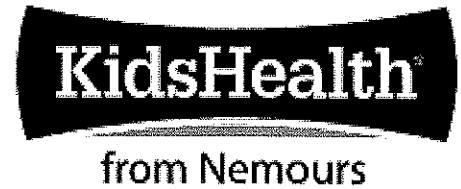


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## Kids With Special Needs

### Kids Who Might Need Extra Help

Isn't every kid special? We think so, but what do we mean when we say "kids with special needs"? This means any kid who might need extra help because of a medical, emotional, or learning problem. These kids have special needs because they might need medicine, therapy, or extra help in school — stuff other kids don't typically need or only need once in a while.

Maybe you know of kids in your school who need a wheelchair or use braces when they walk. Those kids have special needs. They not only need the equipment that helps them get around, but they might need to have ramps or elevators available. They also might need to get a special bus to school — one that lifts them up into the bus so they don't have to get up the steps.

Kids who have an illness, such as epilepsy, diabetes, or cerebral palsy, would have special needs, too. They might need medicine or other help as they go about their daily activities. Kids with sight problems might need Braille books to read. Kids with hearing or speech problems would have special needs, too. A kid who has hearing trouble might need hearing aids to hear and speech therapy, too, since it can be hard to say words correctly when you can't hear very well.

Kids with learning problems often have special needs. Kids with Down syndrome might go to a regular school and might even be in your class. But they have special needs when it comes to learning, so an aide (someone to help) might come with them to class.

You might be able to spot a few kids with special needs, but you probably don't notice all of them. A kid could have a problem that isn't noticeable unless you know the person well. For instance, someone could have trouble with anxiety (worry), but you wouldn't know it unless the kid told you about it. Privately, their parents, teachers, and counselors may be working to help them with this problem.

### What's Life Like for a Special Needs Kid?

Life can be extra-challenging for a kid with special needs. It might be harder to do normal stuff — like learning to read or, if a person has physical handicaps, just getting around school or the mall. The good news is that parents, doctors, nurses, therapists, teachers, and others can help. The goal is to help kids be as independent as possible.

Other kids also can be a big help. How? By being a friend. Kids who use a wheelchair or have lots of health problems want friends just like you do. But meeting people and making friends can be tough. Some kids might tease them or make fun of them. Be sure to tell a teacher if you see someone being bullied or

teased. That's a very lonely feeling.

Also try to be helpful if you know someone with special needs. You might carry the person's books or do something as simple as asking him or her to join you and your friends at lunch. It's also important not to be "overly helpful" when no help is needed. Why? Because just like you, kids with special needs like to be as independent as they can be.

Being friendly to kids with special needs is one of the best ways to be helpful. As you get to know them, they may help you understand what it's like to be in their shoes. And you'll be helping fill a very special need, one that everybody has — the need for good friends.

Reviewed by: David V. Sheslow, PhD

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Nemours.

Note: All information on KidsHealth® is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult your doctor.

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# ADL Curriculum Connections

Anti-Bias Lesson Plans and Resources for K-12 Educators

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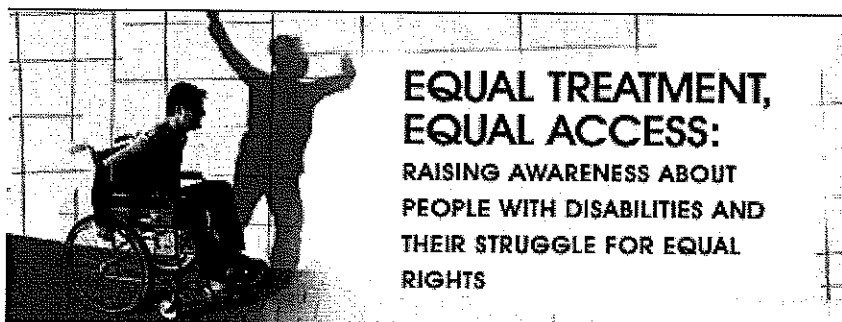
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

