



## **Disability Awareness Month**

### **INCREASING AWARENESS IN THE CLASSROOM AND WITH YOUTH GROUPS**

Have you ever seen a group of children mocking the way a person with a disability walks? Have you ever overheard a child call a person with a disability a disparaging name? When children don't understand why a person is different, they often make fun of him or her.

It is important for people to understand that people with disabilities are more alike than different. For children, this is especially important because attitudes develop during childhood by watching and listening to peers, teachers and family. Schools, clubs and youth groups are ideal places to increase knowledge about people with disabilities and to foster positive attitudes about them.

The information contained in this packet provides suggestions for planning and implementing a disability awareness unit in your classroom, club, youth group, school or school district. Several additional new or alternate ideas are provided for each section. Resources are enclosed, including: a list of web-based resources, a children's book list (available for download from the Disability Awareness Month CD), two coloring books (available for download from the CD), communication tips, language guidelines, accessibility survey, celebrity quiz, sign language alphabet, sign language riddles, Braille alphabet and Braille secret code activity.

*NOTE: Activities that simulate a disability, such as being blind-folded or spending the day sitting in a wheelchair, should be avoided. These activities focus on what people with disabilities cannot do, rather than what they can do with appropriate access, technology or training. Also, because the simulated "impairment" is only for a short period of time, it is difficult for participants to truly experience real limitation in a meaningful way.*

## **Planning**

There are several important factors that will help make the disabilities unit successful. These include teamwork among teachers or youth group leaders in sharing resources and ideas; a willingness to commit the necessary time and effort; volunteers to share their expertise and experiences; and setting aside time to increase the awareness of everyone who will be helping to implement activities before they talk with children.

To increase awareness, plan several meetings with the adults who will be assisting with activities prior to the start of the disabilities unit. The first meeting should cover general awareness, interacting with people with disabilities and basic planning. You might want to invite someone from a local disabilities organization in your area to provide information at the meeting.

Decisions should be made regarding the length of the unit and the topics to be discussed. The unit described in this packet is six weeks long, but you might choose to condense it. Later meetings should focus on planning and learning about the unit's weekly topics. This allows all adults who are participating in the unit to share resources and ideas. Examples of activities include:

- Children/youth can evaluate the school, local businesses or facilities to see if they are accessible for people with disabilities. If the facility is not accessible, the students can provide suggestions for improvement (accessibility survey enclosed).
- Children could write lyrics related to what they are learning to popular tunes they are already familiar with.
- An art, poster or essay contest on the theme of this year's awareness month.
- A person with a disability or group of advocates could visit for the day for a workshop, panel discussion or school assembly.
- A story hour during which the youth group sponsor, school's principal or a local celebrity reads stories about children with disabilities.
- A drama troupe or athletic team of people with disabilities or a speaker or athlete with a disability talking about his/her experiences.
- A small group or classroom could host a person(s) with disabilities for a visit.
- A sign language interpreter could visit the group or classrooms giving brief sign language lessons.

- Children/youth could research disability topics and create a PowerPoint presentation for the group or class.

### **Incorporating the Awareness Month Theme**

Throughout the unit, you should discuss with your students this year's Disability Awareness Month theme, displaying the poster in your classroom and making the bookmarks and stickers available to them. Also ask your students how they can welcome and include children with disabilities in schools and communities.

For older students, consider holding an essay contest pertaining to the Awareness Month theme. The winning essays could be printed in the school and/or community newspaper(s).

### **Materials**

The Council offers Disability Awareness Month materials that can be included with your awareness unit. A supply of posters, bookmarks and stickers was included with your order, along with a Power of Words brochure that provides valuable information about interaction with people with disabilities. Also consider reviewing the following information packets that can also be downloaded from the Disability Awareness Month CD: Activity Suggestions for Children, Arts Program, Essay Contest, Mayor's Story Hour and Library Display, Special Event – Awareness Day, Special Event – Speaker and Increasing Awareness through Athletics and Physical education.

### **Week One – Different and Alike**

The goal for this first week is to find out what the children know about disabilities and address any questions or concerns they have. Discussion will focus on people's *differences and similarities* so that children can begin to understand that all people are different in some ways and alike in others. You might choose to use the sample lesson plan in this packet to illustrate people's differences and similarities.

Also use the first week to discuss the idea of inclusion. Everyone wants to be part of the group. How does it feel to be left out? What can the class/school do to make sure all students are welcomed and included?

Activities for this week could include reading stories about children with disabilities selected from the children's books list near the end of this packet (a longer booklist is available

for download from the CD). You can read the book aloud or have small groups pick out a book to read together. Children could prepare a written or verbal book report, illustrate the book in a drawing or on poster board, or a scene from the book could be acted out. Depending on the age of the children, have them talk about the book and evaluate it according to the following criteria.

