

A Disability Awareness Program For Elementary Students



Developed by Easter Seals and Made Possible by:





Thank you for your interest and participation in Easter Seals' FRIENDS WHO CARE® disability awareness program for elementary schoolers. This update was made possible by the Friendly Ice Cream Corporation, because Friendly's cares about families living in their communities and has worked to support Easter Seals and children with disabilities for more than twenty-five years through Easter Seals' Camp Friendly's and Cones for Kids.

To learn more about how you can use FRIENDS WHO CARE® visit easterseals.com/friendswhocare.

Special thanks to our collaborators and advisers:

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The elementary school Friends Who Care ® program was originally developed by Easter Seals in 1990, with a grant from Ronald McDonald Children's Charities.

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Friends Who Care

Program Description

For almost 30 years, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has provided a guarantee for children with disabilities – that every child receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). To help make this a reality, Easter Seals first created its FRIENDSWHO CARE® program for elementary students 20 years ago, and made it available to teachers across the United States and, via the Internet, to teachers around the globe.

This updated FRIENDSWHO CARE® program was made possible by Friendly's, a company that gives back to its communities and has supported Easter Seals' work to provide exceptional services for children and adults with disabilities since 1981.

FRIENDSWHO CARE® is designed to help children better understand what it means to live with a disability, and to encourage children to accept differences. It explains what differing disabilities are, and provides hands-on activities to help children learn how people with disabilities live independent, everyday lives. Our hope is that your students will become more comfortable including people with disabilities in their lives when they participate in the FRIENDSWHO CARE® program.

OBJECTIVES

- To build disability awareness into school curricula through active learning experiences that facilitate including all children.
- To increase knowledge about disabilities and foster positive attitudes about people living with disabilities.

MATERIALS

- Letter of Introduction
- Pre- and Post- Program Attitudes Survey
- Teacher's Guide
- Activity Sheets
- Guest Speaker Guidelines
- FRIENDSWHO CARE® bookmark
- Friendly's Ice Cream cone coupon for successfully completing the program.

- To facilitate community and school partnerships.
- To promote acceptance of people with disabilities in all aspects of school and the community.

ACTIVITY TIME

FRIENDSWHO CARE® is designed in seven units of 45 minutes. Over the years, teachers have used these materials during social studies and/or during hours where originally scheduled classes and activities have been changed. It can be taught during one week, or over several. Guest speaker visits and extended discussion may require additional time.

STARTING OUT

Make copies of the FRIENDSWHO CARE® letter of introduction to send home with students, so their families understand what they're learning and can add to the discussion at home.

Introduce the FRIENDSWHO CARE® program with the Attitudes Survey, adapted from the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons Scale by Yunker, Block, and Young.



Use guided discussion whenever possible. It's a method used to change myths to facts, fears to confidence and negative feelings to positive



Congratulate your students for their good work.

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Friends Who Care

Program Description – Page Two

After students have completed the pre-FRIENDSWHO CARE® program Attitudes Survey, collect the surveys and keep for later discussion with students.

The FRIENDSWHO CARE® Teacher's Guide outlines lessons and hands-on activities to help students learn more about vision, hearing, and physical disabilities, as well as learning disabilities, intellectual disabilities and, new in this update, autism.

Information is presented to accommodate different learning styles. Most important among these are simulations, guest speaker presentations and guided discussion. Each unit includes an activity sheet for students.

A SPECIAL NOTE

Use guided discussion whenever possible. It's a method used to change myths to facts, fears to confidence and negative feelings to positive attitudes. Discussion helps students gather needed information, express feelings, and work through any discomfort. If you address content and show respect for students' feelings, your discussion will be open, honest and expand opportunities for continuous learning.

Show your students the poster for your classroom. Shannon Saunders Eaton is the girl in the photo. Read her quote below her photo – and explore with students what they think she means when she says she's not going to be a "disability girl" – that she's going to follow her dreams.

