Inclusion Tiles Facilitator Guide

www.generationunified.org

Special Olympics
Unified Champion Schools®

IDEAs that Work
U.S. Office of Special
Education Programs

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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 3-component model offers a unique combination of activities that equip young people with the knowledge, skills and training to create school climates of meaningful inclusion. Students with intellectual disabilities are routinely included in and feel part of all activities and opportunities.

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 experiences (such as Spread the Word campaigns, Respect Weeks, Fans in the Stands). Implementation of Unified Champion Schools programming can vary greatly from school to school but the framework is the same.

3 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 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 exemplifies the integration of SEL in schools. Through sports and leadership activities in particular, the program affirms the importance and value of diversity in all areas of school life.

Our Data

- **100%** of liaisons said the Unified Champion Schools (UCS) program eased the transition from middle to high school by fostering a **sense of belonging, building relationships, and providing continuity for students over time**

- **100%** of liaisons felt the UCS program is **valuable for the school** as a whole

- **95%** of UCS liaisons felt that the program has created a more **socially inclusive environment**

- **95%** of liaisons reported increased participation of students with intellectual disabilities (ID) in school activities, leading to more **inclusive attitudes** school-wide

- **91%** of liaisons indicated that the UCS program **reduces bullying, teasing and use of offensive language in school**

- **85%** of liaisons indicated that UCS programming **increases the attendance of students with ID**

- High schools that implemented UCS had a **2.6% increase in graduation rates** for students with ID and **1.3%** increase for students without intellectual disabilities (ID) (compared to schools without UCS)

- Long term exposure to the UCS program is associated with **increases in standardized test scores and GPA** for middle and high school students with and without ID

- 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**

Data updated Dec 2022*

"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 (Former 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 different relationships. It reflects significant inclusion, not just a gratuitous acknowledgement.

Meaningful inclusion emphasizes that people with intellectual disabilities should not be treated as individuals who need pity. They have strengths and skills to offer society just like everyone else. Language that emphasizes "for" rather than "with" people with intellectual disabilities is discouraged as words often prescribe behavior.

Learn more about inclusion by reading the latest research from Special Olympics and EASEL Lab at Harvard Graduate School of Education. Together, **a framework was developed for inclusive mindsets** that is centered around 3 pillars: Universal Dignity, Empathy and Perspective Taking, and Courageous Action. This framework provides a foundation to build inclusive mindsets and behaviors across Special Olympics programming.

Meaningful inclusion is at the core of the 3 components that make up the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools strategy:

WHOLE SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

INCLUSIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP

SPECIAL OLYMPICS UNIFIED SPORTS®
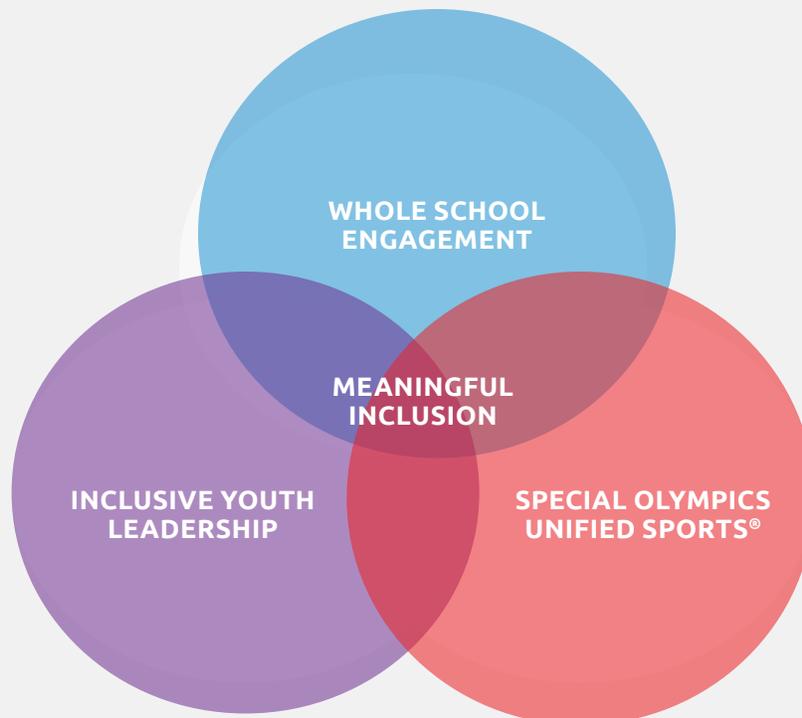
INCLUSION TILES

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 each tile and their associated concepts. This is because people have unique experiences. Inclusion Tiles do not have a designed order or explanation. They represent how people experience and interpret different interpersonal situations.

The Inclusion Tiles have been used in different capacities from the classroom to the boardroom. They are meant to be used between students, adults, and intergenerationally. Some of the Inclusion Tiles have more positive or negative undertones. Activities using Inclusion Tiles can be replicated many times and the results can vary due to gained experiences over time. Inclusion Tiles allow for rearranging and can be applied differently in the context of different discussions. 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 (ID), but Inclusion Tiles can be used to discuss meaningful inclusion in all forms.