1. **Does the book have an interesting plot or is the disability the only theme?** Does the book show people with disabilities in the mainstream of life with other friends? Are the characters included in real situations like other children?
2. **Does the book deal with the whole person or just the disability?** Does the book just focus on the character's disabilities or does it also focus on the character himself/herself? Is the character a person you would enjoy knowing or being friends with?
3. **Is the individual shown as a capable person with strengths as well as needs?** People with disabilities have abilities, strengths and individual interests.
4. **Does the book foster positive attitudes toward others?** Often, books about disabilities show pity towards people with disabilities and give them an image of being helpless people instead of capable people.
5. **Does the book use "people-first" language?** "People first" language emphasizes the person and not the disability. For example, "a person who uses a wheelchair" instead of "a person confined to a wheelchair," and "a person with Cerebral Palsy" instead of "a Cerebral Palsy victim." (see attached language guide)
6. **Does the book highlight similarities as well as show differences?** Does it show that the child with a disability is more like his/her peers than different?

This first week is also a good time to tell the students about "Aunt Blabby," an anonymous person (teacher or other individual) to whom children can write with questions about people with disabilities. Have the children make and decorate a mailbox which will be used to mail their letters to Aunt Blabby. The box should remain in the room for the entire length of the unit. Consider having the children share with the rest of the group their letters to and responses from Aunt Blabby. Also this week, have the children put together a ME book, highlighting their individual characteristics. Take individual photographs of the children to be included in their books or have them bring photos from home.

**Additional ideas:**

1. Have the class plant an "inclusion" garden including flowers and plants with different characteristics. Ask students to describe how each is beautiful in a unique way. Students can write an essay or journal entry on the ways the garden reflects the diversity of their community.

2. Develop a class motto or mission statement that highlights the inclusive nature of the classroom or implement a slogan contest: “I feel included when...”, “I feel included because...”.
3. Ask students to write or tell about a time that they didn’t feel “included” in a group. Talk about how it made them feel. Ask them how their experience relates to anyone who is perceived as different and what challenges they might face in a school setting.
4. Design a classroom mural to depict the students’ perception of what an inclusive school and community looks like or have them make a list of all the ways they can make sure children with disabilities are included and feel welcomed.

### **Week Two – Interacting with People with Disabilities**

There is an appropriate and inappropriate way to interact with people with disabilities. For example, the phrase “person with a disability” is preferred instead of “handicapped person” because the word “handicapped” is said to derive from “cap in hand,” a phrase associated with beggars and begging. Here’s another example: When talking to a person who is blind, do not yell or raise your voice. The person can hear just fine. The attached language guidelines and Ten Commandments of Etiquette can be duplicated and given to children.

Easter Seals Crossroads offers these helpful hints when meeting people with disabilities:

1. It’s okay to offer your help to someone, but don’t just go ahead. Ask first. Or wait for someone to ask you for your help.
2. It’s okay to ask people about their disabilities and it’s also okay for them not to talk about it.
3. Remember, just because people use wheelchairs, it doesn’t mean they are sick. Lots of people who use wheelchairs are healthy and strong.
4. It’s okay to ask people who have speech problems to repeat what they said if you didn’t understand the first time.
5. Don’t speak loudly when talking to people with visual impairments. They hear as well as you do.
6. Never pet or play with seeing-eye dogs or other assistance animals. They can’t be distracted from the job they are doing.
7. Invite friends with disabilities to join you in daily activities and special occasions. For example, invite friends with disabilities to sleep over, come to your house to play or to your birthday party. Think about ways to make sure they can be involved in the things you do.

8. Don't park in places reserved for people with disabilities. Children, don't let your parents park in these spaces.
9. When you go to restaurants and shopping malls, see if a friend with a disability would be able to be there with you. If not, ask the manager to put in ramps, get raised numbers for the elevators, or have picture menus or Braille menus printed.
10. Treat a person with a disability the way you like to be treated, and you'll have a friend for life.

People with disabilities are entitled to the courtesies that you extend to anyone. This includes their personal privacy. If you don't generally ask people personal questions, then don't ask those questions of people with disabilities.

### **Some general considerations for disability etiquette**

- If you don't make a habit of leaning or hanging on to people you're with, then don't lean or hang on someone's wheelchair. Wheelchairs are an extension of personal space for people who use them.
- When you offer to assist someone who is blind, don't grab them by the arm instead allow the person to take your arm. This will help you to guide, rather than propel or lead the person.
- Treat people with disabilities the same way you treat others.

### **In conversation**

- When talking with someone with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or interpreter who might be along.
- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use accepted, common expressions, such as "See you later" or "Got to be running along," that seems to relate to the person's disability.
- To get the attention of a person with a hearing impairment, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. Not all persons with hearing impairments can lip-read. Those who do will rely on facial expressions and other body language to help in understanding. Show consideration by placing yourself facing the light source and keeping your hands and food away from your mouth when speaking. Shouting won't help. Written notes will.
- When talking with a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, place yourself at the eye level of the person to spare you both a stiff neck.
- When greeting a person who is blind, always identify yourself and others who are with you. Say, for example, "On my right is Penelope Potts." When conversing in a group, remember to say the name of the person to whom you are speaking to give verbal cue. Speak in a normal tone of voice, indicate when you move from one place to another and say goodbye when the conversation is at an end.