Invite your students to visit Easter Seals online and see short videos of Shannon, Scottie Gaither and Tori Boyles. Each young person has a disability and dreams for what they'd like to do. Go to easterseals.com/friendswhocare to see their videos.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Have students design a cover of their FRIENDSWHO CARE® folder.
- As a class, create a "Bill of Rights" for persons with disabilities.
- Keep a scrapbook of newspaper and on-line articles about people with disabilities and disability issues.
- Do a bulletin board project featuring people with disabilities who are participating in your community.
- Create a "Hall of Fame" of people with disabilities (famous and not so famous) who students want to acknowledge.
- Have students develop a reading list of books that feature people living with disabilities.

WHEN YOU FINISH

Give students the Attitudes Survey they completed when you introduced the FRIENDSWHO CARE® program. Lead a discussion about how their answers have changed, or why they have not.

Congratulate your students for their good work and let them know that their Friendly's Restaurants team congratulates them too, with a coupon for a free ice cream cone.



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Defining Disability

Tips for introducing the FRIENDS WHO CARE® program

DEFINING DISABILITY

As you introduce the FRIENDS WHO CARE® program, explore what your students know about disabilities. Guide the discussion with introductory questions.

Encourage your students to talk about people they know – perhaps classmates or schoolmates, siblings, parents and grandparents.

- Ask students if they know someone who has a disability. Who is this person in their lives? What is the nature of this person's disability?

A disability may be any physical or mental impairment that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Explain that our schools and our communities have a formal definition of disability that first appeared in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act in 1973. It reads:

A disability may be any physical or mental impairment that substantially impairs or restricts one or more major life activities, such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Point out that how we speak about others can make a very big difference in how people feel about themselves.

EXPLORING ATTITUDES ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

DO SAY/DON'T SAY

Guide students through a discussion of words we use when we describe someone with a disability.

Ask students to describe different disabilities. What words have they heard used? Some negative examples to consider: crippled, deformed, wheelchair bound, deaf and dumb, retarded, dummy, victim, invalid.



Ask students how they feel about these words. Do they describe a disability? Or, do these words feel more like name-calling.



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Vision Disabilities

What a Vision Disability Might Be

GETTING STARTED

A vision disability occurs when there is an impairment in the functioning of the eye. It may be in the eye itself, the nerves that send messages to the brain, or in the portion of the brain where images are processed. Vision disabilities may range from a slight loss to total blindness. And today, with adaptive aids including computer screen readers, people living with vision disabilities can and do learn to do things to the best of their abilities.

A vision disability may be in the eye itself, the nerves that send messages to the brain, or in the portion of the brain where images are processed.

- Supplies:
1. Snellen Eye Chart (from nurse's office)
 2. Waxed paper
 3. Bandana or blindfold for each student
 4. Copies of VISION DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET

20/20 VISION

• Begin by asking your students what they already know about their eyes and vision. Ask what they remember from having their eyes tested – and how many learned they needed glasses after visiting the doctor.

• Post the Snellen Eye Chart. Ask a student volunteer to stand 20 feet from the chart and

identify an "E" about one inch tall. A person with 20/20 vision can read the "E." Explain that someone who is legally blind cannot see this "E." In fact, this person may see at 20 feet what others can see from 200 feet away.

LESSON ONE: LOW VISION

• Vision disabilities include a number of impairments. Some people may have problems with light or depth perception. They may have tunnel vision and problems with peripheral (all around) vision.

• People with LOW VISION often need correction with glasses and have some ability to read.

• Ask students to look at the HOW WELL DO YOU SEE example on their VISION DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET. Ask students to stand at their desks with the ACTIVITY SHEET on the floor, and read from the largest type until they can't read easily. Discuss what they might use to read more.

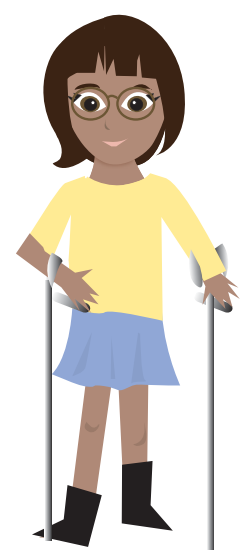
LESSON TWO: PEOPLE WHO ARE BLIND

• Some people have such extensive vision disabilities that they are blind and use senses other than sight to communicate or navigate.

• Children who are blind use their sense of touch to gather tactile information to help them differentiate between everyday objects, such as silverware, coins, hair brushes and toothbrushes.

