Healthy Young Athletes Clinical Director

Special Olympics Health
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Healthy Young Athletes (pediatrics) **provides a holistic medical and developmental screenings**, for children ages 2-7 years old with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Through Healthy Young Athletes, volunteer health professionals provide comprehensive and holistic pediatric screenings, which include measuring vitals and biometrics, physical exams and review of systems, hearing, vision, and dental screenings, and developmental surveillance. Based on screening results, families are provided with relevant education and connected with referral recommendations in their community for follow-up care, as needed.

Purpose & Goals

The goal of Healthy Young Athletes is to identify healthcare and developmental needs in children ages 2-7 years old with and without IDD. This is achieved by:

- Creating a safe and supportive environment for parents and caregivers to share concerns about their child's health and development.
- Conducting holistic pediatric screenings, including physical exams, health screenings, and developmental surveillance.
- Connecting families with appropriate resources and community referrals.
- Providing training experiences for health professionals and students to learn to screen young children and communicate with their families.

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Importance & Impact

Healthy Young Athletes screenings help detect potential developmental delays and medical comorbidities that commonly occur in children with IDD. Broader research on children in the U.S. show the following: **13 out of 1000** children have IDD (Anderson et al., 2019).

People with developmental delays including IDD are at **greater risk for health conditions**, such as asthma, ear infections, gastrointestinal problems, headaches, and seizures, than those without developmental delays (Schieve et al., 2012