- Give whole, unhurried attention when you're talking to a person with a speech impairment. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting, be patient rather than speak for the person. When necessary, ask short questions that require short answers or a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Repeat what you understand. The person's reaction will clue you in and guide you to understanding.

### **Some common courtesies**

- When giving directions to a person using a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs and steep hills.
- Use specifics such as "left a hundred feet" or "right two yards" when directing a person who is blind.
- Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to get things done. Let the person set the pace in walking and other activities.
- When planning events involving persons with disabilities, consider their needs ahead of time. If a barrier exists that you can't fix move the event. If that's not possible let them know about it prior to the event.

In your discussions for this part of the disability unit, talk about appropriate interaction. Ask children why it is important to say goodbye to a person who is blind, why they shouldn't lean on a person's wheelchair or pet a service dog.

Also discuss the "people-first" language and attitude. Children should not have a problem understanding this concept after discussing similarities and differences last week. "People first" recognizes that although people with disabilities might appear different, they are *people first* and their disability comes second. For this week's activities, choose one or more stories that demonstrate the "people first" attitude. Also, have the children make a collage. Have them work in small groups to cut out pictures in magazines that depict people helping each other. Combine the pictures in a large collage to be displayed in the room or somewhere else.

### **Additional ideas:**

1. Have the class study the use of "person-first" language when talking about people with differences in language, culture and ability. Include a discussion of what personal characteristics you want people to emphasize when they refer to you. Each student can sign a contract committing to using person first language in their conversations and sharing this information with others in their family and community. Give them a copy of the attached language guidelines for reference.

2. Have the children form small groups of 5 to 7 and develop a short skit showing interactions with people with different kinds of disabilities. Have them act out the scenario doing everything wrong and let the class identify the mistakes. Then have them act it out correctly. Give them copies of the enclosed Ten Commandments of Etiquette as a guide. Sample scenarios:
  - a. You notice a person who is blind and needs help. How do you make your presence known? What assistance do you offer?
  - b. You meet someone who uses a wheelchair. Where should you stand while talking?
  - c. You have a question for a person with a disability, who is with a friend. To whom should you address the question?
3. Give the children a copy of the Ten Commandments of Etiquette and ask them to share it with their family.

### **Week Three – An Overview of Disabilities**

The goal for this week is to discuss disabilities in general. Talk about why people might have a disability – some are born with a disability and others acquire the disability (an accident, disease or old age). Perhaps a student in your class has a family member, friend or neighbor who has a disability. Allow the students to share with the class.

Talk about physical disabilities and equipment that people who have physical disabilities use, such as wheelchairs, leg braces, artificial arms or legs, etc. If possible, have some of these items in the class so the children can explore them. Also, read and discuss stories about children with disabilities with your class.

Another suggested activity focuses on accessibility and the Universal Access Symbol. Begin by showing a picture of the symbol (at the end of this packet) and explaining what the Universal Access Symbol means and how it is used. This might include wide aisles and oversized bathrooms for people who use wheelchairs, parking spaces near entrances/exits, interpreters for people who are deaf or special assistance upon request. Suggest that people with disabilities might need supports to contribute fully to society, like people with poor vision need glasses. These accommodations, marked by the Universal Access Symbol, allow people with disabilities to have the same access and independence that people without disabilities have. It is



important to explain that even though the symbol is a person in a wheelchair, it translates into accessibility for people with a variety of disabilities. (There are a few other Universal Access Symbols that denote accessibility for specific disabilities such as hearing. But the primary access symbol is the person in the wheelchair.)

Then explain that having a disability doesn't mean a person can't do the same types of things as people without disabilities. People with disabilities have jobs, go to school and are moms, dads, brothers and sisters. The only difference is that they might need accommodations like ramps or appropriate space to maneuver a wheelchair, materials in large-size print or equipment like a voice-activated computer or a phone that can be answered by tapping on a switch.

Ask children to name places where they have seen the Universal Access Symbol sign. The children should begin to realize that the symbol is found in a variety of places, which demonstrates that people with disabilities are everywhere, doing the same types of daily activities as people without disabilities.

Now ask children to identify people they know who have disabilities – everyone probably knows someone with a disability. Give examples from your own life such as your mom who has arthritis, your uncle who uses a hearing aid, your nephew who has a learning disability or your friend who wears eyeglasses. Explain that there are many very famous actors, politicians and inventors that have had disabilities. Mention a few examples or ask children if they know of any. The purpose of this discussion is to point out the variety of disabilities and that disability is a natural part of life.

