Inclusion Tiles
Facilitator Guide

Special Olympics
Unified Champion Schools®

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

About Unified Champion Schools

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® (UCS) is a program for schools Pre-K through university that intentionally promotes social inclusion by bringing together students with and without intellectual disabilities (ID) through sport and education-related activities. The three-component model offers a unique combination of effective activities that equip young people with the knowledge, skills, tools, and training to create classrooms and school climates of acceptance, respect, and meaningful inclusion. These are school climates where students with intellectual disabilities feel welcome and are routinely included in — and feel a part of — all activities, opportunities, and functions.

This is accomplished by implementing Special Olympics Unified Sports®, inclusive youth leadership opportunities (such as clubs, student organizations, and leadership teams), and whole school engagement. The program is woven into the fabric of the school community, enhancing existing efforts and providing rich opportunities that empower all students to be the agents of genuine change in their schools, creating socially inclusive environments that support and engage all learners. Unified Champion Schools implementation can vary greatly from school to school, based on the needs, goals, schedules, and other factors unique to each school, but the building blocks and framework are the same.

Three Components of Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools:

Special Olympics Unified Sports® in schools is defined as a fully inclusive sports or fitness program that combines an approximately equal number of students with and without intellectual disabilities. Unified Sports may be implemented using one of three styles: competitive; player development; and recreation, which includes Unified Physical Education, Young Athletes, and Unified Fitness.

Inclusive youth leadership occurs when students with and without intellectual disabilities work together to lead and plan advocacy, awareness, and other inclusive activities throughout the school year.

Whole school engagement consists of awareness and education activities that promote inclusion and reach the majority of the school population.

Social and Emotional Learning

"Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions." — Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is a strategy that becomes embedded in the school and exemplifies the integration of SEL into schools. Through sports and leadership activities in particular, the program affirms the importance and value of diversity in all areas of school life.

From our Data*

- Students who participate in the UCS program feel more supported by their teachers and peers, have higher levels of grit, receive better grades, and are more empathetic and compassionate.

- Participation in Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) teaches students social and emotional learning skills and builds character. Participants in the UCS program reported they learned about working with others (64%), helping others (68%), becoming more patient (64%), standing up for something (66%), and that they have things in common with students of different abilities (59%). Students who participated at a more intense level more often reported they learned these SEL skills than students who participated moderately or not at all.

- Students who graduate from Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools (UCS) say that the UCS program influences their lives beyond high school. Leadership opportunities cultivated through participation positively affected their personal development. They often report that the program inspired them to pursue careers or community involvement related to the disability and special education fields, and influenced their decisions about college majors and career paths (e.g., elementary/special education and speech-language pathology). Some students have been inspired to take on college majors and careers that serve others more broadly (e.g., Nursing, Medicine, Conflict Analysis Dispute Resolution).

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools Program: Year 10 Evaluation Report 2017 – 2018; Center for Social Development and education, University of Massachusetts, Boston

"From our experience, when a school has a solidified social and emotional learning curriculum you see a high school change from a me-centric culture to a school culture where everyone looks to include and have fun as a school."

**— Britney Bautista and Savannah Rock, U.S. Youth Ambassadors**

Meaningful Inclusion

The concept of meaningful inclusion promotes understanding of each student's individual value, and the mutual benefits that come from each person's contribution to the relationship. It reflects significant inclusion, not just acknowledgement that is uncalled for.

Meaningful inclusion further emphasizes that people with intellectual disabilities should not be treated as individuals who need help and pity, but rather have as much to offer as anyone. Language that emphasizes a service "for" rather than "with," and other power imbalances between people with and without intellectual disabilities are discouraged, as this often sets future behavior.

For students to experience meaningful inclusion, a Special Olympics Unified Champion School must thoughtfully implement the three-component model, which fosters co-equal opportunities for students of all abilities to genuinely participate and engage as members of their communities, not as tokens or special cases to be put on a pedestal and artificially honored.

Meaningful inclusion is at the core of the three components that make up the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools strategy:

WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS®
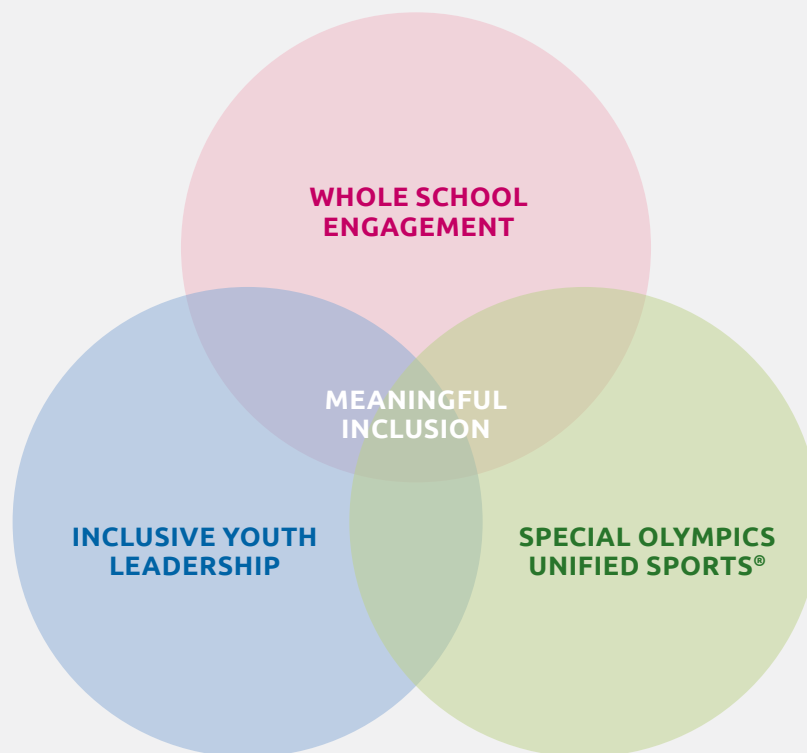
INCLUSION TILES

Purpose

Meaningful inclusion can be a hard thing to put into words. "Inclusion Tiles" are a way to start talking about this topic. People will have different ideas about what each tile and its associated concepts mean. This is because people have unique experiences. "Inclusion Tiles" do not have a designed order. They represent how people experience and interpret different interpersonal situations.

The "Inclusion Tiles" have been utilized in many different capacities from the classroom to the boardroom. They are meant to be used between students, adults, and inter-generationally. Some of the tiles have more positive or negative undertones. This activity can be replicated many times but the results can vary due to gained experiences over time. The different tiles allow for rearranging and can be applied differently based on the discussion at hand. The keywords, or concepts, on the back of each tile are used to help guide the conversation. The explanations and examples provided below are centered on the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, but tiles can be used to discuss meaningful inclusion in all forms.

Contents of Each Pack of Tiles

• 9 Inclusion Tiles using different concepts and characteristics

• 4 Create Your Own tiles to write in additional concepts and characteristics, as needed

• 4 Activity tiles, identifying different ways to use the tiles either independently or in group work

About the Tiles

Front of Tile (Concept)	Back of Tile (Characteristics)	Explanation of Concept
MEANINGFUL INCLUSION	Sense of belonging Defined by unique experiences Valuing individual identities	People with ID are seen as valuable members of society. People with and without ID are celebrated for their skills and personal qualities in school, the community and beyond. Example: Students with and without ID decide to work on a group project together and work on the assignment both in and out of class.
LASTING FRIENDSHIP	Ongoing interaction such as Unified Sports® Seeking out friends Staying in touch	People with and without ID see and treat each other as friends and equals. They actively choose to engage with one another and stay in touch. Example: An athlete and Unified partner continue to stay in touch after high school.
SITUATIONAL FRIENDSHIP	Shared environment Taking part in activities together Opportunity for new friendships	Connections made between a person with and a person without ID through an organized activity. No initiative was taken beyond that point. Example: Pair of students with and without ID only interact with one another during Unified Club meetings, Unified Sports or other activities.

Front of Tile (Concept)	Back of Tile (Characteristics)	Explanation of Concept
INCLUSION	Mutual acknowledgment Integrated opportunities Appreciating differences	People with ID are integrated into school and community spaces. With social inclusion, relationships between people with and without ID have the opportunity to grow. Example: There are no separate tables at lunch for students with ID. Everyone is encouraged to sit together.
ACCEPTANCE	Community of welcome Equal treatment Positive group interactions	People with and without ID acknowledge and warmly receive each other in communal environments. Example: Student without ID says "Hi" to students with ID in the hallway or cafeteria.
TOLERANCE	Passive interaction Service role Providing physical support Using phrases of pity or tokenism	Surface level interaction, which often singles out a person with intellectual disabilities. This can be shown through exaggerated praise. Oppositely, a person may feel "obligated" or like they are "dealing" with someone. Both are forms of tolerance. Example: Student without ID feels obligated to help student with ID in a class. That is the only time they see each other, and interaction tends to be passive rather than active.

