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Disability Awareness To Promote Inclusivity For Children In The Educational Setting

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DISABILITY AWARENESS TO PROMOTE INCLUSIVITY FOR CHILDREN IN THE
EDUCATIONAL SETTING

by

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Faculty Advisor: Dr. Mandy Meyer, PhD

A Scholarly Project

Submitted to the Occupational Therapy Department

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Occupational Therapy Doctorate

Grand Forks, North Dakota

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Approval

This scholarly project, submitted by Abby Bauman in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Occupational Therapy Doctorate from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisor under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.



Faculty Advisor, Dr. Mandy Meyer, PhD

04/11/2023

Date

PERMISSION

Title: Disability Awareness to Promote Inclusivity for Children in the Educational Setting

Department: Department of Occupational Therapy

Degree: Occupational Therapy Doctorate

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: A large barrier to an effective and successful educational experience is the stigma and perceived judgment surrounding a child's disability (Fontil et al., 2020). Implementing disability awareness materials into young classrooms is a way to prevent the development of stigma towards disability. Children who received disability awareness programming in the past have shown improved attitudes towards disabilities as opposed to those who have not (Chae et al., 2019). The purpose of this scholarly project is to assist teachers with implementing disability awareness materials to increase encouragement for young peers to accept, include, and support young individuals with disabilities.

Methodology: Following the completion of the comprehensive literature review, the author partnered with the childcare company New Horizon Academy. The author spent time in preschool classrooms while observing interactions between children as well as conversing with and learning from classroom teachers. The Ecological Model of Human Performance (EHP) was the selected model used to guide the literature search, classroom observations, and the development of the product materials. Based on literature findings and field experience from young classrooms, the *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit was developed. This toolkit, following development, was then accessible through New Horizon Academy's internal, online resource database for teachers' use.

Results: Continued implementation of this toolkit is necessary to determine effectiveness of this product. However, it is anticipated that teachers will feel more comfortable discussing disability and inclusion, children will feel more prepared to interact with their peers, and engagement in education and social participation will be improved for all young individuals.

Conclusions: The implementation of this product is anticipated to be beneficial to the entirety of New Horizon Academy staff. Due to limitations in time and company size, effectiveness was not determined at this time. The *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit was created to be educational, encouraging, and empowering for teachers to facilitate an accepting, inclusive, and supportive classroom. Promoting inclusivity for children in the educational setting will lead to an enhanced experience for the occupations of education and social participation.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This scholarly project has been developed to support teachers in their efforts of making their young classrooms a positive and inclusive space for optimal education and social participation. Children with disabilities have an additional barrier to their education experience due to the stigma and perceived judgment surrounding their disability (Fontil et al., 2020). Implementing disability awareness materials into young classrooms is a way to prevent the development of stigma towards disability. Children who received disability awareness programming in the past have shown improved attitudes towards disabilities as opposed to those who have not (Chae et al., 2019). Two of children's most important areas of occupation are education and social participation. Disability awareness intervention is an intentional way to address each of these areas. This scholarly project is significant in early childhood classrooms as it is aiming to promote occupational engagement in education and social participation for young children. The *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit was created in collaboration with New Horizon Academy to ultimately promote the level of acceptance, inclusion, and support that occurs between young children in a classroom setting.

This resource guide was developed to assist teachers in promoting inclusivity within their classroom despite the differences that some children may have. The product was made with the goal of helping teachers feel more comfortable and more equipped to discuss disability with their class. The product was also curated with the goal of empowering teachers to facilitate discussions and activities within their classroom to foster an accepting, inclusive, and supportive classroom.

Theoretical Framework

The Ecological Model of Human Performance (EHP) guided the completion of this project. Within this framework, there are three conceptualized aspects which each support the implementation of the created product: the person, context, and task each presenting a unique and valuable viewpoint (Dunn, 2017). For the purpose of this scholarly project, the person is referring to the child or children with disabilities. The context, as described in this scholarly project, is referring to the social or physical context of the situation. Socially, this would include a child's teachers, peers, and family members, while the physical context is referring to the child's devices or the classroom layout. Lastly, the task as used in this scholarly project is referring to the disability awareness interventions and the overall advocacy efforts for the children. Another benefit of the utilization of this framework is the user-friendly terminology which can be understood by a variety of disciplines (Dunn, 2017). This was an important factor as the setting for this scholarly project was early childhood classrooms. The language used was accessible for the education staff and classroom teachers.

The framework was used to determine findings both in the literature, as seen in Chapter II, as well as while observing in the classrooms, described in Chapter III. The framework also guided the development of the product itself, as described in Chapter IV; the aspects of the framework were used to curate the components of the product. The person, the context, and the task are each utilized throughout this scholarly project.

Significance of Project to Chosen Area of Practice

The chosen area of practice for this scholarly project is within the school setting. School-based occupational therapists are valuable team members with a goal of collaborating with teachers to improve student performance and positive outcomes within the classroom (Bradley et

al., 2020). This toolkit was developed from an occupational therapy perspective to achieve the goal of supporting young individuals in early childhood classrooms to maximize their occupational engagement in education and social participation. This toolkit is a resource for teachers to facilitate activities and discussions with children to foster an accepting, inclusive, and supportive classroom. This project has significance within the school setting as a solution to the gap found between children with and without disabilities.

Project Objectives

The objectives for this scholarly project include:

- I will demonstrate an understanding and identify solutions for the gap between students with and without disabilities in a school setting.
- I will implement strategies for disability awareness in the school setting.
- I will create disability awareness educational materials for young children and their teachers to promote inclusivity and understanding in a school setting.

Product Goals

Following the implementation of the *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit, teachers will feel:

- Increased comfort and understanding towards disabilities for both teachers and children
- Increased acceptance, inclusivity, and support in the classroom
- Increased occupational engagement in education and social participation

Key Terminology

- Disability Awareness: Knowing, acknowledging, and accepting the experiences of individuals in relation to disability (Disability Network Capital Area, n.d.)

- Inclusivity / Inclusion: “Inclusion is an issue of social justice and occupational therapists believe that children and youth with disabilities have a right to participate in all aspects of life with their typically developing peers, in schools and in the community” (Hansen & Hinojosa, 2014, p. S23).