Explain that people with disabilities have the same likes, dislikes, fears and hopes. They have goals, wants and needs. Physical and attitudinal barriers, however, keep people with disabilities from having opportunities to be friends, coworkers, etc.

Ask the children during the course of a week to keep a list of everywhere they see Universal Access Symbol signs. They should also pick one place and examine its accessibility.

For example:

- Are appropriate signs used to note access?
- Do restrooms appear to be large enough for wheelchairs and do they have grab bars on the walls?
- Do doorways appear to be large enough for wheelchairs?
- Do elevators have Braille next to each button and enunciators or “beepers” for each floor?

- Are there accessible parking spaces near entrances/exits? (Children should check to see if cars parked in accessible spaces have plates or placards with the Universal Access Symbol.)

Explain to children that there are exact guidelines defining accessibility for businesses and communities to follow. Although they won't know for sure if a public bathroom stall is the right size, they can at least check to see if an attempt has been made to make it accessible.

Some teachers have organized an accessibility scavenger hunt for students during Disability Awareness Month. Armed with accessibility checklists and yardsticks, students explored the school and downtown buildings, checking for compliance with ADA regulations. Students prepared a report, including needed improvements, for their principal, and everything was promptly fixed.

Also ask children to survey a family member, friend or neighbor. They should ask questions such as:

- Do you have a disability?
- If so, what types of accommodations do you use?
- If not, do you work with or know someone who has a disability?
- What types of accommodations do they use to work or perform daily activities?

Discuss the results of the children's research. Are people with disabilities always treated like people without disabilities? Encourage them to remember that people with disabilities should have the same opportunities and be treated like everyone else.

**Additional Ideas:**

1. Ask the children to design a chart outlining the features of a school, store, restaurant or other public place that would make it more accessible to people with disabilities. Use the enclosed Access survey to collect data on the school, meeting facility and/or local businesses that have these accessible features. At the conclusion of the project, present an award to the business that has the most accessible features.
2. Have students research federal and state laws that protect human and civil rights. Research disability laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Act or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. How do they apply to our schools and communities?

3. Have small groups read a short story, book or article about different kinds of disabilities. Ask them to discuss the main character and his or her disability. What would it be like to have that disability? What did they learn about the thoughts, feelings and abilities of people with disabilities? If the book's character came to the children's school, how could they adapt activities to include that person? Have them report to the class.
4. Read about or have the children research and write a brief report on a well-known person with a disability. Was the person famous before or after they had a disability? Did they encounter problems? Would those same problems exist today? For one list with links to others go to: [www.disabilityhistory.org/people.html](http://www.disabilityhistory.org/people.html)
5. Have children take the Celebrity Quiz (enclosed). Small groups could research the names on the list to find out the correct answers then share with the class.

#### **Week Four – Communication, Speech and Hearing Disabilities**

This week, help your class understand what it might be like to have a communication, speech or hearing disability. Briefly discuss with your class why some people can't hear or communicate verbally.

Discuss sign language as a communication system. Invite someone who knows or speaks in sign language that can come into the class. Have each child learn how to finger-spell their first names using copies of the enclosed sign language alphabet. There are many good books about sign language. Teach the children a new simple sign language term each day and encourage them to use it throughout the day.

Some people who cannot hear have hearing-ear dogs to let them know when the phone rings or if someone is knocking on their door. Others have special devices that use flashing lights instead of rings for the telephone and doorbell. Another form of communication is the Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) which is used in place of a telephone. Closed-captioned programs allow people with hearing impairments to enjoy watching TV.

While many people who cannot hear or talk often use sign language to communicate with others, people with speech impairments might not have a hearing impairment. People who can hear but not speak often use speech boards or special computers that can talk for them. The speech boards have words, letters and numbers that the person can point to when they want to communicate. Talking computers are activated by pointing to pictures or words, by moving the

eyes, or by beaming light from a special wand that is attached to a headband and worn on the head. Contact a rehabilitation center to see if these devices are available to show to your students or if someone who uses one of these devices would visit the class.

**Additional ideas:**

1. Break up into small groups and give each group a short sentence or statement such as: It's raining or I am very hungry, are you? Vary the complexity of the statement depending on the age of the students. In small groups, think of as many different ways as possible to communicate an idea without speaking out loud. Have individual students/groups members try to communicate the statement and response to everyone else. Write a list of all the communication ideas and discuss which ones worked best and why.
2. Expand your morning circle activity to include various modes of communication. Use sign language, foreign languages and augmentative communication supports (including photos, pictures and assistive technology devices, etc.) to expose children/students to the variety of ways that people can communicate.
3. Have children find out more about alternate ways to communicate. Have them make a class activity schedule using a variety of communications methods such as audio recording, pictures, etc. A good website to use for research and free copies of pictures is: <http://trainland.tripod.com/communication.htm>
4. Using a riddle book and a copy of the enclosed sign language alphabet, work in pairs to tell and guess the answers to riddles. See attached American Sign Language alphabet and sign language riddles.
5. Sit in a circle. The teacher/leader should spell a three-letter word using the sign language alphabet. The person next in the circle must state the word that has been spelled and then spell another word, using the last letter of the teacher/leader's word as the first letter of the new word. Continue around the circle so that everyone has several chances to play. After the first round, you might try longer words or words that fit into a specific category (e.g., foods or animals)
6. On the Internet, research Relay Indiana ([www.relayindiana.com](http://www.relayindiana.com)), a phone service for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Work with your local independent living center,

