Getting to Know Us:

Raising Disability Awareness in Alberta's Schools

ACCD
Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities

Alberta
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund

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The most current text of these materials can be obtained in electronic format from www.accd.net

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The following individuals also contributed to the development of this manual:

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Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities

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Feedback Request:

We hope you will find this school outreach manual useful. We would like to hear from you about your experience using it. If you have suggestions on how to improve it, please let us know. Our contact information is provided above. Thank you!

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About the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities

Mission Statement

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities is a consumer-directed organization that actively promotes full participation in society for Albertans with disabilities.

Our Guiding Principles

Full Participation: We are committed to breaking down barriers that prevent society from seeing beyond our disabilities and that prevent us from being included in all aspects of life. We will take charge of the social, political, and economic decisions that affect our lives. We must be accountable for our actions. We must have choice in the services and supports we require. We acknowledge and accept the dignity of risk.

Accessibility: All buildings and facilities must be accessible. Transportation, information, and communication services must meet our diverse needs.

Equity: We will be vigilant to ensure that our rights and freedoms are upheld. We claim our right to be equal while maintaining our individuality.

A Proud History

The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD) came into existence in 1973 when a group of people with disabilities decided it wanted to speak in a unified voice from the perspective of the person with the disability. Today we remain a grassroots, consumer-directed organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of people with disabilities.

ACCD is Alberta's only provincial, cross-disability organization *of* and *for* people living with physical, mental health, sensory, or developmental disabilities. ACCD has been a part of many positive changes in Alberta. We have helped bring about a variety of services and programs designed to assist people with disabilities to participate fully in the community and be equal partners in society.

ACCD has been a leader in the growing disability movement. All over Alberta, people with disabilities are making their voices heard in increasing numbers. ACCD has been proud to be a part of this consumer-directed movement.

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Introduction

Welcome to *Getting to Know Us: Raising Disability Awareness in Alberta's Schools*!

This publication grew out of the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities' (ACCD's) first-hand experience with the myths and stereotypes that negatively affect the lives of people with disabilities. ACCD is an organization *of* and *for* people with disabilities, and our members deal with discriminatory attitudes every day.

For example, one of our members, who is a triple amputee, tells of how he was approached in a grocery store and told, "People like you shouldn't be allowed out in public." Another member, who uses a wheelchair, finds she is consistently ignored or overlooked when she's in public. She says, "It's hard to believe how many times I've gone out to eat and been ignored by waiters. Instead of asking me what I'd like, they ask whoever I'm with what *they* think *I'd* like!" These types of stories are not uncommon. Myths and stereotypes have affected people's views of us for a long time.

That's why, in 1990, ACCD established its school outreach program. In this program speakers with disabilities visit elementary and junior high classes in the Edmonton area to talk about the realities of living with a disability. They answer questions, tell stories, and give students the opportunity to interact with someone who has a disability. Our program offers children an authentic view of people with disabilities, a view that counters the myths and stereotypes that may influence perceptions of us.

And it's working! When asked to reflect on a classroom visit, one student wrote, "You taught me that people with disabilities are the same as everybody else inside." Another student said, "You taught me that people with disabilities sometimes need help, but I need to ask first."

With funding from the Alberta Human Rights, Citizenship, and Multiculturalism Education Fund, we've enhanced our school outreach program through the development of the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum. It builds on our existing program by providing lesson plans for teachers to implement before and after a visiting speaker comes to their class and by encouraging more disability organizations to become involved in school outreach.

The goal of *Getting to Know Us* is to challenge the stereotypical views that some students and teachers may have of us and, as a result, to reduce discrimination inside and outside the classroom. We believe this will be achieved with the following strategies:

- Providing students and teachers with opportunities to meet someone with a disability
- Providing students and teachers with opportunities to ask questions about disabilities in a familiar learning environment
- Demonstrating appropriate language when discussing disabilities
- Identifying and explaining the myths and stereotypes that shape attitudes about people with disabilities
- Identifying ways to create a barrier-free classroom for students with disabilities
- Involving students with disabilities in the presentation, when appropriate

Currently, ACCD visits about 15 classes each year, primarily in the Edmonton area. With this curriculum, we encourage other individuals and organizations to join us by initiating contact with schools and by making presentations in their own communities. The more children we reach with our message of equality and acceptance, the more inclusive and equitable our world will be. Good luck! And good learning!

Doreen Gyorkos, President

About *Getting to Know Us*

Getting to Know Us provides disability organizations with suggested guidelines, time frames, and a curriculum for coordinating school outreach programs that raise elementary and junior high students' awareness of disabilities.

While this curriculum will usually be accessed through disability organizations, we know that teachers committed to diverse and equal communities may also discover this curriculum on their own and use it. We encourage these teachers to involve a person with a disability in the presentation of the curriculum, especially in Lesson Two of each unit. We believe such involvement is vital to the success of the program.

Curriculum Objectives

Getting to Know Us encourages students and teachers to develop an understanding of and respect for the following ideas:

- Society needs to learn to see the person first, the disability second
- People with disabilities are individuals who have the same aspirations, needs, rights, and expectations as everyone else
- Because words shape attitudes and perceptions, it is important to use words that respect the dignity of the individual

Glossary

Here are a few definitions you'll need to be familiar with:

Visiting Speaker:	This is the person with a disability, usually working for or associated with a disability organization, who visits a classroom to speak about the realities of living with a disability. The visiting speaker coordinates the outreach program with a host school and delivers Lesson Two of the curriculum.
Host School:	This is the school that hosts the visiting speaker. Usually, initial contact is made with the host school through the principal, who then forwards information to interested teachers.
Host Teachers:	These are the teachers who deliver Lessons One and Three of the curriculum. As well, they host the visiting speaker, either in their own class or in combination with other classes.

Curriculum Overview

The curriculum contains a Visiting Speaker's Guide and Teacher's Guides to three grade-specific units: Elementary (K to Gr. 3), Intermediate (Gr. 4 to 6), and Junior High (Gr. 7 to 9).

Visiting Speaker's Guide

This section of the curriculum includes the following:

- A checklist for coordinating the delivery of the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum
- Sample letters
- Tips, strategies, and ideas for preparing and delivering a presentation
- A detailed lesson plan for Lesson Two of the curriculum

Teacher's Guides

We know that teachers are very busy. With this in mind, each unit contains detailed lesson plans for Lessons One and Three, and a synopsis of Lesson Two. These lesson plans have been developed in consultation with several individuals and groups: Brian Laird, ACCD's Public Education Services Coordinator; persons with disabilities; parents of children with disabilities; and an educational consultant. The lessons were refined based on input from teachers and students from Norwood Elementary School and Spruce Avenue Junior High School in Edmonton. The three lessons in each unit are as follows:

Lesson One: This component serves two purposes: it familiarizes host teachers with disability issues by providing background information, and it contains a lesson plan that will prepare students for the visiting speaker's presentation. The lesson plan includes a discussion guide and a selection of student activities.

Lesson Two: This component provides the visiting speaker with a lesson plan to follow when meeting with students to talk about the realities of living with a disability. The lesson includes a discussion guide, a video presentation, and a concluding activity. The detailed version of Lesson Two is included in the Visiting Speaker's Guide; a synopsis is included in each unit of the curriculum.

Lesson Three: This component provides host teachers with a follow-up lesson plan to use after the visiting speaker has made his or her presentation. The lesson plan includes a discussion guide and a selection of student activities.

GETTING TO KNOW US:
RAISING DISABILITY AWARENESS IN ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS

Visiting Speaker's Guide

In This Section, You Will Find:

Overview of Visiting Speaker's Guide

As we've already mentioned, the delivery of the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum is meant to be coordinated by a disability organization. Usually, an employee or volunteer who works as an outreach/ education coordinator will take the lead. This individual will play two roles:

- » Coordinate/oversee the delivery of the curriculum through consultation with host schools and host teachers
- » Deliver Lesson Two in the role of the visiting speaker

The material in this section is intended to prepare you for these roles.

Note: Some organizations may decide to assign different people to fill the coordinator and speaker roles. If this is the case, both individuals should be familiar with the entire curriculum.

In My Experience . . .

Over the past several years, I've found that schools that are interested in having a visiting speaker come to their classrooms usually want him or her to visit many classrooms. Sometimes I've spoken to more than 300 students in a single day! Because my organization, the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities, believes that I'll make the greatest impact on students by keeping the group's size small, I arrange to make presentations to groups of students at the same school at different times of the day. As a rule of thumb, I recommend that I speak to no more than two classes at a time.

Brian Laird, Public Education Services Coordinator
ACCD

Visiting Speaker's Checklist

Task	Purpose
Write a letter to potential host schools Send letter	Contact principals of elementary and junior high schools in your community with a letter. If possible, find out and use each principal's name to personalize the letter. Describe the outreach program and invite schools to participate. (See sample letter on p. 6.)
Start a program log	Keep a record of the schools you've sent letters to and when the letters were sent. When schools contact you to book a presentation or to request more information about the program, jot down the date of contact and other details.
Follow up with the host schools	When a principal confirms the school's commitment to the program, ask for the host teachers' contact information.
Follow up with the host teachers Update the program log	Contact the host teachers to let them know the principal has spoken to you about the school's interest in the program. Together, choose a time for the delivery of Lesson Two: Visiting Speaker. Let the teachers know you will be sending the curriculum to the principal, who will redirect it to them. Record the date on which you spoke to the teachers and the date agreed upon for the delivery of Lesson Two.
Write a letter to the principal Write a letter to host teachers	Write a letter thanking the principal for his or her commitment to the program. (See sample letter on p. 7.) Write a letter introducing host teachers to the curriculum and confirming the date of your visit. (See sample on p. 8.)
Send letters and curriculum Update the program log	Forward letters and the appropriate section of the curriculum (K to 3, Gr. 4 to 6, or Gr. 7 to 9) to the school. Record the date that the letters and materials were sent or dropped off.
Follow up with host teachers Update the program log	Contact the teachers to ensure the curriculum has been received, to ask if they have questions about the curriculum, and to remind them that, ideally, Lesson One will be delivered one to three days prior to your visit. Confirm the date of your presentation and record the call in your log.
Review the evaluations Update the program log	After presentation and follow-up lesson have been delivered, review the evaluations received from the host teachers. If you haven't received the evaluations, contact the teachers to ask how they felt the session went. Record feedback.

Letter of Introduction

Your organization can use the following letter to introduce yourself, your organization, and the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum to a potential host school. You can revise it to best suit your needs.

As you can see, the highlighted areas indicate places where you can customize the letter to reflect your organization's details. You may have to modify the middle line in the second paragraph for accuracy. An electronic version of the letter can be found on the ACCD website at www.accd.net

Date

Address of School

Dear (Principal's name):

(Name of your organization) would like to introduce you and your school to the school outreach curriculum *Getting to Know Us: Raising Disability Awareness in Alberta's Schools*.

Do you think any of your teachers or students would be interested in an in-class presentation about people with disabilities? Our free presentation and curriculum provide an introduction to different types of disabilities, dispel myths about disabilities, and allow your students the opportunity to speak to and ask questions of a person with a disability. We understand that there are many demands on classroom time, so we have designed a flexible curriculum that can be adapted to accommodate individual teacher's preferences. A minimum of one half-hour would be needed for each of the curriculum's three components, which can be presented on different days. However, the curriculum's lessons can easily be expanded, and longer sessions will provide students with more effective opportunities for learning about disability issues.

Getting to Know Us will encourage students and teachers to develop an understanding of and respect for the following ideas:

- Society needs to learn to see the person first, the disability second
- People with disabilities are individuals who have the same aspirations, needs, rights, and expectations as everyone else
- Because words shape attitudes and perceptions, it is important to use words that respect the dignity of the individual

The *Getting to Know Us* curriculum includes three lessons: an introductory lesson, a visiting speaker presentation, and a concluding lesson. The visiting speaker has expertise in and knowledge about many types of disabilities and has already made this presentation to a wide range of students. It is recommended that no more than two classes at a time attend a presentation in order to generate the greatest impact on the students.

To take advantage of this valuable program, please call (phone number) at (your organization's name) and ask for (visiting speaker's name). I can be reached between (times and days of week). I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely, (Visiting speaker's name), (Title), (Organization)

Thank-You Letter to Principal

Your organization can use the following letter to thank a host school once it agrees to use the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum. Fill in the places where you can customize the letter to reflect your organization's details. You can revise it to best suit your needs. An electronic version of the letter can be found on the ACCD website at www.accd.net

Note: A separate cover letter introduces the host teacher(s) to the curriculum (see next page). Be sure to include only the pertinent unit(s) with the letters (K to 3, Gr. 4 to 6, Gr. 7 to 9).

***

Date

Address of School

Dear (Principal's Name),

Thank you for agreeing to host the *Getting to Know Us: Raising Disability Awareness in Alberta's Schools* curriculum at (name of school). I am looking forward to speaking to your students about the realities of life with a disability. My understanding is that I will visit your school on (date) at (time) and will be speaking to students in (grades).

I have enclosed materials for the teacher(s) who will be delivering the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum. Would you please forward these to the appropriate teacher(s) as soon as possible? I would like to give the teacher(s) ample time to prepare the students for my visit.

Thanks again for agreeing to have me visit your school. The more children we reach with our message of equality and acceptance, the more inclusive and equitable our world will be.

Sincerely,
(Visiting speaker's name)
(Title)
(Organization)

Cover Letter to Accompany Teacher's Guide

Your organization can use the following letter to thank host teachers once a school has agreed to use the curriculum. Fill in the places where you can customize the letter to reflect your organization's details. You can revise it to best suit your needs. An electronic version of the letter can be found on the ACCD website at www.accd.net
***

Date

Address of School

Dear (Teacher's Name):

Thank you for agreeing to host the *Getting to Know Us: Raising Disability Awareness in Alberta's Schools* curriculum in your Grade (xx) classroom. I am looking forward to speaking to your students about the realities of life with a disability. I would like to take this opportunity to tell you a bit about this curriculum.

The *Getting to Know Us* curriculum is made up of three lessons: two lessons to be delivered by you, the host teacher, and one to be delivered by me, your visiting speaker. The first lesson is meant to be delivered by you before I come to visit your classroom; the second lesson involves my visit to your classroom; and the third lesson is a follow-up lesson that is meant to take place after my visit.

The enclosed material comprises some background information about the curriculum, the two lessons to be delivered by you, and a synopsis of the presentation I will make. I would like to recommend that you deliver the first lesson one to three days before I come to visit your classroom and the follow-up lesson one to three days after. If more than one teacher in your school is using the curriculum, you are welcome to combine classes for my presentation. However, I recommend that no more than two classes participate in my presentation at one time in order to make the greatest impact on the students. If you have any questions as you review this curriculum, I would be happy to speak with you. You can reach me at (phone number).

Thanks again for agreeing to have me visit your classroom. The more children we reach with our message of equality and acceptance, the more inclusive and equitable our world will be.

Sincerely,

(Visiting speaker's name)
(Title)
(Organization)

Getting Ready

As the visiting speaker, you will facilitate Lesson Two of the curriculum. Before you visit the classroom to make your presentation, we recommend that you take the following steps:

1. Review Lesson Two (p. 16) so that you are comfortable with the content of your presentation. If you are making the presentation for the first time, or if you have only presented it a few times, you may want to practice in front of your colleagues.

2. Review Lessons One and Three from the applicable Teacher's Guide to familiarize yourself with the host teacher's lessons.

3. Call the host teacher(s) a few days ahead of time to confirm this information:

   » The time of the presentation
   » The school's address
   » The number of students attending the presentation

At this time, you can also remind the teachers of these points:

   » To teach Lesson One of the curriculum prior to your visit
   » To make arrangements to have a VCR on hand, if necessary
   » To make enough copies of handouts for the students (Note: If you are making your presentation to only one class of students, you may decide to make copies of the handout yourself and bring them to the session.)

4. A day or two ahead of time, prepare a presentation kit that contains these items:

   » Literature about your organization
   » Business cards for the teachers and the principal
   » Presentation notes, if you use them
   » The video, if you are showing one
   » Additional props (e.g., a prosthetic arm and cutlery to show how the arm works, a Braille book, a talking calculator)
   » Directions to and contact information for the host school
   » Gifts for students (see below)

5. When you arrive at the school, report to the general office. Someone there will take you to the classroom.

In My Experience . . .

When the Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities makes these presentations, we give students rulers and pencils that are decorated with our logo and contact information. This is optional, of course, but we find the gifts promote goodwill and help students remember who we are. If you do not have your own gifts, but would like to present students with a token of your visit, please call ACCD at (780) 488-9088, and we will provide you with some of our mementos.

Brian Laird, Public Education Services Coordinator
ACCD

Effective Presentation Skills

If you do not have much experience making presentations, especially to children and youth, the following tips and strategies may come in handy:

1. Before beginning your presentation, decide if you are willing to take students' questions throughout your presentation or if you'd like to wait until the end. Let the teacher and students know which approach you prefer.

2. Be aware that students from Kindergarten to Grade Three love to tell stories, sometimes entirely unrelated to your presentation. Once one student tells a story, they might all want to tell you something. As much as possible, use these stories as good "teaching moments" that address "right and wrong" perceptions of people with disabilities. If stories go on too long, let the students know that you can listen to more stories at the end of the question period.

3. When telling stories to students from Kindergarten to Grade Three, do not add too many extra details. Stick to the important ideas and facts. Children of this age do not have very long attention spans.

4. Practice your presentation ahead of time. Practice changing the tone of your voice to hold students' interest.

5. Use props to involve students. Children, especially the younger ones, benefit from moving about and getting involved. (See next page, *"In My Experience"*.)

6. Be patient when you ask if the students have any questions. It's okay to wait for half a minute or so while students think through the questions they want to ask.

7. When students do ask questions, listen carefully to ensure you will be able to answer them fully.

8. Ask a question every now and then throughout your presentation to keep the students focused. With younger students, you can ask "yes" or "no" questions and ask for a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" response.

9. Repeat students' questions to ensure the entire group knows what you are responding to.

10. When a student asks you a question, face the student and look at him or her. When you answer the question, respond to the entire group, not to only the student who asked the question, by shifting your body and eye contact away from the questioner to address the others in the room. You may want to "check in" with the questioner by looking at him or her briefly while you respond.

11. As much as possible, refer to other types of disabilities as well as your own, in order to keep the presentation general in nature.

12. If students start to get fidgety, you may want to start wrapping up your presentation.

13. Be yourself!

In My Experience . . .

I think one of the most important things for speakers to keep in mind is keeping an upbeat and positive tone. The myth that I think is most important to dispel for my daughter, and anyone else with a disability, is that she should be pitied.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

In My Experience . . .

When I make a presentation, I bring along a "spare arm" and some cutlery. I find that students often want to touch my arm and see how it works. The kids love it when I pull a spare arm out of my bag that they can pass around! If the students ask, I also show them how I use cutlery.

Brian Laird, Public Education Services Coordinator
ACCD

GETTING TO KNOW US:
RAISING DISABILITY AWARENESS IN ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS

Visiting Speaker's Presentation

In This Section, You Will Find:

Overview of Lesson Two

As the visiting speaker, you will be presenting Lesson Two to the students. As you review the following lesson plan, notice the suggestions that are included for students in different age groups.

Lesson Focus:	To understand that we need to see the person first and the disability second.
Lesson Objectives:	To show students that people with disabilities are individuals who have the same aspirations, needs, rights, and expectations as anyone else. To teach students that words shape attitudes and perceptions. It is important to use words that respect the dignity of the individual.
Time Frame:	30 to 50 minutes in length, depending on class size and the discussion generated. Check with the host teacher(s) ahead of time to find out the time frame you need to adhere to.
Materials:	Copies of letter to parents (see p. 18) A television and VCR for the intermediate and junior high presentations (make arrangements with the teacher ahead of time) Presentation kit (see p.9)

Part One: Introduction

1. Introduce yourself by telling the students about your family, your hobbies and interests, your work, your pets, and other details. The idea here is to begin the presentation by talking about yourself without referring to your disability. We want the students to see the person first, the disability second. From the outset, we want students to see that people with disabilities enjoy family and social, physical, and work-related activities—just like everyone else.

2. Talk to the students about your particular disability and the realities of living with a disability. This may include explaining how or when the disability occurred, how it has affected daily routines and situations, and how family and friends view your disability. It also includes dispelling the stereotypical ideas that many students, especially the older ones, will have about you as a person.

   Through the examples you use and the stories you tell, you will address common misperceptions. Students will learn that you are *not* helpless, that you do *not* want to be pitied, that you *can* live independently, and that, like all people, you *have the right* to participate in society.

3. If you are comfortable doing so, you may want to demonstrate ways you have adapted to life with a disability. For example, you can show how you move through a room with no vision, or how you use a pencil with a prosthetic arm.

4. If you have any props the students can touch, please include these in the presentation. Students retain more information if they can physically hold or touch the objects they are learning about.

In My Experience . . .

The curriculum guidelines suggest sharing some more personal information first to emphasize the idea of "person first, disability second" during your introduction. However, you may be more comfortable with a different approach. Develop your presentation in the way that best suits you, your personality, and your level of comfort.

Brian Laird, Public Education Services Coordinator
ACCD

Part Two: Discussion and Video

1. Once you have introduced yourself, invite students to ask questions. When a student asks a question, repeat it so the entire group knows what you are responding to. Answer frankly and with respect.

   Remember that many of the students will have very little, if any, experience with people with disabilities, so they may feel shy about their questions. With students in Grades Three and above, gently introduce the idea of respectful language if they use words that are inappropriate during the discussion.

2. Sometimes it is difficult to get a discussion going. The host teacher can help out by asking students to tell you about the activity they completed in Lesson One. Or, you can ask the students, "Has anything I've said about living with a disability surprised you? How did you imagine I or my story might be different?"

   After the discussion (or if you seem to have trouble getting the discussion going), show students in Grades 3 and above a video that focuses on dispelling the myths that affect the lives of people with disabilities. The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities uses the video *All Ways Welcome*, produced by the Ontario Department of Tourism, but other videos are also available. Your organization may have a video that is appropriate, or you can contact your local library.

3. If you have remaining time when the video is over, ask students to respond to what they saw. What did they find interesting? What did they learn?

Part Three: Wrapping Up

After the discussion has ended, thank the students for their ideas and for the time spent in the classroom.

Then, let them know you have a letter they can take home to share with their parents about the things they learned in class (see below).

If you have gifts for the students, present them at this time (See *In My Experience* p. 9).

Letter to Parents or Guardians

Distribute the following letter to the students and ask them to share it with their parents. You can forward the letter to the teachers ahead of time and ask them to make copies. The highlighted areas indicate places where you can customize the letter to reflect your organization's details. An electronic version of the letter can be found on the ACCD website at www.accd.net

***
Date

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Today I visited your child's classroom to talk about disability issues. As a person with a disability, I have come to learn that the greatest obstacles I face are not those related to my disability, but those generated by the attitudes and assumptions that others have about my abilities. With this in mind, the focus of my presentation was to encourage students, when they encounter a person with a disability, to focus on what that individual can do, not on what he or she cannot do. In other words, I've encouraged them to *see the person first and the disability second*.

I'd like to ask you to take some time over the next few days to ask your child about my presentation and about the lessons on disability issues that the classroom teacher has also been focusing on. Our goal has been to offer children an authentic view of people with disabilities.

If you have any questions or would like further information about disabilities and disability issues, please feel free to call me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

(Visiting speaker's name)
(Title)
(Organization)

P.S. I've attached a chart to this letter that explains some of the language you can use when discussing disabilities with your child. I hope you find it helpful!

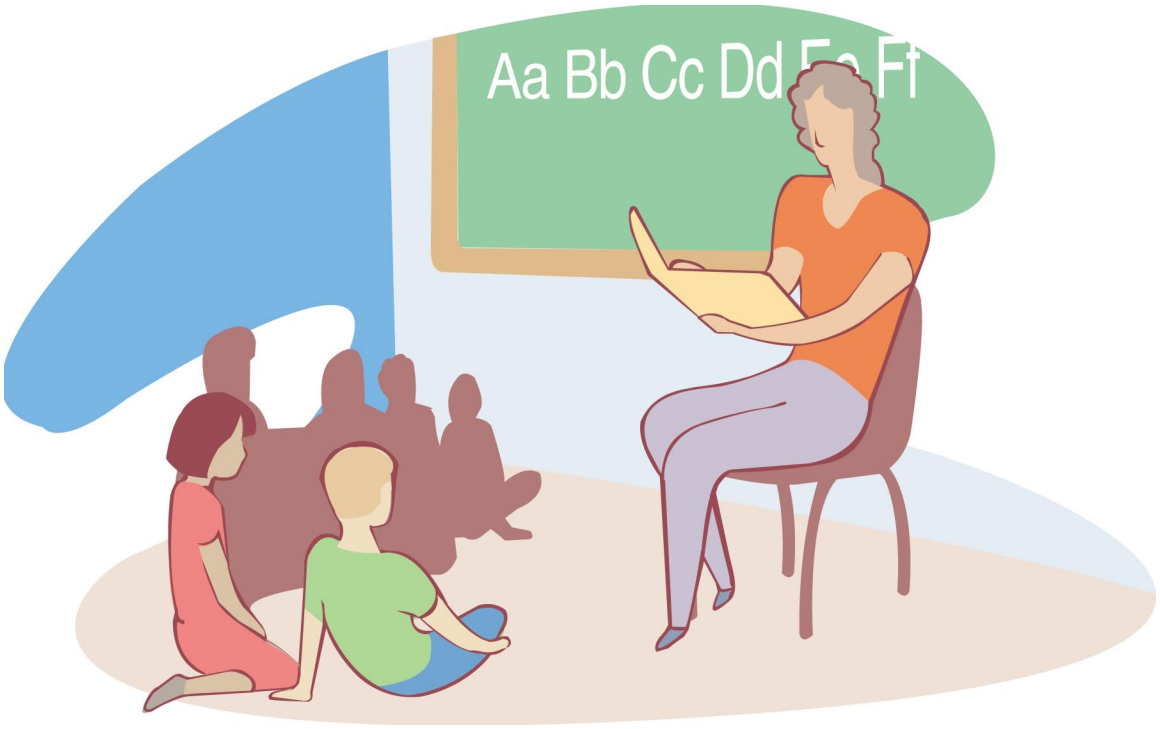
Appropriate Language

"Language is a powerful and important tool in shaping ideas, perceptions and ultimately, public attitudes. Words are a mirror of society's attitudes and perceptions…. It is important to remember that the development of appropriate terminology is still in progress; however, the… terms [below] are currently in use" (Human Resources and Development Canada, Office for Disability Issues, 2002).

