

Disability Awareness Activities for Students of All Ages

Learning more about disabilities helps students develop positive attitudes toward people with disabilities. By providing activities that enhance students' knowledge and understanding of disabilities, teachers can:

- Help students accept and understand what it is like for other students who have a disability
- Dispel students' fears about disabilities
- Open the door for students to include children with disabilities in their daily interactions in school and in the community

Following is a list of suggested activities teachers can use in the classroom with students of all ages to encourage disability awareness.

Presentations – Schedule a puppet show or live theater group to present a play relating to disabilities, or attend a play in the community with your students.

Field Trips - Arrange a field trip to a disability-related organization or special event (for example, a celebration of the Americans with Disabilities Act).

Speakers - Invite a person who has a disability to talk about their disability, how they do things, what adaptations they need, and their feelings about having the disability. A parent or older student might want to share information about a family member's disability.

Poster Display – Have students choose a disability that they would like to know more about. Have them research and create a poster about that disability or an aspect of the disability.

Videos & Films – Watch a film or search on the Internet for videos about people with disabilities. Have the students watch the video or film and discuss what they learned.

Simulation Activities – Search on the Internet for disability simulation activities you can do with your students. These can often be found by searching for “disability awareness activities” for specific disabilities. After the activity, discuss the barriers they encountered, how it made them feel, how other people reacted to them, what they needed to do differently, and how they could help include someone who has that disability.

Report – Have students do a report on a specific disability, a famous person with a disability, sports for people with disabilities, or the laws that are in effect to protect the rights of persons with disabilities.

Inventions – Have students “invent” a piece of equipment or technology that might be helpful to a person with a disability.

Books – For younger students, read books to the class that include persons with disabilities. Have older students do book reports on a book that includes people with disabilities. Ideas for books can be found in your library or through an online search.

Possible resources:

- Your school district special education staff
- School or community library
- Websites for specific disability organizations. A website search on a specific disability will result in links to related organizations, resources, and activities.
- The Internet: search for the answer to a specific question, for example, “How do people who are blind play ball?”
- PACER Center's website: PACER.org