- college/university student disability services center or rehabilitation agency to identify a person in your community who would be willing to serve as a Relay Indiana “phone pal.” Set up a time to call this person using the Relay Indiana service. Using a speaker phone so that everyone can listen and experience the Relay service have several children ask questions of the phone pal. Be sure to send a thank-you note afterward.
7. Have children research and report on topics such as the Deaf President Now Movement at Gallaudet University, the origin of sign language, does facilitated communication work?, how to receive and make a Relay call, or communications equipment: what does it do and who does it help?.
  8. Watch a short movie or TV show, turning off the sound and use closed captioning. Discuss how this technology can assist people who are deaf or hard of hearing and then discuss how closed-captioning also benefits people without disabilities. For example, televisions with closed captioning can help people learn to read or learn to speak English. They are now very common in places with high noise levels, such as airports and fitness centers.

### **Week Five – Visual Disabilities**

Focus this week’s discussion on visual disabilities and the types of things people with visual disabilities use to participate in daily life. Explain what happens to the eyes when a person can’t see. Some children in the class might have to wear eyeglasses to help them see. People with visual impairments need much stronger glasses and other devices to help them see.

Contact a disabilities organization and/or a low-vision specialist in your area for equipment, including Braille books, to show your children/students. They might also know of people who are blind or with visual impairments who would be willing to talk with your group. There might even be someone in your area who has a guide or leader dog.

Introduce your students to the Braille alphabet (enclosed). You might want to plan other activities that focus on the senses (sounds, smells and touches) blind people use to identify their surroundings and move around. Review tips for interacting with people with visual disabilities.

#### **Additional ideas**

1. Not all people who are blind read Braille. In fact, there are many other options available to help people read in a non-visual way. Ask the children to research

alternatives to Braille, such as screen-reading computer software, books on CD, books that can be downloaded to a computer or digital music player and read aloud, and much more.

2. Rent a movie from your local library that is “audio described.” And play a short segment. This type of technology, for people who are blind or have vision impairments, describes out loud what is happening on the screen. Turn off the screen or have them close their eyes and try to picture what is on the screen just from the audio description. Discuss how this technology can benefit people both with and without disabilities.
3. Borrow several Braille books or documents from your local library, school resource center, local independent living center, college student disability services center or rehabilitation agency. Distribute the Braille letters handout. Tell the children that some people who are blind use this system of raised dots to read with their fingertips. Divide the children into small teams and give each team a book printed in Braille. Allow time for them to “read” several passages of the text. Afterward, discuss what it was like to read the raised dots. Remind the children that people who are blind can, with practice, read Braille just as quickly as we read visually.
4. Distribute the Braille Secret Code Activity and Braille alphabet handout. Ask the children to use their Braille alphabet as a code breaker to read the Braille message. Award a small prize to the person who “cracks the code” first. To continue the activity, ask the children to compose short written “secret messages” to a partner, drawing the Braille dots on paper. Then give time for the children to translate their partner’s message.
5. Using the Braille letter handout, a glue stick, mini marshmallows and a piece of construction paper have younger children write their name in Braille by gluing marshmallows to the paper. Alternatively have them write the name of their favorite color or animal and trade with another child to see if they can translate it.
6. Organize a scavenger hunt to discover where Braille is used in the community. Older children can complete this scavenger hunt competitively in small groups if desired, or younger children can complete the activity as a group. Take along a video camera or digital camera to record each item when it is found. Items on the Braille scavenger

hunt list could include: A building sign, such as room number, emergency exit or restroom signage that includes Braille lettering.

- A Braille menu from a local restaurant.
- A Braille-labeled elevator button.
- A public telephone with Braille-labeled buttons and/or instructions.
- A Braille book at the local library and/or bookstore, such as a dictionary, children's book, religious text and/or novel.
- An ATM with Braille-labeled buttons.
- A Braille brochure, price list, contract or other document prepared by a local business for its customers who are blind.
- An official government document, such as a court document, offered in a Braille format.

### **Week Six – Bringing it All Together**

This week, celebrate the abilities of people with disabilities. Have a special lunch or “party” for the children and their peer buddies. This is a good time to announce the winners of the art or poster contest and present other special awards.