INSTEAD OF	PLEASE USE
Handicap, handicapped	Disability, or person with a disability Emphasize the person, not the disability
The blind, the visually impaired	Person who is blind, person who has a visual impairment, person who has low vision
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	Person born with a disability, person who has a congenital disability
Victim of/ afflicted with/suffers from a stroke, polio, muscular dystrophy, etc.	Person who has multiple sclerosis, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Wheelchair-bound or confined to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair, a wheelchair user
Cripple, crippled, gimp, lame, invalid, physically challenged	Person with a disability, person who has a mobility impairment/reduced mobility/ mobility limitations, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	Person who is deaf
The hearing impaired, the hard of hearing	Person who has a hearing loss, person who is hard of hearing
The epileptic	Person who has epilepsy
Handicapped parking, handicapped washrooms, etc.	Accessible parking, accessible washrooms, etc.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, maniac, mental, mental case, neurotic, psycho, psychotic	Person with a mental health disability, person who has schizophrenia, person who has depression, etc.
Learning disabled, the dyslexics	Person with a learning disability
Mentally retarded, defective, idiot, imbecile, moron, retarded, mongoloid	Person with an intellectual disability, person with a developmental disability
Normal, healthy (when used as the opposite of disabled)	Non-disabled, able-bodied

Adapted from: Office for Disability Issues, Human Resources and Development Canada. (2002). *A way with words and images.* www.sdc.gc.ca/en/home.shtml

GETTING TO KNOW US:
RAISING DISABILITY AWARENESS IN ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS



Elementary Teacher's Guide (Kindergarten to Grade Three)

In This Section, You Will Find:

About Getting to Know Us

Getting to Know Us provides disability organizations with suggested guidelines, time frames, and a curriculum for coordinating school outreach programs that raise students' awareness of disabilities. This unit of the curriculum focuses on students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, but we also have units for students in Grades 4 to 6 and Grades 7 to 9.

Each unit comprises three lessons — two to be delivered by teachers in the classroom and one to be delivered by a person with a disability. The involvement of a person with a disability is vital to the success of this program. If you have discovered this curriculum independently (i.e., not through a disability organization), we encourage you to contact a local disability organization and request the names of individuals who would be interested in visiting your classroom.

Curriculum Objectives

Getting to Know Us encourages students and teachers to develop an understanding of and respect for the following ideas:

- Society needs to learn to see the person first, the disability second
- People with disabilities are individuals who have the same aspirations, needs, rights, and expectations as anyone else
- Words shape attitudes and perceptions. It is important to use words that respect the dignity of the individual.

Glossary

Here are a few definitions you'll need to be familiar with:

Visiting Speaker: This is a person with a disability, usually working for or associated with a disability organization, who visits a classroom to speak about the realities of living with a disability. The visiting speaker delivers Lesson Two of the curriculum and coordinates the teacher-delivered lessons.

Host School: This is the school that hosts the visiting speaker. Usually, initial contact is made with the host school through the principal, who then forwards information to interested teachers.

Host Teachers: These are the teachers who deliver Lessons One and Three of the curriculum. As well, they host the visiting speaker, either in their own class or in combination with other classes.

At a Glance

This curriculum comprises three lessons:

Lesson One: You, as the host teacher, introduce your students to the idea of disabilities in general. The lesson is divided into two parts: an introductory discussion and suggested follow-up activities. The lesson raises student awareness about disability issues. This unit does not specifically include learning or mental health disabilities, due to the difficulty with children this age grasping such concepts.

Lesson Two: In the second lesson, your visiting speaker continues the general introduction to disabilities that you began, but she or he also speaks more specifically about her or his particular situation.

Lesson Three: You follow up on the visiting speaker's presentation by encouraging students to apply what they've learned. Like Lesson One, this lesson is divided into two parts: an introductory discussion and suggested follow-up activities.

Students with Disabilities in Your Classroom

If you have a student with a disability in your classroom, you will want to ensure that he or she is comfortable with the lesson ahead of time. Here are a few ideas:

- Explain the content of the lessons to the student and his or her parents ahead of time
- If the student with a disability is comfortable talking to the class, invite the student to explain his or her situation and discuss the activities that he or she finds challenging. Remember, the student knows his or her situation best.
- Choose follow-up activities (see p. 32) that are relevant to the student's disability
- Invite the student's parents or guardians to join you for the lessons
- When speaking with the student and his or her parents, discover if your student has a sibling who would like to speak to the class

In My Experience . . .

Remember: everyone is different. Some students may enjoy the opportunity to speak to the class; others may not want to be present at all. Speak with the student and his or her parents or guardians to decide whether or not the student should be present during the lesson. If the decision is that the student would rather not be in attendance, still invite the parents or guardians to attend, and focus your lesson on their child's particular disability, inviting the parents' input throughout.

Doris Goetz, Board Member, Edmonton ACCD

In My Experience . . .

I think it is very important to involve students with disabilities in the class presentation by having them speak to the class about activities in their lives that are challenging. What a wonderful opportunity for students to share their experience—from school, home, or playing with friends—with their classmates!

Colleen Duff, Board Member, Calgary ACCD

Feeling Comfortable

As you prepare to deliver Lessons One and Three of the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum, you may want to explore your own level of comfort with the information to be presented. What are your own attitudes, thoughts, and opinions regarding the lives of people with disabilities? Do you use appropriate language when referring to, or speaking about, disabilities? Do you feel comfortable when you encounter and interact with people with disabilities?

To assist you in this exploration, we've included the following information:

- » An awareness quiz
- » Background information and statistics about disabilities in Canada (Appendix One)
- » Basic definitions of, and information about, the types of disabilities we ask you to discuss with your students (Appendix Two)
- » A terminology guide that explains the proper words to use when speaking with, or referring to, people with disabilities (Appendix Three)

Please review these materials and, if time permits, take part in some of the following activities. These are meant to provide you with opportunities to explore your own knowledge of, or feelings on, the subject of disabilities.

In My Experience . . .

Sometimes I think teachers don't realize just how important the role is that they play in the lives of all students, including students with disabilities. Students notice the words, body language, and gestures teachers use when interacting with students with a disability. They play a very important role in shaping perceptions and making acceptance happen.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Suggested Activities to Prepare You for Delivering the* Getting to Know Us *curriculum:

- » If you are the only teacher in your school using this curriculum, complete the Awareness Quiz (next page) on your own to give you a better understanding of your own familiarity with disability issues
- » If other teachers in your school are also using this curriculum, create an informal discussion group to talk about disability issues. You can even invite members of your school's parent/teacher committee to join you. Choose someone with experience in disability issues (e.g., the parent of a child with a disability) to lead your discussion group. Use the Awareness Quiz as an ice-breaker for your meeting or as a starting point for discussion.
- » Ask a member from a disability organization to answer your questions about a specific disability
- » If the opportunity exists to invite speakers to professional development events or staff meetings, consider inviting a community member with a disability or a representative from a disability organization

Awareness Quiz

In Canada, students with disabilities may become members of any classroom. However, as doors in schools open to create inclusive environments, teachers, administrators, and fellow students also need to be open to learning about the myths and stereotypes that affect views of people with disabilities.

To dispel these myths, this curriculum focuses on the message that every student is different, and every disability is unique. The following quiz is meant to encourage teachers to think about the ways that individual and social perceptions and attitudes influence how a person with a disability experiences his or her world.

	Agree	Disagree
1. Everyone has unique abilities and talents.	_____	_____
2. Your attitudes are an influential force that determine how a person with a disability will experience the community and the world.	_____	_____
3. It is important to see the person first and the disability second.	_____	_____
4. People with disabilities always require special care and are best treated in an institutional setting.	_____	_____
5. Sports activities are limited for people with disabilities.	_____	_____
6. People are sometimes afraid of a person who has a developmental disability.	_____	_____
7. A person with a learning disability cannot be expected to complete school.	_____	_____
8. A person may have a disability and not be handicapped.	_____	_____
9. Students with visual impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students.	_____	_____
10. Braille is used by about 25% of persons who have visual impairments.	_____	_____
11. When guiding a person who has a visual impairment, you should hold his or her arm.	_____	_____
12. When someone who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should address your conversation to the interpreter.	_____	_____
13. All people with mobility limitations require the same type of support.	_____	_____
14. Students can be assessed with a learning disability at any point during their education.	_____	_____
15. Students who have speech impairments usually have intellectual impairments as well.	_____	_____

Awareness Quiz Answer Key

The answers provided here do not discuss disabilities at length. However, you should find them sufficient to guide you in assessing your own understanding and awareness. If you are using the quiz with a group, the answers (and the questions themselves) should serve as a catalyst for initiating discussion about various disability issues. If a person with a disability, or someone who is familiar with disability issues is present as you review the answers to the quiz, he or she will be able to respond more fully to your questions.

1. **Everyone has unique abilities and talents.**

   True. This may be an obvious statement, but how often do we really see the abilities and talents in an individual first, regardless of whether or not that person has a disability?

2. **Your attitudes are an influential force that determine how a person with a disability will experience the community and the world.**

   True. Barriers are broken down by means of open, positive attitudes with which each person is accepted and treated as an individual.

3. **It is important to see the person first and the disability second.**

   True. By seeing the person first, we accept that someone with a disability, like anyone else, has strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, which contribute to that person's character and to his or her relationships with others. A disability is only one of many aspects that constitute the individual.

In My Experience . . .

*I think it is very important to emphasize the "person first, disability second" approach. Everyone needs to know that the person is **not** the disability. And kids need to realize that classmates with disabilities have moods, likes, and dislikes, just as they do.*

Sue Lagroix, Parent
Rocky Mountain House

4. **People with disabilities always require special care and are best treated in an institutional setting.**

   False. Many people with disabilities can and do live independently. With personal supports, assistive devices, and equal opportunities for education, training, and employment, people with disabilities increasingly participate as independent members of society.

5. **Sports activities are limited for people with disabilities.**

   False. Many people with disabilities, young and old, are involved in, and benefit from, all kinds of recreation and leisure activities. It is a commonly held myth that people with disabilities cannot, or do not want to, participate in sporting activities. But everything from skiing to swimming to bowling to visits to community playgrounds can be part of the lives of many children and adults with disabilities.

In My Experience . . .

I think it's important for people to realize that people with disabilities don't have to be world class athletes to enjoy being active. My 12-year old daughter, who is visually impaired and has cerebral palsy, loves to swim, bowl, and participate in gym class. She enjoys taking part in sports at the community level.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

6. **People are sometimes afraid of a person who has a developmental disability.**

   True. In these instances, fear is usually the result of a lack of knowledge or a false understanding of the nature of developmental disabilities.

7. **A person with a learning disability cannot be expected to complete school.**

   False. Given the appropriate learning environment and accommodations, a person with a learning disability can achieve success at the highest academic levels. (See Appendix Two for a definition of *accommodations*.)

8. **A person may have a disability and not be handicapped.**

   True. People with disabilities are handicapped only when environmental barriers or other people's attitudes interfere with or prevent activities that would otherwise be open to them. (See Appendix Two.)

9. **Students with visual impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students.**

   True. Students with visual impairments, as well as students with mobility and hearing loss, learning disabilities, and mental health disabilities, have the same range of cognitive ability as other students. However, the environmental and attitudinal barriers they face in school systems and in society in general often lead to intelligence scores that are lower than those of students without disabilities.

10. **Braille is used by approximately 25 percent of persons who are visually impaired.**

    False. Braille is used by approximately *3 percent* of persons who are visually impaired. Students who do not use Braille usually read using one or all of the following: large print books, audiotapes, text magnifiers, and other assistive devices. (Definitions of assistive devices are included in Appendix Two.)

11. **When guiding a person with a visual impairment, you should hold his or her arm.**

    False. If you think a person with a visual impairment needs help getting somewhere, first ask if he or she would like assistance and how you may provide it. Then allow him or her to hold on to you, usually by your elbow or forearm, for guidance. Describe anything out of the ordinary that may be in your path, such as objects, stairs, persons with mobility limitations, etc.

12. **When someone who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should address your conversation to the interpreter.**

    False. If a person who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should speak directly to the person who is deaf. Do not speak to the interpreter instead.

13. **People with mobility limitations all require the same types of support.**

    False. The range of mobility limitations is broad. A mobility limitation is any condition that impairs an individual's ability to move his or her body or body parts freely. Some people will be unable to walk without an aid such as a wheelchair, a scooter, a walker, crutches, or a cane. Others may walk freely but have impaired hand or fine motor functions that make activities such as writing, opening doors, or holding objects difficult.

14. **Students can be assessed with a learning disability at any point during their education.**

    True. Learning disabilities can be assessed at any age. If students are assessed when they are young, they will be able to benefit from accommodations early in their education. Unfortunately, many students are not assessed until they are adults.

15. **Students who have speech impairments usually have intellectual impairments too.**

    False. Students with speech impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students. Often, students whose verbal communication is difficult to understand have a mobility limitation that creates difficulties with pronouncing words. This has no connection, however, to the student's ability to understand, reason, or solve problems of an intellectual nature.

Lesson One: Raising Awareness

Overview of Lesson One

Lesson Focus: To understand that we need to see the person first and the disability second.

Lesson Objectives: To introduce students to the idea of "sameness" and "difference" when talking about people with disabilities.

To guide students in defining and identifying visual, hearing, and mobility limitations.

To give students the opportunity to simulate disabilities and learn how to adapt to situations.

Part One: Introductory Discussion

1. Introduce or review the concept of similarities and differences among objects or people.

   » Hold up an apple and an orange and ask: How are these pieces of fruit the same? How are they different?
   » Ask for a show of hands as students respond to questions such as the following: Who has blond hair? Who has brown eyes? Who is wearing a red shirt? Explain to the students that all of these questions refer to differences and similarities that we can see.
   » Now ask for a show of hands as students respond to questions such as the following: Who likes to play sports? Who likes to do crafts? Who likes to listen to music? Who likes to read? Explain to the students that all of these questions refer to differences and similarities that we cannot always see.
   » Ask students if they choose friends because of similarities they can see (first set of questions) or those they cannot see (second set of questions). Discuss the idea that we choose friends for many different reasons – what they like and don't like, their personality, their sense of humour, the way they act, the way they treat others — not simply because of the way they look

2. Discover what the students already know about disabilities. Then use the class discussion to create a definition of the term. (See Appendix Two.)

3. Discover if students know anyone with a disability. Briefly introduce the idea of different types of disabilities: visual, hearing, and mobility.

   » Does anyone know somebody with a disability?
   » If so, how is that person just like everyone else? How is he or she different?

Part Two: Follow-Up Activities

The activities on the next pages vary in length and focus, but they all encourage students to see *the person first and the disability second*. Choose one or more of the activities to follow up on your introductory discussion. As your students work through the assignment, guide them in thinking about the barriers that people with disabilities overcome on a daily basis. Most of the activities require a few everyday objects that you'll need to gather ahead of time.

Each of the activities ends with a brief discussion. When the discussion is complete, wrap up the lesson by letting the students know that a person with a disability will be visiting the classroom to talk about his or her experience.

* * * * *

Follow-Up Activities at a Glance

Activity	Page #	Focus	Delivery	
			Whole Class	Learning Centres
Colouring Sheet*	Resource Section	Visual, Hearing, and Mobility	X	
Memory and Practice	33	Visual		X
What Could This Be?	34	Visual		X
The Talking Book	35	Visual	X	
Come Again?	36	Hearing		X
Watch What I Say	37	Hearing	X	X
A Bit More Room, Please	38	Mobility		X
Adapting	39	Mobility		X

*The Colouring Sheet can be photocopied and distributed to students. Have the students point out the ways that people with disabilities in the picture participate fully in their communities.

In My Experience . . .

When I visit my son's class to raise awareness about his disability, I often lead the students in activities that simulate his experience. I think it is very important to intervene if students use the moment to make fun of disabilities. Learning, not teasing, should be the focus of simulation activities. Explain to the students that the activities are meant to help us understand more fully what it is like to experience a disability.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

MEMORY AND PRACTICE
(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To perform tasks in a familiar place without the use of sight.

Learning Objectives: To learn that, with memory and practice, ordinary activities can be accomplished even if you have a visual impairment.

Materials: Blindfolds
White cane or metre stick (optional)
A few helpers may be needed for students in K or Gr. 1 (i.e., older students, parents, teacher aides)

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that you will be asking them to discover what it would be like to be in the classroom without being able to see.

2. Together with the students, review the location of objects in the room. Use language that emphasizes the position of items. For example, the bookshelf is *beside* the teacher's desk, your desk is the *second* one in the row, the reading area is at the *back* of the classroom. (For older students, you can use *right* and *left.)*

3. Pair up the students. One student will be asked to wear the blindfold and use the white cane or metre stick; the other will be the companion. Let the blindfolded students know they can take their partners' arms, if they'd like.

4. Assign simple classroom tasks to the blindfolded students. Encourage students to use their memory to guide them. Some tasks to consider might be opening the classroom door, returning a book to the bookshelf, wiping off the blackboard/whiteboard, or approaching the teacher's desk.

5. Allow both partners about two minutes each to experience being blindfolded.

Discussion:

After both students have had a chance to be blindfolded, ask them to describe the experience. Lead the discussion to include these subjects:

» Were they *able* to complete the tasks? *(focus on ability)*
» How did they adapt? (e.g., did they move more slowly, rely on touch and hearing, ask for assistance, use their memory?)
» How could they learn to perform these tasks independently? (with practice, time)

WHAT COULD THIS BE?

(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To perform a task using the sense of touch, rather than sight.

Learning Objective: To understand the importance of touch for acquiring information about our world.

Materials: Bags of fairly small, similar objects (e.g., pencils, pens, and chalk, or buttons and coins)

Directions:

1. Form small groups of students, one per bag of objects.
2. Have each student in the group reach into the bag without looking inside it and silently identify the objects. Encourage students to keep their discoveries to themselves until all group members have had a turn.
3. Once everyone has had a turn, ask students to tell the class what was in their bags. Keep a list on the blackboard/whiteboard.
4. Have students open the bags to see what is inside.

Discussion:

Encourage students to think about their experience with this activity. Ask:

» What items did you find the easiest to identify? Which were the most difficult? Why?
» What did this activity teach you about the sense of touch?

THE TALKING BOOK

(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To experience how someone with a visual impairment might use the sense of hearing.

Learning Objective: To learn that a book can be enjoyed even if the words can't be read with our eyes.

Materials: Blindfolds
Audio tape/CD of an age-appropriate short story

Directions:

1. Ask students to make themselves comfortable for a story. Before you begin the audiotape, make sure all of the students are blindfolded.
2. Half way through the story, pause the tape and have the students remove their blindfolds. Have them listen to the remainder of the story with the blindfolds off.

Discussion:

After the story, encourage students to think about their experience. Ask:

» Did you enjoy the story with the blindfold on? With the blindfold off? Compare the two situations. (Students may have found it easier to focus with the blindfold on.)
» Do you think a person with a visual impairment can enjoy a story as much as a person who can see? (Use this question to introduce the idea of appropriate language in relation to visual disabilities. Explain that it would be quite normal for a child with a visual impairment who uses audio books to say, "I've *read* that story." Similarly, it's okay for us to say things like "*See* you later" or "Have you *seen* that new movie?")

COME AGAIN?

(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To have students experience the way someone with a hearing loss might hear certain sounds.

Learning Objective: To gain awareness of hearing loss and to understand the barrier that background noise presents.

Materials: Earplugs or cotton balls
A variety of objects made from different materials (e.g., plastic lunch kits, soup cans, pop cans, an empty glass and a glass full of water, glass jars, wooden blocks)
Tuning fork (optional)

Directions:

1. Ask students to form small groups and provide each group with a selection of objects.
2. Ask one student to plug his or her ears with the earplugs or cotton balls. (Using fingers to plug ears will work, too.) Then have the student face away from the rest of the group. Have the other group members take turns tapping on one or two different objects. The person with plugged ears has to guess which object is being tapped. Take turns until everyone has had the opportunity to simulate hearing loss.
3. To demonstrate the effect of background noise on hearing, try doing this activity with a few students while the rest of them are talking.

Discussion:

Encourage the students to talk about the experience. Ask:

» How did the background noise affect your ability to identify objects?
» Did anyone notice or feel the vibrations that the different sounds made? (This would be especially noticeable if the group used a tuning fork.)

In My Experience . . .

We shouldn't assume that someone who speech reads will always understand everything we say. When I speak to students about speech reading, I let them know that, because some letters look the same as others when formed by the lips, speech reading is not always reliable. For example, if someone asked, "Did you buy the pie?" "Buy" and "pie" would look the same on the lips. Or, if someone asked, "Did you tie your shoes?" "Did" and "tie" would look similar on the lips.

Doreen Gyorkos, Board Member, Lethbridge ACCD

WATCH WHAT I SAY

(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To introduce students to speech reading as a method of communication.

Learning Objective: To understand speech reading as a communication aid for people who are hard of hearing.

To learn how to speak so that someone who is hard of hearing can understand you better.

Materials: A selection of phrases written on index cards (e.g., Hello, how are you today? Where are you going? Do you want to play? I like this game.)

Directions:

1. Explain to the class that people who are hard of hearing will sometimes augment their hearing by speech reading. They do this by carefully watching the way a person's lips move when speaking. Tell the class that they will be given the opportunity to try to speech read.
2. Divide students into pairs and distribute the index cards with the phrases written on them, a different card to each student. Have one student silently form the words on his or her card while the other tries to interpret what is being said. (For younger students who cannot read, the teacher can play the part of the speaker.)
3. Let the speakers know that they may use gestures to assist their partners with the speech reading.
4. After one student has had a turn, switch roles.

Discussion:

Encourage students to think about their experience with this activity. Ask:

» What types of things make it easier for someone to understand what you are saying? (e.g., keeping your hands away from your mouth, having no gum or food in your mouth, speaking slowly and clearly, facing the listener, making gestures)
» Did you notice any limitations to speech reading? (See *In My Experience,* p. 36)

A BIT MORE ROOM, PLEASE

(Mobility Limitation)

Purpose: To examine the immediate surroundings for signs of accessibility for someone with a mobility limitation.

Learning Objective: To understand the concepts of barriers and accessibility as they relate to mobility limitations.

Materials: A baby carriage or stroller, or an office chair with wheels

Directions:

1. Invite a student, or a few students, to wheel a baby carriage or an office chair around the classroom. Ask them to perform certain tasks that involve getting around some of the tighter corners in the room (e.g., get something from the coat room, clean the blackboard/whiteboard, water the plants, etc.). For students using office chairs, ask them to wheel the chair to a spot and then perform a task while sitting in the chair (e.g., turn off the lights, clean off the blackboard/whiteboard, return a book to a top shelf, etc.).

2. As the students move around the classroom, have them make a mental note of the barriers that restrict their movement around the room.

3. After a discussion, brainstorm a checklist of things to observe in other parts of the school, in the schoolyard, and in the neighbourhood, that might *hinder or help* someone with a mobility limitation. Let students know you'll ask them to report back on their observations the next day.

Discussion:

Encourage students to examine the idea of accessibility. Ask:

» What did you notice as you tried to move around the room?
» What could be done to make the classroom more accessible?

Note: Having students create a chart that outlines the accessible and inaccessible features of the classroom, the school, or the neighbourhood makes a good follow-up exercise for this activity. Students can also draw a picture of an accessible classroom, school, or neighbourhood to accompany the chart.

ADAPTING
(Mobility Limitation)

Purpose: To perform a task without the full use of your fingers.

Learning Objective: To learn some of the ways a person with a mobility limitation adapts.