• Have students put on their bandana blindfolds. (Everyone should have his/her own to prevent the transfer of infections.) Ask students to feel the objects on their desks. Discuss how they identify specific objects. Point out that many times, people who are blind use coding systems such as adding a rubber band or a Braille label to help them.

• Remind students that for people who are blind, the senses of touch, hearing and smell become more finely tuned.



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Vision Disabilities

What a Vision Disability Might Be – Page 2

SIGHTED GUIDE

- Explain that to get safely from place to place, people who are blind have a number of options. They may use a guide dog, or learn to use a white cane, and learn to pay very close attention to environmental clues.
- Another option is to rely on another person to be their sighted guide. A sighted guide acts as a pair of eyes for someone who is blind, and it is their job to describe what is around and in front of them – as well as to identify noises.
- Ask a student to read the BEING A SIGHTED GUIDE steps on the VISION DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET. Ask students to find a partner, and choose who will wear the bandana blindfold and who will be the sighted guide. In small groups, ask students to guide each other through your classroom for a few minutes.

Guide a discussion about how it felt to be the guide, and the person who relied on his/her guide.

BRaille

- Before screen readers and other computer-assisted technologies that have been developed over the last 15 years, people who are blind relied on the Braille alphabet – a system of raised dots – to read by touch. Go to the VISION DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET and explore the Braille alphabet.

FINISHING UP

- Guide a discussion about what your students have learned about how people with vision disabilities and blindness approach their world.





Hearing Disabilities

What a Hearing Disability Might Be

GETTING STARTED

Begin by explaining what a hearing disability might be.

A hearing disability occurs when there is an impairment in the functioning of the ear. It may be in the ear itself, in the nerves that send messages, or in the area of the brain where sound is processed. People with hearing disabilities may have slight hearing loss – and hear a great deal – or they have significant hearing loss and hear very little. Many people use hearing aids. Others with more significant hearing loss may use speech, speech reading and sign language to communicate.

A hearing disability may be in the ear itself, in the nerves that send messages, or in the area of the brain where sound is processed.

general, the more tones that someone cannot hear, the greater or more severe the hearing disability.

Hearing disabilities range from mild to profound. Many people whose losses are so severe that they are called “deaf” can and do “hear” some things. Since sounds are made up of vibrations, people who have hearing disabilities often enjoy music and dancing because they can “hear” parts of music by feeling the beat.

Supplies:
1. Short, written messages on 3x5 cards.
2. HEARING DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET

SOUNDS

Using your classroom clock, ask students to sit quietly for one minute and listen to the sounds around them. Then, ask each student to identify and describe a sound he/she heard.

LOUDNESS AND PITCH

Explain that sounds have two parts: loudness and pitch.

Since students will know what loudness is, ask them to give examples of soft, medium and loud sounds. One example to explain pitch is a piano keyboard – with high, medium and low tones. Both loudness and pitch work together to produce the sounds we hear.

Tell students that both loudness and pitch are affected when someone has a hearing disability. With hearing disabilities, people usually experience a loss of pitch (or certain tones) as well as a reduced volume in the tones they can hear. Many older people – perhaps your students’ grandparents – lose the ability to hear higher tones; the result is often that what they hear sounds as if someone is mumbling. In

COMMUNICATING

Divide students into pairs or have some students come to the front of the class. Pass out messages to students, such as:

- Please get me a drink of water
- Please get me three books to read
- It's your turn to write on the chalkboard
- I have three cats at home

Ask student volunteers to communicate their message without talking. Discuss how they communicated by using eye contact, gestures, pointing to objects, examples, or writing. Point out that these messages were easy and concrete.



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Hearing Disabilities

What a Hearing Disability Might Be – Page 2

SPEECH AND SPEECH READING

For many people with hearing disabilities, the greatest difficulty is to use and understand speech. Even people with profound hearing loss may use speech to communicate – and the clarity of their speech often depends on when the hearing loss occurred in their lives.

COMMUNICATION TOOLS AND ADAPTATIONS

Speech reading, or lip reading, is one way to “hear.” Someone who reads speech watches the face and mouth of a speaker to discern what is being said. And, we know that even the best speech readers understand only about one-third of what is being said.