Summary

This scholarly project has been developed from an occupational therapy perspective to support teachers and children in an early childhood classroom setting. This scholarly project has resulted in the development of classroom materials. The overarching goal of the *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit is to assist teachers in encouraging young peers to accept, include, and support young individuals with disabilities. This resource is an encouraging and empowering way to support teachers in fostering an inclusive classroom for young children.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Disability awareness is an incredibly important topic to implement into conversations with individuals of all ages. Disability awareness intervention, especially in the classroom setting, is a way to increase understanding and encourage support between peers with and without disabilities. According to the Minnesota Council on Disability, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as, “A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment” (Cross, 2022). Therefore, disability awareness is a method to illuminate the realities of disabilities in an effort to advocate for those who may have some sort of impairment. The following literature review was written to highlight existing literature, gaps in understanding, and ultimately the importance of disability awareness efforts within society and future generations.

Due to the focus of this project, the majority of literature utilized was written on the topic of disability awareness in an educational setting. The need for disability awareness can be emphasized in three major ways. First, children need to understand that differences between one another are okay. Difference is the primary driver towards social exclusion; accepting differences is one major way relationships amongst children can be improved (Nowicki et al., 2014). Secondly, children without disabilities must understand that children with disabilities can still live meaningful and functional lives (Parisi, 2020). Third, in order to learn about their peers, children need a safe space to ask questions; this will lead to more acceptance and inclusion (Lightner, 2022).

The overarching problem in need of a solution is that there is a lack of support for children with disabilities in a school setting. Children with disabilities are commonly not understood or included by their peers which leads to less positive experiences and outcomes for these children in a school setting. Occupational therapy plays a large role in school-based interactions; occupational therapists serve as collaborators with teachers to ultimately improve student performance and positive outcomes within the classroom (Bradley et al., 2020). Occupational therapy practitioners often act as a consultant or an indirect support while working in an educational setting (Cahill & Bazyk, 2020); they can work in an indirect role as they collaborate with teachers to facilitate disability awareness education.

Person

The “person” in this project is referring to the children, or students, who have disabilities. There are many people who have the potential to make a large impact on these children’s success, whether that be positive or negative. However, these individuals will be discussed in the context section of this literature review. In this portion, children in schools who have disabilities and are requiring support are the focal point.

Children with disabilities can mean an array of things; for the purpose of this literature review, it is important to understand that this is an encompassing phrase. For example, children with disabilities could be referring to anyone requiring extra support in a school setting. It can be mental or physical and of any severity. Children can require support in a variety of ways as well. They could be served under an Individualized Education Program, a 504 plan, personal accommodations, or extra physical or emotional support from teachers or peers.

There has been a fluctuation in the number of individuals served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B, over the last twenty years. Within the state of

Minnesota, there has been an increase of 31.5% in individuals served from 2000 to 2020 (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). There are over 10,000 children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old who are served under IDEA part B in the state of Minnesota (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.). These statistics alone drive the importance of educating one another on what disabilities are and how to support individuals with these disabilities. There are students with some form of impairment in nearly all classrooms; it is time to educate students' teachers and peers so they are best supported in a classroom environment.

Context

According to existing literature, the context is a factor that can determine support or barriers for children with disabilities; these can be the physical, social, temporal, or cultural context. The social context will be the main focus in this project. Socially, it is important to consider any person relevant to a child's success. At large, teachers and peers have the majority of influence on a child's academic success, although there are others like administrators or family members who also play a role. In the literature, it was found that teachers' lack of knowledge and training in various developmental disorders was a major barrier to successful transitions for children with said developmental disorders (Fontil et al., 2020). Training teachers and equipping them with necessary tools is one way to change the trajectory of how a child feels support while at school.

Peers are also a crucial component to a child's success; researchers found that peers are an extremely strong influence in making an individual with disabilities feel supported and connected (Carter et al., 2013). More specifically, peer attitudes can be extremely influential for any child and especially one with disabilities. Attitudes are often most positive towards physical disabilities while they are least positive towards intellectual and behavioral disabilities (de Boer

et al., 2012). Thus, children are seemingly more positive or more supportive to other children with a visible impairment or a physical disability. Intellectual and behavioral disabilities are often “hidden”. However, these children deserve support and positivity just as much as anyone else.

Hong et al. (2020) found that interactions between peers with and without disabilities are oftentimes found to be positive, although they are typically infrequent. Peer interactions could be increased overall to create a stronger relationship. More specifically, peers are more likely to interact in a helping or leading way, and typically during play as opposed to academic activities (Hong et al., 2020). More interactions could be beneficial, but it would also be helpful for peers to connect in a non-helping way. Individuals without disabilities are least likely to interact with peers with a physical impairment; however, they are more likely to interact with these individuals if they believe the task can be completed with similar proficiency (Edwards et al., 2019). If children believe that the physical demands will be too challenging for the peer, they will be less likely to engage in the activity with them. Diamond and Hong (2010) completed a study using dolls and they found that children were more likely to choose and play with a doll which was representing a child without a disability. However, the prompting of certain activities, typically those less physically demanding, resulted in the doll in a wheelchair to be chosen multiple times. Overall, this shows that children are not completely ruling out the dolls with visible disabilities, although they are less likely to choose those dolls first. Children who were seemingly more aware of the unequal experiences tended to be more sensitive towards the dolls and therefore more likely to choose the dolls who had a visible impairment like the one in the wheelchair (Diamond & Hong, 2010). In other words, children who are more informed and more aware can result in a greater rate of inclusion and support.

Large gaps between students with and without disabilities may be noted related to feeling barriers while at school; students without disabilities reported very minimal, if any, barriers, while students with disabilities identified many barriers to their participation and involvement in the school setting (Coster et al., 2013). These barriers are stemming from various environments, whether they be physical or social. Policies, routines, accessibility, social demands, and even sensory experiences are all impacting the degree to which an individual feels that they can be participate or engage in school activities (Coster et al., 2013). There is an imbalance in the level of challenge for students of different abilities while they are at school.

