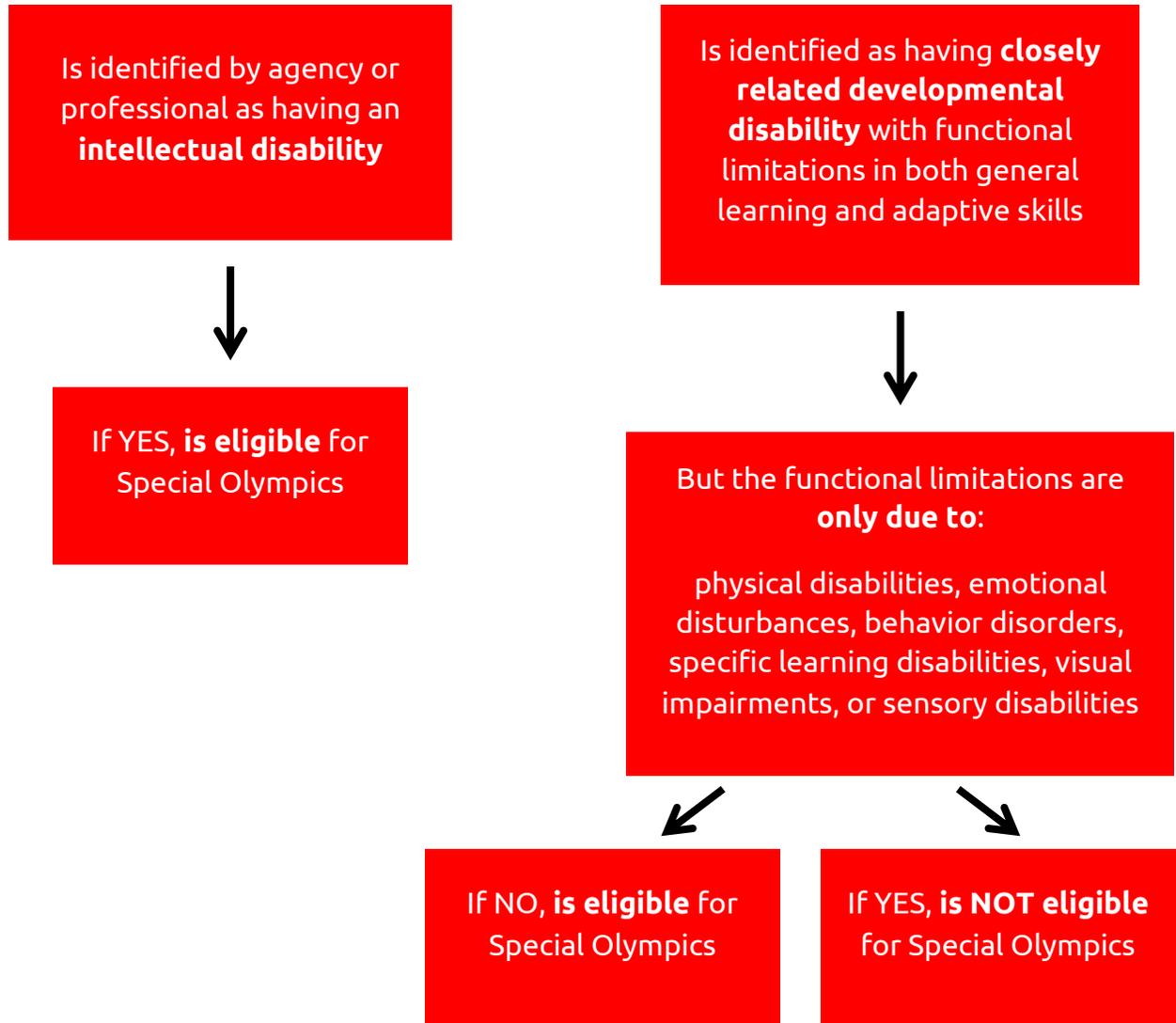


# Athlete Eligibility Guidelines

## Identification for Eligibility

The person is 8 years of age or older, male or female and...



## **DEFINITION – WHAT IS AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

An intellectual disability is not something you have, like blue eyes, or a bad heart. Nor is it something you are, like short, or thin.

It is not a medical disorder, nor a mental disorder.

An intellectual disability is a particular state of functioning that begins in childhood and is characterized by limitation in both intelligence and adaptive skills.

An intellectual disability reflects the "fit" between the capabilities of individuals and the structure and expectations of their environment.

An intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills.

This disability originates before age 18.