Front of Tile (Concept)	Back of Tile (Characteristics)	Explanation of Concept
AVOIDANCE	Disregard No acknowledgement No eye contact Isolation decided by others	There is no recognition or engagement of students with ID in the school as a whole. Students without ID do not connect with students with ID on a positive level. Example: Student with ID walks down the hallway of a school and people turn their heads away as they pass them.
FEAR OF DIFFERENCE	Lack of understanding Limited interaction Deliberate separation Bullying	People with ID are purposely excluded, avoided and bullied due to minimal knowledge about ID by others. Example: Students without ID bully students with ID because those students look or act differently than themselves.
EXCLUSION	Denied access Isolation Feeling of rejection	People with ID are completely excluded from school and community environments. Opportunities are not available for those with ID. Example: Students with ID are enrolled in special education classes that are in an isolated part of the school with no opportunities to interact with other students.

Activities

Below are in-depth instructions and potential discussion questions for facilitators to use with the "Inclusion Tiles." As a reminder, each deck comes with activity tiles for participants to reference or for independent use.

Facilitator Tip: The timings provided for each activity are suggestions. Times for each activity can vary according to group size and event type.

ORDER THE TILES

Estimated Time: 1 hour for activity, 30 minutes for discussion

Participants will be asked to arrange and group the tiles. The goal is to become acquainted with the tiles and introduce conversations on meaningful inclusion.

Instructions:

1 Participants work independently to place the tiles in a sequential order that makes sense to them. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

> *Another way to instruct this activity is to pick one tile that is the "end goal." Then order the tiles in a way that will help reach that goal.*

2 Then, turn to a neighbor and explain the orders they made. *(Approx. 10 minutes: 5 minutes for each person to share)*

3 As a pair, both participants work together to create one sequence that combines both of their perspectives. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

4 Then, have one pair get with another pair. Both pairs share their thoughts on the way each pair ordered the tiles. *(Approx. 10 minutes: 5 minutes for each pair to share)*

  Repeat the process. This time grouping the tiles as follows:

5 Participants work independently to place the tiles in groupings that make sense to them. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

6 Then, turn to a neighbor and explain the groupings they made. *(Approx. 10 minutes: 5 minutes for each person to share)*

7 As a pair, both participants work together to create groupings that combine both of their perspectives. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

8 Then, have one pair get with another pair and share their thoughts on the groupings. *(Approx. 10 minutes, 5 minutes for each pair to share)*

Discussion Questions:

• How did you decide on the order or grouping with your partner and others?

• Why did you decide to put the tiles in that order or grouping, either by yourself or with others?

• Did it make more sense to put the tiles into groups or in sequential order?

• If you put the tiles in order, what needs to happen to move from one tile to another?

FIND YOUR MATCH

Estimated Time: 1 hour for activity, 30 minutes for discussion

Participants will pick a tile from the deck and work with people who picked the same color tile and answer a series of questions.

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Instructions:

1 Combine multiple decks of "Inclusion Tiles."

> *Note: The amount of decks you use will depend on the size of your group.*

2 Pass out one tile to each student.

3 Have participants get into groups with those that took the same tile as them.

> *Note: There are nine tiles in a deck. Please make sure there are at least two people that receive each tile.*

4 Have the participants answer the discussion questions below: *(Approx. 3 minutes per participant)*

   • What does this tile mean to you?

   • What is an example of it from your life or something you have seen?

   • Does this tile have more positive or negative qualities, and why?

5 Participants continue this activity in pairs or groups of people that have different tiles than them. In these groups, have each participant describe their tile. Then, they can discuss the questions below: *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

   • What is the relationship between these two different tiles?

   • Is one better than the other? Does one lead you to the other? Talk it out.

6 Do this another time, and have participants pair up with someone who has a tile they have not discussed yet. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

7 As a whole group, have one representative per tile share what they learned about their tiles from talking with others. *(Approx. 30 minutes: 3 minutes per tile)*

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Discussion Questions:

• What did you learn from talking to someone with a different tile?

• What tile do you think is most important in your relationships both inside and outside of school?

• Do you think that other people feel the same way you do?

• Why is it important to include someone different from you in a meaningful way? How would you include this person?

TALKING TILES

Estimated Time: Approx. 30 minutes – 1 hour, depending on how many tiles are discussed

This activity is an opportunity for participants to discuss the tiles and consider the applications to their lives.

. . . .

Instructions:

1 Have participants get in small groups with one deck of tiles per group. The group will shuffle the deck and then pick up one tile to start. They can answer the following questions: *(Approx. 15 minutes per tile)*

   • What does this tile mean in general?

   • What are your own experiences with the information on this tile? What are some examples of where this tile fits into your life?

   • What are some examples of this tile in action? Give one example of what this tile looks like in a school, workplace, sports team, or in the community.

2 This activity can be repeated with as many tiles as desired.

> *Optional: Ask the small groups to identify if there is a word missing from the deck. They can then use the Create Your Own tiles to write a keyword and other descriptor words to go along with it. They can even draw an image as well. Each group can share out and explain the words they have added.*

Discussion Questions:

• How are your experiences with the information on each tile different or similar to those of your peers?