RACISM AND RACIAL DIVERSITY

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

SEXISM AND GENDER ISSUES

[Curriculum Connection Home](#) > [Lesson\\_1](#)



## Lesson 1: Getting To Know People with Physical Disabilities (Grades K - 2)

**Rationale :** The purpose of this lesson is to begin to familiarize students with the term disability, and to raise awareness about the experiences of people with physical disabilities. Through children's literature and personal connections with people who have a physical disability, students come to understand the capacity of people with disabilities to engage in activities that all people enjoy. Students will also come to know and recognize the International Symbol of Access to People with Disabilities.

### Objectives :

- Students will learn the terms disability and physical disability.
- Students will understand and recognize the International Symbol of Access to People with Disabilities.
- Students will discover the various abilities of people who use wheelchairs.
- Students will meet a person with a physical disability to learn more about the daily experiences of people living with a disability.
- Students will develop a class book depicting what they learned about people with disabilities.

[National Standards](#) ( .pdf format - 119 KB - requires [Acrobat Reader](#))

**Age Range :** Grades K - 2

### Requirements :



### Handouts/Supporting Documents :

(Click on the link above for a master pdf file with all of the handouts or click on any individual title below for an html version of that single handout.)

- [International Symbol of Access to People with Disabilities](#)

**Other Materials :** [A Very Special Critter](#) by Gina and Mercer Mayer, basic art supplies, construction paper, crayons, markers

**Time :** 20 minutes for Part I, and 1 hour for Part II

**Techniques and Skills :** analyzing main ideas from a storybook, communicating ideas in words and drawings, developing a class book, examining and recognizing symbols, formulating questions, large group discussion

## EQUAL TREATMENT, EQUAL ACCESS

### In This Issue

### Lesson Plans

- [Lesson 1: Getting To Know People with Physical Disabilities \(Grades K - 2\)](#)
- [Lesson 2: Experiencing Hearing Disability through Music \(Grades 2 - 4\)](#)
- [Lesson 3: Seeing the World through the Hands of People with a Visual Disability \(Grades 4 - 6\)](#)
- [Lesson 4: Understanding Learning Differences \(Grades 6 - 9\)](#)
- [Lesson 5: History of the Disability Rights Movement \(Grades 10 - 12\)](#)

### Resources

- [ADA Signing Ceremony](#)
- [Assessing Your School Environment for Access to People with Disabilities](#)
- [Evaluating Children's Books that Address Disability](#)
- [A Brief History of the Disability Rights Movement](#)
- [Communication Guidelines on Disability](#)
- [Disability Glossary](#)
- [Famous People with Disabilities](#)
- [List of Disability-Related Organizations](#)

## ADL Education Programs

- A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute Recommended Multicultural and Anti-Bias Books for Children
- A CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE Programs and Resources
- THE MILLER EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Key Words :** ability, difference, disability, sign, symbol, wheelchair

INITIATIVE of A WORLD OF  
DIFFERENCE® Institute

**Procedures :**

**Note:** In order to appropriately define language and guide student discussion on disability issues, it is recommended that teachers carefully read ADL's resource sheets on disability prior to facilitating lessons with students. See the Resources section in the right-hand toolbar of this webpage for further reference.

**Part I (20 minutes)**

1. Hold up the International Symbol of Access to People with Disabilities for all students to see. Ask students:

- a. Have you seen this sign before? Where have you seen this sign?

- b. What does this symbol look like to you?  
*(Explain that this symbol is a picture of a person who uses a wheelchair, and is for people who are disabled. This sign can be found in parking spaces close to the entrance of a store, or a park, or a school so that people who use wheelchairs or who have trouble walking do not have to travel far to get inside. Sometimes it can be found on seats in buses or trains, and means that those seats are reserved for people with disabilities.)*

- c. What is a disability?  
*(Explain that a disability is a condition that limits a person in being able to see, hear, walk, or speak. Some people with disabilities may be blind, or deaf, or may use a wheelchair if they are unable to walk.)*

- d. Have you ever met a person with a disability?