Materials: Oven mitts for each student or rubber gloves with cotton balls stuffed in the fingertips
Coins for sorting
A computer keyboard
Paper and pencil

Directions:

1. Ask your students to put on oven mitts or stuffed rubber gloves.
2. Then ask students wearing shoes with Velcro to try to open the Velcro, take off their shoes, put them back on, and do them up again. Ask students with laces or buckles to try to undo and do up their shoes, too.
3. Next, distribute coins to each student, or to small groups of students. Ask them to figure out a way to sort the coins.
4. Ask students to get a book out of their desks and turn to a certain page. Encourage them to think of new ways to perform this familiar task.
5. If you have a computer in your classroom, ask the students to key in their names. Again, encourage them to find new ways to adapt the task.
6. Ask the students to print the sentence: *The fox runs fast.*
7. Ask the students to take off and put on their socks.

   Note: If students do not come up with the idea themselves, show them how they can sort coins, turn pages, or operate a keyboard using the eraser end of a pencil.

Discussion:

Ask the students to describe their experiences. You can ask these discussion questions as each activity is undertaken or you can ask them in a discussion period once all of activities have been worked at:

- » Which type of shoe was easiest to manage? Why?
- » Did you discover any new ways to sort coins? Turn pages in your book? Use a keyboard? (Emphasize the idea of the ability we have to do the same tasks in different ways.)
- » How did it feel to know what you were supposed to write, but not be able to do it that well?
- » What other daily tasks may be difficult to perform with limited hand mobility (e.g., dialing a phone, buttoning clothes)? How could these daily tasks be accomplished? (using a pencil to dial, wearing clothes that pull on or have Velcro fasteners)

Note: This activity works well in a learning centre format. Set up several centres (one with a pile of shoes of various types, one with coins, another with books, another with paper and pencils, etc.). Have students move around the room to each centre to perform the tasks.

Lesson Two Synopsis: Visiting Speaker

Overview of Lesson Two

Lesson Objectives:	To show students that, in many ways, people with disabilities are the same as people without disabilities. To introduce students to the realities of life with a disability.
Time Frame:	30 to 50 minutes in length, depending on class size and the discussion generated. You can let the visiting speaker know ahead of time if you have a time frame you need to adhere to.
Materials:	The visiting speaker may need access to a television and VCR.

Part One: Introduction

After you introduce the visiting speaker, he or she will expand upon your introduction by telling students about his or her likes and dislikes, family members, hobbies and interests, work, pets, etc. As a result, the students will focus on the person and his or her *abilities* rather than on the disability.

Then the speaker will talk to the students about the realities of living with his or her particular disability. This may include explaining how or when the disability occurred, how it has affected daily routines and situations, and how family and friends view the disability. If appropriate, the visiting speaker will demonstrate ways he or she has adapted to life with a disability (e.g., how to move through a room with no vision, how to use a pencil with a prosthetic arm, etc.).

Part Two: Discussion and Video

The visiting speaker will encourage the students to ask questions about life with a disability. If students seem to have difficulty generating questions, the visiting speaker may use a video to encourage discussion. If the discussion goes smoothly, the video will be shown at the end of the discussion. The visiting speaker will then respond to questions about the video.

Part Three: Wrapping Up

After the discussion has ended, the visiting speaker will thank the students for their ideas and time. Then he or she will distribute (or ask you to distribute) copies of a letter for the students to take home to their parents (see next page).

Some visiting speakers may have small gifts for the students (e.g., rulers, pencils, bookmarks, etc.) that they will distribute at this time.

Letter to Parents or Guardians

Visiting speakers will send home a letter similar to the following. If they need you to provide photocopying, they will let you know ahead of time and provide you with a copy of the letter. The appropriate language chart referred to in the postscript will resemble the one in Appendix Three.

***

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Today I visited your child's classroom to talk about disability issues. As a person with a disability, I have come to learn that the greatest obstacles I face are not those related to my disability, but those generated by the attitudes and misperceptions that others have about my abilities. With this in mind, the focus of my presentation was to encourage students, when they encounter a person with a disability, to focus on what that individual can do, not on what he or she can't do. In other words, I've encouraged them to *see the person first and the disability second*.

I'd like to ask you to take some time over the next few days to ask your child about my presentation and about the lessons on disability issues that the classroom teacher has also been focusing on. Our goal has been to offer children an authentic view of people with disabilities.

If you have any questions or would like further information about disabilities and disability issues, please feel free to call me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

(Visiting speaker's name)
(Title)
(Organization)

P.S. I've attached a chart to this letter that explains some of the language you can use when discussing disabilities with your child. I hope you find it helpful!

In My Experience . . .

Along with the letter students take home to their parents, teachers could suggest a homework assignment where the student and his or her parents "adopt a disability" for an evening. By simulating a disability and then writing or talking about the experience, the family may develop some insight into our experiences.

Dari Lang, ACCD Member,
Calgary

Lesson Three: Taking Action

Overview of Lesson Three

Lesson Focus: To learn to see the person first and the disability second.

Lesson Objectives: To provide students with the information they need to interact in a non-discriminatory way with people with disabilities.

To encourage students to bring their new awareness into the community.

Part One: Introductory Discussion

1. One to three days after the visiting speaker's presentation, review the concept of seeing the person first and the disability second. Then show the students the overhead *Similarities/ Differences* in the Resource Section 7, p. 139. Ask them, "Which picture best represents a classroom with a student with a disability? Why?"

   (Note: Students should choose the picture of the variety of fruit, since people with disabilities are unique as individuals, just like everyone else in the room. The picture with many different types of fruit depicts the idea of looking at the person first and the disability second. The overhead with one orange and many apples emphasizes differences, not similarities.)

2. Next, use the following discussion questions to ensure the students understood the visiting speaker's presentation and to encourage them to actively work towards creating a more inclusive society.

   » What did you learn from the speaker (and the video) about ways to interact with people with disabilities?
   » Have you met any people with disabilities since the presentation? How did you act? What did you say?

Part Two: Follow-Up Activities

Once the students have reviewed the concepts presented by the visiting speaker, guide them in completing one or more of the following activities to reinforce the ideas. The suggested activities vary in length and focus, but they all encourage students to actively work to create a more inclusive society for people with disabilities.

Follow-Up Activities at a Glance

Activity	Page #	Delivery	
		Whole Class	Learning Centres
Making A Difference	43	X	X
Role Play	45		X
Person First, Disability Second	46	X	
Thank-You Letter	46	X	X

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Purpose: To have students apply what they've learned by describing appropriate ways to interact with people with disabilities.

Learning Objective: To encourage understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Materials: Flip chart or whiteboard/blackboard for recording ideas

Directions:

1. Write the following three questions on the board.

   » How can I be supportive of someone with a visual impairment?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a hearing loss?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a mobility limitation?

2. Provide the students with one sample answer, and then together brainstorm a number of ideas for each question.

   Note: For older students, once you have suggested a sample answer for each question, you may want to divide the students into groups, assign each group a question, and have the groups perform the brainstorm activity independently before reporting back to the class.

Possible Responses to Discussion Questions

Possible answers follow, but your students will likely come up with a number of interesting and practical suggestions on their own.

How can I be supportive of someone with a visual impairment?

» When you say "hi," also say who you are. You may want to lightly touch the individual so he or she knows where you are positioned.
» Speak normally and directly to the person you are addressing
» Invite someone you know with a visual impairment to an upcoming event or activity
» See the person first and the disability second
» Don't feel embarrassed if you use phrases like "*watch* out," "did you *see?* . . . ," or "*look* at that." People with visual disabilities are just as comfortable with everyday language as you are.

How can I be supportive of someone with a hearing loss?

» If the person is hard of hearing, be sure to face the person, maintain eye contact, and keep things away from your mouth when you speak. Do not chew gum or eat while communicating with a person who is hard of hearing. This way, the person can speech read if he or she likes.
» Speak slowly, distinctly, and clearly, but not more loudly than normal
» Rephrase your words if the person can't understand you. Try saying the same thing in a different way.

- » If the person is deaf, try communicating through gestures or a written note. If you know sign language, you can use it
- » If the person who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf, not to the interpreter. Be sure the students understand that the person who is deaf needs to look at the interpreter and, therefore, cannot maintain eye contact with the speaker.
- » Practice sign language with a person who is deaf and willing to teach you
- » Learn more about Deaf Culture
- » Invite someone you know with a hearing loss to an upcoming event or activity
- » For deaf and hard of hearing persons, one of the most crucial communication needs is good lighting. Front row seating is also important because distance from speakers is a significant barrier.

How can I be supportive of someone with a mobility limitation?

- » Speak directly to the person with the mobility limitation and not solely to someone who happens to be with him or her
- » Be yourself and let others be themselves too. This means being patient when people with mobility limitations are accomplishing a task (e.g., putting on a jacket, having a drink, etc.). It may take them a long time to do something that you can do in a short time. This does not mean they want help with the task. They can still do things for themselves; they may just have to do them differently.
- » Invite someone you know with a mobility limitation to an upcoming event or activity
- » If someone with a mobility limitation appears to need help, ask before lending a hand

ROLE PLAY

Purpose: To have students apply what they've learned about interacting with people with disabilities through role-play scenarios.

Learning Objective: To encourage understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Materials: Index cards or handouts that outline role-play scenarios (suggestions are provided at the end of this activity)
Older students, teachers' aides, or parents to help with younger students

Directions:

1. Introduce the students to the scenarios that are outlined on the index cards.
2. Divide the students into groups (about four students per group), give them one or two scenarios, and have them create a short play based on the scenario. Give them about five minutes to develop and practice their play.
3. As the students work on their plays, circulate among the groups. Ensure that the plays are about the *appropriate* way to behave/interact. You do not want the students to be practicing inappropriate behaviour.
4. As the students develop their plays, encourage them to use the new information they have learned in Lesson One.
5. Ask each group to perform its play for the rest of the class.

Discussion:

After each play has been performed, ask the class:

» What things did the performing students do to support or help the person with the disability?
» What things could have been done differently?

Sample Role-Play Scenarios:

1. You meet a visually impaired person on the street corner. She seems to want to cross the street. What do you do?
2. Your neighbour introduces you to a friend who is deaf or hard of hearing. How do you tell the friend you are happy to meet him or her?
3. A person in a wheelchair is trying to reach a cereal box in a store. What do you do?
4. You are working at a sports equipment store, and a teenager with a visual impairment enters the store. How do you approach and help him?
5. On a snowy day, you are walking to school and see a person in a wheelchair having difficulty navigating the sidewalk. What do you do?
6. You have invited some friends, including a friend who is deaf, to join you at the water park. Show how you include this friend in the day's activities.
7. You are a waiter in a restaurant. A young woman in a wheelchair and her friend come in for lunch. Show how you would interact with the two customers.

PERSON FIRST, DISABILITY SECOND

Purpose: To introduce and reinforce, through a creative medium, the concept of inclusion.

Learning Objective: To learn that someone with a disability can participate in many of the activities that others enjoy.

Materials: Writing materials
Arts and crafts supplies

Directions:

1. Invite the students to draw a picture, make a collage or poster, or write a story that depicts people with and without disabilities interacting in various ways—at school, at play, at work.
2. Encourage a variety of projects, reminding students that people with disabilities have the same interests as people without disabilities. (They play games, go out with their friends, go to Cubs or Brownies, take swimming lessons, play basketball, etc.)
3. Completed projects can be shared, exchanged, or presented to the class.

Discussion:

Invite a few students to explain what is happening in their collage or picture, or invite them to read their stories to the class.

THANK YOU

Purpose: To thank the visiting speaker and let him or her know that the presentation was helpful.

Learning Objective: To encourage students to make a commitment to apply some of the ideas they've learned about interacting with people with disabilities.

Materials: Writing materials

Directions:

1. Ask students to write a letter to the visiting speaker thanking him or her for coming to the classroom. (Or you can create a class letter and ask students to contribute to it.)
2. Let students know that you want them to complete the following sentence (or something similar) at some point in the letter: "The next time I meet a person with a visual (or hearing or mobility) disability, I will . . ."
3. Gather the letters and send them to the visiting speaker.

EVALUATION

Thank you for using the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum. Would you please take a few minutes to let us know how we could improve our presentation or these materials?

School/Grade: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

1. Did the letter of introduction provide you with enough information to decide whether or not this curriculum would be appropriate for you and your students?

   Yes No Comment: _____

2. Did our office provide you with courteous, timely, and professional assistance?

   Yes No Comment: _____

3. Respond to the following statements using a rating scale, with 5 indicating "strongly agree" and 1 indicating "strongly disagree." Please use the back of this page to expand upon or explain your rating, or to make additional comments.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a) The *Feeling Comfortable* section helped me assess my own awareness of disability issues.	1	2	3	4	5
b) Lesson One was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
c) The activities in Lesson One were appropriate and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
d) Lesson Two (the visiting speaker's presentation) was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
e) Lesson Three was well-organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
f) The activities in Lesson Three were appropriate and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
g) The appendices provided relevant and useful information.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Do you have suggestions for other activities that we could include in revised versions of this curriculum? If so, please attach details.

   Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback. Please forward these comments to your visiting speaker.

Appendix One: Background Information

A Canadian Perspective on Disability Issues

The following excerpt is from *In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada* (Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 2000, pp. 5-6).

> Canadians share basic values that help define us as a nation. These include a commitment to inclusion—welcoming everyone to participate fully in society. The vast majority of Canadians believe that persons with disabilities should be supported in their efforts to be active in their communities and society. However, we still have a long way to go to fulfill this goal.
>
> Citizenship for people with disabilities depends on having the supports necessary to take part in work and community activities. It also depends on having access to public and private facilities and decision-making processes.
>
> Each person with a disability faces a unique situation, determined by a variety of factors including the nature of the disability, the family and community situation, as well as the cultural context—important considerations in a multicultural society.

Disability Facts and Figures

In 2001, Statistics Canada conducted the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* to gather statistics about Canadians with disabilities. The following facts and figures have been compiled from that data. To find out more, visit www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-577-XIE/canada.htm

- In 2001, 3.6 million Canadians living in households reported having activity limitations; this represents a disability rate of 12.4%.
- Of this 12.4%, 180,930 (or 3.3%) were children under the age of 14.
- Among children aged 0 to 14, the most widespread disability is that related to a chronic health condition, such as asthma.
- In 2001, over 100,000 children aged 5 to 14, or 2.6% of all children in that age group, were reported to have learning disabilities. This represented 64.9% of children with disabilities in the 5 to 14 age group.
- Pain-related disability affects half of young adults aged 15 to 24 who have a disability.
- Mobility problems affect more than 1.1 million persons aged 65 and over or nearly eight persons in ten with disabilities. Nationally, 23.3% of adults aged 65 to 74 reported having mobility problems, and the rate climbed to 42.9% for those 75 and over.
- The likelihood of a person having a disability increases with age. As Canada's population ages, the incidence of disability increases.

Appendix Two: Definitions

Accommodations:

In connection with disabilities, accommodations refer to the supports that people with disabilities need to ensure a "level playing field." In the education system, some accommodations might involve note-takers for students who have limited hand mobility, or interpreters for students who are deaf. In the workplace, an accommodation might be a hands-free phone or voice-activated computer. The nature of the accommodation depends on the disability.

Impairment:

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "impairment" as "any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function."

Disability:

The WHO defines "disability" as "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being."

Handicap:

The WHO defines "handicap" as "the disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from a . . . disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role." These disadvantages vary tremendously and include physical, attitudinal, social, and cultural barriers.

Many people use the words "impairment," "disability," and "handicap" interchangeably. However, impairment refers to a *medical condition*, disability refers to the *limitations* arising from that condition, and handicap refers to the *barriers* that disadvantage the individual who has a disability.

Source**:** World Health Organization. (2003). International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF).18 Sept 2003. www.who.ch/icidh

Please note: The World Health Organization is currently revising its system of classification of impairments, disabilities, and handicaps. The above URL will direct you to updated definitions as they become available.

In My Experience . . .

When I read an early draft of this curriculum, I found the statistics intriguing, especially those related to learning disabilities. If you are interested in other research concerning learning disabilities, you may want to visit the Learning Disabilities of Canada website at www.ldac.ca.

Nancy Kjeldsli, Parent
Medicine Hat

In My Experience . . .

When I visit my son's class to talk about disability issues, I always emphasize that a disability and a handicap are two very different things. I explain that a handicap keeps a person from doing something, which means people without disabilities experience handicaps too. For example, I'm pretty short. So when I visit my son's classroom, I explain to his classmates that I'm handicapped by high cupboards in my house. I'll also say that a person who takes off her glasses will have a handicap. Then, I go on to say that every day people overcome handicaps and perform daily tasks. People with a disability simply overcome their handicaps in a way that is specific to their disability.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Visual Impairments:

"Visual impairment" is the term used to refer to conditions involving the inability or limited ability to receive information visually. Some individuals are partially sighted and learn visually by using magnification devices or other adaptive materials. People who are blind do not use vision as a means of learning and rely primarily on touch and hearing.

Depending on their needs, individuals with visual impairments may use Braille, audiotapes, large-print books, specialized computers, and other aids to assist in learning.

Of those individuals who are identified as legally blind, only some are totally blind. In Canada, legal blindness is defined as a range of vision from the perception of no vision up to 10 percent vision. Other visual impairments include colour blindness, tunnel vision, night blindness, and a lack of visual acuity.

Source: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students*. Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Visual Impairments

Braille: The communication system of raised dots that represent letters of the alphabet and other language symbols. Braille is read using the fingertips.

Braille watch: Has raised dots representing the numbers, which can be touched by opening a cover that protects the watch face.

Braille writer: Specialized machine or computer keyboard that types in Braille.

Closed Circuit TV: Electronically enlarges printed material up to 16 times on a television screen.

Magnifying glasses and heavy lenses: Used to read print.

Monoculars: Used to read print at a distance (e.g., on street signs, flip charts, blackboards/whiteboards, etc.).

Screenreader: Computer software that provides an audible reading of what is on the screen.

Service dogs: Are trained to lead a person with a visual impairment. These dogs are recognized by the harnesses and the U-shaped handle held in the owner's left hand unless circumstances (such as multiple disabilities) require that the dog be trained for the right hand.

Talking Calculator: Performs the functions of a basic electronic calculator and speaks each entry and result.

Tape-recorded texts: Also referred to as talking books, these are recordings of books and other reading materials on cassette.

White cane: A lightweight cane that warns of obstructions and changes in the level of the walking area.

Sources: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students*. Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1992). *Discover together: An active learning program on disability awareness for children from age 5 to 13*. Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State.

In My Experience . . .

My daughter and I have discovered descriptive videos. These are regular home videos that have a narrator describing things like the action taking place, what the actors are wearing, what the set looks like, etc. They try to do this without interfering with the dialogue or regular sound effects. We can watch these on our regular VCR; no extra technology is needed! The idea is to give people with visual impairments a more complete picture of what is happening in a movie or TV show.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

Hearing Loss:

"Hard of hearing" is the term used to describe individuals with a hearing loss whose main form of communication is speech. This category includes those with a mild loss who can hear and understand most speech, as well as those who have more limited hearing. Often, hard of hearing persons rely on visual clues and assistive listening devices, although adaptations vary with each individual.

"Deaf" (with a capital D) is the term used to refer to the cohesion and identity of a particular group of the population who share a linguistic, social, and political heritage. The use of sign language (e.g., American Sign Language) provides a basis for the group's identity.

"Oral deaf" is the term used for individuals who have a severe to profound hearing loss, who identify themselves as being deaf, and who rely on oral means of communication. While the degree of hearing loss may vary, it is usually profound to severe.

Source: Warick, R. (1997). *Hearing the learning: A post-secondary education handbook for students who are hard of hearing.* Ottawa: Canadian Hard of Hearing Association.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Hearing Loss

ASL: American Sign Language is a separate language that is not based on Standard English grammar and structures. People who are deaf regard deafness as its own culture and ASL as its language.

Captioning: Just as a caption in a book is the text under a picture, captioning of television, video, or DVD programs refers to text that is located at the bottom of a TV or movie screen. *Closed captions* are captions that are hidden in the video signal, invisible without a special decoder. For older models of televisions, a decoder is a separate mechanism, but since 1993, decoders have been built into televisions and can be activated through the TV's controls. *Open captions* are captions that have been decoded, so they are an integral part of the screen, just like subtitles on a movie.

CART: Communication Assistance (Real Time) is provided by a specially trained person who types verbatim an account of what is being said at meetings, conferences, in classrooms, etc. for persons who are hard of hearing.

Hearing Aid: A battery-powered device that consists of an ear mould section placed inside the ear to direct sound waves, picked up by the aid's microphone, into the ear canal. The hearing aid amplifies sound, but it does not discriminate voices from other sounds. Thus, background noises such as a keyboard being used, chairs scraping on the floor, etc., are all amplified.

Infrared, FM Systems: Amplification systems that can be used in classrooms, auditoriums, and other large rooms to transmit sound from a speaker directly to the receiver of a person with a hearing loss. The speaker wears a microphone that converts sound into electrical energy that is transmitted to a receiver and amplified for the person who is hard of hearing.

Service Dog: Trained to alert people with hearing disabilities to sounds such as alarm clocks, smoke alarms, telephones, door bells or knocks, babies crying, or intruders.

Message Relay Service: A service offered by telephone companies across Canada that allows people who do not have access to a TTY to communicate with someone who does.

Signaling Device: Sound-detecting devices that convert smoke and fire alarms, door bells, phones, or alarm clock sounds into flashing lights.

Sign Language Interpreter: A person who translates speech into manual communication for a sign language user, usually using American Sign Language (ASL). This person then translates the signed reply into speech for those who do not know sign language.

TTY: A text telephone transmits signals from one telephone to another when both are equipped with this transmitter/receiver device. Conversation is typed on a keyboard at one end and transmitted to a visual display board in typed form at the other.

Telephone Amplification Devices: Are compatible with hearing aids and have a volume control switch to adjust phone volume to individual needs.

Sources: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students.* Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1992). *Discover together: An active learning program on disability awareness for children from age 5 to 13.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State.

Mobility Limitations:

"Mobility limitations" are conditions that prevent an individual from being able to move his or her body or body parts freely. Some people with mobility limitations will be unable to move about without a walking aid (e.g., wheelchair, scooter, crutches, cane, or walker). Others may move freely but have impaired hand or fine motor functions that make writing, opening doors, or other fine motor tasks difficult to perform. Mobility limitations may be caused by medical conditions such as cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and polio, or by injuries due to accidents.

Source**:** Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities. (2003). *Raising instructor awareness: A series of workshops on disability issues.* Edmonton: Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Mobility Limitations

- Manual and electric wheelchairs
- Electric scooters
- Artificial limbs
- Adapted cars and vans
- Hands-free telephones operated with speakers or head sets
- Control systems for appliances
- Bathroom grab bars, poles, and tub rails
- Bath lifts and tub seats
- Stair lifts
- Crutches, canes, and walkers

Learning Disabilities:

Although this Elementary Teacher's Guide does not focus on learning disabilities, we have included for your information the following material that is included in the Intermediate and Junior High Teacher's Guides.

Learning disabilities refer to a number of conditions that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding, or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These conditions affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities related to thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from developmental disabilities, in which intellectual functioning is affected.

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- Oral language (e.g., listening, speaking, understanding)
- Reading (e.g., decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension)
- Written language (e.g., spelling, written expression)
- Mathematics (e.g., computation, problem solving)

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction, and perspective taking.

Learning disabilities are lifelong. The ways in which they are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's strengths and needs. Learning disabilities are suggested in cases of unexpected academic under-achievement or achievement that is maintained only by unusually high levels of effort and support.

Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors or injury that alter brain functioning in a manner that affects one or more processes related to learning. These disorders are not due primarily to hearing and/or vision problems, socio-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation, or ineffective teaching, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may co-exist with various conditions, including attentional, behavioural, and emotional disorders, sensory impairments, or other medical conditions.