#### **Additional Ideas:**

1. Have individual children write an essay or list of the most important things they learned about people with disabilities. For young children this could be done as a class and posted on a wall or bulletin board.
2. Arrange a visit to a local rehabilitation agency or hospital, independent living center, medical device supplier, or other local organization that sells, rents or uses adaptive equipment for people with disabilities. If possible, allow the children to try out the equipment. Be sure to leave time for them to ask questions of the organization's representative. Afterward, emphasize that these devices allow people with disabilities to accomplish almost any task.
3. Show a movie or documentary that depicts people with disabilities as major characters. Use everything that has been learned to talk about how people with disabilities are portrayed in the movies: Were the actors really people with disabilities? Do you think that an actor with a disability could have done a better job? What barriers did they run into? How did people treat them? Were they able to overcome barriers? How did their disability help them or get in the way of what they wanted to do? Did you see any examples of the Ten Commandments of Etiquette or people-first language? What kinds of assistive technology did you see? Use some of

the discussion points about books on page 4 to help children analyze the film. Some examples of movies include Finding Nemo (small fin), for very young children. For older children some suggestions are: Song of Our Children (PBS documentary on school inclusion), Riding the Bus with my Sister (intellectual disabilities); Children of a Lesser God or Mr. Holland's Opus (deaf); Murder Ball (spinal cord injury); What's Eating Gilbert Grape or Rain Man (autism), Door to Door or My Left Foot (Cerebral Palsy), Warm Springs (Pres. Roosevelt/polio), Up Syndrome (down syndrome), The Other Sister or Forest Gump (intellectual disability) and Mask (facial disfigurement). For more films go to: <http://disabilityfilms.tripod.com/>.

4. Have the children teach a lesson about interacting with people with disabilities to another class or younger grade. For example groups of children could work as a group to put on a skit or do a power point presentation and/or sing a song they created.
5. Have the children create a display for the entire school with pictures they made, essays, lists and important facts and tips.
6. Have the children collaborate on an article for the school newsletter or develop a publication to send to their parents about what they have learned.



(Sample Lesson Plan for Young Children)

**Week One: Similarities and differences**

Materials needed:     large cardboard dolls (cut-outs)  
                              wheelchair  
                              walker  
                              name cards

Overview: Children should be gathered in a group around the teacher. The three dolls will be the focus of attention.

Introduce first doll as a person named \_\_\_\_\_ [suggestions from group] who was born very much like all of you. [Add a name tag.]

Ask children to name similarities in all children (arms, legs, etc.).

Ask children to name some differences among all children (skin color, eyes, hair color, and gender). [Add hair and eyes to the doll.]

Have children continue to name similarities. [Add name tags, eyes, hair, etc., until all three dolls have been discussed.]

Name three additional differences in the dolls:

1. Cerebral Palsy (might need support in sitting, walking and talking)
2. Autism (signals to/from your brain are interrupted)
3. Intellectual disability (might not learn as quickly or as much as you)

Ask the children if they know other children who have one of these disabilities.

Ask the children to think of other ways in which the children they mentioned are just like them. Most children, for example, like fuzzy animals, music, balls, balloons, playing, hugs, smiles, sitting on lap of mom or dad, visiting grandparents, stories, television, friends, Christmas, birthdays. In other words, children with disabilities have many of the same interests as children without disabilities. They also can do many of the same things and we should never assume they can't participate in activities.

## Disability Awareness Resources for Teachers

### Web-based resource for additional activities and ideas

**Inclusive Schools celebrations:** [www.inclusiveschools.org](http://www.inclusiveschools.org)

Celebration Kit, which will include publications that speak to the benefits of inclusive schools, celebration ideas, lesson plans and other publications.

**Bandaides and Blackboards:** [www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides/](http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides/)

A site about growing up with medical problems of any type. Its goal is to help people understand what it's like, from the perspective of the children and teens who are doing just that.

**Kids Quest:** [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/kidhome.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/kidhome.htm)

This site is intended to get 4<sup>th</sup> through 6<sup>th</sup> grade children to think about people with disabilities and some of the issues related to daily activities, health and accessibility.

**Count Me In:** [www.pacer.org/puppets/count.asp](http://www.pacer.org/puppets/count.asp)

This puppet program was designed to help children and adults learn about disabilities and chronic illnesses in an effort to bridge the gap between typical students and those with disabilities included in the classroom.

**Bibliography of Disability Awareness Resources:**

<http://www.parentcenterhub.org/resources/>

A list of materials on disability awareness from NICHY. Provides a brief descriptions, the age range for which it is intended; the name, address, phone number, email and web address of the company from which it is available. Includes: curriculum; books; children's books; videos; and posters and other merchandise.

**Famous People with Disabilities:** [www.disabilityhistory.org/people.html](http://www.disabilityhistory.org/people.html)

A list of people with disabilities who have made history with information about them and links to other sites.

**Teacher books and publications:**

Many of these resource or similar titles are available on loan at no cost from the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community Library. To find out more go to: [www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/)

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*Moving on.* This video documents the educational and professional accomplishments of six people with disabilities with the music of Indiana's John Mellencamp, who was a patient at Riley Hospital.