In a study conducted by Nowicki et al. (2018), 19 educators of varying experience found consistent information regarding children's perceptions of their peers with disabilities. The main themes discovered were as follows: children are perceiving their peers without disabilities as better than their peers with disabilities; there is a noticeable difference in the level of support provided to classmates with disabilities; and social exclusion in the classroom can result from behavioral, physical, intellectual, and academic attributes in children with disabilities (Nowicki, et al., 2018).

Each of these aforementioned factors will assist in developing disability awareness materials as they will facilitate activities and talking points. It was discovered that teachers and peers have a great amount of influence on other children, providing reason to target them with these materials. Teachers will benefit from facilitating positivity and advocacy, and children will benefit from learning how to interact with and how to support their peers, regardless of presence or form of disability.

Task

The task of this project involves the overall advocacy for children with disabilities in a school setting. More specifically, the task will include a collaboration between occupational therapists and teachers to facilitate an environment where students become educated about their peers with disabilities to ultimately promote inclusivity and support. To best accomplish this goal, there are various factors that must be considered regarding the logistics of teaching children about such a complex topic. Optimal age, strategy for teaching and learning, and length and frequency of intervention are all important factors when considering the facilitation of disability awareness intervention. In short, the task includes teaching children to support other children.

It is known that some disability awareness programming has had great success. For example, students without disabilities who received programming showed greater attitudes towards disabilities than their peers, also without disabilities, who did not receive disability awareness programming (Chae et al., 2019). This supports the efforts of developing and implementing disability awareness interventions in educational settings. Along with its proven effectiveness, it is crucial to understand how to approach these interventions for best results. According to Chae et al. (2019), direct contact interventions have been most effective in previous disability awareness efforts. The longer and more often students interacted with one another, the more positive their attitudes tended to be (Chae et al., 2019). Along with frequency and duration of interactions, it was also found to be effective for children, with and without disabilities, to share their experiences with one another while aiming to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses (Chae et al., 2019).

Regarding age, it was found that disability awareness conversations with children is always applicable; conversations should just be adapted to various topics as children age and

mature. Most of all, it is important to emphasize kindness and the idea that individuals with disabilities can still live meaningful and functional lives (Parisi, 2020). Parisi (2020) has utilized a wheelchair for mobility her entire life and has a first-hand perspective of a physical impairment. Preschool and kindergarten students learn best when discussing individuals who have visible disabilities, whether that be someone relying on a cane, crutches, a wheelchair, or any other assistive device. She suggests discussing mobility devices in a celebratory way, such as “Isn’t that wheelchair cool!?” (Parisi, 2020). Additionally, elementary students will likely benefit most from discussing experiences the children have already had. This is a time to be extremely careful with the choice of words to use when describing individuals; for example, it is inappropriate to call someone with a disability “inspiring” unless they truly are. It is also inappropriate to discuss these disabilities as something that should be “healed” or “fixed”. The author suggests that emphasizing differences and unique experiences is appropriate for students in middle school. It is also crucial to explain to them certain vocabulary terms that are inappropriate including the “R” word. When students reach high school, it is appropriate to discuss ableism with them and the types of discrimination individuals with disabilities have faced throughout their lives (Parisi, 2020).

Children with disabilities who struggle with friendships, interactions, and peer rejection are likely to have negative impacts later in life as a result (Mrug et al., 2012). Middle adolescence was found to be an influential time in these individuals’ lives; negative outcomes tended to begin if they were continuing to struggle with peers. Negative outcomes later in life included fewer friendships, higher delinquency rates, and increased anxiety (Mrug et al., 2012). Although there may not be a specific time to discuss disability awareness, this study shows that advocacy and support should be encouraged earlier in students’ lives.

Lightner (2022) composed a list of various activities to utilize with children as a method to raise awareness for disability. Some primary suggestions provided by Lightner (2022) include focusing on strengths and allowing children to ask questions as they are curious. Providing children an opportunity to ask questions will allow appropriate and healthy responses; it will allow them to learn about their peers in a healthy and respectful way. Misunderstanding peers is okay and children should not be embarrassed by their lack of understanding but rather encouraged to seek answers. Curiosity can and should lead to advocacy and inclusion. It is also important to have the motive that we not only want to make individuals aware, we want individuals to accept and include. Within Lightner's (2022) resource, there are a variety of other means available for parents and teachers to utilize as well as tips to approaching this overall topic of discussion.

Meyer and Ostrosky (2016) completed a study which resulted in the findings that friendships are fostered more effectively when play is a part of the programming. They facilitated two separate groups and the one which involved play was found to be much more successful. Similarly, Fox et al. (2020) conducted a study comparing school-based interventions to play-based interventions for a greater understanding at the acquisition of social skills, social interactions, language, and problem-solving skills. It was also found within this study that those who completed the play-based program intervention had much more positive and successful outcomes compared to those who went through the school-based intervention (Fox et al., 2020).

Within this same study, there was a child of typical development paired with a child who had a mental impairment. This seemingly fostered positive interactions as well (Fox et al., 2020). Likewise, Schaefer et al. (2018) conducted a study where peers were arranged in support groups to facilitate improved interactions within a school setting. Researchers found that interactions

were substantially improved, peer interactions especially but academic engagement was slightly improved as well (Schaefer et al., 2018).

As mentioned previously, 19 educators participated in a study where they each reviewed children's statements and perceptions of their peers with disabilities (Nowicki et al., 2018).

These educators came from all different perspectives including elementary classroom teachers, accessibility counselors, a learning support teacher, a vice principal, psychologists, and an autism spectrum disorder specialist. All of these educators found consistent results and interpreted children's perceptions in a similar way, as stated earlier; they all found common themes about preferences towards peers without disabilities, noticeable differences in support provided, and social exclusion in the classroom secondary to characteristics about their peers (Nowicki et al., 2018). The consistent negative attitudes provide reason for continued disability awareness intervention and programming. Multiple perspectives from varying lens within a school setting are finding it to be true that children prefer their peers without disabilities. These main themes are each valuable talking points to use as goals to ultimately address and diminish the strong opinions.