Source: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. (2002). Official definition of learning disabilities. Retrieved November 18, 2004, from www.ldac-taac.ca/english/defined/definew.htm

Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities

The accommodations students with learning disabilities might need to succeed at their tasks include, but are not limited to:

- More time to complete an assignment
- Instructions repeated in simpler words
- Someone to read assignments aloud
- A quiet, neat study area
- An easy-to-use dictionary
- Permission to answer exam questions orally

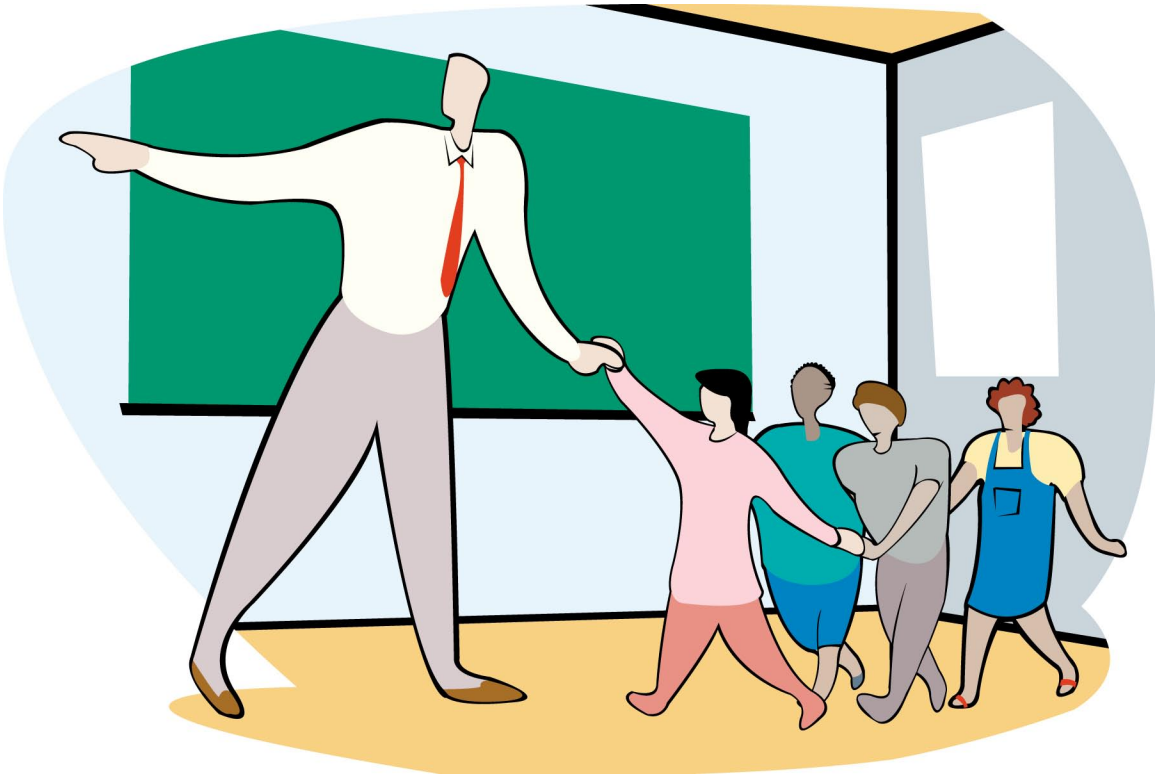
Appendix Three: Appropriate Language

"Language is a powerful and important tool in shaping ideas, perceptions and ultimately, public attitudes. Words are a mirror of society's attitudes and perceptions…. It is important to remember that the development of appropriate terminology is still in progress; however, the… terms [below] are currently in use" (Human Resources and Development Canada, Office for Disability Issues, 2002).

INSTEAD OF	PLEASE USE
Handicap, handicapped	Disability, or person with a disability Emphasize the person, not the disability
The blind, the visually impaired	Person who is blind, person who has a visual impairment, person who has low vision
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	Person born with a disability, person who has a congenital disability
Victim of/ afflicted with/suffers from a stroke, polio, muscular dystrophy, etc.	Person who has multiple sclerosis, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Wheelchair-bound or confined to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair, a wheelchair user
Cripple, crippled, gimp, lame, invalid, physically challenged	Person with a disability, person who has a mobility impairment/reduced mobility/ mobility limitations, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	Person who is deaf
The hearing impaired, the hard of hearing	Person who has a hearing loss, person who is hard of hearing
The epileptic	Person who has epilepsy
Handicapped parking, handicapped washrooms, etc.	Accessible parking, accessible washrooms, etc.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, maniac, mental, mental case, neurotic, psycho, psychotic	Person with a mental health disability, person who has schizophrenia, person who has depression, etc.
The learning disabled, the dyslexics	Person with a learning disability
Mentally retarded, defective, idiot, imbecile, moron, retarded, mongoloid	Person with an intellectual disability, person with a developmental disability
Normal, healthy (when used as the opposite of disabled)	Non-disabled, able-bodied

Adapted from: Office for Disability Issues, Human Resources and Development Canada. (2002). *A way with words and images.* www.sdc.gc.ca/en/home.shtml

GETTING TO KNOW US:
RAISING DISABILITY AWARENESS IN ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS



Intermediate Teacher's Guide (Grades Four to Six)

In This Section, You Will Find:

About Getting to Know Us

Getting to Know Us provides disability organizations with suggested guidelines, time frames, and a curriculum for coordinating school outreach programs that raise students' awareness of disabilities. This unit of the curriculum focuses on students in Grades 4 to 6, but we also have units for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 7 to 9.

Each unit comprises three lessons: two to be delivered by teachers in the classroom, and one to be delivered by a person with a disability. The involvement of a person with a disability is vital to the success of this program. If you have discovered this curriculum independently (i.e., not through a disability organization), we encourage you to contact a local disability organization and request the names of individuals who would be interested in visiting your classroom.

Curriculum Objectives

Getting to Know Us encourages students and teachers to develop an understanding of and respect for the following ideas:

- Society needs to learn to see the person first, the disability second
- People with disabilities are individuals who have the same aspirations, needs, rights, and expectations as everyone else
- Words shape attitudes and perceptions. It is important to use words that respect the dignity of the individual.

Glossary

Here are a few definitions you'll need to be familiar with:

Visiting Speaker: This is a person with a disability, usually working for or associated with a disability organization, who visits a classroom to speak about the realities of living with a disability. The visiting speaker delivers Lesson Two of the curriculum and coordinates the teacher-delivered lessons.

Host School: This is the school that hosts the visiting speaker. Usually, initial contact is made with the host school through the principal, who then forwards information to interested teachers.

Host Teachers: These are the teachers who deliver Lessons One and Three of the curriculum. As well, they host the visiting speaker, either in their own class or in combination with other classes.

At a Glance

This curriculum comprises three lessons:

Lesson One: You, as the host teacher, introduce your students to the idea of disabilities in general. The lesson is divided into two parts: an introductory discussion and suggested follow-up activities. The lesson raises student awareness about disability issues.

Lesson Two: In the second lesson, your visiting speaker continues the general introduction to disabilities that you began, but also speaks more specifically about his or her particular situation.

Lesson Three: You follow up on the visiting speaker's presentation by encouraging students to apply what they've learned so far. Like Lesson One, this lesson is divided into two parts: an introductory discussion and suggested follow-up activities.

Students with Disabilities in Your Classroom

If you have a student with a disability in your classroom, you will want to ensure that he or she is comfortable with the lesson ahead of time. Here are a few ideas:

- Explain the content of the lessons to the student and his or her parents ahead of time
- If the student is comfortable with talking to the class, invite the student to explain his or her situation and discuss the activities that he or she finds challenging. Remember, the student knows his or her situation best.
- Choose follow-up activities (see p. 68) that are relevant to the student's disability
- Invite the student's parents or guardians to join you for the lessons
- When speaking with the student and his or her parents, find out if there is a sibling who would like to speak to the class

In My Experience . . .

Remember: everyone is different. Some students may enjoy the opportunity to speak to the class; others may not want to be present at all. Speak with the student and his or her parents or guardians to decide whether or not the student should be present during the lesson. If the decision is that the student would rather not be in attendance, still invite the parents or guardians to attend, and focus your lesson on their child's particular disability, inviting the parents' input throughout.

Doris Goetz, ACCD Board Member,
Edmonton

In My Experience . . .

I think it is very important to involve students with disabilities in the class presentation by inviting them to speak about activities in their lives that are challenging. What a wonderful opportunity for students to share their experience—from school, home, or playing with friends—with their classmates!

Colleen Duff, ACCD Board Member,
Calgary

Feeling Comfortable

As you prepare to deliver Lessons One and Three of the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum, you may want to explore your own level of comfort with the information to be presented. What are your own attitudes, thoughts, and opinions regarding the lives of people with disabilities? Do you use appropriate language when referring to or speaking about disabilities? Do you feel comfortable when you encounter and interact with people with disabilities?

To assist you in this exploration, we've included the following information:

- An awareness quiz
- Background information and statistics about disabilities in Canada (Appendix One)
- Basic definitions of and information about the types of disabilities we ask you to discuss with your students (Appendix Two)
- A terminology guide that explains the proper words to use when speaking with or referring to people with disabilities (Appendix Three)

Please review these materials and, if time permits, take part in some of the following activities. They are meant to provide you with opportunities to explore your own knowledge of and feelings about disabilities issues.

In My Experience . . .

Sometimes I think teachers don't realize just how important the role is that they play in the lives of all students, including students with disabilities. Students notice the words, body language, and gestures teachers use when interacting with students with a disability. They play a very important role in shaping perceptions and making acceptance happen.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Suggested Activities to Prepare You for Delivering the* Getting to Know Us *Curriculum:

- If you are the only teacher in your school using this curriculum, complete the Awareness Quiz (next page) on your own to give you a better understanding of your familiarity with disability issues
- If other teachers in your school are also using this curriculum, create an informal discussion group to talk about disability issues. You can even invite members of your school's parent-teacher committee to join you. Choose someone with experience in disability issues (e.g., the parent of a child with a disability) to lead your discussion group. Use the Awareness Quiz as an ice-breaker for your meeting, or as a starting point for discussion.
- Ask a member from a disability organization to answer your questions about a specific disability
- If the opportunity exists to invite speakers to professional development events or staff meetings, consider inviting a community member with a disability or a representative from a disability organization

Awareness Quiz

In Canada, students with disabilities may be integrated into any classroom. However, as doors in schools open to create inclusive environments, teachers, administrators, and fellow students also need to be open to learning about the myths and stereotypes that affect people with disabilities.

To dispel these myths, this curriculum focuses on the message that every student is different, and every disability is unique. The following quiz is meant to encourage teachers to think about the ways that individual and social perceptions and attitudes influence how a person with a disability experiences his or her world.

	Agree	Disagree
1. Everyone has different abilities and talents.	_____	_____
2. Your attitudes are an influential force that determine how a person with a disability will experience the community and the world.	_____	_____
3. It is important to see the person first and the disability second.	_____	_____
4. People with disabilities always require special care and are best treated in an institutional setting.	_____	_____
5. Sports activities are limited for people with disabilities.	_____	_____
6. People are sometimes afraid of a person who has a developmental disability.	_____	_____
7. A person with a learning disability cannot be expected to complete school.	_____	_____
8. A person may have a disability and not be handicapped.	_____	_____
9. Students with visual impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students.	_____	_____
10. Braille is used by about 25% of persons who are visually impaired.	_____	_____
11. When guiding a person who has a visual impairment, you should hold his or her arm.	_____	_____
12. When someone who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should address your conversation to the interpreter.	_____	_____
13. All people with mobility limitations require the same type of support.	_____	_____
14. Students can be assessed with a learning disability at any point during their education.	_____	_____
15. Students who have speech impairments usually have intellectual impairments as well.	_____	_____

Awareness Quiz Answer Key

The answers provided here do not discuss disabilities at length. However, you should find them sufficient to guide you in assessing your own understanding and awareness. If you are using the quiz with a group, the answers (and the questions themselves) should serve as a catalyst for initiating discussion about various disability issues. If a person with a disability or someone who is familiar with disability issues is present as you review the answers to the quiz, he or she will be able to respond more fully to your questions.

1. **Everyone has unique abilities and talents**.

   True. This may be an obvious statement, but how often do we really see the abilities and talents in an individual first, regardless of whether or not that person has a disability?

2. **Your attitudes are an influential force that determine how a person with a disability will experience the community and the world.**

   True. Barriers are broken down by means of open, positive attitudes with which each person is accepted and treated as an individual.

3. **It is important to see the person first and the disability second.**

   True. By seeing the person first, we accept that someone with a disability, like anyone else, has strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, which contribute to that person's character and to his or her relationships with others. A disability is only one of many aspects that constitute the individual.

In My Experience . . .

*I think it is very important to emphasize the "person first, disability second" approach. Everyone needs to know that the person is **not** the disability. And kids need to realize that classmates with disabilities have moods, likes, and dislikes, just as they do.*

Sue Lagroix, Parent
Rocky Mountain House

4. **People with disabilities always require special care and are best treated in an institutional setting.**

   False. Many people with disabilities can and do live independently in society. With personal supports, assistive devices, and equal opportunities for education, training, and employment, people with disabilities increasingly participate as independent members of society.

5. **Sports activities are limited for people with disabilities.**

   False. Many people with disabilities, young and old, are involved in and benefit from many kinds of recreation and leisure activities. It is a commonly held myth that people with disabilities cannot, or do not want to, participate in sporting activities. But everything from skiing to swimming to bowling to visits to community playgrounds can be part of the lives of many children and adults with disabilities.

In My Experience . . .

I think it's important for people to realize that people with disabilities don't have to be world class athletes to enjoy being active. My 12-year old daughter, who is visually impaired and has cerebral palsy, loves to swim, bowl, and participate in gym class. She enjoys taking part in sports at the community level.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

6. People are sometimes afraid of a person who has a developmental disability.

True. In these instances, fear is usually the result of a lack of knowledge or a false understanding of the nature of developmental disabilities.

7. A person with a learning disability cannot be expected to complete school.

False. Given the appropriate learning environment and accommodations, a person with a learning disability can achieve success at the highest academic levels. (See Appendix Two for a definition of *accommodations*.)

8. A person may have a disability and not be handicapped.

True. People with disabilities are handicapped only when environmental barriers or other people's attitudes interfere with or prevent activities that would otherwise be open to them. (See Appendix Two.)

9. Students with visual impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students.

True. Students with visual impairments, as well as students with mobility and hearing loss, learning disabilities, and mental health disabilities, have the same range of cognitive ability as other students. However, the environmental and attitudinal barriers they face in school systems and in society in general often lead to intelligence scores that are lower than those of students without disabilities.

10. Braille is used by approximately 25 percent of persons who are visually impaired.

False. Braille is used by approximately *3 percent* of persons who are visually impaired. Students who do not use Braille usually read using one or all of the following: large print books, audiotapes, text magnifiers, and other assistive devices. (Definitions of assistive devices are included in Appendix Two.)

11. When guiding a person with a visual impairment, you should hold his or her arm.

False. If you think that a person with a visual impairment needs help getting somewhere, first ask if he or she would like assistance and how you may provide it. Then, allow the person to hold on to you, usually by your elbow or forearm, for guidance. Describe anything out of the ordinary that may be in your path such as objects, stairs, persons with mobility limitations, etc.

12. When someone who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should address your conversation to the interpreter.

False. If a person who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, direct your conversation directly to the person who is deaf. Do not speak to the interpreter instead.

13. People with mobility limitations all require the same types of support.

False. The range of mobility limitations is broad. A mobility limitation is any condition that impairs an individual's ability to move his or her body or body parts freely. Some people with mobility limitations will be unable to move without a walking aid such as a wheelchair, a scooter, a walker, crutches, or a cane. Others may walk freely but have impaired hand or fine motor functions that make activities such as writing, opening doors, or holding objects difficult.

14. Students can be assessed with a learning disability at any point during their education.

True. Learning disabilities can be assessed at any age. If students are assessed when they are young, they will be able to benefit from accommodations early in their education. Unfortunately, many students are not assessed until they are adults.

15. Students who have speech impairments usually have intellectual impairments too.

False. Students with speech impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students. Often, students whose verbal communication is difficult to understand have a mobility limitation that creates difficulties with pronouncing words. This has no connection, however, to the student's ability to understand, reason, or solve problems of an intellectual nature.

Lesson One: Raising Awareness

Overview of Lesson One

Lesson Focus: To understand that we need to see the person first and the disability second.

Lesson Objectives: To explore the idea that people have similarities and differences.

To guide students in defining and identifying visual, hearing, mobility, and learning disabilities.

To give students the opportunity to simulate disabilities and learn how to adapt to situations.

Part One: Introductory Discussion

1. Explore the concept of similarities and differences among people by asking students, "In what ways are people alike? How are they different?"

2. Raise the idea of differences and similarities that we can see and those we cannot see.

   » Ask for a show of hands as students respond to questions like the following: Who has blond hair? Who has brown eyes? Who is wearing a red shirt?
   » Now ask for a show of hands as students explore similarities and differences we can't see. Ask: Who likes to play sports? Who likes to do crafts? Who likes to listen to music? Who likes to read? (Choose questions that reflect common interests that children may have.)

3. Ask students if they choose friends because of similarities they can see (first set of questions) or those they cannot see (second set of questions). Discuss the idea that we choose friends for many different reasons – what they like and don't like, their personality, their sense of humour, the way they act, the way they treat others – not simply because of the way they look.

4. Discover what the students already know about disabilities. Then use the class discussion to create a definition of the term. (See Appendix Two.)

5. Discover if any students know someone with a disability. Briefly introduce the idea of different types of disabilities: visual, hearing, mobility, and learning.

   » Does anyone know somebody with a disability?
   » If so, how is that person just like everyone else? How is he or she different?

Part Two: Follow-Up Activities

The activities on the next pages vary in length and focus, but they all encourage students to see *the person first and the disability second*. Choose one or more of the activities as a follow-up to your introductory discussion. As your students work through the activity, guide them in thinking about the barriers that people with disabilities overcome on a daily basis. Most of these activities require a few everyday objects that you'll need to gather ahead of time.

Each of the activities ends with a brief discussion. When the discussion is complete, wrap up the lesson by letting the students know that a person with a disability will be visiting the classroom to talk about his or her experience.

* * * * *

Follow-Up Activities at a Glance

Activity	Page #	Focus	Delivery	
			Whole Class	Learning Centres
Word Search	Resource Section	Visual, Hearing, Mobility, Learning	X	
Let's Explore	69	Visual	X	
Money Matters	70	Visual		X
Movie Time	71	Hearing	X	
What Did You Say?	72	Hearing		X
Technical Aids	73	Mobility	X	
Becoming Barrier Free	74	Mobility	X	X
I Want to Read	77	Learning	X	
I Am Trying	79	Learning	X	

Note: It is possible to set up several centres in the classroom with a different activity at each centre. Or, if you'd like to spend more time on one activity, you could do a different activity every day or two.

In My Experience . . .

When I visit my son's class to raise awareness about his disability, I often lead the students in activities that simulate his experience. I think it is very important to intervene if students use the moment to make fun of disabilities. Learning, not teasing, should be the focus of simulation activities. Explain to the students that the activities are meant to help us understand more fully what it is like to experience a disability.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

LET'S EXPLORE
(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To gather information by relying on the senses of touch, hearing, and smell, rather than sight.

Learning Objective: To understand the use of other senses in adapting to a visual impairment.

Materials: Blindfolds

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that they will be going on a short exploratory walk to experience what it is like to gather information without being able to see. (The length of the walk will depend on the age level and ability of the students. Anywhere from three to five minutes should do.)
2. Divide the students into pairs. Blindfold one student and have the other student act as a guide as they go on the walk. The walk may be in the classroom, in other areas of the school, or outside the school, depending on the age and ability of the students. Explain that they will record and share their observations when they return.
3. Before the students leave on their walks, remind them to rely on touch, hearing, and smell to tell them about their surroundings. (Note**:** Students who are blindfolded should not taste things unless the guide is certain that it is safe to do so.) Also, remind the students to talk only when necessary. This way, they will rely more on their other senses to make observations.
4. Have the guide and the blindfolded students switch roles.
5. When the students finish their walks, ask them to record their observations, experiences, and challenges in a journal or notebook.

Discussion:

Ask students to share their observations. Then, facilitate a discussion that focuses on the idea of abilities and barriers. Ask:

» What did you learn about the environment without using the sense of sight?
» How could the classroom environment be improved for a student with a visual impairment?
» Do you think a student with a visual impairment would always need a guide to get around our school? If so, what could be done to make the school more accessible?

In My Experience . . .

I often find that people assume that a person with a visual impairment will know who they are, even if they don't introduce themselves. With this activity, ask the students, "Did you immediately recognize the people around you?" You want the students to realize that they need to introduce themselves when they encounter a friend/person with a visual impairment.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

MONEY MATTERS
(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To perform tasks using the sense of touch and memory skills, rather than the sense of sight.

Learning Objective: To understand the ways in which someone with a visual impairment uses the sense of touch to carry out tasks such as paying for things and counting change.

Materials: Blindfolds
Collection of various coins

Directions:

1. Distribute coins to small groups of students. (This activity can also be performed independently by giving each student some coins or by asking older students to use their own coins.)
2. Blindfold the students and ask them to sort the coins into different denominations and to study the distinguishing physical characteristics of each coin such as shape, weight, and size.
3. Ask the students to count out coins to make specific amounts (e.g., $1.25, $1.43, etc.).
4. Allow the students to remove the blindfolds and examine the coins to see how they did. Then ask them to put the blindfolds on and try the activity again. If students are working in small groups, allow all of the students to have a turn.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about the experience. Ask:

» Was the task easier or more difficult than you thought it would be? Why?
» When you tried the activity the second time, were you more successful?
» What other everyday tasks could you perform by using the sense of touch? (One example is pouring a glass of cold water or a cup of hot chocolate. Cold liquids are usually measured by keeping one finger on the inside edge of the glass, hot liquids by feeling the level of heat as it rises up the container. Dialing a telephone and using a calculator are other tasks that can be performed by relying on the sense of touch.)
» What types of assistive devices do you think people with visual impairments use to perform everyday tasks? (See Appendix Two for ideas.)

MOVIE TIME
(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To experience a film without using the sense of hearing.

Learning Objectives: To understand that visual cues provide a great deal of information to someone with a hearing loss.

To become aware of the importance of captioning for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Materials: A five to ten minute video (with captioning)
Note: When choosing a video, ensure it is not animated as the characters' mouth movements will not be mimicking actual words.

Directions:

1. Ask students to define, as best they can, the idea of closed and open captioning of films, TV shows, videos, etc. (Use the definitions in Appendix Two to guide the discussion.)

2. Explain to the students that they will be simulating deafness by watching a video without sound and, at first, without captioning. Ask them to pay careful attention to any words or phrases they might be able to speech read, and to observe how gestures and actions provide non-verbal clues to what is taking place.

3. Play the video without sound. Then, ask the students to write a short paragraph describing the video.

4. Play the video again, this time with captioning but with the sound still off. Have the students write a paragraph describing the experience.

5. Finally, play the video with the sound on and the captioning open. Have the students write about the experience.

Discussion:

Encourage the students to talk about their experiences. Ask:

» What parts of the video were easy to understand without sound?
» Were you able to fully understand the video with just the captioning?
» For what parts did you really need sound in order to understand?
» How did your description of the video measure up once you could watch it with sound?
» How would watching animated characters rather than actual people change the experience of viewing the video with no sound?

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To simulate the experience a person who is hard of hearing might have in a group conversation.

Learning Objectives: To become aware of the barriers someone who is hard of hearing faces in group conversations.

To become aware of supplemental "listening" skills.

Materials: Earplugs or cotton wool

Directions:

1. Divide students into working groups of five, with one assigned to be the hard-of-hearing listener. Explain that the students who are not the listeners will pair off and have conversations that the listening student will try to summarize. Remind the listening student to look for facial clues, gestures, and other body language while listening to the conversations.
2. Ask the listener who is simulating the hearing loss to put the earplugs or cotton wool in his or her ears.
3. Ask the other students to carry on two separate but simultaneous short conversations for one or two minutes. Some possible topics include discussing an upcoming class project, plans for the weekend, favorite video or TV show, music they like, etc.
4. After the conversations are complete, the listening student can share with the others what he or she understood of the conversations.
5. If there is time, give other students the opportunity to be the listener simulating the hard-of-hearing experience.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about ways they adapted to the listening situation. Ask:

» Were certain parts of the conversation easier to understand than others? Why?
» Were you able to use any other clues to figure out what was being said? (e.g., gestures or speech reading)
» If you are speaking to someone who is hard of hearing in a group situation, what could you do that might make it easier for that person to understand what's going on? (Note: It would be helpful to move closer to the person and, if possible, away from people talking nearby.)

TECHNICAL AIDS
(Mobility Limitation)

Purpose: To make students aware of technical aids and their use in daily living, both for people with disabilities and for those without them.

Learning Objectives: To learn that we all use technical aids to help us do things.

To learn that someone with a mobility limitation uses aids for exactly the same reason as do people with disabilities—to make a task easier to perform.

Materials: Arts and crafts materials
Magazines for cutting up

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that technical aids are those things we use that help make day-to-day tasks easier to perform. Everything from training wheels on a toddler's bike, to a toothbrush for brushing our teeth, to a hammer for pounding in nails is an aid.

2. Ask students to look through magazines to find examples of people using an object to aid them in performing a task. Students can use these pictures to create a collage or chart of technical aids. (Examples of aids include pliers, ladders, telephones, calculators, and zippers.)

Discussion:

Encourage students to realize that people with and without disabilities use technical aids and that we all use them for the same reason—to make a task easier to perform. Ask:

» Why do you think the aids in your collage or chart were invented/created?
» Which aids do you think you could do without, and which are essential to daily living? Why?
» Are any of the technical aids in your collage or chart useful to people with mobility limitations? Which ones? How?
» Could some of the aids be modified for someone with a mobility limitation? (e.g., keyboards with widely-spaced keys, or a tool for dialing a telephone)
» Can you think of other aids that people with mobility limitations use? (Use the information from Appendix Two to guide this part of the discussion.)

BECOMING BARRIER-FREE
(Mobility Limitation)

Purpose: To develop awareness of the environment relative to a wheelchair user.

Learning Objectives: To discover how accessible or inaccessible the school environment is for a wheelchair user.

To understand the importance of accessibility.