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**NOTE:** For a longer book list, with grade level designations and plot descriptions, download the Children's book list also included on the Disability Awareness CD.

## **Ten Commandments of Etiquette for Communicating with People with Disabilities**

The following Ten Commandments of Etiquette will help you communicate more effectively with people with disabilities.

1. When talking with a person with a disability, use eye contact and speak directly to that person rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
2. When introduced to a person with a disability, it is appropriate to offer to shake hands. People with limited hand use or who wear an artificial limb usually can shake hands. (Shaking hands with the left hand is an acceptable greeting.)
3. When meeting a person who is visually impaired, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. When conversing in a group, remember to identify the person to whom you are speaking.
4. If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
5. Treat adults as adults. Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others. Never patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder.
6. A wheelchair is part of the personal body space of the person who uses it. Leaning on a person's wheelchair is similar to leaning on a person and is generally considered inappropriate.
7. Listen attentively when you're talking with a person who has difficulty speaking. Be patient and wait for the person to finish, rather than correcting or speaking for the person. If necessary, ask short questions that require short answers, a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty in doing so. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond.
8. When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair or a person who uses crutches, place yourself at eye level in front of the person to facilitate the conversation.
9. To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively to determine if the person can read your lips. Be sensitive to those who lip read by placing yourself so that you face the light source and keeping hands and food away from your mouth when speaking.
10. Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you use common expressions – such as “See you later” or “Did you hear about that?” – that seem to relate to the person's disability. It's okay to ask questions when you're unsure of what to do.

This list and language guide is available as part of in the Council's *Power of Words* brochure, which was included with your order.



## LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

| <b>Disrespectful/inappropriate terms</b>   | <b>Respectful terms</b>   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Crazy/insane/deranged</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Psychiatric disability</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cripple/crippled person</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person with a disability</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deaf and dumb/deaf-mute</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deaf or *hard of hearing, as appropriate – Deafness refers to a profound hearing loss, while a person who is hard of hearing has mild to moderate hearing loss. When the person is also unable to speak, say “person who is deaf and unable to speak.” * People with hearing loss is now the preferred term</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Differently-abled/Handi-capable</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has a disability – Avoid trendy or “cute” terms, which are viewed by many people with disabilities as condescending.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The disabled/the blind/the deaf</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People with disabilities/people who are blind/people who are deaf</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Handicap</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disability</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Handicapped parking/restrooms/seating</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accessible parking/restrooms/seating</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mental retardation/mentally retarded</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intellectual disability/person with an intellectual disability – “Cognitive disability” is also widely used.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mongoloid</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person with Down syndrome</li> </ul>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retard</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Person with an intellectual disability</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stricken with/victim of/suffering from [a particular disability]</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Had or has [a particular disability] – Do not use negative terms that imply illness or suggest that people with disabilities should be pitied.</li> </ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Wheelchair-bound/confined to a wheelchair</li> </ul>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses a wheelchair – For a person with a disability, a wheelchair is a liberating, not a confining, tool; it creates freedom of movement for people who cannot walk.</li> </ul>   |

## ACCESSIBLY SYMBOLS



## UNIVERSAL ACCESS SYMBOL



## ACCESSIBILITY SURVEY

|   | Yes   | No    |
|---|-------|-------|
| Is the number of accessible parking spaces adequate (one accessible space for each 25 spaces)?  | _____ | _____ |
| Are accessible parking spaces marked with the Universal Symbol of Accessibility?  | _____ | _____ |
| Are there curb cuts at drives, parking areas and drop-off areas?  | _____ | _____ |
| Can you enter the building without climbing stairs?   | _____ | _____ |
| Is the entrance door at least 32 inches wide?   | _____ | _____ |
| Is the door handle no higher than 48 inches and able to be operated with a closed fist?   | _____ | _____ |
| Are all public spaces in the building on an accessible route of travel (at least 36 inches wide with no barriers)?  | _____ | _____ |
| In paths of travel, are all obstacles detectable by a person who is blind and uses a cane (located no higher than 27 inches above the floor or no lower than 80 inches above the floor, or protruding no more than 4 inches from the wall)? | _____ | _____ |
| Do directional and elevator signs have Braille text?  | _____ | _____ |
| Are light switches and other controls operable with a closed fist?  | _____ | _____ |
| Are tabletops and counters between 28 and 34 inches high?   | _____ | _____ |
| Are there ramps, lifts or elevators to all levels?  | _____ | _____ |
| Is at least one restroom stall fully accessible (at least 5 feet by 5 feet, with grab bars on the wall nearest the toilet and a toilet seat 17-19 inches high)?   | _____ | _____ |
| Is there at least one water fountain with clear floor space of at least 30 by 48 inches in front? Is the spout no higher than 36 inches from the ground?  | _____ | _____ |
| Is the public telephone hearing-aid compatible?   | _____ | _____ |
| If there are four or more public telephones, is at least one of the phones equipped with a text telephone (TT)?   | _____ | _____ |