It has been determined that disability awareness efforts are valuable. Various approaches to conversation and activities have also been discussed. There are a variety of ways to approach disability awareness within a school setting through different talking points and facilitating differing activities or scenarios. It is crucial to raise awareness and educate each other about what disabilities are and most importantly how to advocate for and support peers who have disabilities.

Gaps in Literature

Current literature is imbalanced when analyzing it through the specific lens that was used. The majority of literature present was related to context. Information regarding the person and the task were seemingly more restricted. Regarding task, there was information regarding logistics of disability awareness intervention, as far as length, frequency, and age, however there were some conflicting results. This is an area that could also be researched and reviewed further. Additionally, limited results were found regarding a child's desire or motivation to learn about their peers with disabilities. This information would be beneficial as future materials could be better targeted towards the children who will be learning from said materials. Children of all ages will benefit from learning about their peers and how to best support them, however, the effectiveness of this project could vary depending on children's interest.

Additionally, the inclusion and exclusion criteria for this literature search was established with a wider range to promote best results and the most information. Although there was a significant amount of literature published regarding disability awareness interventions in a school setting, much of it was created 10 or more years ago. The information is still valid and important, however, more recent research should be completed to factor in societal changes over the past few years. More specifically, there has been a continuous increase in mental health awareness, school shootings, and even technology use which could all have an impact on disability and its awareness and understanding.

As mentioned, there was a specific lens used to guide the review of literature. This viewpoint includes various criteria and components, all of which were chosen based on a theoretical framework. Throughout this review, material has been organized by separating

information into describing the person, context, and task. EHP, described in more detail below, has been and will continue to be utilized.

Ecological Model of Human Performance

EHP is composed of three main components which will guide the organization of this project. These three components consist of the person, the context, and the task which have been outlined above (Dunn, 2017). Questions were posed based on the specific aspects of EHP prior to beginning the search for literature. Upon reviewing the posed questions and the literature found, it was noted that there was an imbalanced amount of information to answer questions pertaining to the context aspect of EHP rather than the person or task aspects. The model of EHP works well in other settings, such as a school, as it was developed to be used between disciplines and utilizes terminology that is more well-known (Dunn, 2017). Other advantages to using the EHP to guide this project include its various approaches to intervention. EHP offers approaches such as establish or restore, create, prevent, alter, and adapt or modify a situation. These specifically outlined approaches to intervention are valuable for programming so the developer has a clear and defined approach and can plan accordingly. In this program, the primary intervention approach used will be create (Dunn, 2017). A disability awareness program will be created and then implemented into educational classrooms to facilitate advocacy and support for children with disabilities.

Conclusion

The person, context, and task each play a role in the remainder of this project. Overall, it was noted that the context is a driver of social inclusion/exclusion and will therefore be a major component in disability awareness intervention. As described above, there is a lack of support for children with disabilities in an educational setting. It is extremely crucial that these children are

being advocated for to increase the level of support they receive from their teachers and peers. Occupational therapists already work in a school setting using a collaborative approach to benefit all parties including administration, teachers, and students. Occupational therapy outcomes, as defined by the American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA, 2020), include increased participation in education, improved role competence as a classmate and peer, and ultimately better quality of life for both children with and without disabilities. Disability awareness is a way that occupational therapists can use their expertise to improve participation and engagement in schools which will lead to more positive interactions and experiences for all students.

The results of this literature review will guide the formation of this project to ultimately develop the final disability awareness programming. The disability awareness programming will consist of educational materials that can be provided to teachers for them to implement into their classrooms. Appropriate classrooms will primarily be preschool to elementary-aged. The aim of the educational materials will be to facilitate activities with a conversation all about how to include and support peers who have disabilities. As done in this literature review, the educational materials will be created without use of defining terms or diagnoses. For children's sake, labels will be left out of the project. Children will only be informed of varying struggles with paired ways to be of support. Children with disabilities will be advocated for regardless of their disability or diagnosis.

EHP will continue to be used to ensure all aspects are met; intervention approaches will be carefully reviewed, analyzed, and eventually implemented. Following the completion of this project, students with and without disabilities will feel more empowered to interact with one another. Children with disabilities in a school setting need to feel included, but children without disabilities need to know how to include them.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The development of this product initially began by completing a comprehensive literature review on the topic of disability awareness within educational settings. To complete the literature review, a literature search was conducted utilizing databases including CINAHL and ERIC, governmental published guidelines such as the Minnesota Council on Disability, and professional organizations such as the AOTA. During these searches, the primary key words and phrases used included “disability awareness,” “inclusivity,” “attitudes towards disability,” and “peer support.” Criteria for the articles to be included in the review consist of being from 2010 or later, involving students and/or the school setting, and involving students with disabilities. Following the literature search, a literature review was completed which separated the contents into 3 main categories of the context, person, and task, in alignment with EHP.

The next step in the process, following the literature review, was to build a relationship with a site. The site that was chosen for the completion of this process was the childcare company New Horizon Academy. New Horizon Academy is a family-owned company with 80+ childcare centers, each serving children from infancy to school-age. This organization was a valuable placement for the development of this product as they serve a wide variety of individuals and abilities as well as their potential for a large impact in supporting inclusivity efforts within the classroom.

An on-site needs assessment was continuously completed throughout the completion of this product. Needs were determined while completing classroom visits as well as informal informational interviews. Many centers played an indirect role in the process through observations, although there were three centers that were very involved. These centers were pre-

established as centers that would benefit greatly from disability awareness educational materials. These centers had a variety of children who were already requiring additional support or accommodations, making them a valuable partnership for this product to troubleshoot with.

Throughout the time on-site and while needs were being assessed, the development of product materials were able to be initiated as well. The product materials were drafted and revised numerous times by the author, with two reviews from stakeholders from the education department. These review meetings were done with the leader of the education department as well as one of the mental health specialists at New Horizon Academy. These two professionals helped the author create materials which reflected Conscious Discipline, an evidence-based, trauma-informed, social-emotional framework the company has adopted.

