



**GOVERNOR'S
COUNCIL FOR
PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES**

Disability Awareness Month

THEMED & DISABILITY EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS

This year's campaign – Be Cool. We Are. – shares a heartfelt message from people with disabilities to their co-workers, neighbors, friends, and strangers that it isn't cool to treat people with disabilities differently than anyone else. What is cool, and important, is that all Hoosiers just be themselves no matter the person or people they are interacting with at any given time. When people choose to be themselves in all their interactions, they are treating others the way they want to be treated.

Themed & Disability Education Activity Suggestions for Children

Following are discussion guides, speaker ideas and activities you can use to explain the message of Disability Awareness Month 2018 to children. The activities will help children develop positive attitudes about and behaviors toward people with disabilities. Included in this year's Awareness Month campaign kit are posters, activity sheets, and other items that share the campaign's message of openness and inclusion. Feel free to incorporate these materials into classroom work or other print/electronic venues. If you need additional resources, visit the Council's website at in.gov/gpcpd, or visit the disability awareness website at IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org. You can also contact the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities at (317) 232-7770 (voice/TT) or council@gcpd.in.gov (email).

***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.*

Discussion Guide

Ask the children about the images of the people in the 2018 Awareness Month poster. How are the people on the poster different from them? How are they the same? Ask the children to name one or two of the things that make them unique? Do they think one of the people on the poster could be unique in the same ways? Discuss how everyone's differences make them who they are and why it's important that everyone always try to be their best, unique self.

Explain to the children what it means to "be yourself" when interacting with other people. (Or, for older children, ask them why "being yourself" is important.) Ask the children to draw pictures or write essays about what makes them unique? What makes the other important people in their lives unique, like a guardian or sibling? Do any of their examples of people's unique qualities include a disability? Discuss why people with disabilities might feel uncomfortable with the idea that their disabilities make them feel different or make others act differently around them.

Ask the children to list some of the things they do as part of their everyday routine – eat breakfast, brush their teeth, go to school, do homework, clean their room, etc. Then, ask the children if they think people with disabilities do these same things every day. Ask them: Are you more alike or more different than someone with a disability? Why? Explain that people with disabilities do the exact same things they do every day and that people with and without disabilities should be treated the same because we are all more alike than we are different.

Ask the children if they've ever changed their minds about liking a fruit or vegetable and ask them to share why they changed their minds? Was it because the vegetable was baked into a casserole made by their grandmother? Or, because the fruit was made into a delicious cobbler? Do you have friends who like different vegetables and fruit than you like? Why do they like or dislike those vegetables and fruit? Does it make any difference how they treat or act around each other because they may like different things? Why or why not?

Ask the children to name a time when, once they got to know someone, the person turned out to be different than they'd originally thought. For example, what if they thought a new kid at school was really boring, but then found out that the person was really fun to be with. What would have happened if they didn't take the time to be themselves around that person and to get to know that person? Would they have missed out on an opportunity for friendship? When we

include someone and get to know them, we often find out we have more in common than we originally thought.

Ask the children to name different characteristics about themselves. What if people excluded them from activities because they had brown hair, wore eyeglasses, or didn't like to play the same sports? Explain that people with disabilities have the same thoughts and feelings as people without disabilities and want to participate in the same activities.

Finally, discuss the importance of using respectful and kind language to describe people. Ask the children how they feel when someone says something hurtful to them. Have they ever said something hurtful to someone in their family, a friend, neighbor, or stranger? Introduce the concept of "people-first" language – which emphasizes the person before their disability. For example, say the "woman who is blind" instead of "the blind woman." By using people-first language, we hear the person first instead of the disability. Also, discuss the negative effects of using slang terms, such as the word "retarded," which can be hurtful and emphasize negative stereotypes. How do the children like to be spoken to and treated? How would they feel if others treated them differently than that?

Speakers

1. Invite a speaker with a disability who is on a sports team, who is an artist, or who is musically talented, to speak with the children about how he/she became involved with the team, art or music. Ask him/her to discuss any accommodations that make it possible for him/her to participate and how it makes him/her feel included in the community. Before the speaker arrives, give the children some background information about him/her and ask them to write down questions. (Or, work together as a class to create a list of questions.) Allow time at the end of the presentation for children to ask questions.
2. Invite a speaker from the community to talk with the children about disabilities. Some possibilities include a person who works with people with disabilities, such as an interpreter or someone from Easterseals Crossroads; or the parent of a child with a disability. Ask the speaker to address his/her own experiences with disability, as well as ways the children can include others with disabilities in their everyday activities. Have the speaker talk about special equipment or accommodations that might be needed to make a public area, such as a community center, accessible for everyone. Perhaps the

speaker could even talk about his/her experiences in helping to make a public area in the community more accessible. Before the speaker arrives, give the children some background information about him or her and ask them to write down questions. (Or, work together as a class to create a list of questions.) Allow time at the end of the presentation for the children to ask these written questions, as well as any other questions they may have.