Source: *The Americans with Disabilities Act Checklist for Readily Achievable Barrier Removal. Adaptive Environments Center and Barrier Free Environments.*

### **CELEBRITY QUIZ**

See if you can match the following personal description to the names below:

- |                       |                            |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| a. Albert Einstein    | e. Winston Churchill       |
| b. Walt Disney        | f. Hans Christian Anderson |
| c. Nelson Rockefeller | g. George Patton           |
| d. F.W. Woolworth     | h. Tom Cruise              |

1. As a child he was labeled as slow. He clerked in a village grocery store. He suggested putting slow-moving merchandise on a counter and selling it for five cents. This venture was so successful that it was continued with new goods. He became the principal founder of a chain of five and ten cent stores.

2. When he was 12 years old, he could not read, and he had trouble reading all his life. However, he could memorize entire lectures, which was how he got through school. He became a famous general during WW II.

3. He was slow in schoolwork and did not have a successful school experience, but later became a well-known movie producer and cartoonist.

4. This noted Englishman had much difficulty in school. He later became a national leader and an English Prime Minister.

5. This young boy had difficulty reading, but was able to write some of the world's best loved stories.

6. This boy could not talk until the age of four. He did not learn to read until he was nine. His teachers considered him to be mentally slow, unsociable and a dreamer. He failed the entrance examination for college. Ultimately, he developed the theory of relativity.

7. He is a famous movie star. He learns his lines by listening to a tape. He has dyslexia.

8. This young man had much difficulty reading and throughout his life was unable to read well. However, he was the governor of the state of New York for four terms and later won congressional approval to be appointed vice president of the United States.

The source of this quiz is unknown. It was reproduced from *Take A Walk In My Shoes - A Guide Book for Youth on Diversity Awareness Activities* by Yuri Morita, June 1996. The guide may be purchased for \$10.00 from the Office of Affirmative Action, Division of Agriculture & National Resources, University of California, 300 Lakeside Drive, 6th Floor, Oakland, California 94612-3560. Phone 510/987-0096.

**SIGN LANGUAGE ALPHABET: LETTER SYMBOLS**



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



M



N



O



P



Q



R



S



T



U



V



W



X



Y



Z

## Sign language riddles

1. Where do cows go on Saturdays?



Answer: To the \*\*\*\*\*

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2. What is a snake's favorite school subject?



Answer: \*\*\*\*\*\_\*\*\*\*\*

Try making your own sign language riddles using cut out pictures of the manual alphabet or, work with a Partner, a joke book, and the answer section using sign language to give each other the answer.

For more sign language riddles and answers go to:  
[www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/kidsweb/gameschamber.html](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/kidsweb/gameschamber.html)

## UNDERSTANDING BRAILLE

People who are blind often use Braille to read. Braille is written with patterns of raised dots, which can be “read” with the fingertips. Braille symbols are based on a grid made of six dots:

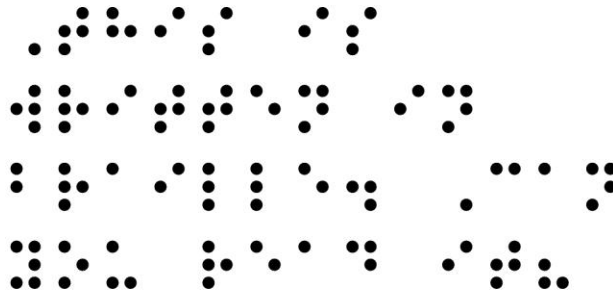


Letters are capitalized in Braille by adding a dot at the number-six space on the grid, just before the letter to be capitalized. Numbers are shown by adding a number sign (dots three, four, five and six) in front of one of the first 10 letters of the alphabet. For example, a number sign and the sign for letter “C” means “three.”

|                |                |      |    |    |    |    |
|----------------|----------------|------|----|----|----|----|
| •              | •              | ••   | •• | •• | •• | •• |
| a              | b              | c    | d  | e  | f  | g  |
| 1              | 2              | 3    | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| ••             | ••             | ••   | •• | •• | •• | •• |
| h              | i              | j    | k  | l  | m  | n  |
| 8              | 9              | 0    |    |    |    |    |
| ••             | ••             | ••   | •• | •• | •• | •• |
| o              | p              | q    | r  | s  | t  | u  |
| ••             | ••             | ••   | •• | •• | •• | •• |
| v              | w              | x    | y  | z  | ,  | .  |
| • Capital sign | •• Number sign | •• ? |    |    |    |    |

### BRAILLE SECRET CODE ACTIVITY

The three-dimensional symbols of Braille enable people who are blind or have vision impairments to read quickly using their sense of touch. How quickly can you crack the code of a two-dimensional version?



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