### **Five Assumptions Essential to the Application of the Definition**

1. Limitations in present functioning must be considered within the context of community environments typical of the individual's age peers and culture.
2. Valid assessment considers cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication, sensory, motor, and behavioral factors.
3. Within an individual, limitations often coexist with strengths.
4. An important purpose of describing limitations is to develop a profile of needed supports.
5. With appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with an intellectual disability generally will improve.



## **What is a disability?**

A disability refers to personal limitations that represent a substantial disadvantage when attempting to function in society. A disability should be considered within the context of the environment, personal factors, and the need for individualized supports.

## **What is Intelligence?**

Intelligence refers to a general mental capability. It involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly, and learn from experience. Although not perfect, intelligence is represented by Intelligent Quotient (IQ) scores obtained from standardized tests given by a trained professional. In regard to the intellectual criterion for the diagnosis of intellectual disability, is generally thought to be present if an individual has an IQ test score of approximately 70 or below. An obtained IQ score must always be considered in light of its standard error of measurement, appropriateness, and consistency with administration guidelines. Since the standard error of measurement for most IQ tests is approximately 5, the ceiling may go up to 75. This represents a score approximately 2 standard deviations below the mean, considering the standard error of measurement. It is important to remember, however, that an IQ score is only one aspect in determining if a person has an intellectual disability. Significant limitations in adaptive behavior skills and evidence that the disability was present before age 18 are two additional elements that are critical in determining if a person has an intellectual disability.

## **What is Adaptive Behavior?**

Adaptive behavior is the collection of conceptual, social, and practical skills that people have learned so they can function in their everyday lives. Significant limitations in adaptive behavior impact a person's daily life and affect the ability to respond to a particular situation or to the environment.



Limitations in adaptive behavior can be determined by using standardized tests that are normed on the general population including people with disabilities and people without disabilities. On these standardized measures, significant limitations in adaptive behavior are operationally defined as performance that is at least 2 standard deviations below the mean of either (a) one of the following three types of adaptive behavior: conceptual, social, or practical, or (b) an overall score on a standardized measure of conceptual, social, and practical skills.

### **What are some specific examples of Adaptive Behavior Skills?**

- **Conceptual Skills**
  - Receptive and expressive language
  - Reading and writing
  - Money concepts
  - Self-directions
  
- **Social Skills**
  - Interpersonal
  - Responsibility
  - Self-esteem
  - Gullibility (likelihood of being tricked or manipulated)
  - Naiveté
  - Follows rules
  - Obeys laws
  - Avoids victimization
  
- **Practical Skills**
  - Personal activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, mobility and toileting
  - Instrumental activities of daily living such as preparing meals, taking medication, using the telephone, managing money, using transportation and doing housekeeping activities
  - Occupational skills
  - Maintaining a safe environment



## **What are supports?**

The concept of supports originated about 15 years ago and it has revolutionized the way habilitation and education services are provided to person's with an intellectual disability. Rather than mold individuals into pre-existing diagnostic categories and force them into existing models of service, the supports approach evaluates the specific needs of the individual and then suggests strategies, services and supports that will optimize individual functioning. The supports approach also recognizes that individual needs and circumstances will change over time. Supports are defined as the resources and individual strategies necessary to promote the development, education, interests, and personal well-being of a person with an intellectual disability. A parent, friend, teacher, psychologist, doctor can provide supports; and in the case of Special Olympics organization our coaches and volunteers provide individualized supports in an athlete's life through experiences of sport training and competition.

## **Why are supports important?**

Providing individualized supports can improve personal functioning, promote self-determination and societal inclusion, and improve personal well-being of a person. Focusing on supports as the way to improve education, employment, recreation, and living environments is an important part of person-centered approaches to providing supports to people with an intellectual disability.

## **How do you determine what supports are needed?**

It is recommended by established service organizations that an individual's need for supports be analyzed in at least nine key areas such as human development, teaching and education, home living, community living, employment, health and safety, behavior, social, and protection and advocacy.