Activities

1. Ask the children to think about the treatment of people with disabilities discussed on the Disability Awareness Month poster. Then, ask them to write a short story about how acting differently around a classmate, co-worker, or neighbor might make that other person feel uncomfortable. What kinds of choices can they make to be more inclusive and make people feel more comfortable? Are the people in the pictures the same? How are they different?
2. Create a classroom wall that showcases each student in the class and something that makes them unique (favorite sport, favorite food, favorite movie or game). Ask each student to present what makes them unique to the class and invite the class to discuss how what makes someone unique doesn't mean they deserve to be treated differently.
3. Find pictures of famous people with disabilities that the kids may not immediately know who they are. Give one or two clues about the person and ask the children to guess what that person's talents and contributions are.
4. Watch the animated movie, "Wreck It Ralph." Then discuss with the children how Ralph felt when he wasn't invited to parties or to hang out with the other characters in the film. How did Ralph feel? What happened at the end that caused Ralph to be included?
5. Ask the children to work together to create a group painting, latch hook rug, woven mat or potholder, where each child participates. When the project is finished, discuss how each person's unique contributions – all the colors, pieces of yarn/string/paper, etc. – are connected to one another and share an equal importance, just like all people in a community need to be engaged and connected by different things, such as church involvement, sharing books, visiting the library or park, and purchasing things at the store. Hang the piece of group artwork in your classroom to remind the class that all the

people who make up our communities are important to the beauty and success of those communities.

6. For younger children, divide them into groups of three or four and give each group a large piece of paper and a box of crayons. Ask each of the children in the group to choose his/her favorite color crayon. Then, ask the children to draw a rainbow using the different colors each child has selected. Have each group show their rainbows to the class. Are they all the same? Why not? Then, talk with the children how beautiful rainbows are because different colors all work together. That's just like communities. When different people with different contributions all come together, share their own unique abilities and support one another, the community becomes a better place to live.
7. Ask the children to identify an assistive device that someone with a disability might use. An assistive device is something, such as a wheelchair or walker, that allows people with disabilities to complete everyday tasks. Explain to the children how assistive technology and devices allow people with disabilities to fully participate in their communities. Have the children think of some assistive devices that allow people to become actively involved in their communities (eyeglasses/contacts, canes or wheelchairs). Ask them to find and bring into school common items from home that are assistive devices (something as simple as an everyday fork or spoon) or that they might use to invent an assistive device. Have them share with the class.
8. Give each child a piece of paper and ask everyone to draw a picture of an ability that makes each of them unique. Examples include: being able to sing, dance, play an instrument, draw, run fast, etc. As each child shares the paper with the class, ask him/her how their unique ability could be used to help other people and make their community a better place. Talk about how everyone – with and without disabilities – makes a community a better place.
9. Participate in the Spread the Word to End the Word Campaign, sponsored by Special Olympics and Best Buddies. Visit r-word.org to take a pledge to end the use of the “r” word, and download videos, information, resources, materials and ideas for conducting age-appropriate awareness activities in your school and community.

10. Read the children a book or short story that relates to Disability Awareness Month.
Check with your public or school librarian to select an appropriate book or choose one of the following: *What It's Like to Be Me* by Helen Exley (Friendship Press); *Charlie's Chuckle* by Clara Widess Berkus (Woodbine House); *I'm Like You, You're Like Me: A Child's Book About Understanding and Celebrating Each Other* by Cindy Gainer (Free Spirit Publishing); *We Can Do It!* By Laura Dwight (Checkerboard Press); *Andy and His Yellow Frisbee* by Mary Thompson (Woodbine House); or *A Very Special Friend* by Dorothy Hoffman Levi (Gallaudet University Press). After you read the story, ask the children about the characters with disabilities and their experiences. How would you feel if you were this person? How can you include everyone in activities? Why is it important to open your mind and see people for who they really are?
11. View and discuss online videos with your classroom or other child- and teen-focused organizations and activities (i.e., Girl Scouts, sports teams, student council). For teens, videos such as “Part of Me, Not All of Me,” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk-EtXk5iEg&feature=related>) feature teens with disabilities sharing their hobbies and interests, demonstrating that their disabilities do not define who they are. Another video, “The Power of 504,” (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SyWcCuVta7M>) is an award-winning, 18-minute documentary video that captures the historic civil rights demonstration of people with disabilities in 1977. This demonstration resulted in the signing of the 504 Regulations, the first Federal Civil Rights Law protecting people with disabilities. Additional videos, recommended by the Governor’s Council and Fifth Freedom, are included in this packet.
12. Give students the coloring page found at <https://www.indianadisabilityawareness.org/> and ask them to take it home and decorate it using several different kinds of art supplies – crayons, markers, yard, clay, glitter, tissue paper, etc. Hang the coloring pages in the classroom and discuss with the children all of the different types of art supplies that are available to allow us to make “beautiful” things. Talk about how people are just as unique as the different art supplies, but when we put our unique talents and gifts to work with others talents, our community is a better place to live.