Materials: A metre stick or measuring tape for each group of students

Directions:

1. Explain to students that they will be determining how accessible the school is for wheelchair users.
2. Together, brainstorm the types of things that need to be considered when thinking about accessibility, and record these ideas on the board. Use the checklist on p. 76 to direct student input and to provide students with standard height and width expectations.*
3. Divide the students into small groups (3 or 4 students per group) and have them create their own checklists based on the ideas the class has brainstormed.
4. Provide each group with a metre stick or measuring tape.
5. Assign each group to a different area of the school (e.g., library, gym, washrooms). Give them about five minutes to use their checklists to determine whether or not the area is accessible.
6. Let students know they will be asked to report back to the class on their findings.

* You could revise this activity somewhat by providing students with the attached checklist rather than having them brainstorm their own. However, the brainstorm process is intended to get students thinking about accessibility issues before providing them with the answers.

In My Experience . . .

I find that many people assume an area is accessible simply because doorways are wide enough or phones and water fountains are low enough. But we need to remember that accessibility relies on much more than height and width. When brainstorming your checklist with the students, remind them to consider things like signage, handrails, ramps, and elevators.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

Discussion:

When students return to the classroom, ask them to share their observations. Ask:

- » Did you find your area of the school accessible or not? Explain.
- » How could accessibility in the school be improved?
- » Explain that legally, everyone has the right to access public buildings and facilities, but often people with mobility limitations cannot exercise that right. What public buildings in the community can you think of that are accessible? Which ones are not?

Barrier Checklist

A barrier is something that makes it very difficult or impossible for a person with a mobility limitation to access a building. Is your school barrier-free? Remember most buildings have barriers, but barriers can be changed.

	Yes	No
1. If the main entrance to the school has stairs but no ramp, it has a barrier. Does your school have a ramp?	____	____
2. Are the doorknobs of all main doors 92 cm from the ground?	____	____
3. Do the hallways have handrails to help people walk?	____	____
4. Are there reserved accessible parking spaces that are 366 cm or 3.6 m wide?	____	____
5. Are there curb cuts so that people in wheelchairs or on scooters, and people with walkers, baby carriages, or shopping carts can pass easily?	____	____
6. If your school has more than one floor, does it also have an elevator?	____	____
7. Are all doorways at least 84 cm wide?	____	____
8. Are the sinks low enough to be used by someone in a wheelchair? Get a chair and check. If the sinks are too high, how many centimetres should they be lowered?	____	____
9. Are the telephones in the building accessible? Get a chair and check. If the telephones are too high, how many centimetres should they be lowered?	____	____
10. Are there grab bars in the bathroom stalls to facilitate the use of the toilet for wheelchair users?	____	____
11. Are the windows 61 cm – 71 cm from the floor?	____	____
12. Are the aisles in the classroom at least 81cm wide so that people in wheelchairs or on scooters, and those using crutches, canes, or walkers can get around easily?	____	____

I WANT TO READ
(Learning Disability)

Purpose: To simulate the difficulty some students with learning disabilities may experience in reading.

Learning Objective: To appreciate the difficulty a student with a learning disability may have in processing reading material.

Materials: Reading sample and answer key overhead. (see next page)

Directions:

1. Explain to the class that they will be completing an exercise that will give them an idea of what some students with learning disabilities experience.
2. On the overhead projector, display the first paragraph and cover the second paragraph.
3. Ask a few students to read the first paragraph aloud to the class. As the students give this a try, emphasize that not all students with learning disabilities will see print this way but that some will. Point out that some students with learning disabilities will see letters and sometimes whole words reversed.
4. Reveal the second paragraph and ask a student to read it for the class.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about the experience. Ask:

» What did you notice as you read the first paragraph, and how did you feel as you tried to read it? (Draw attention here to the feeling that they *should* be able to read the paragraph and the frustration with recognizing the letters, but not the words.)
» What types of things do you think might help a person with a learning disability to decipher the paragraph? (Draw attention to the following strategies, but note that they are beneficial to everyone, not just people with learning disabilities: easy-to-use dictionary or spell-checker; quiet study area, personally developed reading strategies.)

Read This

He was lla eht syob glaying their dest tobay. Eht gone saw bobgedall. Jim mabe a doog qass ot eth enb fo eht feilb. Eht qlay went afts. Eht crowb saw no their efte cheering. He now eht game amb tuq tuo eth dest yug no eht other etma.

Compare To This

He saw all the boys playing their best today. The game was dodge ball. Jim made a good pass to the end of the field. The play went fast. The crowd was on their feet cheering. He won the game and put out the best guy on the other team.

I AM TRYING
(Learning Disability)

Purpose: To simulate a learning disability that involves difficulty in expressing and coordinating ideas and movements.

Learning Objective: To appreciate the problems someone may have in accomplishing tasks if information processing is affected.

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that they will be simulating the experience of people with learning disabilities who have difficulty processing information.
2. Ask students to write in their best handwriting their names and addresses at the top of a sheet of paper.
3. Have the students repeat this exercise while moving their left foot on the floor in counter-clockwise circles (for left-handed students, the right foot in a clockwise direction).
4. Encourage students to keep the foot in motion until the writing activity is complete.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about their experience with this activity. Ask:

» How does your writing differ in the two situations?
» How did it make you feel to know what you wanted to do, but be unable to do it? (See sidebar with I Want To Read activity.)
» Explain that some learning disabilities are characterized by the brain sending the wrong signal to the hand, or the brain constantly receiving messages which most people can screen out. As a result, the person always feels as if he or she has a "foot in motion," as in the activity.

In My Experience . . .

When your students simulate disabilities, I think you'll find that they often feel frustrated that they cannot achieve a task that they know they are capable of doing. This is the same for many people with disabilities, too. But because people with disabilities are living with their situation day to day, these feelings of frustration and sadness can be pretty overwhelming. Teach your students to consider the point of view of a friend or classmate who lives with a disability every day.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Lesson Two Synopsis: Visiting Speaker

Overview of Lesson Two

Lesson Objectives:	To show students that, in many ways, people with disabilities are the same as people without disabilities. To introduce students to the realities of life with a disability.
Time frame:	30 to 50 minutes in length, depending on class size and amount of discussion generated. You can let the visiting speaker know ahead of time if you have a time frame you need to adhere to.
Materials**:**	The visiting speaker may need access to a television and VCR

Part One: Introduction

After you introduce the visiting speaker, he or she will expand upon your introduction by telling students about his or her likes and dislikes, family members, hobbies and interests, work, pets, etc. As a result, the students will focus on the person and his or her abilities, rather than on the disability.

Next, the speaker will talk to the students about the realities of living with his or her particular disability. This may include explaining how or when the disability occurred, how it has affected daily routines and situations, and how family and friends view the disability. If appropriate, the visiting speaker will demonstrate ways he or she has adapted to life with a disability (e.g., how to move through a room with no vision, how to use a pencil with a prosthetic arm).

Part Two: Discussion and Video

The visiting speaker will encourage the students to ask questions about life with a disability. If students seem to have difficulty generating questions, the visiting speaker may use a video to encourage discussion. Otherwise, the video will be shown at the end of the discussion. The visiting speaker will then respond to questions about the video.

Part Three: Wrapping Up

After the discussion has ended, the visiting speaker will thank the students for their ideas and time. Then he or she will distribute (or ask you to distribute) copies of a letter for the students to take home to their parents (see next page).

Some visiting speakers may have small gifts for the students (e.g., rulers, pencils, bookmarks) that they will distribute at this time.

Letter to Parents or Guardians

Visiting speakers will send home a letter similar to the following. If they need you to provide photocopying, they will let you know ahead of time and provide you with a copy of the letter. The appropriate language chart referred to in the postscript will resemble the one in Appendix Three.

***

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Today I visited your child's classroom to talk about disability issues. As a person with a disability, I have come to learn that the greatest obstacles I face are not those related to my disability, but those generated by the attitudes and misperceptions that others have about my abilities. With this in mind, the focus of my presentation was to encourage students, when they encounter a person with a disability, to focus on what that individual can do, not on what he or she can't do. In other words, I've encouraged them to *see the person first and the disability second.*

I'd like to ask you to take some time over the next few days to ask your child about my presentation and about the lessons on disability issues that the classroom teacher has also been focusing on. Our goal has been to offer children an authentic view of people with disabilities.

If you have any questions or would like further information about disabilities and disability issues, please feel free to call me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

(Visiting speaker's name)
(Title)
(Organization)

P.S. I've attached a chart to this letter that explains some of the language you can use when discussing disabilities with your child. I hope you find it helpful!

In My Experience . . .

Along with the letter students take home to their parents, teachers could suggest a homework assignment where the student and his or her parents "adopt a disability" for an evening. By simulating a disability and then writing or talking about the experience, the family may develop some insight into our experiences.

Dari Lang, ACCD Member,
Calgary

Lesson Three: Taking Action

Overview of Lesson Three

Lesson Focus: To understand that we need to see the person first and the disability second.

Lesson Objectives: To provide students with the information they need in order to interact in a non-discriminatory way with people with disabilities.

To encourage students to bring their new awareness into the community.

Part One: Introductory Discussion

1. One to three days after the visiting speaker's presentation, review the concept of seeing the person first and the disability second. Then, show the students the overhead *Similarities/Differences* in the Resource Section 7, p. 139. Ask them, "Which picture best represents a classroom with a student with a disability? Why?"

   (Note: Students should choose the picture of the variety of fruit, since people with disabilities are unique as individuals, just like everyone else in the room. The picture with many different types of fruit depicts the idea of looking at the person first and the disability second. The overhead with one orange and many apples emphasizes differences, not similarities.)

2. Use the following discussion questions to ensure the students understood the visiting speaker's presentation and to encourage them to work actively towards creating a more inclusive society.

   » What did you learn from the speaker (and the video) about ways to interact with people with disabilities?
   » Have you met any people with disabilities since the presentation? How did you act? What did you say?

Part Two: Follow-Up Activities

Once the students have reviewed the concepts presented by the visiting speaker, guide them in completing one or more of the following activities to reinforce the ideas. The suggested activities vary in length and focus, but they all encourage students to actively work to create a more inclusive society for people with disabilities.

Follow-Up Activities at a Glance

Activity	Page #	Delivery	
		Whole Class	Learning Centres
Making A Difference	83	X	X
Role Play	85		X
Person First, Disability Second	86	X	
Thank-You Letter	87	X	X

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Purpose: To have students apply what they've learned by describing appropriate ways to interact with people with disabilities.

Learning Objective: To encourage understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Materials: Flip chart or whiteboard/blackboard for recording ideas
Etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139)

Directions:

1. Write the following four questions on the board.

   » How can I be supportive of someone with a visual impairment?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a hearing loss?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a mobility limitation?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a learning disability?

2. As a class, come up with one sample answer for each of the four questions. Divide students into groups and assign each group one question.

3. Using the sample answer as a guide, have each group brainstorm its own list of ideas. Let the groups know they will be asked to share their brainstorming with the rest of the class.

4. After five minutes or so, ask each group to report back to the entire class. (Possible answers follow.)

5. After the discussion, distribute the etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139) to reinforce the learning that has taken place.

Possible Responses to Discussion Questions

Possible answers to the above questions follow, but your students will likely come up with a number of interesting and practical suggestions themselves.

How can I be supportive of someone with a visual impairment?

» When you say "hi," also say who you are. You may want to lightly touch the individual so he or she knows where you are positioned.
» Speak normally and directly to the person you are addressing
» Invite someone you know with a visual impairment to an upcoming event or activity
» See the person first and the disability second
» Don't feel embarrassed if you use phrases like "*watch* out," "did you *see?* . . . ," or "*look* at that." People with visual disabilities are just as comfortable with everyday language as you are.

How can I be supportive of someone with a hearing loss?

- » If the person is hard of hearing, be sure to face the person, maintain eye contact, and keep things away from your mouth when you speak. Do not chew gum or eat while communicating with a person who is hard of hearing. This way, the person can speech read if he or she likes.
- » Speak slowly, distinctly, and clearly, but not more loudly than normal
- » Rephrase your words if the person can't understand you. Try saying the same thing in a different way.
- » If the person is deaf, try communicating through gestures or a written note. If you know some sign language, you can use it.
- » If the person who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf, not to the interpreter. Be sure the students understand that the deaf person needs to look at the interpreter and, therefore, cannot maintain eye contact with the speaker.
- » Practice sign language with a person who is deaf and willing to teach you
- » Learn more about Deaf Culture
- » Invite someone you know with a hearing loss to an upcoming event or activity
- » For deaf and hard of hearing persons, one of the most crucial communication needs is good lighting. Front row seating is also important because distance from speakers is a significant barrier.

How can I be supportive of someone with a mobility limitation?

- » Speak directly to the person with the mobility limitation and not solely to someone who happens to be with him or her
- » Be yourself and let others be themselves too. This means being patient when people with mobility limitations are accomplishing a task (e.g., putting on a jacket, having a drink). It may take them a long time to do something that you can do in a short time. This does not mean they want help with the task. They can still do things for themselves; they may just have to do them differently.
- » Invite someone you know with a mobility limitation to an upcoming event or activity
- » If someone with a mobility limitation appears to need help, ask before lending a hand

How can I be supportive of someone with a learning disability?

- » Share your awareness and understanding of what can often be a "hidden" disability with those who are not aware
- » Offer to do homework together so you can read aloud assignments or math problems
- » Take the time to find out someone's abilities and interests
- » Be understanding of miscalculations or mistakes—we all have difficulty with one thing or another
- » Be aware that most people with learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence. However, they need appropriate work environments, learning strategies, and positive reinforcement to overcome the distorted processing of information they experience.

ROLE PLAY

Purpose: To have students apply what they've learned about interacting with people with disabilities, through role-play scenarios.

Learning Objective: To encourage understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Materials: Index cards or handouts that outline role-play scenarios (suggestions are provided at the end of this activity)
Etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139)

Directions:

1. Introduce the students to the scenarios that are outlined on the index cards. Divide the students into groups (about four students per group), give them one or two scenarios, and have them create a short play based on the scenario. Give them about five minutes to develop and practice their plays.
2. As they develop the plays, circulate among the groups. Ensure that the plays are about the *right* way to behave/interact. You do not want the students to be practicing inappropriate behaviour.
3. Encourage students to use the new information they have learned as they develop their plays.
4. Ask each group to perform its play for the rest of the group.
5. After the discussion, distribute the etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139) to reinforce learning.

Discussion:

After each play has been performed, ask the "audience":

- » What things did the performing students do to support or help the person with the disability?
- » What things could have been done differently?

Sample Role-Play Scenarios

1. You meet a visually impaired person on the street corner. She seems to want to cross the street. What do you do?
2. Your neighbour introduces you to a friend who is deaf or hard of hearing. How do you tell the person with the hearing loss you are happy to meet him or her?
3. A person in a wheelchair is trying to reach a cereal box in a store. What do you do?
4. You are working at a sports equipment store, and a teenager with a visual impairment enters the store. How do you approach and help him or her?
5. On a snowy day, you are walking to school and see a person in a wheelchair having difficulty navigating the sidewalk. What do you do?
6. You have invited some friends, including a friend who is deaf, to join you at the waterpark. Show how you include your friend who is deaf in the day's activities.
7. You are a waiter in a restaurant. A young woman in a wheelchair and her friend come in for lunch. Show how you would interact with the two customers.
8. A classmate has difficulty reading, even though she understands textbooks and stories that are read to her. You are a pretty good reader, but don't always understand the content. Approach your classmate to do homework together and show how your first study time together goes.

PERSON FIRST, DISABILITY SECOND

Purpose: To introduce and reinforce, through a creative medium, the concept of inclusion.

Learning Objective: To learn that someone with a disability can participate in many of the activities that others enjoy.

Materials: Writing materials
Arts and crafts supplies
Etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139)

Directions:

1. Invite the students to draw a picture, make a collage or poster, or write a story that depicts people with and without disabilities interacting in various ways—at school, at play, at work.
2. Encourage a variety of projects, reminding students that people with disabilities have the same interests as people without disabilities. They play games, go out with their friends, belong to community groups, take swimming lessons, play basketball, etc.
3. Completed projects can be shared, exchanged, or presented to the class.
4. Invite a few students to explain what is happening in their collage or picture, or invite them to read their stories to the class.
5. Distribute the etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139) to reinforce learning.

THANK YOU

Purpose: To thank the visiting speaker and let him or her know that the presentation was helpful.

Learning Objective: To encourage students to make a commitment to apply some of the ideas they've learned about interacting with people with disabilities.

Materials: Writing materials

Directions:

1. Ask students to write a letter to the visiting speaker thanking him or her for coming to the classroom.
2. Let students know that you want them to complete the following sentence (or something similar) at some point in the letter: "The next time I meet a person with a visual (or hearing or mobility or learning) disability, I will…."
3. Gather the letters and send them to the visiting speaker.
4. Distribute the etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139) to reinforce learning.

Evaluation

Thank you for using the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum. Could you please take a few minutes to let us know how we could improve our presentation or these materials?

School/Grade: _____ Teacher's Name:_____

1. Did the letter of introduction provide you with enough information to decide whether or not this curriculum would be appropriate for you and your students?

   Yes No Comment: _____

2. Did our office provide you with courteous, timely, and professional assistance?

   Yes No Comment: _____

3. Respond to the following statements using a rating scale, with 5 indicating "strongly agree" and 1 indicating "strongly disagree." Please use the back of this page to expand upon or explain your rating, or to make additional comments.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a) The *Feeling Comfortable* section helped me assess my own awareness of disability issues.	1	2	3	4	5
b) Lesson One was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
c) The activities in Lesson One were appropriate and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
d) Lesson Two (the visiting speaker's presentation) was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
e) Lesson Three was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
f) The activities in Lesson Three were appropriate and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
g) The appendices provided relevant and useful information.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Do you have suggestions for other activities that we could include in revised versions of this curriculum? If so, please attach details.

   Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback. Please forward these comments to your visiting speaker.

Appendix One: Background Information

A Canadian Perspective on Disability Issues

The following excerpt is from *In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada* (Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 2000, pp. 5-6).

> Canadians share basic values that help define us as a nation. These include a commitment to inclusion—welcoming everyone to participate fully in society. The vast majority of Canadians believe that persons with disabilities should be supported in their efforts to be active in their communities and society. However, we still have a long way to go to fulfill this goal.
>
> Citizenship for people with disabilities depends on having the supports necessary to take part in work and community activities. It also depends on having access to public and private facilities and decision-making processes.
>
> Every person with a disability faces a unique situation, determined by a variety of factors including the nature of the disability, the family and community situation, as well as the cultural context—important considerations in a multicultural society.

Disability Facts and Figures

In 2001, Statistics Canada conducted the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* to gather statistics about people living with disabilities in Canada. The following facts and figures have been compiled from that data. To find out more, visit www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-577-XIE/canada.htm

- In 2001, 3.6 million Canadians living in households reported having activity limitations; this represents a disability rate of 12.4%.
- Of this 12.4%, 180,930 (or 3.3%) were children under the age of 14.
- Among children aged 0 to 14, the most widespread disability is that related to a chronic health condition such as asthma.
- In 2001, over 100,000 children aged 5 to 14, or 2.6% of all children in that age group, were reported to have learning disabilities. This represented 64.9% of children with disabilities in the 5 to 14 age group.
- Pain-related disability affects half of young adults aged 15 to 24 who have a disability.
- Mobility problems affect more than 1.1 million persons aged 65 and over or nearly eight persons in ten with disabilities. Nationally, 23.3% of adults aged 65 to 74 reported having mobility problems, and the rate climbed to 42.9% for those 75 and over.
- The likelihood of a person having a disability increases with age. As Canada's population ages, the incidence of disability increases.

Appendix Two: Definitions

Accommodations:

In connection with disabilities, accommodations refer to the supports that people with disabilities need to ensure a "level playing field." In the education system, some accommodations might involve note-takers for students who have limited hand mobility, or interpreters for deaf students. In the workplace, an accommodation might be a hands-free phone or voice-activated computer. The nature of the accommodation depends on each disability.

Impairment:

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "impairment" as "any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function."

Disability:

The WHO defines "disability" as "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being."

Handicap:

The WHO defines "handicap" as "the disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from a . . . disability, that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role." These disadvantages vary tremendously and include physical, attitudinal, social, and cultural barriers.

Many people use the words "impairment," "disability," and "handicap" interchangeably. However, impairment refers to a *medical condition*, disability refers to the *limitations* arising from that condition, and handicap refers to the *barriers* that disadvantage the individual who has a disability.

Source**:** World Health Organization. (2003). International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF). 18 Sept 2003. www.who.ch/icidh

Please note: The World Health Organization is currently revising its system of classification of impairments, disabilities, and handicaps. The above URL will direct you to updated definitions as they become available.

In My Experience . . .

When I read an early draft of this curriculum, I found the statistics intriguing, especially those related to learning disabilities. If you are interested in other research concerning learning disabilities, you may want to visit the Learning Disabilities of Canada website at www.ldac.ca

Nancy Kjeldsli, Parent
Medicine Hat

In My Experience . . .

When I visit my son's class to talk about disability issues, I always emphasize that a disability and a handicap are two very different things. I explain that a handicap keeps a person from doing something, which means people without disabilities experience handicaps too. For example, I'm pretty short. So when I visit my son's classroom, I explain to his classmates that I'm handicapped by high cupboards in my house. I'll also say that a person who takes off her glasses will have a handicap. Then, I go on to say that every day people overcome handicaps and perform daily tasks. People with a disability simply overcome their handicaps in a way that is specific to their disability.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Visual Impairments:

"Visual impairments" are conditions that involve the inability or limited ability to receive information visually. Some individuals with visual impairments are partially sighted and use magnification devices or other adaptive materials; individuals who are blind rely primarily on touch and hearing.

Depending on their needs, individuals with visual impairments may use Braille, audiotapes, large-print books, specialized computers, and other aids.

Of individuals who are identified as legally blind, only some are totally blind. In Canada, legal blindness is defined as a range of vision from the perception of no vision up to 10 percent vision. Other visual impairments include colour blindness, tunnel vision, night blindness, and a lack of visual acuity.

Individuals who are both deaf and blind have a dual-sensory impairment and need to stay in touch with their surroundings in order to make sense of their environment.

Source**:** Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students*. Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Visual Impairments

Braille: The communication system of raised dots that represent letters of the alphabet and other language symbols. Braille is read using the fingertips.

Braille Watch: Has raised dots representing the numbers that can be touched by opening a cover that protects the watch face.

Braille Writer: Specialized machine or computer keyboard that types in Braille.

Closed Circuit TV: Electronically enlarges printed material up to 16 times on a television screen.

Magnifying Glasses and Heavy Lenses: Used to read print.

Monoculars: Used to read print at a distance (on street signs, flip charts, blackboards, etc.).

Screenreader: Computer software that provides an audible reading of what is on the screen.

Service Dogs: Are trained to guide a person with a visual impairment. These dogs are recognized by the harnesses and the U-shaped handle held in the owner's left hand unless circumstances (such as multiple disabilities) require that the dog be trained for the right hand.

Talking Calculator: Performs the functions of a basic electronic calculator and speaks each entry and result.

Tape-recorded Texts: Also referred to as talking books, these are recordings of books and other reading materials on cassette.

White Cane: A lightweight cane that warns of obstructions and changes in the level of the walking area.

Sources: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students.* Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1992). *Discover together: An active learning program on disability awareness for children from age 5 to 13.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State.

In My Experience . . .

There are regular home videos that have a narrator describing things like the action taking place, what the actors are wearing, what the set looks like, etc. They try to do this without interfering with the dialogue or regular sound effects. We can watch these on our regular VCR; no extra technology is needed! The idea is to give people with visual impairments a more complete picture of what is happening in a movie or TV show.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

Hearing Loss

"Hard of hearing" is the term used to describe individuals with a hearing loss whose main form of communication is speech. This category includes those with a mild loss who can hear and understand most speech, as well as those who have more limited hearing. Often, hard of hearing persons rely on visual clues and the use of assistive listening devices, although adaptations vary with each individual.

"Deaf" (with a capital "D") is the term used to refer to the cohesion and identity of a particular group of the population who share a linguistic, social, and political heritage. The use of sign language (e.g., American Sign Language) provides a basis for the group identity.

"Oral deaf" is the term used to refer to individuals who have a severe to profound hearing loss, who identify themselves as being deaf, and who rely on oral means of communication. While the degree of hearing loss may vary, it is usually profound to severe.

Source**:** Warick, R. (1997). *Hearing the learning: A post-secondary education handbook for students who are hard of hearing.* Ottawa: Canadian Hard of Hearing Association.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Hearing Loss

ASL: American Sign Language is a separate language that is not based on Standard English grammar and structures. People who are deaf regard deafness as its own culture and ASL as its language.

Captioning: Just as a caption in a book is the text under a picture, captioning of television, video, or DVD programs refers to text that is located at the bottom of a TV or movie screen. *Closed captions* are captions that are hidden in the video signal, invisible without a special decoder. For older models of televisions, a decoder is a separate mechanism, but since 1993, decoders are built into televisions and can be activated through the TV's controls. *Open captions* are captions that have been decoded, so they are an integral part of the screen, just like subtitles on a movie.

CART: Communication Assistance (Real Time) is provided by specially trained persons who type verbatim accounts of what is being said at meetings, conferences, in classrooms, etc. for persons who are hard of hearing.