Each of the partnering schools were visited three times. The initial visit was preliminary; it consisted of introductions, a tour, as well as some simple and informal observations and conversations. The second visit was used to gain more information from management and teachers at each school so a better understanding could be attained related to the challenges of having certain children in the classroom, how the peers respond to their classmates' differences, and what resources or assistance they felt would be most beneficial. During the second visit, more observations and interactions were completed with the children as well. The third and final visit to the specifically established centers were to implement the materials created. During this last visit, the materials were presented to the teachers with the opportunity for teachers to provide their feedback and ask any pertinent questions regarding the resource.

Following the three visits, the author made necessary changes to the materials prior to their finalization. The author presented the final materials to stakeholders within New Horizon Academy, specifically those who would be able to refer teachers and staff members to use the

materials. The site, New Horizon Academy, implemented these materials on their resource database for all management and teachers, across all 80+ schools, to access for their benefit.

EHP was chosen by the author to guide this project as it was the best fit for both the topic as well as the setting. EHP is useful in interdisciplinary settings such as education due to the greater-known and wider-used terminology, while simultaneously covering multiple aspects such as the people of varying abilities, the context of the school and children's devices, and the task of becoming more aware about the individuals in the classroom (Dunn, 2017). Throughout the completion of this scholarly project, the author utilized EHP while observing in the classroom as they made note of the abilities and/or differences in each person, how the social and physical context were supporting or inhibiting the interactions between children, and the teacher's comfort level with the task of facilitating disability awareness interventions in their classroom.

The author chose the topic of disability awareness as they have a passion for inclusivity and desire to encourage a positive experience for both education and social participation for all children in all classrooms. The author believes that school should be a safe and positive place for learning. They also chose this area to benefit all children in classrooms to maximize young individuals' experiences and opportunities, regardless of their differences or abilities. Lastly, it is believed by the author that increasing understanding and comfort in early years will lead to more influential adults who value inclusivity.

CHAPTER IV

PRODUCT

All children of any age and any ability need to feel accepted, included, and supported while at school. Researchers have stated that peers are a strong influence in other children reaching the feeling of connectedness (Carter et al., 2013). Without peer support, individuals with disabilities may not experience school as positively as they could. One way to prevent this is through disability awareness implementation within the academic setting. As discussed in Chapter II, there are three major ways that disability awareness can be encouraged. Children accepting the differences between peers, understanding that disability can still mean functional, and having a safe space to ask questions can all benefit a child's ability to accept, include, and support (Nowicki et al., 2014; Parisi, 2020; Lightner, 2022). This product was developed with a goal to achieve each of those three aspects to ultimately best support a child's experience while at school.

The overarching goal of this product is to assist teachers in encouraging young peers to accept, include, and support young individuals with disabilities. This product, a toolkit titled *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom*, was created from an OT perspective while guided by the lens of EHP (Dunn, 2017). The toolkit was constructed based on the findings from the completed needs assessment, both within published literature as well as on-site observations and interviews at New Horizon Academy. The toolkit was developed to supplement teachers' current level of expertise to ultimately maximize the occupations of social participation and education for the children in these classrooms. Please refer to Appendix A to view the full product.

The toolkit consists of four main components, each crafted to support teachers in their efforts in facilitating an accepting, inclusive, and supportive classroom. These four components consist of (1) a teacher handout to orient educators to the materials, (2) a list of scenarios to assist teachers in navigating situations which involve children with needs, (3) a guide for activities and discussions to facilitate with the children, and (4) disability picture cards with discussion prompts.

Teacher Materials

Teacher Handout

This handout consists of an introductory letter to orient teachers to the rest of the materials, as well as a list of helpful hints and helpful strategies which were created as foundational information for all teachers in all classrooms. Examples of the information provided include the importance of discussing differences, how to discuss disability with students, tips for their own self-regulation in managing a challenging classroom, and reminders to consider all aspects of the situation including the person, context, and task. View the full Teacher Handout in Appendix A.

Scenarios

Scenarios have been drafted to validate teachers experiences and feelings while managing challenging classrooms. These are scenarios that cover a wide variety of disabilities, impairments, or situations that a teacher can rely on if they have a similar case in their classroom. The scenarios have a brief outline of the difficulties with corresponding tips and things to consider. The scenarios include differences in children such as barriers with communication, impacts from trauma, developmental delays, behavioral situations, or a physical impairment.

Child Materials

Activity and Discussion Guide

Although this guide is labeled as one of the “Child Materials,” it is still targeted towards teachers. The activities and discussions were created to facilitate with the children yet written in a way to support the teachers in their facilitation. Different activities and discussions integrated in the toolkit include Affirmations, We Are Different, How to Include a Friend, and Games to Promote Back and Forth Connection. See the full product in Appendix A for more information.

Disability Picture Cards

These picture cards are essentially flash cards with small images on them. Each image has either one or two children on them with some form of a disability present. The goal of these picture cards is to encourage discussion about the disability on the card. The attached information sheet has talking points and prompts to facilitate with the children. Teachers could either utilize all cards with their students, or the cards that are more specific to the children in their classroom.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

Project Summary

The *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit is a resource guide which was developed to assist teachers in helping the children in their classroom be more accepting, inclusive, and supportive. The resource guide was developed while getting field experience in young classrooms with children of all abilities. It contains a handout for teachers to orient them to the materials, scenarios for potential situations in the classroom, various discussions and activities to facilitate with the children, and disability flashcards with information attached to them.

Implementation

The *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit has been implemented into New Horizon Academy's resource database, WeConnect. This is an online internal database that can be accessed by all New Horizon Academy employees. All staff from school management to corporate leaders have been informed about the resource's purpose and availability. This allows professionals within New Horizon Academy to direct teachers towards the resource as appropriate. Many of these company individuals become involved when classroom situations are unique or challenging. With the awareness of the product's availability, each of these will be able to recommend a teacher to access and utilize the materials.

Strengths and Limitations

Strengths of this scholarly project include the large potential for impact that the disability awareness materials can have. New Horizon Academy is a large childcare company that is continuing to grow, offering the ability to make a substantial impact. The *Disability Awareness:*

Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom toolkit was written in user-friendly terminology to prevent intimidation or confusion while utilizing the resource. Teachers will feel increased comfort with the accessible nature of this toolkit. The toolkit is educational, encouraging, and empowering. Another strength of this toolkit is that with minor adjustments, it can be utilized in a variety of settings. The strategies integrated throughout this resource are not site-specific and could be useful and beneficial to organizations outside of New Horizon Academy.