Themed & Disability Education Activity Suggestions for Adults

Adult disability advocates have always played a critical role in spreading the message of Disability Awareness Month and changing Hoosiers' attitudes about people with disabilities. This year, we are providing activities that any adult can use while working to build awareness with two different groups: children and adults. Following are activities you can use to explain the message of Disability Awareness Month 2018 to both groups. Included in this year's Awareness Month campaign kit are posters, activity sheets, and other items that share the campaign's message of openness and inclusion. Feel free to incorporate these items into office materials or other print/electronic venues. If you need additional resources, visit the Council's website at in.gov/gcpd and click on Resources, or visit the disability awareness website at IndianaDisabilityAwareness.org. You can also contact the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities at (317) 232-7770 (voice/TT) or council@gcpd.in.gov (email).

Other activities promoting awareness among children

1. Work with your local schools and public libraries to prepare a Disability Awareness Month reading list. Ask the librarian to display the books in a prominent location; also arrange disability-focused story hours. You might also consider offering a prize to the child who reads the highest number of disability-related books during March.
2. Suggest to a local school that they incorporate disability awareness into a previously scheduled school function, such as a visit to a local park or theater. If they do not have such an event scheduled, encourage them to create additional extracurricular activities, such as hosting a "block party" for all students and their families.
3. Arrange with a local school or the children's section of the public library to offer a speaker to address disability issues. The speaker could be a person with a disability; a person who works with people with disabilities, such as a service dog trainer or sign language interpreter; the parent of a child with a disability; someone from a local arts organization; or even you. Allow time for questions at the end. If the speaker has a disability, you might also ask the speaker to demonstrate any assistive technology he or she uses, if applicable.
4. Suggest to a local school that its students complete an accessibility survey of the school building as a Disability Awareness Month project. Or, encourage the parents to drive their

children around your city or town and help the children write down things they see that make the community accessible or not accessible. Provide the students with the necessary resources/checklists. Afterward, meet with them to go over the results. Talk about how accessible parking spots, ramps, parks, stores, arts organizations and other amenities enhance the community by enabling everyone to access public places. Discuss how any barriers the students identified can affect people with disabilities or older adults and prevent them from participating fully in community activities.

If the accessibility survey is done for the school, help the students draft a letter to the school principal asking that accessibility problems be addressed, then contact the principal to offer the necessary resources and contacts. If the survey is done in the community, help the students draft a letter to the mayor and/or city planner.

5. Partner with local schools, places of worship, or Boys and Girls Clubs to arrange an inclusive-community sporting event. Children with disabilities can participate, with few or no adaptations, in almost any sport. For example, you might choose to organize a basketball tournament or track and field events. Make sure each team is inclusive; do not create segregated teams that compete against one another. The event will encourage children with and without disabilities to work together and will show the children that everyone can contribute to the team.
6. If your own children play team sports, ask the coach to talk to the children about the importance of inclusion both on and off the field. Have him or her encourage the children to understand that all team members have something to offer, even if their physical abilities aren't the strongest. Have the coach invite the children to be inclusive when they play at home in their own neighborhoods, especially if they live near children with disabilities.
7. Arrange a disability awareness community fair at a school or other central location that offers activities for children. Prepare booths and displays that help people without disabilities to understand better the needs of people with disabilities. You might also demonstrate assistive technology, teach attendees how to write their names in Braille and offer quick sign language tutorials.

8. If you work with a company that offers services to people with disabilities, organize a Disability Awareness Month open house. Invite local schools to visit the open house as a field trip, and involve clients and staff in talking and interacting with the children.

