

A Healthy Weight Initiative for Special Olympics Athletes

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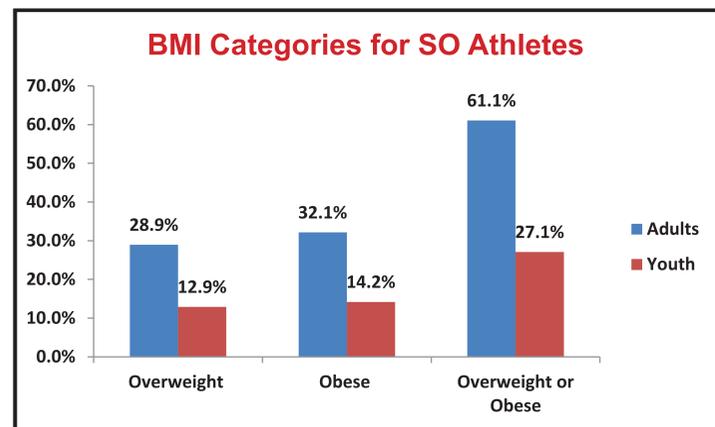
Objectives

- Identify the unique obesity risk factors for people with intellectual disability (ID.)
- Describe the goals and components of the Special Olympics (SO) Healthy Weight Initiative.
- Discuss TRAIN program.



Introduction

Worldwide, 32.1% of adult SO athletes are obese and 28.9% are overweight. More than 1 in 4 SO athletes under 21 are overweight or obese.



Obesity risk factors among people with ID include:

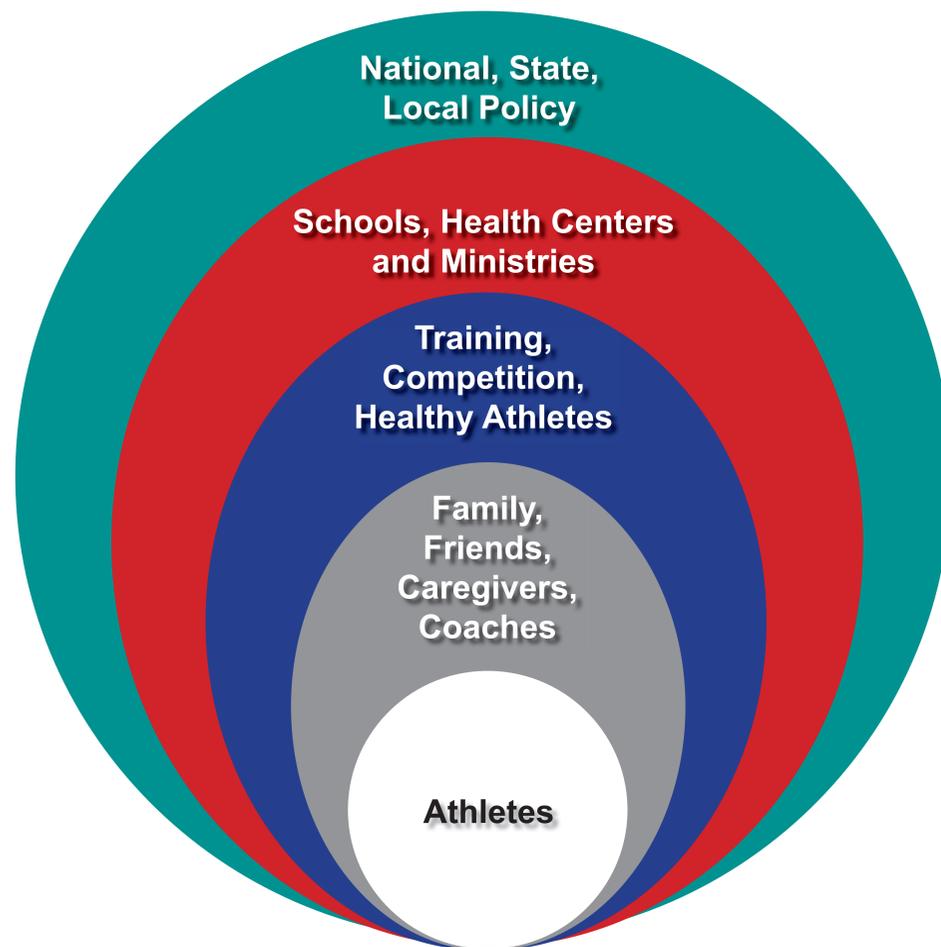
- Severity and type of disability
- Medications
- Living arrangements
- Lack of control over diet, difficulty chewing, food aversions
- Lack of access to physical activity and other participatory restrictions
- Socioeconomic status
- Limited health literacy

Healthy Weight

The Healthy Weight Initiative builds upon the existing SO sports and health programs by educating and encouraging individuals to adopt healthy behaviors around diet and physical activity, with the ultimate goals being sustained healthy weight and life-long fitness for athletes.

This socio-ecological model focuses on both individual and societal environmental factors as targets for interventions and is being seamlessly interwoven with sports programming so that health is not seen as a separate program but rather an equal, necessary component to helping athletes achieve their fullest potential both on and off the field.

Healthy Weight Socio-Ecological Model



TRAIN

TRAIN is a sports skills assessment and educational program designed to introduce athletes to sport readiness skills, appropriate sport selection, the benefits of home training and healthy eating. The nutrition stations focus on arranging a healthy, balanced meal on a plate, with the goal being for athletes to replicate these healthy meals at home and in their daily lives.

TRAIN@Home provides athletes and their friends, families and coaches with tools for achieving proper exercise and good nutrition both inside and outside the SO setting.

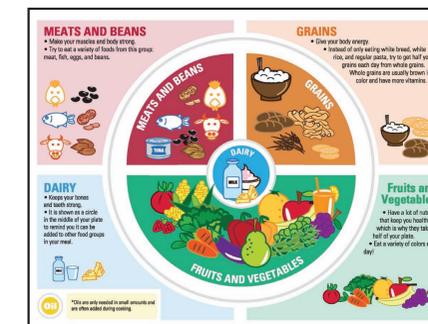


TRAIN Water Bottle

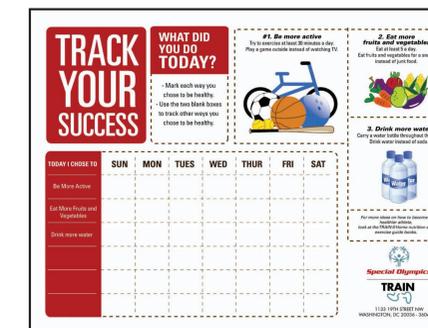
Conclusion

The existing SO sports and Healthy Athletes Programs alone are not enough to combat the increasing obesity statistics – SO athletes, their coaches and their caregivers still do not have appropriate or adequate resources to achieve healthy weight. Behavior does not occur within a vacuum, and environmental and individual health behavior change does not happen overnight. Interventions need to provide the teaching and implementation of healthy diet and physical activity, and should address both the individual athlete and their environment. Messages must be multi-faceted, reinforced over time, and delivered in a variety of settings to multiple audiences. Support mechanisms must be in a place long term for positive health habits to form and be sustained.

For more information on TRAIN go to <http://trainso.blogspot.com>



TRAIN Healthy Plate Placement



TRAIN@Home Nutrition Guide