A limitation to the effectiveness of this scholarly project is the size of New Horizon Academy. It employs too many teachers to be able to orient all staff on the materials. Rather, the author found more efficiency in training corporate leaders for a hopeful trickle-down effect regarding the use of the toolkit. Another limitation to this project is the inability to represent all situations and all children. Many of the scenarios are quite generalized; this was more effective as it can apply to more children, although contingent on teachers' willingness and ability to adapt the resource to their classroom's situation.

Recommendations for Sustainability

This project will be best sustained if New Horizon Academy's corporate leaders continue to encourage school staff to utilize the materials. The individuals utilizing this toolkit would also benefit from time spent analyzing the effectiveness of the materials. It would be useful for disability awareness efforts to determine who, how, and when this resource is most effective to maximize its outcomes in company-wide classrooms. A primary goal for the future of this toolkit is that it would be used in orientations and trainings for new teachers. As teachers and professionals transition into New Horizon Academy schools, orientation leaders could provide each of them with their own toolkit. This would be an educational opportunity for teachers to

enter the classrooms feeling slightly more encouraged and empowered to foster an inclusive classroom.

The author prioritized using generalizations and empowering language to allow the opportunity for teachers to adapt solutions to their own classroom situation. This not only allows for greater representation of children, but it also gives teachers a learning opportunity. They will be more involved and invested in the concept of disability awareness, which will in-turn teach them skills necessary for facilitating an accepting, inclusive, and supportive classroom.

Conclusions

The overarching goal of the *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit is to assist teachers in encouraging young peers to accept, include, and support young individuals with disabilities. The product has been created and implemented into New Horizon Academy to achieve this goal. Teachers and other staff members will have this resource guide to utilize for increased comfort and understanding in discussing disabilities in their classroom. This resource will be educational to teachers while encouraging and empowering them to be an accepting, inclusive, and supportive leader in young children's lives.

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APPENDIX A

SITE PERMISSIONS FORM

I, Kate Wessinger, grant permission to Abby Bauman and the University of North Dakota's Occupational Therapy Department to use the contents of this scholarly project, including Appendix B, for educational and operational purposes. I understand that this information may be published through the Scholarly Commons, a repository service of the University of North Dakota libraries, which may be accessed around the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kate Wessinger', written over a horizontal line.

Signature

04/10/2023

Date

APPENDIX B

FULL PRODUCT

Disability Awareness

Promoting Inclusivity
in the Classroom



Abby A. Bauman, OTDS

Author

Abby A. Bauman, OTDS

Abby A. Bauman is a graduate student in her final year of the Occupational Therapy Doctorate program at the University of North Dakota. Abby has created the *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit to support teachers and children in early childhood classrooms. Abby has a passion for inclusivity and wants to encourage a positive experience for both education and social participation for all children in all classrooms.

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Kate Wessinger is an Early Childhood Mental Health Specialist at New Horizon Academy. Kate is a compassionate and knowledgeable professional who has a passion for the well-being of young individuals. Kate worked alongside Abby as a supportive role model throughout the development of these materials.

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Introduction

Hi teachers! Welcome to the *Disability Awareness: Promoting Inclusivity in the Classroom* toolkit.

Disability Awareness is an evidence-based topic that is proven to help provide all children the opportunity to feel accepted, included, and supported while at school. Within this toolkit, there are a variety of resources specifically created to promote acceptance, inclusion, and support within the classroom. Throughout this resource, you will find a variety of tools to help you feel more comfortable in leading your classroom to becoming more accepting, inclusive, and supportive. You will also see the words “Accepting, Inclusive, and Supportive” used repeatedly. This is intentional! It is our goal to be more accepting, inclusive, and supportive of all children to ultimately encourage them to do the same.

This toolkit has been developed so any teacher serving any age group can utilize it to benefit their classroom! Although many activities may appear more advanced or the scenarios seem to only relate to preschool, Disability Awareness is important to implement into infant and toddler classrooms as well. Children will benefit from the consistent and positive messaging beginning at a young age. It will be far more impactful for these children to grow into their older years already recognizing the value of inclusion.

Please know that the scenarios and activities throughout this resource are generalized in a way to fit most situations in most classrooms. It is important to recognize that just as each child is unique and special, each situation is unique and special as well. Use this resource and adapt it to your students in your classroom.

Teacher Handout

Helpful Hints

Always remember that the goal is to be more **ACCEPTING, INCLUSIVE, and SUPPORTIVE** for all individuals. We are all different, and that's okay!

Make sure **YOU** are comfortable. It will not feel like a safe conversation if the leader is seemingly uncomfortable or unsure about appreciating others' differences.

Every child has a right to feel **safe** and **supported** while at school.

Lead by example! If you want to teach your students how to include a peer, **show them**. Be inclusive. Children are always watching; they are learning how to interact with each other from the way you interact with them. If you are biased towards or against certain characteristics, they may be as well.

This is a **SAFE space** to ask questions and learn about their peers who have differences. It is important to be direct while always providing fact-based information. Provide enough information to the children to make them feel heard, understood, and validated while also respecting the confidentiality of another child's health status.

Sometimes, the best solution can just be a change in **mindset**. When children are seemingly more challenging in the classroom, try to ask yourself these questions:

- Why is this child doing this?
- What do they need?
- What are they trying to communicate?
- How can I best help this child right now?

Remember the **power of co-regulation**. Children can only do as well as their adults.

- Are you regulated?
- If not, what do you need to do to regulate yourself?

It is **extremely** important to recognize that each situation will be different. Every child with a physical impairment will be unique, every developmental situation will be different, and no behavioral scenario appears alike. Use these tools and adapt them to the unique child with a specific situation in your distinct classroom.

You can do this! You are part of the solution. You have the potential to make a big, positive, and powerful change in the world becoming more accepting, inclusive, and supportive.

Helpful Strategies

I don't have the words and I need support. Where do I turn?

