

# It's Great to be Involved!

## Sports, Camps, Trainings, Volunteering...

Transition Skills, Tips & Tools

Leisure Activities and Community Involvement



1. Belonging is a very strong feeling that a person experiences when they are valued by others.
2. Being involved in group or structured activities is a great way for teens to:
  - ✓ Enhance self-awareness and a deeper sense of self. These skills help you see and understand who you are relative to the world around you. Self-awareness is the first step toward defining your goals.
  - ✓ Explore personal interests.
  - ✓ Develop social skills.
  - ✓ Have access to resources and activities.
3. Being with peers is also important for:
  - ✓ Learning how to get along with each other and how to problem solve.
  - ✓ Having more diversity in relationships.
  - ✓ Enjoying more opportunities to learn, grow and make informed choices.
4. Community participation can help you be successful by:
  - ✓ Fostering opportunities and excitement to contribute and be part of the community.
  - ✓ Providing resources to do and achieve things that are important to you.
  - ✓ Inspiring you to share your gifts and talents with the community.
5. Participation can challenge your abilities and help you achieve your goals.
6. Take these steps to get involved:
  - ✓ Identify your gifts, talents and dreams.
  - ✓ Identify barriers and think of solutions.
  - ✓ Create a plan.
7. Look for funding and scholarships to support your activities. The Division of Specialized Care for Children (DSCC) may be able to fund camps, classes and conferences for you to attend. Discuss possible options with your DSCC care coordination team.
8. Turn this page over for suggestions on how to find leisure and community participation activities.

# It's Great Being Involved!

Ways to find opportunities for leisure and community participation:

- **Special Recreation Association Network of Illinois:** Call your nearest cooperative to find out more about special recreation services in your community - [specialrecreation.org/find-my-services.html](http://specialrecreation.org/find-my-services.html)
- **Camps:** DSCC's annual list of summer camps that provide a variety of options for all ages, including day and overnight programs (updated every spring) - [dsc.uic.edu/events/categories/camp/](http://dsc.uic.edu/events/categories/camp/)
- **YMCA:** After-school programs, specialty camps for campers with special needs, opportunities to explore new interests and passions, swimming lessons, sports and play opportunities and more - [www.ymca.org/find-your-y](http://www.ymca.org/find-your-y)
- **Special Olympics Illinois:** Allowing people with intellectual disabilities to realize their full potential in sports and in life. Programs enhance physical fitness, motor skills, self-confidence, social skills and encourage family and community support - [www.soill.org/](http://www.soill.org/)
- **DO-IT:** Students with disabilities can connect with mentors to learn about opportunities in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) - [www.washington.edu/doiit](http://www.washington.edu/doiit)
- **Lions of Illinois Foundation:** Serving people with vision and hearing needs - [lionsofillinoisfoundation.org/](http://lionsofillinoisfoundation.org/)
- **Neighborhood Parents Network:** Connecting Chicago parents, parent workshops and support groups - [www.npnparents.org/](http://www.npnparents.org/)
- **Illinois Network of Centers for Independent Living (CILs):** Peer support (social activities and meetings for a wide variety of disability categories) - [www.incil.org/](http://www.incil.org/)
- **Boys and Girls Clubs of America:** Programs designed to empower youth to excel in school, become good citizens and lead a healthy, productive life - [www.bgca.org/get-involved/ find-a-club](http://www.bgca.org/get-involved/find-a-club)
- **4-H:** A youth development program - [4-h.org/find/](http://4-h.org/find/)
- **Supporting Illinois Brothers and Sisters:** Provides support to siblings of people with disabilities by connecting them with information, networking opportunities and resources in order to enhance the quality of life for their entire family - [www.sibsnetwork.org/](http://www.sibsnetwork.org/)
- **Illinois Department of Natural Resources:** Kids' events, gardening tips, activity books, education materials, earth day in the parks and more - [dnr.illinois.gov/](http://dnr.illinois.gov/)
- **Best Buddies Illinois:** Offers one-to-one friendship, socialization opportunities, integrated employment and leadership development programs for individuals with and without disabilities - [www.bestbuddies.org/illinois/](http://www.bestbuddies.org/illinois/)
- **Wishing Organizations:** Make-A-Wish - [illinois.wish.org/](http://illinois.wish.org/); A Special Wish Chicago - [www.aswchicago.org/](http://www.aswchicago.org/); Dream Factory Central Illinois - [www.dreamfactoryinc.org/centralillinois/](http://www.dreamfactoryinc.org/centralillinois/), all grant dreams or wishes to critically and chronically ill children and youth ages 3-18.
- **School Activities:** After-school activities can offer some of the best learning experiences. Discover what your school offers and get involved with activities. You can develop new skills, increase self-esteem, improve social skills, have a change of pace and diversity, plus, it will look good on your resume or college application.
- **Faith-Based Youth Programs:** Can empower, protect and support well-being. Take a look at what is offered in your community.
- **Girl Scouts:** Fun activities, friendships, life skills, community experiences and more - [www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/our-program.html](http://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/our-program.html)
- **Boy Scouts:** Scouting fun, hands-on-learning and achievement - [www.scouting.org/](http://www.scouting.org/)
- **Local Library:** Check with your library about inclusive programs for children with disabilities - [publiclibraries.com/state/illinois/](http://publiclibraries.com/state/illinois/)

## We're here to help.

To learn more about the Division of Specialized Care for Children's programs and services, check out our website at: [dsc.uic.edu](http://dsc.uic.edu)