Hearing Aid: A battery-powered device that consists of an ear mould section placed inside the ear to direct sound waves, picked up by the aid's microphone, into the ear canal. The hearing aid amplifies sound, but it does not discriminate voices from other sounds. Thus, all background sounds such as a keyboard being used, chairs scraping on the floor, etc., are amplified.

Infrared, FM Systems: Amplification systems that can be used in classrooms, auditoriums, and other large rooms to transmit sound from a speaker directly to the receiver of a person with a hearing loss. The speaker wears a microphone that converts sound into electrical energy that is transmitted to a receiver and amplified for the person who is hard of hearing.

Service Dog: Trained to alert people with hearing disabilities to sounds such as alarm clocks, smoke alarms, telephones, doorbells or knocks, babies crying, or intruders.

Message Relay Service: A service offered by telephone companies across Canada, which allows people who do not have access to a TTY to communicate with someone who does.

Signaling Device: Sound-detecting devices that convert smoke and fire alarms, door- bells, and phone and alarm clock sounds into flashing lights.

Sign Language Interpreter: A person who translates speech into manual communication, usually American Sign Language (ASL), for a sign language user, and then translates the signed reply into speech for those who do not know sign language.

TTY: A text telephone transmits signals from one telephone to another when both are equipped with this transmitter/receiver device. Conversation is typed on a keyboard at one end and transmitted to a visual display board in typed form at the other.

Telephone Amplification Devices: Are compatible with hearing aids and have a volume control switch to adjust phone volume to individual needs.

Sources: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students*. Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1992). *Discover together: An active learning program on disability awareness for children from age 5 to 13.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State.

Mobility Limitations

"Mobility limitations" are those conditions that impair an individual's ability to move his or her body or body parts freely. Some people with mobility limitations will be unable to move about without a walking aid (e.g., a wheelchair, a scooter, crutches, a cane, or a walker). Others may move freely but have impaired hand or fine motor functions that make writing, opening doors, or other fine motor tasks difficult to perform. Mobility limitations may be caused by medical conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and polio, or by accidents.

Source**:** The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities. (2003). *Raising instructor awareness: A series of workshops on disability issues.* Edmonton, AB: The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Mobility Limitations

- Manual and electric wheelchairs
- Artificial limbs
- Adapted cars and vans
- Hands-free telephones operated with speakers or headsets
- Control systems for appliances
- Bathroom grab bars, poles, and tub rails
- Bath lifts and tub seats
- Stair lifts
- Crutches, canes, and walkers
- Electric scooters

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities refer to a number of conditions that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding, or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These conditions affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities related to thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from developmental disabilities, in which intellectual functioning is affected.

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- Oral language (listening, speaking, understanding)
- Reading (decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension)
- Written language (spelling, written expression)
- Mathematics (computation, problem solving)

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction, and perspective taking.

Learning disabilities are lifelong. The ways in which they are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's strengths and needs. Learning disabilities are suggested by unexpected academic under-achievement or achievement that is maintained only by unusually high levels of effort and support.

Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors or injury that alter brain functioning in a manner which affects one or more processes related to learning. These disorders are not due primarily to hearing and/or vision problems, socio-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation, or ineffective teaching, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may co-exist with various conditions, including attentional, behavioural and emotional disorders, sensory impairments, or other medical conditions.

Source: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. (2002). *Official definition of learning disabilities.* Retrieved November 18, 2004, from www.ldac-taac.ca/english/defined/definew.htm

Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities

The accommodations a student with a learning disability might need to succeed at his or her tasks include, but are not limited to:

- More time to complete an assignment or exam
- Instructions repeated in simpler words
- Someone to read assignments aloud
- A quiet, neat study area
- An easy-to-use dictionary
- Permission to answer exam questions orally

Appendix Three: Appropriate Language

"Language is a powerful and important tool in shaping ideas, perceptions and ultimately, public attitudes. Words are a mirror of society's attitudes and perceptions…. It is important to remember that the development of appropriate terminology is still in progress; however, the… terms [below] are currently in use" (Human Resources and Development Canada, Office for Disability Issues, 2002).

INSTEAD OF	PLEASE USE
Handicap, handicapped	Disability, or person with a disability Emphasize the person, not the disability
The blind, the visually impaired	Person who is blind, person who has a visual impairment, person who has low vision
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	Person born with a disability, person who has a congenital disability
Victim of/afflicted with/ suffers from a stroke, polio, muscular dystrophy, etc.	Person who has multiple sclerosis, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Wheelchair-bound or confined to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair, a wheelchair user
Cripple, crippled, gimp, lame, invalid, physically challenged	Person with a disability, person who has a mobility impairment/reduced mobility/ mobility limitations, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	Person who is deaf
The hearing impaired, the hard of hearing	Person who has a hearing loss, person who is hard of hearing
The epileptic	Person who has epilepsy
Handicapped parking, handicapped washrooms, etc.	Accessible parking, accessible washrooms, etc.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, maniac, mental, mental case, neurotic, psycho, psychotic	Person with a mental health disability, person who has schizophrenia, person who has depression, etc.
Learning disabled, the dyslexics	Person with a learning disability
Mentally retarded, defective, idiot, imbecile, moron, retarded, mongoloid	Person with an intellectual disability, person with a developmental disability
Normal, healthy (when used as the opposite of disabled)	Non-disabled, able-bodied

Adapted from: Office for Disability Issues, Human Resources and Development Canada. (2002). *A way with words and images.* www.sdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/topics/pyp-pup/shtml

GETTING TO KNOW US:
RAISING DISABILITY AWARENESS IN ALBERTA'S SCHOOLS

Junior High Teacher's Guide (Grades Seven to Nine)

In This Section, You Will Find:

About Getting to Know Us

Getting to Know Us provides disability organizations with suggested guidelines, time frames, and a curriculum for coordinating school outreach programs that raise students' awareness of disabilities. This unit of the curriculum focuses on students in Grades 4 to 6, but we also have units for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 and Grades 7 to 9.

Each unit comprises three lessons: two to be delivered by teachers in the classroom, and one to be delivered by a person with a disability. The involvement of a person with a disability is vital to the success of this program. If you have discovered this curriculum independently (i.e., not through a disability organization), we encourage you to contact a local disability organization and request the names of individuals who would be interested in visiting your classroom.

Curriculum Objectives

Getting to Know Us encourages students and teachers to develop an understanding of, and respect for, the following ideas:

- Society needs to learn to see the person first, the disability second
- People with disabilities are individuals who have the same aspirations, needs, rights, and expectations as everyone else
- Words shape attitudes and perceptions. It is important to use words that respect the dignity of the individual.

Glossary

Here are a few definitions you'll need to be familiar with:

Visiting Speaker:	This is a person with a disability, usually working for or associated with a disability organization, who visits a classroom to speak about the realities of living with a disability. The visiting speaker delivers Lesson Two of the curriculum and coordinates the teacher-delivered lessons.
Host School:	This is the school that hosts the visiting speaker. Usually, initial contact is made with the host school through the principal, who then forwards information to interested teachers.
Host Teachers:	These are the teachers who deliver Lessons One and Three of the curriculum. As well, they host the visiting speaker, either in their own class or in combination with other classes.

At a Glance

This curriculum comprises three lessons:

Lesson One:	You, as the host teacher, introduce your students to the idea of disabilities in general. The lesson is divided into two parts: an introductory discussion and suggested follow-up activities. The lesson raises student awareness about disability issues.

Lesson Two: In the second lesson, your visiting speaker continues the general introduction to disabilities that you began, but also speaks more specifically about his or her particular situation.

Lesson Three: You follow up on the visiting speaker's presentation by encouraging students to apply what they've learned so far. Like Lesson One, this lesson is divided into two parts: an introductory discussion and suggested follow-up activities.

Students with Disabilities in Your Classroom

If you have a student with a disability in your classroom, you will want to ensure that he or she is comfortable with the lesson ahead of time. Here are a few ideas:

- Explain the content of the lessons to the student and his or her parents ahead of time
- If the student is comfortable talking to the class, invite the student to explain his or her situation and discuss the activities that he or she finds challenging. Remember, the student knows his or her situation best.
- Choose follow-up activities (see p. 108) that are relevant to the student's disability
- Invite the student's parent or guardian to join you for the lessons
- When speaking with the student and his or her parents, discover if your student has a sibling who would like to speak to the class

In My Experience . . .

Remember — everyone is different. Some students may enjoy the opportunity to speak to the class; others may not want to be present at all. Speak with the student and his or her parents or guardians to decide whether or not the student should be present during the lesson. If the decision is that the student would rather not be in attendance, still invite the parents or guardians to attend, and focus your lesson on their child's particular disability, inviting the parents' input throughout.

Doris Goetz, ACCD Board Member,
Edmonton

In My Experience . . .

I think it is very important to involve students with disabilities in the class presentation by asking them to speak about activities in their lives that are challenging. What a wonderful opportunity for students to share their experience—from school, home, or playing with friends—with their classmates!

Colleen Duff, ACCD Board Member,
Calgary

Feeling Comfortable

As you prepare to deliver Lessons One and Three of the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum, you may want to explore your own level of comfort with the information to be presented. What are your own attitudes, thoughts, and opinions regarding the lives of people with disabilities? Do you use appropriate language when referring to or speaking about disabilities? Do you feel comfortable when you encounter and interact with people with disabilities?

To assist you in this exploration, we've included the following information:

- An awareness quiz
- Background information and statistics about disabilities in Canada (Appendix One)
- Basic definitions of, and information about, the types of disabilities we ask you to discuss with your students (Appendix Two)
- A terminology guide that explains the proper words to use when speaking with, or referring to, people with disabilities (Appendix Three)

Please review these materials and, if time permits, take part in some of the following activities. They are meant to provide you with opportunities to explore your own knowledge of, or feelings on, the subject of disabilities.

In My Experience . . .

Sometimes I think teachers don't realize just how important the role is that they play in the lives of all students, including students with disabilities. Students notice the words, body language, and gestures teachers use when interacting with students with a disability. They play a very important role in shaping perceptions and making acceptance happen.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Suggested Activities to Prepare You for Delivering the* Getting to Know Us *Curriculum:

- If you are the only teacher in your school using this curriculum, complete the Awareness Quiz (next page) on your own to give you a better understanding of your own familiarity with disability issues
- If other teachers in your school are also using this curriculum, create an informal discussion group to talk about disability issues. You can even invite members of your school's parent/teacher committee to join you. Choose someone with experience in disability issues (e.g., the parents of a child with a disability) to lead your discussion group. Use the Awareness Quiz as an ice-breaker for your meeting, or as a starting point for discussion.
- Ask a member from a disability organization to answer your questions about a specific disability
- If the opportunity exists to invite speakers to professional development events or staff meetings, consider inviting a community member with a disability or a representative from a disability organization

Awareness Quiz

In Canada, students with disabilities may be integrated into any classroom. However, as doors in schools open to create inclusive environments, teachers, administrators, and fellow students also need to be open to learning about the myths and stereotypes that affect people with disabilities.

To dispel these myths, this curriculum focuses on the message that every student is different, and every disability is unique. The following quiz is meant to encourage teachers to think about the ways that individual and social perceptions and attitudes influence how a person with a disability experiences his or her world.

	Agree	Disagree
1. Everyone has unique abilities and talents.	_____	_____
2. Your attitudes are an influential force that determine how a person with a disability will experience the community and the world.	_____	_____
3. It is important to see the person first and the disability second.	_____	_____
4. People with disabilities always require special care and are best treated in an institutional setting.	_____	_____
5. Sports activities are limited for people with disabilities.	_____	_____
6. People are sometimes afraid of a person who has a developmental disability.	_____	_____
7. A person with a learning disability cannot be expected to complete school.	_____	_____
8. A person may have a disability and not be handicapped.	_____	_____
9. Students with visual impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students.	_____	_____
10. Braille is used by about 25% of persons who are visually impaired.	_____	_____
11. When guiding a person who has a visual impairment, you should hold his or her arm.	_____	_____
12. When someone who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should address your conversation to the interpreter.	_____	_____
13. All people with mobility limitations require the same type of support.	_____	_____
14. Students can be assessed with a learning disability at any point during their education.	_____	_____
15. Students who have speech impairments usually have intellectual impairments as well.	_____	_____

Awareness Quiz Answer Key

The answers provided here do not discuss disabilities at length. However, you should find them sufficient to guide you in assessing your own understanding and awareness. If you are using the quiz with a group, the answers (and the questions themselves) should serve as a catalyst for initiating discussion about various disability issues. If a person with a disability or someone who is familiar with disability issues is present as you review the answers to the quiz, he or she will be able to respond more fully to your questions.

1. **Everyone has unique abilities and talents.**
   True. This may be an obvious statement, but how often do we really see the abilities and talents in an individual first, regardless of whether or not that person has a disability?

2. **Your attitudes are an influential force that determine how a person with a disability will experience the community and the world.**
   True. Barriers are broken down by means of open, positive attitudes in which each person is accepted and treated as an individual.

3. **It is important to see the person first and the disability second.**
   True. By seeing the person first, we accept that someone with a disability, like anyone else, has strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, which contribute to that person's character and to his or her relationships with others. A disability is only one of many aspects that constitute the individual.

In My Experience . . .

*I think it is very important to emphasize the "person first, disability second" approach. Everyone needs to know that the person is **not** the disability. And kids need to realize that classmates with disabilities have moods, likes, and dislikes, just as they do.*

Sue Lagroix, Parent
Rocky Mountain House

4. **People with disabilities always require special care and are best treated in an institutional setting.**
   False. Many people with disabilities can and do live independently in society. With personal supports, assistive devices, and equal opportunities for education, training, and employment, people with disabilities increasingly participate as independent members of society.

5. **Sports activities are limited for people with disabilities.**
   False. People with disabilities, young and old, are involved in, and benefit from, all kinds of recreation and leisure activities. It is a commonly held myth that people with disabilities cannot, or do not want to, participate in sporting activities. But everything from skiing to swimming to bowling to visits to community playgrounds can be part of the lives of many children and adults with disabilities.

In My Experience . . .

I think it's important for people to realize that people with disabilities don't have to be world class athletes to enjoy being active. My 12-year old daughter, who is visually impaired and has cerebral palsy, loves to swim, bowl, and participate in gym class. She enjoys taking part in sports at the community level.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

6. **People are sometimes afraid of a person who has a developmental disability.**
   True. In these instances, fear is usually the result of a lack of knowledge or a false understanding of the nature of developmental disabilities.

7. **A person with a learning disability cannot be expected to complete school.**
   False. Given the appropriate learning environment and accommodations, a person with a learning disability can achieve success at the highest academic levels. (See Appendix Two for a definition of *accommodations*.)

8. **A person may have a disability and not be handicapped.**
   True. People with disabilities are handicapped only when environmental barriers or other people's attitudes interfere with or prevent activities that would otherwise be open to them. (See Appendix Two.)

9. **Students with visual impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students.**
   True. Students with visual impairments, as well as students with mobility and hearing loss, learning disabilities, and mental health disabilities, have the same range of cognitive ability as other students. However, the environmental and attitudinal barriers they face in school systems and in society in general often lead to intelligence scores that are lower than those of students without disabilities.

10. **Braille is used by approximately 25 percent of persons who are visually impaired.**
    False. Braille is used by approximately *3 percent* of persons who are visually impaired. Students who do not use Braille usually read using one or all of the following: large print books, audiotapes, text magnifiers, and other assistive devices. (Definitions of assistive devices are included in Appendix Two.)

11. **When guiding a person with a visual impairment, you should hold his or her arm.**
    False. If you think a person with a visual impairment needs help getting somewhere, first ask if he or she would like assistance and how you may provide it. Then, allow the person to hold on to you, usually your elbow or forearm, for guidance. Describe anything out of the ordinary that may be in your path: objects, stairs, persons with mobility limitations, etc.

12. **When someone who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should address your conversation to the interpreter.**
    False. If a person who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, you should speak directly to the person who is deaf. Do not speak to the interpreter instead.

13. People with mobility limitations all require the same types of support.
False. The range of mobility limitations is broad. A mobility limitation is any condition that impairs an individual's ability to move his or her body or body parts freely. Some people with mobility limitations will be unable to move without a walking aid such as a wheelchair, a scooter, a walker, crutches, or a cane. Others may walk freely but have impaired hand or fine motor functions that make tasks such as writing, opening doors, or holding objects difficult.

14. Students can be assessed with a learning disability at any point during their education.
True. Learning disabilities can be assessed at any age. If students are assessed when they are young, they will be able to benefit from accommodations early in their education. Unfortunately, many students aren't assessed until they are adults.

15. Students who have speech impairments usually have intellectual impairments as well.
False. Students with speech impairments have the same range of cognitive ability as other students. Often, students whose verbal communication is difficult to understand have a mobility limitation that creates problems with pronouncing words. This has no connection, however, to the student's ability to understand, reason, or solve problems of an intellectual nature.

Lesson One: Raising Awareness

Overview of Lesson One

Lesson Focus: To understand that we need to see the person first and the disability second.

Lesson Objectives: To raise awareness about disability issues.

To guide students in defining and identifying visual, hearing, mobility, and learning disabilities.

To give students the opportunity to simulate disabilities and learn how to adapt to situations.

Part One: Introductory Discussion

1. Discover what the students already know about disabilities. Then, through class discussion, create definitions of the terms *impairment, disability* and *handicap*. Refer to Appendix Two to guide development of the definitions. It's important that the students grasp the difference between the terms.

2. Discover if students know anyone with a disability. Use the discussion to briefly introduce the idea of different types of disabilities: visual, hearing, mobility, and learning. Ask the students, "How are people with disabilities just like everyone else? How are they different?"

   Note: It is important to focus on how individuals with disabilities are the same as other people first. From the outset, we want students to see that people with disabilities enjoy social, physical, family, and school or work-related activities—just like everyone else.

3. When students speak about differences, they will likely introduce the idea that people with disabilities often use technical aids that address the *handicap* created by their disabilities. Use these comments to generate a discussion on technical aids. (See Appendix Two for examples of various aids.) Ask the students the following questions, and record their answers on the board:

   » What are some types of aids or assistive devices that you've noticed people with disabilities using?
   » What do these devices do? (Make a task easier to accomplish)
   » What are some aids or devices that people without disabilities use? (headset for phone, ladders, training wheels on toddlers' bicycles, etc.)
   » What do these devices do? (Make a task easier to accomplish—the same as for people with disabilities)

Part Two: Follow-Up Activities

The activities on the next pages vary in length and focus, but they all encourage students to see *the person first and the disability second*. Choose one or more of the activities to follow up on your introductory discussion. As your students work through the activity, guide them in thinking about the barriers that people with disabilities overcome on a daily basis. Most of the activities require a few, everyday objects that you'll need to gather ahead of time.

Each of the activities ends with a brief discussion. When the discussion is complete, wrap up the lesson by letting the students know that a person with a disability will be visiting the classroom to talk about his or her experience.

* * * * *

Follow-Up Activities at a Glance

Activity	Page #	Focus	Delivery	
			Whole Class	Learning Centres
Word Search	Resource Section	Visual, Hearing, Mobility, Learning	X	
Simulation Activity	109	Visual	X	X
The Classroom Maze	111	Visual	X	X
Too Much Noise	112	Hearing	X	
Movie Time	113	Hearing	X	
Personal Insights	114	Hearing	X	
I Can Do This	115	Mobility	X	X
Are We Accessible	116	Mobility	X	X
Which Way?	118	Learning	X	
I Want To Read	119	Learning	X	

Note: If you'd like, it is possible to set up several centres in the classroom, with a different activity at each centre. Or, if you'd like to spend more time on one activity, you could do a different one every day or two.

In My Experience . . .

When I visit my son's class to raise awareness about his disability, I often lead the students in activities that simulate his experience. I think it is very important to intervene if students use the moment to make fun of disabilities. Learning, not teasing, should be the focus of simulation activities. Explain to the students that the activities are meant to help us understand more fully what it is like to experience a disability.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

SIMULATION ACTIVITY

(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To perform tasks while simulating different types of visual disabilities.

Learning Objectives: To gain awareness of the varieties of visual disabilities.

To understand that different assistive devices are available to people with various types of visual disabilities.

Materials: Glasses or goggles
A bar of soap to smear on the glasses or goggles
Paper towel tubes
Magazine (or magazine article)
Simple jigsaw puzzle

Directions:

1. Pair up students and give each pair two paper towel tubes and a pair of glasses or goggles. Note: This activity also works well in a centre-style format.

2. Explain to the students that they will be using the glasses or goggles and the paper towel tubes to simulate different visual disabilities.

3. Hand out an activity sheet/index card with the following directions:

   » To simulate tunnel vision, hold the paper towel tubes close to your eyes
   » To simulate a condition of having only peripheral vision, cover the centre part of the glasses or goggles with the soap, but leave the edges clear
   » To simulate a condition of being able to see only light, totally cover the glasses or goggles with the soap

4. Ask the students to choose one of the types of visual impairment indicated on the card and prepare the glasses or goggles as necessary. Then, ask them to take turns completing one or several of the following tasks. As they work on the tasks, one student should simulate the disability while the other acts as a helper.

   » Reading a magazine article
   » Locating an object in a darkened closet
   » Copying a short paragraph from a textbook
   » Selecting a specific book in the library
   » Completing a simple jigsaw puzzle

5. After completing the task(s), ask the students to select a different type of visual impairment and a different task to complete.

Discussion:

After several minutes of simulating a visual impairment, encourage the students to talk about the experience. Ask:

- What was it like to experience a visual impairment?
- What type of assistive devices do you think would have improved your ability to perform the tasks? (See Appendix Two.)
- Can you think of any futuristic inventions that might assist someone with a visual impairment?

THE CLASSROOM MAZE
(Visual Impairment)

Purpose: To walk independently without the use of sight.

Learning Objective: To understand how an assistive device works to help someone with a visual impairment move about independently.

Materials: Blindfolds
White cane or metre stick

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that they will be constructing a maze in the classroom and that some students will be asked to find their way through the maze while blindfolded.
2. Ask some students to leave the room while a maze of tables, desks, and chairs is set up.
3. Once the room is ready, have the students who were not in the room put on blindfolds. Then ask them to find their way one at a time through the maze, first without and then with a cane or metre stick.
4. As students make their way through the maze with the cane, encourage them to keep the cane low to the ground and to move it from side to side.

Note: You can pair up older or more mature students and have them explore leaving and re-entering the building by different doors or finding their way to the bathroom and back. One student would be the helper, while the other would be blindfolded and have the cane or metre stick.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about the experience. Ask:

» Was it easier to navigate with or without the cane? Why?
» Do you think you would prefer to use a cane, a guide dog, or perhaps no device at all if you had a visual impairment? Why?

TOO MUCH NOISE
(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To appreciate what a difficult listening situation might mean to someone who is hard of hearing.

Learning Objective: To understand the barriers presented by background noise.

Materials: Tape recorder
Blank tape

Directions:

1. Discuss with the class the idea of varying degrees of hearing loss and the significance of background noise for people who are hard of hearing.
2. Explain to students that, throughout a part of the day, they are to record specific conversations in busy, noisy situations (e.g., the school cafeteria, the hallway between classes, the classroom before the teacher arrives).
3. At a set time later in the day, have the students play back the tapes to the class.
4. Explain that when the volume on a hearing aid is increased, all sounds become louder, not just the sound the person wants to focus on. Play the tape at a louder volume to demonstrate.

Discussion:

Use the tapes to guide the students in discovering the significance of background noise. Ask:

- What is the extent of the background noise?
- How does it interfere with our ability to understand a conversation?
- How many surrounding sounds have to be "tuned out" in order to focus on a specific situation?
- If you are speaking to someone who is hard of hearing in a group situation, what could you do that might make it easier for that person to understand what's going on? (Note: It would be helpful to move closer to the person and, if possible, slightly away from people talking nearby.)

Note: Encourage interested students to tape conversations in other areas, such as in a shopping centre, on the school bus, or in a fast-food restaurant.

MOVIE TIME
(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To experience a film without using the sense of hearing.

Learning Objectives: To understand that visual cues provide a great deal of information to someone with a hearing loss.

To become aware of the importance of captioning for those who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Materials: A five to ten minute video (with captioning). When choosing a video, ensure it is not animated as the characters' mouth movements will not be mimicking actual words.

Directions:

1. Ask students to define, as best they can, the idea of closed and open captioning of films, TV shows, videos, etc. Use the definitions in Appendix Two to guide the discussion.
2. Explain to the students that they will be simulating deafness by watching a video without sound and, at first, without captioning. Ask them to pay careful attention to any words or phrases they might speech read and to observe how gestures and actions provide non-verbal clues to what is taking place.
3. Play the video without sound. Then ask the students to write a short paragraph describing the video.
4. Play the video again, this time with captioning but with the sound still off. Have the students write a paragraph describing the experience.
5. Finally, play the video with the sound on and the captioning open. Have the students write about the experience.

Discussion:

Encourage the students to talk about their experiences. Ask:

» What parts of the video were easy to understand without sound?
» Were you able to fully understand the video with just the captioning?
» What parts did you really need sound to understand?
» How did your description of the video measure up once you could watch it with sound?
» How would watching animated characters rather than actual people change the experience of viewing the video with no sound?