It is understandable if you do not always feel like you have the words for a situation. However, this does not mean things can be left unsaid. Use other modes! Consider reading a book to the class. Ask your management team for book recommendations that help tell the story of one of your students' experiences. Depending on the situation, it may be helpful to read storybooks about the child ahead of time. This way, the children will be more prepared to accept, include, and support the child when they transition into the classroom. The conversation can continue as the child is in the classroom as well. Songs are great too!

There might be an individual out there who can speak on a child's behalf. Consider having another support person (maybe a health care specialist, social worker, or the child's parent/guardian) come and talk to the class. This can be a powerful way to teach peers about this child's condition. Make sure the person you choose is someone who knows the child well and will speak about them in a respectful and encouraging way.

Rely on your people! Don't be afraid to ask for support.

- How can a co-teacher be helpful?
- What do you need from your management team?
- Have you reached out to your internal resources?
- What do you need from the child's parents/guardians to ensure both you and the child have a successful classroom experience?

Language is one of the more specific and challenging parts of inclusivity efforts. It is extremely important to utilize language that is judgement-free. More specifically, it is considered best practice to use person-first language. This is one way to discuss an individual as a person rather than labeling them as a diagnosis or disability. However, there are certain cultures and communities that wish to name themselves in an identity-first way. It is ultimately up to the individual and how they feel they are associated with their diagnosis. To be most inclusive, you are encouraged to ask the individual what they like to be called. In a childcare setting, consider asking the child's parents if and how they like to associate themselves with the diagnosis.

My routine is not working for every child in the classroom. What do I do?

Although challenging, there are going to be times that certain children will just require more from you. Strategies and solutions can be attempted, but there will be children who just need a closer look. Keep these children in mind at all times and keep an eye on them.

Be strategic with your methods in the classroom! It is not about taking the easy route, but rather the intelligent route. Some children will naturally have a harder time following directions or the prompts given to them. If this is the case, consider swapping around the order of tasks in the classroom. For example, how would it make a difference if a certain child transitioned first or last? When getting dressed for outside, is it more effective for them to go last? When preparing

for nap, is it more effective for the child to use the bathroom last? Experiment with other routines until you are most effective in your classroom.

Specific accommodations can be very helpful for a child. Accommodations are beneficial for the child, teachers, peers, and the overall classroom when they are approached appropriately. Per licensing standards, doing things differently for a child must be justified in writing. Reach out to your internal resources if and when this situation applies to your classroom.

Different children respond better to different things. Consider different types of cueing.

- Are they having a hard time responding to your verbal directions? Try using a visual.
 - o There are different ways to utilize visuals, each of which being potentially effective for a child. Sometimes, children will understand cartoon images or sketches of the concept. However, some children may find it more effective when using actual images of the concept. Try this! For example, if you are creating a visual for handwashing, try taking a picture of the actual sink and soap dispenser in your classroom.
- If prompting a child with: “Do this, go there, do this,” is ineffective, try 2 prompts instead such as: “Do this, then this.” If 2 prompts are still too challenging, try 1 prompt at a time. Simplify prompts as needed for the most effective outcome between both the teacher and the child. This could sound like “Wash hands.” or “Use bathroom.”

Consider all the aspects of the situation:

- How can we help this **person**?
- Is the **context** helping or hurting?
- How could we make the **task** more inclusive?

Sometimes the children in our classroom just need something different. Whether it be an actual accommodation or just a different way of doing something, small changes have the potential for large impacts. Consider what this child may be needing and how you could make a small change.

You can do this!

Teacher Materials – Scenarios

The next few pages consist of a list of scenarios which cover a wide variety of situations which you may or may not encounter in your early childhood classroom setting. Each situation provides a story with questions to ask or things to consider to ultimately maximize the situation for you, the child, and the child's peers. These scenarios are targeting the **task**.

Within the “Things to Consider” tips, acknowledge that there are three aspects described – the **person**, **context**, and the **task**. One, two, or all three of these factors could be contributing to the situation. The person will typically be referring to the child in the scenario. The context will typically be referring to the social dynamics in the room, the support people like parents or health care providers, or the physical context of the device or adaptive equipment. Lastly, the task will be referring to you as the teacher practicing disability awareness programming in your classroom. It is always crucial to consider multiple components of a situation to best help yourself, the child, and the child's peers.

Remember to consider all the aspects of the situation:

- How can we help this **person**?
- Is the **context** helping or hurting?
- How could we make the **task** more inclusive?

Scenario 1 – Challenging Behavior

There is a child in your classroom who is running around the classroom, jumping over chairs, using inappropriate language, or hitting and punching peers. This is challenging.

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - It is important to consider the fact that attention seeking is connection seeking. This child is relying on their behaviors in hopes you will acknowledge them. They want connection. This child may be demonstrating their attachment needs in these actions. For example, sometimes when a child is being hurtful, it is a sign that they are hurting emotionally.
 - Try to make it clear to this child that you see them, you hear them, and you care about them, even when they are having a hard time.
- *Context*
 - It is important to keep yourself, the child, and all peers safe. Looking around the room, what are quick adaptations you can make to keep the context safe?
 - Children do not have the skills yet to self-regulate. They can only do as well as their adults are doing. This is a reminder to you that they are relying on you for co-regulation. Regulate yourself so you can be there for the child in a helpful way.
- *Task*
 - This child deserves a safe and positive experience while at school. What do you need in order to help this child have a safe and positive experience?
 - Children who are demonstrating challenging behavior are likely struggling with something. It is always a priority to be empathetic and caring towards children who are hurting; however, it is okay to continue to hold an expectation for this child to remain safe in the classroom. By empathetically recognizing what they might be experiencing, you are able to provide helpful accommodations to help children have the best experience in the classroom.

Things to Discuss:

- Explain to the other children that this friend needs a little more patience and support while at school. You can say something like this, while always adapting words to fit your specific situation better:
 - “Our friend is having a difficult time. They are not trying to be mean. Even though you might feel sad, try to support them. They do not want to be mean to you, but they don’t know how else to communicate. Try asking them if they want to play something with you, or if they want your help right now. If they say no, that’s okay. They are having a hard time with something that we can’t see. Sometimes, we can’t see what is going on in our friends’ lives. We can’t always see the hurt or the things that they may be struggling with.”