## What are some specific examples of supports areas and support activities?

- **Human Development Activities**
  - Providing physical development opportunities that include eye-hand coordination, fine motor skills, and gross motor activities
  - Providing cognitive development opportunities such as using words and images to represent the world and reasoning logically about concrete events
  - Providing social and emotional developmental activities to foster trust, autonomy, and initiative
  
- **Teaching and Education Activities**
  - Interacting with trainers and teachers and fellow trainees and students
  - Participating in making decisions on training and educational activities
  - Learning and using problem-solving strategies
  - Using technology for learning
  - Learning and using functional academics (reading signs, counting change, etc.)
  - Learning and using self-determination skills
  
- **Home Living Activities**
  - Using the restroom/toilet
  - Laundering and taking care of clothes
  - Preparing and eating food
  - Housekeeping and cleaning
  - Dressing
  - Bathing and taking care of personal hygiene and grooming needs
  - Operating home appliances and technology
  - Participating in leisure activities within the home
  
- **Community Living Activities**
  - Using transportation
  - Participating in recreation and leisure activities
  - Going to visit friends and family
  - Shopping and purchasing goods
  - Interacting with community members
  - Using public buildings and settings



- **Employment Activities**
  - Learning and using specific job skills
  - Interacting with co-workers
  - Interacting with supervisors
  - Completing work-related tasks with speed and quality
  - Changing job assignments
  - Accessing and obtaining crisis intervention and assistance
  
- **Health and Safety Activities**
  - Accessing and obtaining therapy services
  - Taking medication
  - Avoiding health and safety hazards
  - Communicating with health care providers
  - Accessing emergency services
  - Maintaining a nutritious diet
  - Maintaining physical health
  - Maintaining mental health/emotional well-being
  
- **Behavioral Activities**
  - Learning specific skills or behaviors
  - Learning and making appropriate decisions
  - Accessing and obtaining mental health treatments
  - Accessing and obtaining substance abuse treatments
  - Incorporating personal preferences into daily activities
  - Maintaining socially appropriate behavior in public
  - Controlling anger and aggression
  
- **Social Activities**
  - Socializing within the family
  - Participating in recreation and leisure activities
  - Making appropriate sexual decisions
  - Socializing outside the family
  - Making and keeping friends
  - Communicating with others about personal needs
  - Engaging in loving and intimate relationships
  - Offering assistance and assisting others



- **Protection and Advocacy Activities**

- Advocating for self and others
- Managing money and personal finances
- Protecting self from exploitation
- Exercising legal rights and responsibilities
- Belonging to and participating in self-advocacy/support organizations
- Obtaining legal services
- Using banks and cashing checks

### **Why is sport so important for persons with intellectual disability?**

Sport is a crucial part of the lives of the world's population. It offers to persons with intellectual disability the same values, pleasures and satisfaction. In addition it is an invaluable means by which social, physical and psychological skills can be taught and learned. Sport is a major contributor to good health. It can transform the lives of individuals with intellectual disability by giving a new stimulus, a feeling of success, self-worth, achievement and belonging. It can also transform the lives of parents and carers. Ability not disability is the catalyst for change. Athletes with intellectual disability competing at any level not only provide role models for others, but also assist in breaking down the prejudice and ignorance which so badly restricts the lives of people with intellectual disability.

### **Why change the definition from mental retardation to intellectual disability?**

Changes in the definition have occurred when there is new information, or there are changes in clinical practice or breakthroughs in scientific research. The 10th edition of *Mental Retardation: Definition, Classification and Systems of Supports* contains a comprehensive update to the landmark 1992 system and provides important new information, tools and strategies for the field and for anyone concerned about people with an intellectual disability. Moreover people who have an intellectual disability have informed us that they resent being labeled by this term. For this reason, we always refer to people for who they are, rather than by what they are (ie. the "disabled"). See language guidelines policy and OSO "language sensitivity" position paper 2003.



## **What are the causes of intellectual disability?**

The causes of intellectual disability can be divided into biomedical, social, behavioral, and educational risk factors that interact during the life of an individual and/or across generations from parent to child. Biomedical factors are related to biologic processes, such as genetic disorders or nutrition. Social factors are related to social and family interaction, such as child stimulation and adult responsiveness. Behavioral factors are related to harmful behaviors, such as maternal substance abuse. And educational factors are related to the availability of family and educational supports that promote mental development and increases in adaptive skills. Also, factors present during one generation can influence the outcomes of the next generation. By understanding inter-generational causes, appropriate supports can be used to prevent and reverse the effects of risk factors.

### **Adaptations and source references from:**

World health organization (WHO),  
International Statistics Classification (ICD-10),  
International classification of functioning, Disability and health (ICF)  
American Association for Mental Retardation - AAMR 10th edition  
International Sports Federation for persons with intellectual disabilities – (NAS-FID),  
International Association Scientific Studies on intellectual Disabilities (IASSID)  
Special Olympics Inc. (SOI)  
Community Living Canada  
ARC