Each Pack of Inclusion Tiles Contains:

- 9 Inclusion Tiles using different concepts and characteristics
  - Characteristics are grouped into 2 perspectives: **included perspective** (top) and **includer perspective** (bottom)
- 5 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
ACCEPTANCE	Equal treatment Positive group interactions Welcoming	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.
AUTHENTIC FRIENDSHIP	Building connection Growing community Ongoing interaction through Unified Sports® Continuing communication	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.
AVOIDANCE	Ignored Unwelcoming Clique	There is no recognition or engagement of students with ID in the school. 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.

Characteristics are grouped into 2 perspectives: included perspective (top) and includer perspective (bottom)

Front of Tile (Concept)	Back of Tile (Characteristics)	Explanation of Concept
EXCLUSION	Access denied Isolation Rejection of others	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.
FEAR OF DIFFERENCE	Limited interaction Left behind Bullying Little understanding	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.
INCLUSION	Opportunities for integration Appreciating differences Showing respect	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.

Characteristics are grouped into 2 perspectives: included perspective (top) and includer perspective (bottom)

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.
SITUATIONAL FRIENDSHIP	Taking part in activities together Shared environment 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.
TOLERANCE	Object of pity Unable to connect Little effort Helper mentality	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.

Characteristics are grouped into 2 perspectives: included perspective (top) and includer perspective (bottom)

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 1 tile that is the "end goal." Then order the tiles in a way that will help reach that goal.*

2 Then, have participants pair up and explain to each other the orders they made. *(Approx. 10 minutes, 5 minutes for each person to share)*

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

4 Then have 2 pairs combine efforts. 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 organizing the tiles as follows:

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

6 Then, each person will 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 their perspectives. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

8 Then have 2 pairs combine efforts and share their thoughts on their groupings. *(Approx. 10 minutes, 5 minutes for each pair to share)*

Discussion Questions:

• Why did you or your partner(s) decide to put the Inclusion Tiles in that order or grouping? Which tile was the most challenging to add to your group or order?

• Did it make more sense to put the Inclusion Tiles into groups or sequential order? Why or why not?

• If you put the Inclusion Tiles in order, what actions need to be taken to move from 1 tile to another?

• What do you notice about the terms on the back of each tile? What perspectives are represented by how they are sorted?

FIND YOUR MATCH

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

Participants will pick 1 of the Inclusion Tiles from the deck. They will then find those who picked the same tile and answer a series of questions.

Instructions:

1 Combine multiple decks of Inclusion Tiles.

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

2 Have students draw 1 tile, or pass out 1 tile to each student.

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

> *Note: There are 9 tiles in a deck. Please make sure there are at least 2 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?

   • Share an example of this tile from your life or something you have seen.

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

5 Participants can also do this activity with those who have different Inclusion Tiles. 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 2 tiles?

   • Is 1 better than the other? Does 1 lead you to the other? Talk it out.

6 Do this 1 more time. Have participants pair up with someone who has a tile they have not yet discussed. *(Approx. 5 minutes)*

7 As a whole group, have 1 representative per tile share what they learned about Inclusion Tiles from talking with others. *(Approx. 30 minutes: 3 minutes per tile)*

Discussion Questions:

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

• Which 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 Inclusion Tiles and consider the applications to their lives.

Instructions:

1 Have participants get in small groups with 1 deck of Inclusion Tiles per group. *(Approx. 15 minutes per tile)*

2 Have each group shuffle their deck of Inclusion Tiles.

3 Each participant takes a turn picking up a card and answering one of the following questions.

- What is your definition of the world on the tile?
- Discuss your own experience with this word.
- What are some examples of this tile in action? Think about:
    - Your school
    - Your team
    - Your community

4 Allow everyone to take turns until the deck runs out.

Discussion Questions:

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

- Which tile do you think currently 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?

Optional: Ask the small groups to identify if there is a word missing from the deck. They can create the missing tile by using a "Create Your Own' tile. Each group can share out and explain the words they have added.

Inclusion Word Bank:
Bystander, Upstander, Helper, Advocate, Supporter, Bullying, Mentor

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 1 deck per group.

2 Similar to the game, "Heads Up", have 1 group member hold 1 of the Inclusion Tiles 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 Inclusion 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 1 to guess the keyword.

Discussion Questions:

• Were some Inclusion Tiles easier than others to guess?

• Was it difficult or easy to explain each tile?

• Do some Inclusion Tiles have overlapping traits or explanations? Which ones?

Switch it up! Have students act out or draw the selected tile instead of using words.

CREATE YOUR OWN TILES

In each deck, there are 5 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 why they were added. 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. Inclusion Tiles provide flexibility. They provide examples of what inclusion and exclusion can look like.

Inclusion Word Bank:

Bystander, Upstander, Helper, Advocate, Supporter, Bullying, Mentor

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 Inclusion Tiles and activities prior to having them facilitate with others.

  If students need more background on these words and concepts, watch Unified Talks: Building a Strong and Inclusive Team.

- **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 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

Testimonials

Below are trends and feedback of Inclusion Tiles discovered from a focus group of 276 students and 30 adults:

Quantitative Data

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

Anecdotal Data

Which tile sparked the most conversation?

- "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."

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

After using Inclusion Tiles, empower your participants to post their thoughts:

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 MEANINGFUL INCLUSION mean? 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 inclusive but one filled with 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! Tag us at @SONorthAmerica

Ordering Inclusion Tiles

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

Other Resources:

Go to www.generationunified.org for more resources including our online Inclusion Tiles Game.

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