PERSONAL INSIGHTS
(Hearing Loss)

Purpose: To develop students' awareness and understanding of what it means to be deaf or hard of hearing.

Learning Objectives: To discuss and explore statements made by Canadians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To develop empathy and understanding.

Directions:

1. Choose one or more of the statements included below and use it as a focal point for a class discussion on developing awareness and understanding.

Discussion:

Guide students to consider the issues of isolation, the insensitivity of others, the nature of our "hearing society," and the uses of technology. Ask them how they could apply their new understanding to situations involving persons who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Selected Quotations:

The following statements have been selected from material gathered from Canadians who are deaf or hard of hearing.

"For me, being hard of hearing meant nearly 50 years of trying to pretend I could hear—smiling, laughing, or nodding whenever I thought it was appropriate and suffering embarrassment whenever I found it was inappropriate."

"It means I miss the wonders of the musical note, BUT it means peace and quiet and solitude amid chaos."

"In a nutshell, you're in a world of your own—it is impossible to hear your friend in a public place where there's a lot of noise or others are talking—you just sit and look wise and try to catch the odd word or words."

"People sometimes seem to back away from you as they don't seem to know how to cope with the deaf or hard of hearing."

"Learn to live with the fact that at times you will be ignored, talked over and around, as if you didn't exist—and appreciate the effort of people who do make the effort to communicate with you."

I CAN DO THIS
(Mobility Limitation)

Purpose: To simulate the ability to use only one arm.

Learning Objectives: To understand the challenge of a mobility limitation.

To become more familiar with the technical aids that some people use.

Materials: Sling or masking tape (to immobilize one arm)

Directions:

1. Pair the students up and give each pair some masking tape or a sling. Explain to the students that they will be asked to perform a variety of tasks with the use of only one arm.

2. Ask one student to be the helper and the other to be the person with a mobility limitation. The helper can prepare the other student by pinning one arm to his or her side using the sling, or by taping it to his or her side with the masking tape.

3. Once the students are ready, have them perform one or more of the following tasks:

   » Getting books out of a locker
   » Getting dressed to go outside in winter
   » Managing at lunchtime in the cafeteria

4. Encourage the helper to be sensitive to the wishes of the person with use of only one arm. Remind them not to assume that help is always wanted.

5. Have students take turns with the activities.

   Note: You may want to have students paint or write without the use of either arm.

Discussion:
Once students have tried to complete one or more of the tasks, have them talk about the experience. Ask:

» How successful were you?
» Did your helper ever assume you wanted help when you preferred to do something yourself? How did that feel?
» Can you think of anything that would have helped you complete the tasks more easily? (See Appendix Two to guide students in thinking about various technical aids.)
» Can you think of any futuristic inventions that might assist someone with a mobility limitation?

In My Experience . . .

When I had my students do this activity, I modified it slightly. They worked in teams to plant tulip bulbs, fill a birdfeeder, and even dismantle a computer. The students had to practice working together to effectively complete the tasks.

Bevan Janzen, Teacher, Spruce Avenue Junior High
Edmonton

ARE WE ACCESSIBLE?
(Mobility Limitation)

Purpose: To develop awareness of the environment relative to wheelchair use.

Learning Objectives: To learn how accessible or inaccessible the school environment is for a wheelchair user.

To understand the importance of accessibility.

Materials: A metre stick or measuring tape for each group of students

Directions:

1. Explain to students that they will be determining how accessible the school is for wheelchair users.
2. Distribute the barrier checklist that follows and review the points with the class. If necessary, provide students with clarification.
3. Divide students into pairs or small groups and give each group a metre stick or measuring tape.
4. Explain that the group will use the barrier checklist to rate the accessibility of the school. Give them a set amount of time to conduct their survey (approximately 10 to 15 minutes). Ask different groups to start at different places in the checklist.
5. Let students know they will be asked to report back to the class on their findings.

Note: Depending on the time you have, you may want to have students brainstorm their own barrier checklist and use the attached one as a guideline to make sure they have covered all areas.

Discussion:

When the students return to the classroom, encourage them to think about accessibility issues. Ask:

» Did you find the school to be accessible or not? Explain.
» What would the merits be of removing barriers in regular schools so that all students could attend them, as opposed to creating special schools for students with mobility limitations? In this discussion, remind students to examine the benefits of inclusion from the point of view of students without disabilities as well as students with disabilities.
» What are your recommendations for improving access in the school?

In My Experience . . .

I find that many people assume an area is accessible simply because doorways are wide enough or phones and water fountains are low enough. But we need to remember that accessibility relies on much more than height and width. When brainstorming your checklist with the students, remind them to consider things like signage, hand rails, ramps, and elevators.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

BARRIER CHECKLIST

A barrier is something that makes it very difficult or impossible for a person with a mobility limitation to access a building. Is your school barrier-free? Remember that most buildings have barriers, but barriers can be changed. Use the back of the page for comments or observations.

	Yes	No
1. If the main entrance to the school has stairs but no ramp, it has a barrier. Does your school have a ramp?	____	____
2. Are the doorknobs of all main doors 92 cm from the ground?	____	____
3. Do the hallways have handrails to help people walk?	____	____
4. Are there reserved accessible parking spaces that are 366 cm or 3.6 m wide?	____	____
5. Are there curb cuts so that people in wheelchairs or on scooters, and people with strollers, baby carriages, or shopping carts can pass easily?	____	____
6. If your school has more than one floor, does it also have an elevator?	____	____
7. Are all doorways at least 84 cm wide?	____	____
8. Are the sinks low enough to be used by someone in a wheelchair? Get a chair and check. If the sinks are not low enough, how many centimetres should they be lowered?	____	____
9. Are the telephones in the building accessible? Get a chair and check. If the telephones are too high, how many centimetres should they be lowered?	____	____
10. Are there grab bars in the bathroom stalls to facilitate the use of the toilet for wheelchair users?	____	____
11. Are the windows 61 cm – 71 cm from the floor?	____	____
12. Are the aisles in the classroom at least 81 cm wide so that people in wheelchairs or on scooters, and those using crutches, canes, or walkers can get around easily?	____	____

WHICH WAY?
(Learning Disability)

Purpose: To simulate a learning disability that involves directional confusion.

Learning Objective: To understand some of the challenges facing people with learning disabilities.

Materials: Mirrors
Photocopies of "Colouring Sheet" from Resource Section 7
Tracing paper for each student

Directions:

1. Explain to the class that they will be simulating the experience of a person with a learning disability that involves directional confusion.
2. Divide students into small groups. Give each group a mirror, some tracing paper, and a photocopy of "Colouring Sheet" from Resource Section 7
3. Direct the students to tape the tracing paper over the illustration, to place the mirror perpendicular to the top of the illustration sheet, and to trace the pattern by looking only at its reflection in the mirror.
4. Have each student in the group take a turn.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about the experience. Ask:

» How did it feel to think you should be able to do something, but not be able to succeed?
» How do you think a person with a learning disability might feel when trying to do something that looks simple, but turns out to be quite difficult?

In My Experience . . .

When your students simulate disabilities, I think you'll find that your students often feel frustrated that they cannot achieve a task that they know they are capable of doing. This is the same for many people with disabilities too. But because people with disabilities are living with their situation day to day, these feelings of frustration and sadness can be pretty overwhelming. Teach your students to consider the point of a view of a friend or classmate who lives with a disability every day.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

I WANT TO READ
(Learning Disability)

Purpose: To simulate the difficulty some students with learning disabilities may experience in reading.

Learning Objective: To appreciate the difficulty a student with a learning disability may have in processing reading material.

Materials: Reading sample and answer key overhead (see next page)

Directions:

1. Explain to the class that they will be completing an exercise that will give them an idea of what some students with learning disabilities experience.
2. On the overhead projector, display the first paragraph and cover the second paragraph.
3. Ask a few students to read the first paragraph aloud to the class. As the students give this a try, emphasize that a student with a learning disability may not necessarily see print this way but that the exercise simulates the reading experience for some students with learning disabilities. Point out that often letters and sometimes whole words are perceived as reversed.
4. Reveal the second paragraph and ask a student to read it for the class.

Discussion:

Encourage students to talk about the experience. Ask:

» What did you notice as you read the first paragraph and how did you feel as you tried to read it? (Draw attention here to the feeling that they *should* be able to read the paragraph and the frustration with recognizing the letters, but not the words.)
» What types of things do you think might help a person with a learning disability decipher the paragraph? (Draw attention to the following strategies, but note that they are beneficial to everyone, not just people with learning disabilities: easy-to-use dictionary or spell-checker, quiet study area, personally developed reading strategies.)

Lesson Two Synopsis: Visiting Speaker

Overview of Lesson Two

Lesson Objectives:	To show students that, in many ways, people with disabilities are the same as people without disabilities. To introduce students to the realities of life with a disability.
Time frame:	30 to 50 minutes in length, depending on class size and the discussion generated. You can let the visiting speaker know ahead of time if you have a time frame you need to adhere to.
Materials:	The visiting speaker may need access to a television and VCR

Part One: Introduction

After you introduce the visiting speaker, he or she will expand upon your introduction by telling students about his or her likes and dislikes, family members, hobbies and interests, work, pets, etc. As a result, the students will focus on the person and his or her *abilities* rather than on the disability.

Next, the speaker will talk to the students about the realities of living with his or her particular disability. This may include explaining how or when the disability occurred, how it has affected daily routines and situations, and how family and friends view the disability. If appropriate, the visiting speaker will demonstrate ways he or she has adapted to life with a disability (e.g., how to move through a room with no vision, how to use a pencil with a prosthetic arm, etc.).

Part Two: Discussion and Video

The visiting speaker will encourage the students to ask questions about life with a disability. If students seem to have difficulty generating questions, the visiting speaker may use a video to encourage discussion. If the discussion goes smoothly, the video will be shown at the end of the discussion. The visiting speaker will then respond to questions about the video.

Part Three: Wrapping Up

After the discussion has ended, the visiting speaker will thank the students for their ideas and time. Then he or she will distribute (or ask you to distribute) copies of a letter for the students to take home to their parents (see next page).

Some visiting speakers may have small gifts for the students (e.g., rulers, pencils, bookmarks) that they will distribute at this time.

Letter to Parents or Guardians

Visiting speakers will send home a letter similar to the following. If they need you to provide photocopying, they will let you know ahead of time and provide you with a copy of the letter. The appropriate language chart referred to in the postscript will resemble the one in Appendix Three.

***

Dear Parent(s) or Guardian(s),

Today I visited your child's classroom to talk about disability issues. As a person with a disability, I have come to learn that the greatest obstacles I face are not those related to my disability, but those generated by the attitudes and misperceptions that others have about my abilities. With this in mind, the focus of my presentation was to encourage students, when they encounter a person with a disability, to focus on what that individual can do, not on what he or she can't do. In other words, I've encouraged them to *see the person first and the disability second.*

I'd like to ask you to take some time over the next few days to ask your child about my presentation and about the lessons on disability issues that the classroom teacher has also been focusing on. Our goal has been to offer children an authentic view of people with disabilities.

If you have any questions or would like further information about disabilities and disability issues, please feel free to call me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

(Visiting speaker's name)
(Title)
(Organization)

P.S. I've attached a chart to this letter that explains some of the language you can use when discussing disabilities with your child. I hope you find it helpful!

In My Experience . . .

Along with the letter students take home to their parents, teachers could suggest a homework assignment where the student and his or her parents "adopt a disability" for an evening. By simulating a disability and then writing or talking about the experience, the family may develop some insight into our experiences.

Dari Lang, ACCD Member,
Calgary

Lesson Three: Taking Action

Overview of Lesson Three

Lesson Focus: To understand that we need to see the person first and the disability second.

Lesson Objectives: To provide students with the information they need to interact in a non-discriminatory way with people with disabilities.

To encourage students to bring their new awareness into the community.

Part One: Introductory Discussion

One to three days after the visiting speaker's presentation, use the following discussion questions to ensure the students understood the presentation and to encourage them to actively work toward creating a more inclusive society.

- » What did you learn from the speaker (and the video) about ways to interact with people with disabilities?
- » Have you met any people with disabilities since the presentation? How did you act? What did you say?
- » Do you have any questions about the presentation?

Part Two: Follow-Up Activities

Once the students have reviewed the concepts presented by the visiting speaker, guide them in completing one or more of the following activities to reinforce the ideas. The suggested activities vary in length and focus, but they all encourage students to actively work to create a more inclusive society for people with disabilities.

Follow-Up Activities at a Glance

Activity	Page #	Delivery	
		Whole Class	Learning Centres
Making A Difference	123	X	X
Movie Representations of Persons with Disabilities	126	X	
In My Shoes	127	X	
Thank-You Letter	128	X	X

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Purpose: To have students apply what they've learned by describing appropriate ways to interact with people with disabilities.

Learning Objective: To encourage understanding and acceptance of diversity.

Materials: Flip chart or whiteboard/blackboard for recording ideas
Etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139))

Directions:

1. Write the following four questions on the board:

   » How can I be supportive of someone with a visual impairment?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a hearing loss?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a mobility limitation?
   » How can I be supportive of someone with a learning disability?

2. As a class, come up with one sample answer for each of the four questions. Divide students into groups and assign each group one question.

3. Using the sample answer as a guide, have each group brainstorm its own list of ideas. Let the groups know they will be asked to share their brainstorming with the rest of the class.

4. After five minutes or so, ask each group to report back to the entire class. (Possible answers follow.)

5. After the discussion, distribute the etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139) to reinforce the learning that has taken place.

Possible Responses to Discussion Questions

Possible answers to the above questions follow, but your students will likely come up with a number of interesting and practical suggestions themselves.

How can I be supportive of someone with a visual impairment?

» When you say "hi," also say who you are. You may want to lightly touch the individual so they know where you are positioned.
» Speak normally and directly to the person you are addressing
» Invite someone you know with a visual impairment to an upcoming event or activity
» See the person first and the disability second
» Don't feel embarrassed if you use phrases like "*watch* out," "did you *see?* . . . ," or "*look* at that." People with visual disabilities are just as comfortable with everyday language as you are.

In My Experience . . .

I often find that people assume a person with a visual impairment will know who they are, even if they don't introduce themselves. With this activity, ask the students, "Did you immediately recognize the people around you?" You want the students to realize that they need to introduce themselves when they encounter a friend/person with a visual impairment.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

How can I be supportive of someone with a hearing loss?

- » If the person is hard of hearing, be sure to face the person, maintain eye contact, and keep things away from your mouth when you speak. Do not chew gum or eat while communicating with a person who is hard of hearing. This way, the person can speech read if he or she likes.
- » Speak slowly, distinctly, and clearly, but not more loudly than normal
- » Rephrase your words if the person can't understand you. Try saying the same thing in a different way.
- » If the person is deaf, try communicating through gestures or a written note. If you know some sign language, you can use it.
- » If the person who is deaf is accompanied by an interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf, not to the interpreter. Be sure the students understand that the deaf person needs to look at the interpreter and, therefore, cannot maintain eye contact with the speaker.
- » Practice sign language with a person who is deaf and willing to teach you
- » Learn more about Deaf Culture
- » Invite someone you know with a hearing loss to an upcoming event or activity
- » For deaf and hard of hearing persons, one of the most crucial communication needs is good lighting. Front row seating is also important because distance from speakers is a significant barrier.

How can I be supportive of someone with a mobility limitation?

- » Speak directly to the person with the mobility limitation and not solely to someone who happens to be with him or her
- » Be yourself and let others be themselves too. This means being patient when people with mobility limitations are accomplishing a task (e.g., putting on a jacket, having a drink, etc.). It may take them a long time to do something that you can do in a short time. This does not mean they want help with the task. They can still do things for themselves; they may just have to do them differently.
- » Invite someone you know with a mobility limitation to an upcoming event or activity
- » If someone with a mobility limitation appears to need help, ask before lending a hand

How can I be supportive of someone with a learning disability?

- » Share your awareness and understanding of what can often be a "hidden" disability with those who are not aware
- » Offer to do homework together so you can read aloud assignments or math problems
- » Take the time to find out someone's abilities and interests
- » Be understanding of miscalculations or mistakes—we all have difficulty with one thing or another
- » Be aware that most persons with learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence. However, they need appropriate work environments, learning strategies, and positive reinforcement to overcome the distorted processing of information they experience.

MOVIE REPRESENTATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Purpose: To examine representations of persons with disabilities in movies.

Learning Objective: To encourage students to think about how movies might influence the ways individuals regard persons with disabilities.

Materials: Movie (see suggested titles below)
VCR and TV

Directions:

1. Explain to the students that they will be watching a movie that includes one or more characters with a disability. As they watch the movie, they are to keep in mind what they've learned about disabilities from in-class activities and the visiting speaker.

2. After the movie, have students write in their journals about their reaction to the character with a disability. Guide the journal entries with questions like:

   » Was the character with a disability displayed in a positive or negative manner? Explain?
   » What issues are raised about living with a disability?
   » How was the person with the disability treated?
   » What were the character's feelings about his or her situation?
   » Did you get a sense of this person as a real person?
   » Do you think the story was realistic?
   » Did you react to this movie differently than you would have before the visiting speaker came to our class?

Discussion:

Encourage the students to share their impressions of the movie, especially in terms of how the character with a disability was portrayed.

Some Movie Suggestions

Passion Fish: spinal cord injury
Forest Gump: cognitive disability
Children of a Lesser God: deafness
My Left Foot: cerebral palsy
What's Eating Gilbert Grape: developmental disability

IN MY SHOES

Purpose: To have students consider the implications of living with a disability.

Learning Objective: To encourage students to make a commitment to creating change in society for people with disabilities.

Materials: Journals for students to write in

Directions:

1. Ask the students to jot down a type of disability that they have learned about in the class discussions of disability issues, or from the visiting speaker.
2. Collect the pieces of paper and put them in a hat. Then have each student draw a piece of paper from the hat.
3. Explain to the students that sometimes things can change quite significantly in their lives and that, for the purposes of this exercise, they are to assume that they now have the disability described on the piece of paper they drew from the hat.
4. Ask them to reflect on the effects the disability will have on their lives. In a journal, have them respond to the following questions:
    - » What will change in your life now that you have this disability?
    - » What will stay the same?
    - » What supports will you need to continue to participate fully in your community? At school?

Discussion:

After students have finished their journal entries, talk to them about the idea of diversity and inclusiveness. Ask:

- » Should we act to improve society only when it directly affects us? Or should we be supportive of others who will benefit from positive changes?
- » How do people without disabilities benefit from the inclusion of people with disabilities in our communities?

THANK YOU

Purpose: To thank the visiting speaker and let him or her know that the presentation was helpful.

Learning Objective: To encourage students to make a commitment to apply some of the ideas they've learned about interacting with people with disabilities.

Materials: Writing materials

Directions:

1. Ask the students to write a letter to the visiting speaker thanking him or her for coming to the classroom.
2. Let the students know that you want them to complete the following sentence (or something similar) at some point in the letter: "The next time I meet a person with a visual (or hearing or mobility or learning) disability, I will…."
3. Gather the letters and send them to the visiting speaker.
4. Distribute the etiquette handouts (see Resource Section 7, p. 139)) to reinforce learning.

Evaluation

Thank you for using the *Getting to Know Us* curriculum. Would you please take a few minutes to let us know how we could improve our presentation or these materials?

School/Grade: _____ Teacher's Name: _____

1. Did the letter of introduction provide you with enough information to decide whether or not this curriculum would be appropriate for you and your students?

   Yes No Comment: _____

2. Did our office provide you with courteous, timely, and professional assistance?

   Yes No Comment: _____

3. Respond to the following statements using a rating scale, with 5 indicating "strongly agree" and 1 indicating "strongly disagree." Please use the bottom of this page to expand upon or explain your rating, or to make additional comments.

	Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
a) The *Feeling Comfortable* section helped me assess my own awareness of disability issues.	1	2	3	4	5
b) Lesson One was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
c) The activities in Lesson One were appropriate and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
d) Lesson Two (the visiting speaker's presentation) was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
e) Lesson Three was well organized and helpful.	1	2	3	4	5
f) The activities in Lesson Three were appropriate and interesting.	1	2	3	4	5
g) The appendices provided relevant and useful information.	1	2	3	4	5

4. Do you have suggestions for other activities that we could include in revised versions of this curriculum? If so, please attach details.

Thank you for taking the time to provide us with your feedback. Please forward these comments to your visiting speaker.

Appendix One: Background Information

A Canadian Perspective on Disability Issues

The following excerpt is from *In Unison 2000: Persons with Disabilities in Canada* (Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services, 2000, pp. 5-6).

> Canadians share basic values that help define us as a nation. These include a commitment to inclusion—welcoming everyone to participate fully in society. The vast majority of Canadians believe that persons with disabilities should be supported in their efforts to be active in their communities and society. Yet we still have a long way to go to fulfill this goal.
>
> Citizenship for people with disabilities depends on having the supports necessary to take part in work and community activities. It also depends on having access to public and private facilities and decision-making processes.
>
> People with disabilities face unique situations determined by a variety of factors. These include the nature of the disability, the family situation, and the community, as well as the cultural context -- an important consideration in a multicultural society.

Disability Facts and Figures

In 2001, Statistics Canada conducted the *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey* to gather statistics about people living with disabilities in Canada. The following facts and figures have been compiled from that data. To find out more, visit www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-577-XIE/canada.htm

- In 2001, 3.6 million Canadians living in households reported having activity limitations; this represents a disability rate of 12.4%.
- Of this 12.4%, 180,930 (or 3.3%) were children under the age of 14.
- Among children aged 0 to 14, the most widespread disability is that related to a chronic health condition such as asthma.
- In 2001, over 100,000 children aged 5 to 14, or 2.6% of all children in that age group, were reported to have learning disabilities. This represented 64.9% of children with disabilities in the 5 to 14 age group.
- Pain-related disability affects half of young adults aged 15 to 24 who have a disability.
- Mobility problems affect more than 1.1 million persons aged 65 and over or nearly eight persons in ten with disabilities. Nationally, 23.3% of adults aged 65 to 74 reported having mobility problems, and the rate climbed to 42.9% for those 75 and over.
- The likelihood of a person having a disability increases with age. As Canada's population ages, the incidence of disability increases.

Appendix Two: Definitions

Accommodations:

In connection with disabilities, accommodations refer to the supports that people with disabilities need to ensure a "level playing field." In the education system, some accommodations involve note-takers for students who have limited hand mobility, or interpreters for students who are deaf. In the workplace, an accommodation might be a hands-free phone or voice-activated computer. The nature of the accommodation depends on the disability.

Impairment:

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "impairment" as "any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical structure or function."

Disability:

The WHO defines "disability" as "any restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being."

Handicap:

The WHO defines "handicap" as "the disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from a . . . disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role." These disadvantages vary tremendously and include physical, attitudinal, social, and cultural barriers.

Many people use the words "impairment," "disability," and "handicap" interchangeably. However, impairment refers to a *medical condition*, disability refers to the *limitations* arising from that condition, and handicap refers to the *barriers* that disadvantage the individual who has a disability.

Source**:** World Health Organization. (2003). *International classification of functioning, disability and health (ICF).* 18 Sept 2003. www.who.ch/icidh

Please note: The World Health Organization is currently revising its system of classification of impairments, disabilities, and handicaps. The above URL will direct you to updated definitions as they become available.

In My Experience . . .

When *I read an early draft of this curriculum, I found the statistics intriguing, especially those related to learning disabilities. If you are interested in other research concerning learning disabilities, you may want to visit the Learning Disabilities of Canada website at www.ldac.ca*

Nancy Kjeldsli, Parent
Medicine Hat

In My Experience . . .

When I visit my son's class to talk about disability issues, I always emphasize that a disability and a handicap are two very different things. I explain that a handicap keeps a person from doing something, which means people without disabilities experience handicaps too. For example, I'm pretty short. So when I visit my son's classroom, I explain to his classmates that I'm handicapped by high cupboards in my house. I'll also say that a person who takes off her glasses will have a handicap. Then, I go on to say that every day people overcome handicaps and perform daily tasks. People with a disability simply overcome their handicaps in a way that is specific to their disability.

Jackie Hutchison, Parent
Edmonton

Visual Impairments:

"Visual impairments" are conditions that involve the inability or limited ability to receive information visually. Some individuals who have visual impairments are partially sighted and use magnification devices or other adaptive materials; individuals who are blind rely primarily on touch and hearing.

Depending on their needs, individuals with visual impairments may use Braille, audiotapes, large-print books, specialized computers, and other aids.

Of individuals who are identified as legally blind, only some are totally blind. In Canada, legal blindness is defined as a range of vision from the condition of no vision up to 10 percent vision. Other visual impairments include colour blindness, tunnel vision, night blindness, and a lack of visual acuity.

Individuals who are both deaf and blind have a dual-sensory impairment and need to stay in touch with their surroundings in order to make sense of their environment.

Source**:** Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students*. Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Visual Impairments

Braille: A communication system of raised dots that represent letters of the alphabet and other language symbols. Braille is read using the fingertips.

Braille Watch: Has raised dots representing the numbers that can be touched by opening a cover that protects the watch face.