Activities promoting awareness among adults

1. Partner with other organizations and individuals in your community – with and without disabilities – to create a community service day. Determine which local not-for-profit/charitable organizations could benefit from volunteer service, gather a group of individuals together – with and without disabilities – and spend a half day or a day volunteering for that organization(s). Then, discuss how their volunteerism helped them learn how to work together and include others.
2. Contact your minor or major league sports team and ask them to dedicate a game day to a local organization that includes both people with and without disabilities. You could also ask the team to participate in a fundraising event of some sort (maybe proceeds from one game going to the organization or a community cause). This would help showcase the variety of people that make up a community.
3. Contact organizers of local fairs and festivals to discuss accessibility for people with disabilities and how it can be improved. You could offer to have a person with disabilities go with you to check out the fair or festival layout and provide their suggestions for improved mobility.
4. Submit an op-ed (as a group or individually) to your local newspaper, explaining the importance of inclusion for people with disabilities. In the letter, remind newspaper readers that every person is important, and people with disabilities should not be excluded from school, work, church, participating in the voting process or getting access to buildings.
5. Organize volunteers to tutor local students with disabilities. For example, volunteers could assist students with learning disabilities or students who are deaf or blind. Contact schools in your area to assess their education needs. To ensure tutors feel prepared for their task, organize a workshop about how to interact with and assist students with disabilities. Contact local special education teachers to ask for their assistance and advice on how to proceed.

6. Ask your mayor to declare March as Disability Awareness Month in your community. Encourage him or her to make the announcement at a local school so children can be involved in the process. You might also consider having the mayor introduce a disability-related speaker or other program at a school-wide convocation or to make a speech about the progress the community has made in meeting the needs of people with disabilities.
7. Arrange a disability awareness fair at your place of work, church or other central location that offers activities for adults. Prepare booths and displays that help people without disabilities to understand better the needs of people with disabilities. You might also demonstrate assistive technology, teach attendees how to write their names in Braille and offer quick sign language tutorials.
8. During March, post the Disability Awareness Month 2018 artwork in your place of business and seek inclusion of the theme and message in your company communications: newsletter website, billing statements, paycheck envelopes and bulletin boards. You can even have the message placed on your postage machine for outgoing mail.
9. Create a Disability Awareness Month accessibility award and recognize a local business or other organization in your community for its efforts to be accessible and inclusive for everyone. Invite the local news media to attend a ceremony at the business/organization when you present the award.
10. Working with others in the community, with and without disabilities, build an accessible community garden. Sell the produce to raise funds for other community projects or donate the produce to a local food pantry or other charity.
11. Contact local fitness centers and YMCAs to see if they might post the 2018 Disability Awareness Month poster. Also work with local schools, places of worship, the Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, and other places/organizations where children gather, asking them to post and distribute Disability Awareness Month materials.
12. Start a simplified version of a Little Free Library in a school classroom, by designating one day every two weeks where students bring their favorite personal book from home. The students all trade books with one another and read their shared books during classroom

reading time. After two weeks, they return the books to the owners and then bring new books in to share with their classmates.

TED Talks on Disability Issues Educational Video Series

TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design) is well-known for presenting some of the best educational content available online in 15 minutes or less.

1. Temple Grandin: The world needs all kinds of minds

Temple Grandin, diagnosed with autism as a child, talks about how her mind works -- sharing her ability to “think in pictures,” which helps her solve problems that neurotypical brains might miss. She makes the case that the world needs people on the autism spectrum: visual thinkers, pattern thinkers, verbal thinkers, and all kinds of smart geeky kids. Visit:

http://www.ted.com/talks/temple_grandin_the_world_needs_all_kinds_of_minds?language=en

2. Aditi Shankardass: A second opinion on learning disorders

Developmental disorders in children are typically diagnosed by observing behavior, but Aditi Shankardass knew that we should be looking directly at their brains. She explains how a remarkable EEG device has revealed mistaken diagnoses and transformed children's lives. Visit:

https://www.ted.com/talks/aditi_shankardass_a_second_opinion_on_learning_disorders?language=en

3. Aimee Mullins and her 12 pairs of legs

Athlete, actor and activist Aimee Mullins talks about her prosthetic legs – she's got a dozen amazing pairs – and the superpowers they grant her: speed, beauty and an extra six inches of height. Quite simply, she redefines what the body can be. Visit:

https://www.ted.com/talks/aimee_mullins_the_opportunity_of_adversity?language=en