2. Explain that the class is going to read a book about a student who has a physical disability and uses a wheelchair. Invite students to join you in reading the book A Very Special Critter by Gina and Mercer Mayer.

*[Book summary of A Very Special Critter: Little Critter is nervous when his teacher announces that a new student who uses a wheelchair will be joining their class. After realizing that the new critter who uses a wheelchair takes part in a lot of the same games and activities as the rest of the class, Little Critter and the other students are happy to have a new friend and classmate.]*

3. Ask some or all of the following discussion questions as you read the story aloud to students:

- a. Why do you think Little Critter was scared to meet Alex , the new student who uses a wheelchair?

- b. Why do you think Alex felt scared on his first day at school?

- c. How would you feel if you were the one who was different the way Alex was?

- d. How did Little Critter and the other students make Alex feel welcome?

- e. What could Alex do using his wheelchair?

- f. Was there anything that Alex could do using his wheelchair that surprised you?

- g. How did the other students help Alex?

- h. How did Alex help the other students?

- i. If a person who uses a wheelchair joined our class, how could we make him or her feel welcome? How could we make sure he or she could join us in all of our classroom activities?

**Part II (1 hour)**

1. Invite a local community member who uses a wheelchair or who wears a prosthetic device to visit the class (or take the class to visit them) so that students have a chance to meet a person with a physical disability. In preparation of the visit, develop a list of questions that the students would like to ask about what it is like to live with a physical disability.

(Note: If this is not possible, gather non-fiction books about people with disabilities so that students can learn more about what it means to have a physical disability and use a wheelchair (see suggested titles listed below). Refer to the ADL resource [Evaluating Children's Books That Address Disability](#) for guidelines on choosing children's literature on disability.)

Suggested non-fiction books:

- a. [Let's Talk about Being in a Wheelchair](#) by Melanie Ann Apel
- b. [Rolling Along: The Story of Taylor and His Wheelchair](#) by Jamee Riggio Heelan
- c. [Sam Uses a Wheelchair](#) by Jillian Powell

2. At the conclusion of the visit, invite students to draw pictures and/or write about what they learned about people with physical disabilities. Once the students have completed their pictures and writing, assemble into a class book, and review with students. (Extension activity: Invite family members and/or schoolmates to a reading of the class book so that students can share what they have learned about people with disabilities. Assist students in answering any questions that guests may have about people with disabilities.)

**Extension Activity :**

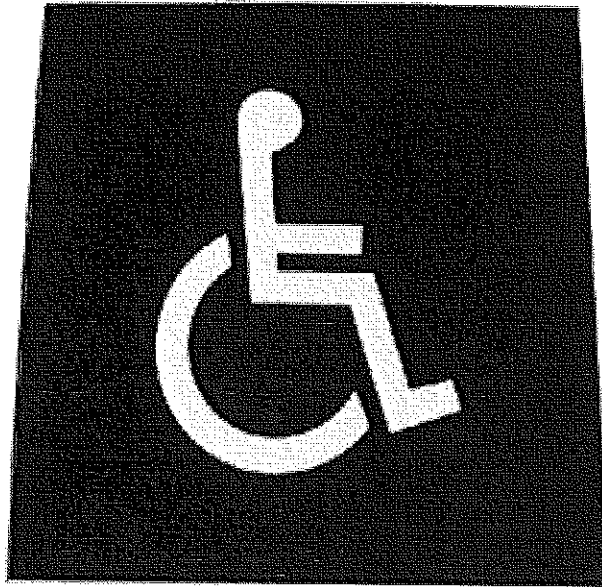
Organize a field trip to visit a local school or community center that hosts athletic programs for people with physical disabilities. Have students talk to some of the sports players about their disability and how they became involved in the sports program. Visit the [International Paralympics Committee](#) website to find local athletic programs for people with physical disabilities.



## International Symbol of Access to People with Disabilities



Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_



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