Braille Writer: Specialized machine or computer keyboard that types in Braille.

Closed Circuit TV: Electronically enlarges printed material up to 16 times on a television screen.

Magnifying Glasses and Heavy Lenses: Used to read print.

Monoculars: Used to read print at a distance (e.g., on street signs, flip charts, blackboards, etc.).

Screenreader: Computer software that provides an audible reading of what is on the screen.

Service Dogs: Are trained to guide a person with a visual impairment. These dogs are recognized by the harness and the U-shaped handle held in the owner's left hand unless circumstances (such as multiple disabilities) require that the dog be trained for the right hand.

Talking Calculator: Performs the functions of a basic electronic calculator and speaks each entry and result.

Tape-recorded texts: Also referred to as talking books, these are recordings of books and other reading materials on cassette.

White cane: A lightweight cane that warns of obstructions and changes in the level of the walking area.

Sources: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students.* Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1992). *Discover together: An active learning program on disability awareness for children from age 5 to 13.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State.

In My Experience . . .

My daughter and I have discovered descriptive videos. These are regular home videos that have a narrator describing things like the action taking place, what the actors are wearing, what the set looks like, etc. The narrator tries to do this without interfering with the dialogue or regular sound effects. We can watch these on our regular VCR; no extra technology is needed! The idea is to give people with visual impairments a more complete picture of what is happening in a movie or TV show.

Marlene Shopland, Parent
Wainwright

Hearing Loss:

"Hard of hearing" is the term used to refer to individuals with a hearing loss whose main form of communication is speech. This category includes those with a mild loss who can hear and understand most speech, as well as those who have more limited hearing. Often, hard of hearing persons rely on visual clues and the use of assistive listening devices, although adaptations vary with each individual.

"Deaf" (with a capital "D") is the term used to refer to the cohesion and identity of a particular group of the population who share a linguistic, social, and political heritage. The use of sign language (e.g., American Sign Language) provides a basis for the group identity.

"Oral deaf" is the term used to refer to individuals who have a severe to profound hearing loss, who identify themselves as being deaf, and who rely on oral means of communication. While the degree of hearing loss may vary, it is usually profound to severe.

Source**:** Warick, R. (1997). *Hearing the learning: A post-secondary education handbook for students who are hard of hearing.* Ottawa: Canadian Hard of Hearing Association.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Hearing Loss

ASL: American Sign Language is a separate language that is not based on Standard English grammar and structures. People who are deaf regard deafness as its own culture and ASL as its language.

Captioning: Just as a caption in a book is the text under a picture, captioning of television, video, or DVD programs refers to text that is located at the bottom of a TV or movie screen. *Closed captions* are captions that are hidden in the video signal, invisible without a special decoder. For older models of televisions, a decoder is a separate mechanism, but since 1993, decoders are built into televisions and can be activated through the TV's controls. *Open captions* are captions that have been decoded, so they are an integral part of the screen, just like subtitles on a movie.

CART: Communication Assistance (Real Time) is provided by specially trained persons who type verbatim accounts of what is being said at meetings, conferences, in classrooms, etc. for persons who are hard of hearing.

Hearing Aid: A battery-powered device that consists of an ear mould section placed inside the ear to direct sound waves, picked up by the aid's microphone, into the ear canal. The hearing aid amplifies sound, but it does not discriminate voices from other sounds. Thus, background sounds like a keyboard being used, chairs scraping on the floor, etc., are all amplified.

Infrared, FM Systems: Amplification systems that can be used in classrooms, auditoriums, and other large rooms to transmit sound from a speaker directly to the receiver of a person with a hearing loss. The speaker wears a microphone that converts sound into electrical energy that is transmitted to a receiver and amplified for the person who is hard of hearing.

Service Dog: Trained to alert people with hearing disabilities to sounds such as alarm clocks, smoke alarms, telephones, door bells or knocks, babies crying, or intruders.

Message Relay Service: A service offered by telephone companies across Canada, which allows people who do not have access to a TTY (see below) to communicate with someone who does.

Signaling Device: Sound-detecting devices that convert smoke and fire alarms, door bells, phones, or alarm clock sounds into flashing lights.

Sign Language Interpreter: A person who translates speech into manual communication, usually American Sign Language (ASL), for a sign language user, and then translates the signed reply into speech for those who do not know sign language.

TTY: A text telephone transmits signals from one telephone to another when both are equipped with this transmitter/receiver device. Conversation is typed on a keyboard at one end and transmitted to a visual display board in typed form at the other.

Telephone Amplification Devices: Are compatible with hearing aids and have a volume control switch to adjust phone volume to individual needs.

Sources: Friend, Marilyn et al. (1998). *Including exceptional students.* Scarborough, ON: Allyn and Bacon.

Human Resources Development Canada. (1992). *Discover together: An active learning program on disability awareness for children from age 5 to 13.* Ottawa: Department of the Secretary of State.

Mobility Limitations:

"Mobility limitations" are conditions that impair an individual's ability to move his or her body or body parts freely. Some people with mobility limitations will be unable to move about without a walking aid (e.g., a wheelchair, a scooter, crutches, a cane, or a walker). Others may move freely but have impaired hand or fine motor functions that make writing, opening doors, or other fine motor tasks difficult to perform. Mobility limitations may be caused by medical conditions such as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and polio, or by accidents.

Source**:** The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities. (2003). *Raising instructor awareness: A series of workshops on disability issues.* Edmonton: The Alberta Committee of Citizens with Disabilities.

Assistive Devices/Supports for Individuals with Mobility Limitations

- Manual and electric wheelchairs
- Artificial limbs
- Adapted cars and vans
- Hands-free telephones operated with speakers or head sets
- Control systems for appliances
- Bathroom grab bars, poles and tub rails
- Bath lifts and tub seats
- Stair lifts
- Crutches, canes, and walkers
- Electric scooters

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities refer to a number of disorders that may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or nonverbal information. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities related to thinking and/or reasoning. As such, learning disabilities are distinct from developmental disabilities, in which intellectual functioning is affected.

Learning disabilities range in severity and may interfere with the acquisition and use of one or more of the following:

- Oral language (listening, speaking, understanding)
- Reading (decoding, phonetic knowledge, word recognition, comprehension)
- Written language (spelling, written expression)
- Mathematics (computation, problem solving)

Learning disabilities may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction, and perspective taking.

Learning disabilities are lifelong. The ways in which they are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's

strengths and needs. Learning disabilities are suggested in cases of unexpected academic under-achievement or achievement that is maintained only by unusually high levels of effort and support.

Learning disabilities are due to genetic and/or neurobiological factors or injury that alter brain functioning in a manner that affects one or more processes related to learning. These disorders are not due primarily to hearing and/or vision problems, socio-economic factors, cultural or linguistic differences, lack of motivation, or ineffective teaching, although these factors may further complicate the challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities may co-exist with various conditions, including attentional, behavioural and emotional disorders, sensory impairments, or other medical conditions.

Source**:** Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. (2002). O*fficial definition of learning disabilities*. Retrieved November 18, 2004, from www.ldac-taac.ca/english/defined/definew.htm

Accommodations for Students with Learning Disabilities

The accommodations a student with a learning disability might need to succeed at his or her tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Extra time to complete an assignment or exam
- Instructions repeated in simpler words
- Someone to read assignments aloud
- A quiet, neat study area
- An easy-to-use dictionary
- Permission to answer exam questions orally

Appendix Three: Appropriate Language

"Language is a powerful and important tool in shaping ideas, perceptions and ultimately, public attitudes. Words are a mirror of society's attitudes and perceptions…. It is important to remember that the development of appropriate terminology is still in progress; however, the… terms [below] are currently in use" (Human Resources and Development Canada, Office for Disability Issues, 2002).

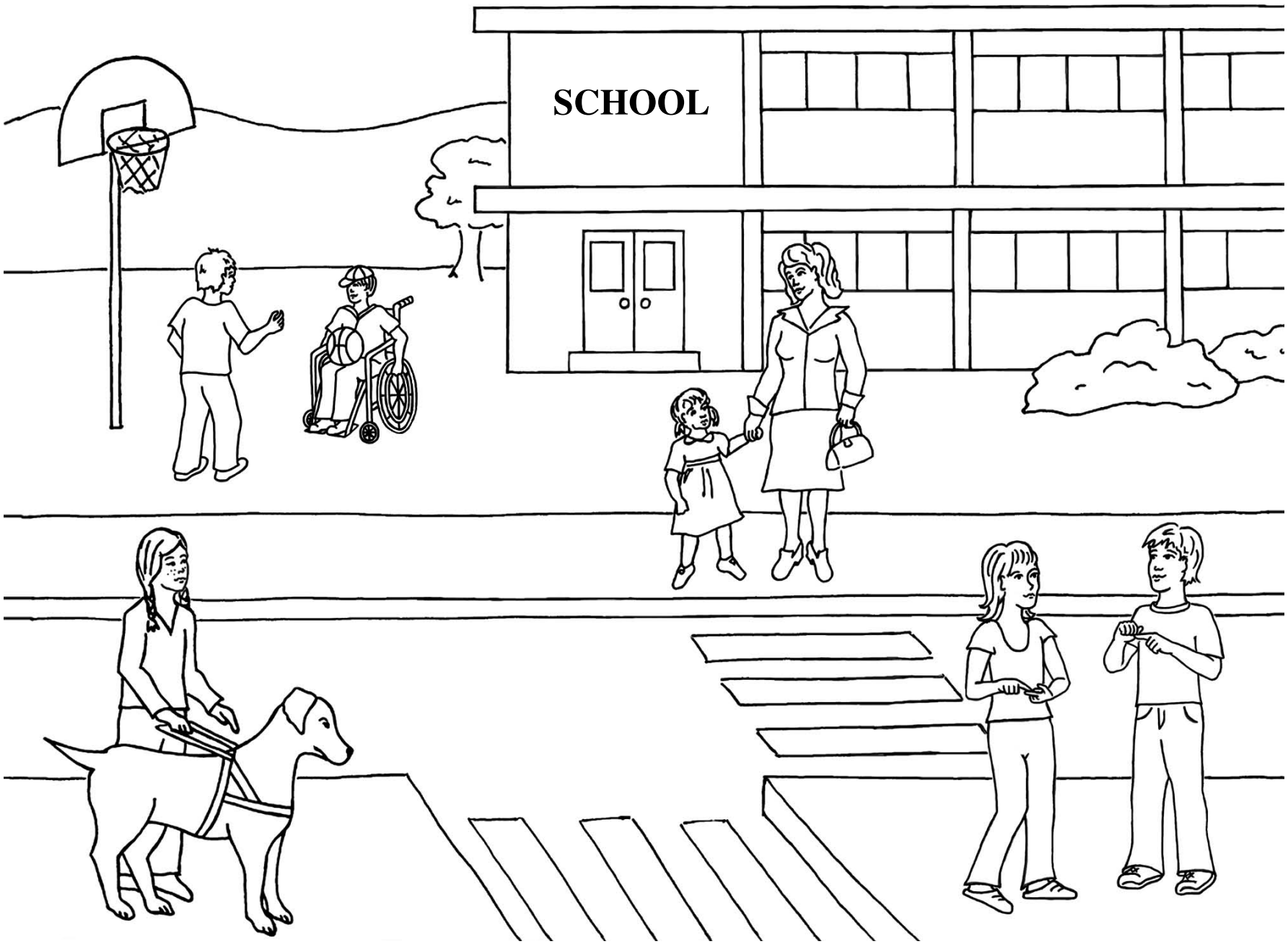
INSTEAD OF	PLEASE USE
Handicap, handicapped	Disability or person with a disability Emphasize the person, not the disability
The blind, the visually impaired	Person who is blind, person who has a visual impairment, person who has low vision
Birth defect, congenital defect, deformity	Person born with a disability, person who has a congenital disability
Victim of/afflicted with/suffers from a stroke, polio, muscular dystrophy, etc.	Person who has multiple sclerosis, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Wheelchair-bound or confined to a wheelchair	Person who uses a wheelchair, a wheelchair user
Cripple, crippled, gimp, lame, invalid, physically challenged	Person with a disability, person who has a mobility impairment/reduced mobility/ mobility limitations, person who has a spinal cord injury, etc.
Deaf-mute, deaf and dumb	Person who is deaf
The hearing impaired, the hard of hearing	Person who has a hearing loss, person who is hard of hearing
The epileptic	Person who has epilepsy
Handicapped parking, handicapped washrooms, etc.	Accessible parking, accessible washrooms, etc.
Crazy, insane, lunatic, maniac, mental, mental case, neurotic, psycho, psychotic	Person with a mental health disability, person who has schizophrenia, person who has depression, etc.
Learning disabled, the dyslexics	A person with a learning disability
Mentally retarded, defective, idiot, imbecile, moron, retarded, mongoloid	Person with an intellectual disability, person with a developmental disability
Normal, healthy (when used as the opposite of disabled)	Non-disabled, able-bodied

Adapted from: Office for Disability Issues, Human Resources and Development Canada. (2002). *A way with words and images.* www.sdc.gc.ca/en/home.shtml

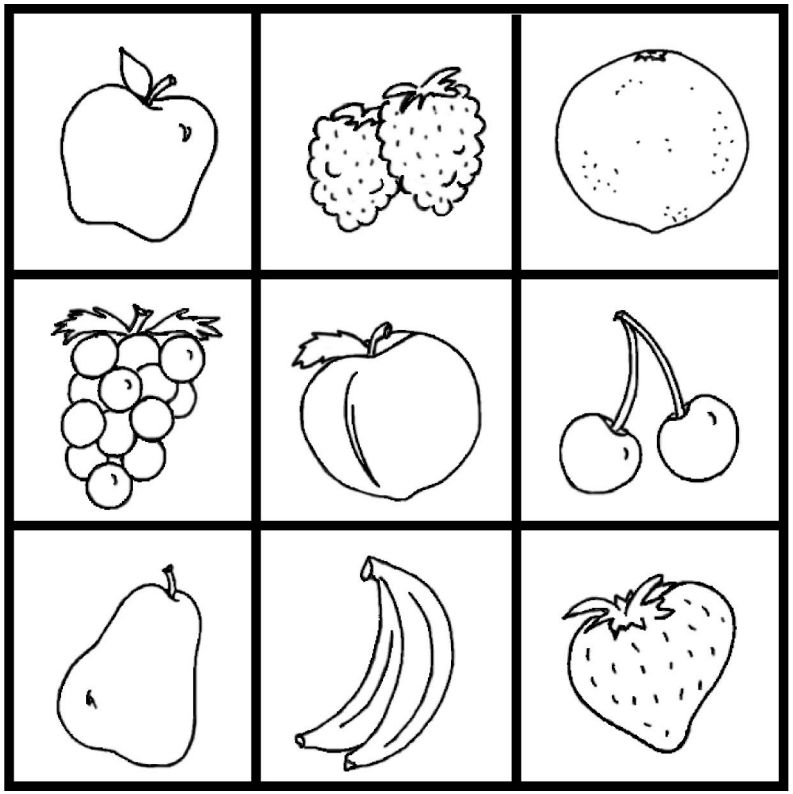
Resource Section

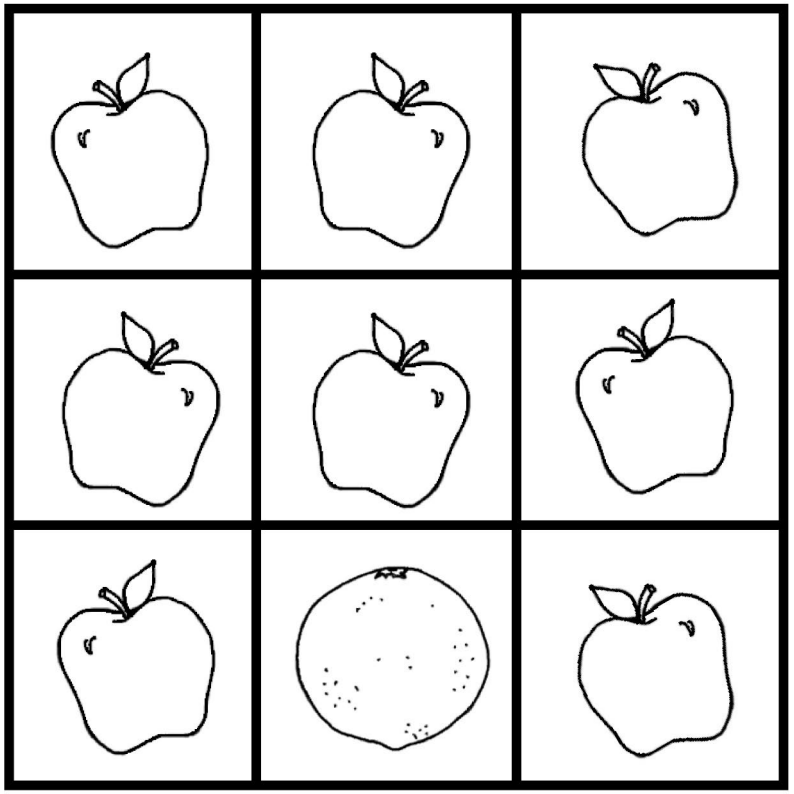
Overheads and Activities

Colouring Sheet



Similarities / Differences



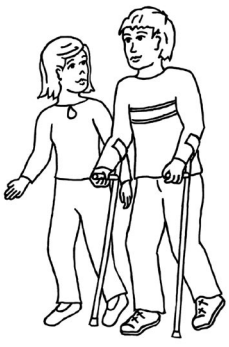


Word Search

H	Q	D	J	Y	W	S	A	C	E	S	C	G	I	Y
B	Y	P	I	N	T	D	S	U	X	A	B	N	S	T
I	T	A	Y	V	A	I	G	E	P	Q	C	F	E	I
M	I	N	C	P	E	I	L	T	N	L	Q	U	N	L
P	N	U	T	C	T	R	I	I	U	E	L	A	S	I
A	U	U	N	A	E	O	S	S	B	H	R	S	E	B
I	M	I	F	I	N	S	I	I	P	O	E	A	S	A
R	M	Q	I	I	Q	V	S	R	T	D	M	E	W	K
M	O	Z	N	Z	E	U	M	I	U	Y	U	B	M	A
E	C	G	J	K	J	C	E	T	B	T	S	R	I	F
N	P	E	R	S	O	N	I	B	U	I	H	H	S	H
T	P	K	O	L	I	T	V	U	R	E	L	B	C	Y
A	S	S	I	S	T	I	V	E	D	E	V	I	C	E
X	H	H	A	A	F	E	T	I	Q	U	E	T	T	E
E	P	Y	T	O	E	R	E	T	S	B	C	S	D	Y

Word Search Clues

Ability
Accessibility
Adapt
Assistive device
Attitudes
Awareness
Captioning
Community
Diversity
Etiquette
Fatigue
Impairment
Inclusive
Mobility
Senses
Stereotype
Senses
Unique



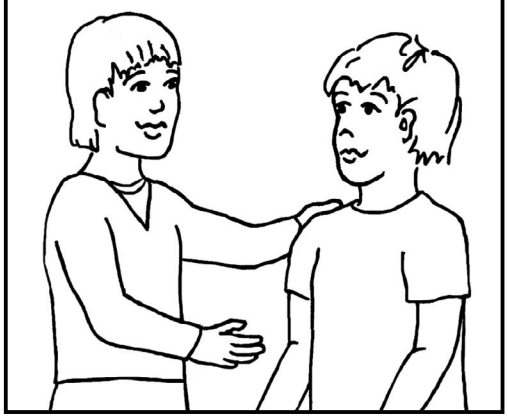
Etiquette

When Meeting Someone Who Is Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Use a pen and paper if you do not know sign language.

It's okay to wave to get someone's attention.

Relax and be yourself.



If you stand in front of a light, it is difficult for the person to see your expression or speech read.

Other Tips

Maintain eye contact.

To get the person's attention, it's okay to touch his/her arm or shoulder.

Don't cover your mouth or put your head down.

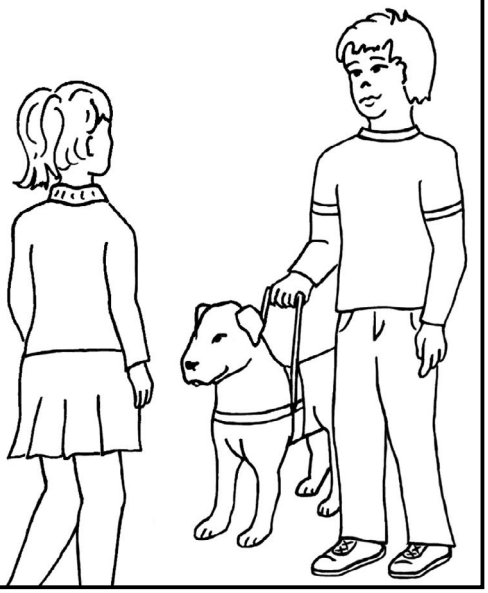
Do not assume that you need to speak slowly or more loudly to be understood.

Speak clearly and normally.

Etiquette

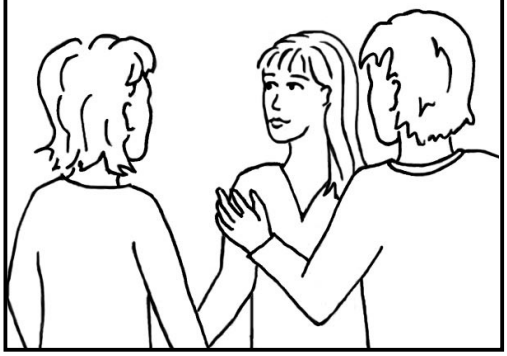
When Meeting Someone Who Is Blind or Partially Sighted

Never pet or talk to a guide dog while it is "working."

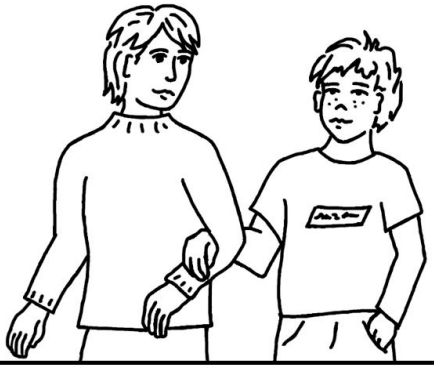


Identify yourself when you say hello.

Introduce others who join in a conversation.



If someone asks for your assistance, offer your elbow.



Other Tips

Speak directly to the person.

Don't assume the person needs help. If you think the person needs help, ask first.

Walk normally when guiding someone who has a visual impairment.

Let the person know about obstacles you may be approaching.

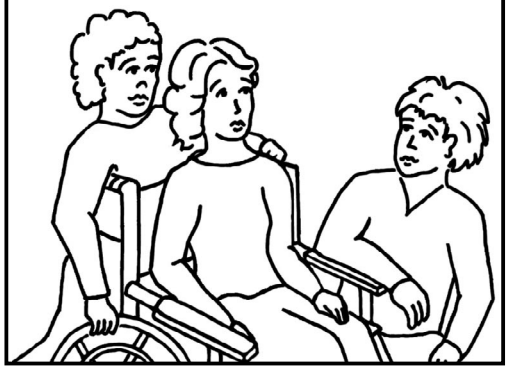
If you are leaving, let him/her know you are doing so.

Etiquette

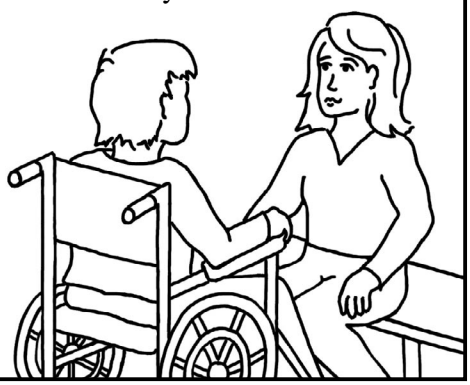
When Meeting Someone Who Has a Mobility Impairment

Don't push someone's chair unless he or she has agreed to be pushed.

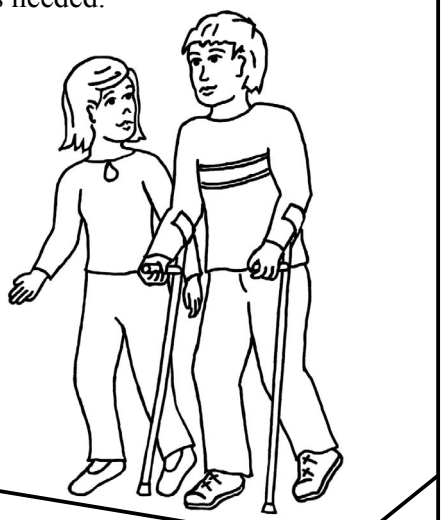
Do not hang on someone's wheelchair.



If you are going to be speaking for a while, sit down so you can be at the same eye level.



It's okay to ask if help is needed.



Other Tips

Don't feel embarrassed about using the words "walk" and "run" in conversation with a person who uses a wheelchair or scooter.

People with mobility disabilities are just as comfortable with everyday language as you are.

Do not speak in a loud or slow voice. A mobility impairment does not mean a person has difficulty understanding.

Only provide help if the individual agrees.

Notes

Notes