SIGN LANGUAGE

Many people who are deaf use sign language and systems to communicate. Finger spelling is one system, where specific letters are represented by hand shapes. Signed Exact English is one system where every spoken word and parts of words are signed and finger spelled. Another system is American Sign Language (Ameslan). This signing system condenses words and phrases.

Using the HEARING DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET, explore The Manual Alphabet, and the Examples of Signed Exact English. Ask students if they are familiar with finger spelling and signing. Do they know someone who communicates with finger spelling and signing?

FINISHING UP

Ask students if they have seen or used interpreters who translate speech to sign and sign to speech, for someone who is deaf to communicate and participate. Do they think this works well?





Learning Disabilities

What a Learning Disability Might Be

GETTING STARTED

Explain to students that a learning disability occurs when a person has problems processing information necessary to learning. The channels of information needed to learn get mixed up somewhere – either in the brain, on the way to the brain, or on the way out of the brain. A person with a learning disability has difficulty in one or more of the learning processes.

- Learning disabilities may be in one area or in a combination of areas. People with learning disabilities may have trouble with reading and writing, learning math, or with tasks that require learning symbols. It may be hard to concentrate or remember a series of instructions. Sometimes seeing complete pictures, faces, or shapes is an issue. All of these problems involve the information-processing functions of the brain.

• No one knows for sure what causes learning disabilities. They are different from developmental or intellectual disabilities in that there is not an overall slowing of the thinking processes and capacity to learn. Learning disabilities do not indicate laziness. In fact, people with learning disabilities have a full range of intelligence. They simply learn differently from the norm and have trouble with specific tasks.

LEARNING PROCESSES

- Have students make a list of the learning processes they use in a typical day. Write these on the board. The list should include items such as reading (from books, from the board, directions, math symbols); knowing relational terms (up/down, in/out); writing (from memory, copying); listening; remembering

People with learning disabilities have a full range of intelligence. They simply learn differently from the norm and have trouble with specific tasks.

(things in order, facts) figuring out shapes in pictures; keeping columns straight in math; distinguishing between faces; saying what you really want to say; interpreting others' facial expressions and gestures; applying appropriate social skills.

- Ask students if they know kids in school who have learning disabilities. Are these kids who can do many things, yet struggle with specific tasks? Then, ask students if they know how their friends adapt to learn. Do they use different approaches to learn, or need special materials or assistance?

FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

- Have students stand and follow these instructions:
- Cross their arms at their wrists and with their palms together.
- Interlace their fingers and hold them together.
- Pull their hands down and inward, bending at the elbows, and touch their chests.
- Continue with new directions, such as lift your ring finger, or your two middle fingers of your right hand.
- DISCUSS with students what they just did. Explain that it probably wasn't as easy as they thought. Ask if they really had to concentrate.



Supplies:

1. Chalkboard
2. LEARNING DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET



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Learning Disabilities

What a Learning Disability Might Be – Page 2

- EXPLAIN that to come up with the correct moves, they used a number of thought processes: listening to instructions; thinking about how to do what they were asked; and then taking the information their brains gave them to follow through on the instructions. These are all adaptive strategies.

READING

- Remind students that reading is a skill necessary for almost every task they have in school. When a person doesn't read well, it is very difficult to succeed in school, no matter how bright someone is or how much he/she wants to be successful. Reading disabilities are among the most common learning disabilities.
- Hand out the LEARNING DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEETS, with "the Friembly Bog" face up. Choose a few students to read aloud – and translate as if they were reading understandable words. It may mean that students need to "make things up." You might also have students in pairs to figure out the story. DISCUSS the strategies students used to

FINISHING UP

- Discuss the importance of traffic signs, facial expressions, and clues or prompts for reading and communication.

make sense of the story, and how they might feel if reading was always this difficult.

- EXPLAIN that there are many ways for people with reading disabilities to improve their reading skills. They might listen to a taped reading while following along. They might also use pictures, or prompts or extra practice.
- Point out that sometimes people with learning disabilities can't see the whole picture. It makes life confusing.
- Have students try to read the message on the bottom of their LEARNING DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET. "Amanda was sleeping under a mushroom. When she woke up, she was surprised to be small."