• Which tiles do you think most represents your school or student body?

• Which tile would you like to represent your school or student body? What can you do to make it that way?

GUESS WHICH TILES

Estimated Time: Approximately 30 minutes

After there have been discussions around the concepts and characteristics of each tile, this activity can be used to ensure individuals have a similar understanding of what each tile represents for further discussions.

Instructions:

1 Have everyone get into small groups with one deck per group.

2 Similar to the game, "Heads Up!," have one group member hold a tile above their head, so it is facing the rest of the group.

3 The other members of the group describe the tile without using the keyword. The person holding the tile should guess the keyword to be able to move onto the next tile.

4 Keep going until the deck has been finished. Each individual should be able to take a turn being the one to guess the keyword.

Discussion Questions:

• Were some tiles easier than others to guess?

• Was it difficult or easy to explain each tile?

• Do some tiles have overlapping traits or explanations? Which ones?

CREATE YOUR OWN TILES

In each deck, there are four tiles that prompt participants to "Create Your Own." This can be done as its own activity. Have participants add their own words or concepts and discuss with others why they added them. A word can also be added collectively as a group. After discussion and decision, everyone in the class can add the same word to their deck. There is a lot of flexibility with these as the tiles provided are only examples of what different forms of inclusion or exclusion can look like.

Inclusive Youth Leadership Integration

The activities listed above can be lead by students and adult facilitators alike. Consider the following when involving student leaders in the planning and facilitation of these activities:*

- **Measure Familiarity:** Have students engage with the tiles and activities prior to having them facilitate for other students, school community members or other adults.

- **Create a Supportive Environment:** Throughout facilitation, provide a supportive space so students and others can share their experiences with meaningful inclusion freely and without judgment. This includes ensuring student facilitators engage all participants and perspectives.

- **Creativity is Welcome:** Students may have other ideas of how the "Inclusion Tiles" will help make good conversation. Be sure to work with student leaders to come up with new activities and accompanying goals of discussion.

*For more ideas, look at the Inclusive Youth Leadership Training Facilitator Guide (2019)

Research and Feedback

Below are trends discovered from a focus group to help guide your facilitation of activities using "Inclusion Tiles":

• 276 Students and 30 Adults took the survey.

• On a scale of 1 (Not Interesting) to 5 (Most Interesting), 50% of respondents gave the activity a score of 4.

• 86% of respondents said the "Inclusion Tiles" made them think about inclusion in a different way.

• The three tiles that sparked the most conversation were, "Tolerance" (23%), "Situational Friendship" (23%), and "Meaningful Inclusion" (21%).

 Why did that tile spark the most conversation? (Anecdotal Data)

 » "Tolerance is worse than people think. You should not settle for tolerance."

 » "I think that this tile sparked conversation because it is the inciting incident that starts meaningful inclusion. This fear can cause people to fear being excluded from their friends or other people. If the student isn't determined enough, they can give up easily at this step. However, once a person passes this task, it can create a path of lasting friendship and inclusion."

 » "I think that lasting friendship sparked the most conversation because we were able to discuss the differences between "situational friendships" and true, "lasting friendships." We talked about how to be a real friend to students with disabilities and go the extra mile to be with them."

Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools is looking for your feedback.

Have your group take the following survey after finishing an activity with the "Inclusion Tiles":
http://bit.ly/TileSurvey

Social Media Guidance

The "Inclusion Tiles" not only can spark conversation in the classroom but online as well. Empower participants to post their thoughts about the activity:

Example social media copy:

> Today, [Insert Club or School Name] talked about meaningful inclusion and what it means to our community. Interested in being part of the conversation? Go to www.generationunified.org.

> Inclusion is something we talk about all the time. But what does it mean to be meaningfully included? To me, it's all about [insert your thoughts on meaningful inclusion]. Learn more about meaningful inclusion at www.generationunified.org.

> As a member of the #UnifiedGeneration, I have a responsibility to make our world not just an inclusive one but a world of MEANINGFUL INCLUSION. Join me at www.generationunified.org.

Be sure to post a photo from an "Inclusion Tiles" activity along with your social media post!

Getting Tiles

Want to purchase "Inclusion Tiles" for your group to use? Please contact your local Special Olympics State Program or email usschools@specialolympics.org.

Coming Soon

The Inclusion Tiles Facilitator's Guide is the first of many additional resources to supplement the "Inclusion Tiles." Here are other resources to expect this school year:

• Student Guide, March 2020

• Video Guide, March 2020

• Facilitator's Guide, Version 2, June 2020

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IDEAs that Work

U.S. Office of Special Education Programs