



The Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes® program is changing lives in communities across the globe, providing free eye assessments, prescription eyewear, sunglasses and sports goggles to people with intellectual disabilities. At the end of the 12-step visual exam, a decision is made if new glasses may be helpful. **Through the generosity of our corporate sponsors Essilor (lenses) and Safilo (frames), athletes choose from a selection of free eyewear.** Athletes who do not need any corrective lenses receive plano sunglasses provided by Safilo.

Criteria for Clinical Directors:

Individuals interested in acting as a Clinical Director for Opening Eyes events should have the following qualifications and skills:

- Licensed eye care professional, such as an Optometrist or Ophthalmologist
- Ability to work with local program to determine event opportunities and evaluate programming
- Recruit and train volunteer health professionals
- Obtain equipment, supplies, and athlete giveaways
- Set up and supervise Healthy Athletes venue
- Collect and report data



Purpose and Goals:

There are several ways that the Opening Eyes program helps increase athletes' access to care:

- Providing vision exams, refractions, and dispensing of appropriate eyewear to athletes during Special Olympics events
- Making permanent changes in the attitudes of the optometrists/eyecare practitioners and optometry students who volunteer to participate in the Opening Eyes vision exams
- Educating athletes, their guardians, coaches and administrators about the importance of vision to the performance of athletes in sports, school and work
- Providing continuing education to our volunteer optometrists/eyecare practitioners in order to familiarize them with the best techniques for testing this patient population
- Collecting and analyzing screening data in order to raise awareness and to advocate for improved eye care for people with intellectual disabilities

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Importance and Impact:

Opening Eyes examinations indicate a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes have untreated eye problems.

Out of SONJ athletes screened:

- **47.2%** need new prescription glasses
- **13.1%** have an eye disease
- **4.8%** have never had an eye exam