Autism

Why kids with Autism are so different from each other

GETTING STARTED

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or autism is a developmental disability. It is a neurological condition affecting brain function. Individuals with autism experience challenges in communication, socialization and restrictive and repetitive behavior. Children and adults with autism find it difficult to relate to other people in a meaningful way. While great strides are being made, there is no known cause or cure, nor a known singular effective treatment for autism. The common term of "autism" collectively represents a set of five closely related conditions that fall under the umbrella of Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

Your students are likely to wonder: WHY KIDS WITH AUTISM ARE SO DIFFERENT – EVEN FROM EACH OTHER? Here's a brief explanation of the five developmental disorders that fall under the Autism Spectrum Disorder umbrella defined by challenges in three areas: social skills, communication, and behaviors and/or interests.

- Autistic Disorder occurs in males four times more than females and involves impairments in communication, socialization and behavior.
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS) includes children that do not fully meet the criteria for the other specific disorders, but do have challenges in socialization, communication and restrictive/repetitive behavior.
- Asperger Syndrome is sometimes considered a milder form of autism. Asperger's may be diagnosed later in life than other disorders

People living with autism have brains that work differently. They learn things differently than most other people.

on the spectrum. People with Asperger syndrome function in the average to above average intelligence range and have no delays in language development, but often struggle with social skills and restrictive and repetitive behavior.

- Rett Syndrome is diagnosed primarily in females who exhibit typical development until approximately five to 30 months when children with Rett syndrome begin to regress, especially in terms of motor skills and loss of abilities in other areas. A key indicator of Rett syndrome is the appearance of repetitive, meaningless movements or gestures of the hands.
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder involves a significant regression in skills that have previously been acquired, and deficits in communication, socialization and/or restrictive and repetitive behavior.

EXPLAIN THAT people living with autism have brains that work differently. They learn things differently than most other people. People with autism go to school to learn to read and do math just like you. They can learn and grow up to have jobs. People with autism may see, hear or feel things in another way. They may have a hard time being in the loud cafeteria or might not like to touch clay in the art room.



Supplies:
AUTISM
ACTIVITY
SHEET



Congratulate your students for their good work.

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Autism

Why kids with Autism are so different ... Page 2

COMMUNICATING AND UNDERSTANDING

- People with autism may have difficulty communicating and understanding other people. Some people with autism do not learn how to speak; they can communicate by pointing to pictures or words that tell you what they want to say. They didn't choose to have autism and they can't just make their difficulties go away in the same way that you can't just choose to have a different eye color. Every person with autism is unique. Here are some examples:
 - A person with autism may not be able to talk, so he/she would have a hard time communicating, but might be really good at balancing and could walk across the balance beam without ever falling.
 - A person with autism may not be able to understand all of the Harry Potter characters and how they interact, but he/she might know A LOT about the ocean and describe all sorts of plants and animals that live in the ocean.
- A person with autism might not be a fast runner and not like to play chase on the playground, but he/she might be really good at board games and able to win a checkers game every time.
- A person with autism might not know how to help you if you are crying, because he/she won't know if you are sad or hurt. But, he/she can be a good helper if you explain specifically what you need.
- A person with autism might have a hard time taking turns on the swing, because he/she doesn't understand the concept of waiting in line, but he/she might be really good at math and able to do multiplication and division in their head.

Distribute the AUTISM ACTIVITY SHEET.

- Work through the two activities with your students and guide discussion as students have questions.





Physical Disabilities

What a Physical Disability Might Be

GETTING STARTED:

Ask students if they can identify a physical disability. EXPLAIN that a physical disability occurs when someone is born with or acquires an impairment of bones, joints, muscles or nerves. A physical disability can also result from a spinal cord injury. It affects how someone moves, as well as how someone speaks or writes.

A physical disability occurs when someone is born with or acquires an impairment of bones, joints, muscles or nerves.

People living with physical disabilities use a variety of adaptive tools and assistive technologies. These are tailored to the nature of the disability – whether it affects one’s arms

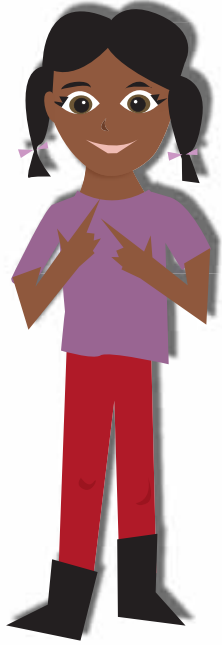
and hands, legs, speech, or any combination of body parts. Adaptations help people increase their mobility (getting from place to place or from task to task), their communication skills and their independence.

Remind students that while people with physical disabilities may face some barriers, they are able to participate in school, in sports, in the workforce, and to live independently.

- Give each student an 8” piece of masking tape. Ask them to tape the thumb, index and middle fingers together on the hand they write with. Then, ask them to write their name, to tie their shoes, to cut a circle, to zip their jacket, to turn the pages of a book, or open a door. DISCUSS what made these everyday tasks difficult. Ask students what kinds of aids might have helped – such as loops on zippers, rubber tipped page-turners, door levers, instead of knobs.

MOBILITY

- Remind students that a wheelchair or a motorized scooter is an adaptive device. These are used to help people with mobility issues move around.
- Your students likely have seen a variety of wheelchairs, from sports chairs to power chairs, They also may have seen people who have significant disabilities use mouth sticks to steer their chairs.



DAILY LIVING SKILLS

- Ask students to think about some of the things they do with their “little muscles,” or their fine motor skills. List some of these activities on the board: eating, writing, drawing, cutting, shoe tying, buttoning, teeth brushing, drinking, hand-held games.

- Ask students to talk about people they know who use wheelchairs. See if they know about athletes who “run” marathons in wheelchairs, or play basketball, or compete in the Paralympics.

Supplies:

1. Paper, pencils, ruler and masking tape
2. PHYSICAL DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET
3. FRIENDS WHO CARE ATTITUDES SURVEY
4. FRIENDS WHO CARE Bookmarks
5. FRIENDLY'S Ice Cream Cone coupons



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Physical Disabilities

What a Physical Disability Might Be – Page 2

- POINT OUT that wheelchairs are important mobility aids but, like bicycles, they face barriers – such as steps and small spaces. When someone cannot move past a barrier, that place becomes inaccessible. Ask students if they've ever been with someone who uses a wheelchair who couldn't get in to where they were hoping to go. (Churches, schools, stores, ...)
- Give students the PHYSICAL DISABILITIES ACTIVITY SHEET and rulers. Ask them to complete the Accessibility Checklist – in groups or in pairs – to see how accessible your school is for children, parents and teachers with disabilities.
- DISCUSS students' findings together and see if your students offer suggestions for how to make your school more accessible.

Ask students if they have seen:

- Accessible parking spaces, with the International Symbol of Accessibility
- Buildings with ramps; curb cuts on streets
- Elevators with Braille lettering
- Elevators with control buttons low enough for wheelchair users
- Teletype phones (TTYs) for people who have hearing disabilities or are deaf
- Explain that there are federal and state laws that state that people who have disabilities are part of the public, and public buildings and events must be accessible to them. This means voting booths, public libraries, post offices, schools, public transportation, bathrooms and other public places.

FINISHING UP

- Revisit the Attitudes Survey. Distribute the bookmarks. Talk with students about what they learned about people living with physical disabilities. Remind students that there is one additional barrier people with disabilities face – the attitudes of people who don't know how to include people with disabilities. Encourage students to share what they've learned with others who might not know, so they can truly be FRIENDS WHO CARE.





Easter Seals also thanks these four organizations for their collaboration in developing the activities for FRIENDS WHO CARE®, when it was originally published in 1990.

The Kids on the Block, Inc.

Written by Barbara Aiello, creator of The Kids on the Block puppets used throughout the world to teach children about differences.

Project L.E.A.D.

Project L.E.A.D. was one of the California State Disability Awareness Projects, funded by the State of California to bring awareness, acceptance and understanding of disabilities to thousands of students and educators.

Understanding Handicaps of Newton, Inc.

This disability awareness curriculum was written for use by classroom volunteers with fourth grade students and included: simulation activities, activities with aids and adaptive equipment, audio-visual materials, printed materials and bibliographies.

The Learning About Handicaps Program

Volunteer taught disability awareness program designed for elementary, middle and high school students.



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