Scenario 2 – Physical Impairment (Wheelchair)

You are teaching in a younger preschool classroom and you have a student who utilizes a wheelchair for mobility. What are some things to consider?

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - How can the child be most involved in their care? Support the child where help is needed but continue to encourage independence as you would with all children. Examples include (if able):
 - Having the child lock their own brakes
 - Having the child maneuver their wheelchair throughout the classroom
 - Think of this child's wheelchair as an extension of their body. Be mindful of this when touching or helping with a child's device.
- *Context*
 - Have you been oriented to this device? Do you feel equipped to operate the wheelchair if/when you need to? Examples include:
 - Raising, lowering, tilting the chair
 - Adding or removing the foot plates
 - Adding or removing the armrests
 - Locking & unlocking the brakes
 - Transferring the child in/out of the wheelchair safely
 - Consider different classroom layouts to accommodate for the child's wheelchair.
 - Increasing space between pieces of furniture
 - Removing a chair at the end of the table to provide a consistent space for this child to sit at
- *Task*
 - ALWAYS ask the child before giving them a "push".
 - This child deserves a positive play experience, both indoors and outdoors.
 - Is it recommended or encouraged for the child to get out of their wheelchair and play on the floor/ground?
 - If there is snow on the ground, consider putting a rubber mat down for the child to sit on so they can play with the snow. Consider the use of an innertube or snow sled so the child can engage in snow play with their friends.
 - How can you encourage other children to spend time with this child? It is extremely important that children are included in peer play both inside and outside.

Things to Discuss:

- Explain to the children why they are not able to walk or run like other kids are. “Our friend was born with a condition which makes their legs work differently than some of our legs. This means that our friend uses this wheelchair to move around the classroom.”
- It is okay to talk to the children about the child’s wheelchair. Tell peers that they must ask the child for permission prior to giving them a push and they should never touch the wheelchair without permission.
- “Our friend can move throughout the classroom on their own. Sometimes giving them a push would be a nice gesture. But it is important to never push your friend’s wheelchair without asking their permission first. One way to ask is, ‘Can I give you a push?’”
- “Sometimes, your friend may want to do something themselves, just like how you sometimes want to do it yourself.”

Scenario 3 – Physical Impairment (Prosthetic or Orthotic)

There is a child in your classroom who has some form of an orthosis or prosthesis. (Other terms for these items could be an artificial limb or a brace, splint). This is something that will likely appear differently to other children in the classrooms.

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - It is okay to acknowledge that this peer is utilizing something different. That is factual information! However, be sure to discuss the differences in a positive, non-judgmental manner. Be factual with the children. This child DOES have a prosthetic/orthotic – let's not be ashamed about it!
 - Think of this child's prosthetic/orthotic as an extension of their body. Be mindful of this when touching or helping with a child's device.
- *Context*
 - Have you been oriented to this device? Do you feel equipped to manipulate the device if you needed to? For example, do you feel you understand how to clean it, how to adjust it, how to put it on, etc., if something were to happen while the child was playing? Being able to confidently answer these questions will be useful for if/when a situation were to arise. The individuals who will be most helpful in answering these questions will be the child's parents, their health care professionals, and sometimes the child.
- *Task*
 - This child deserves a positive play experience, both indoors and outdoors. Find ways for the child to engage in play alongside their peers.
 - Allow the child to complete tasks that they are able to complete. Support them as needed without automatically doing things for them.

Things to Discuss:

- “___ was born with something different. Their ___ (arm, leg, foot, etc.) did not grow the way we usually think it is going to grow. But their doctors and parents and all the special people who care about them were able to make this super cool tool for them to use. This way, they can still have 2 ___ (arms, legs, feet, etc.) just like you and me! It may look a little different than you're used to, but they are still able to do many, many things. Just because their ___ looks different than yours might, we can still accept, include, and support them in our classroom. We're still friends no matter what our body parts look like!”
- It is natural for children to be curious about their peers. It is okay for peers to talk to the child about their prosthetic or orthotic. Give children the words to say when asking about a peer so these interactions can remain accepting, inclusive, and supportive.
 - “Can you tell me about your ____ (arm, leg, foot, etc.)? How does it work? How does it feel?”

Scenario 4 – Eye Patch

This scenario applies to you because you have a child in your classroom who is utilizing an eye patch at the moment for whatever reason. This is something that children are likely to notice and possibly ask about. Talk about their eye patch in a neutral, non-judgmental way.

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - What is the purpose of the child's eye patch? Are they wearing it for protection? Are they wearing it for healing? For vision correction?
 - This child is arriving at school with something noticeably different on their face. Be sure to treat them as you would any other day.
- *Context*
 - What are the parent's expectations for wearing this eye patch throughout the day?
- *Task*
 - Do you feel comfortable with the added responsibility of monitoring the child's eye patch?

Things to Discuss:

- "I hear that you've noticed the patch on ____'s eye! That is for ____ (protection, healing, fixing, etc.). Do you know what protection is? Protection is something we use to keep other things safe. For ____, they are wearing an eye patch to keep their eye safe! Their eye patch is protection to keep their eye safe right now! What are some things that keep you safe?"
- We can use others' tools as a way to connect each other and identify similarities between two people. So, when identifying something as a "protector," you can identify another peer's "protector" to facilitate connection between the two peers. The same example can be used if you are referring to the child's eye patch as a healer or a fixer, as well.

Scenario 5 – Autism Spectrum Disorder

You have a child in your classroom who is diagnosed with ASD. Some of the children are noticing that this individual presents a little differently in the classroom. Here are some things to consider:

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - What makes it more difficult to interact with this child?
 - Do you have enough resources to understand what this child is experiencing on a day-to-day basis? More resources could benefit your understanding of the child and therefore the way you view their patterns or habits.
- *Context*
 - What are the barriers to social participation for this child?
- *Task*
 - Utilize visuals! This could be sign language, showing the prompt (ex: showing a diaper when it is time to change), pointing to the group time rug, or a more advanced visual curated with technology and images.
 - Rely on the child's special interests when promoting inclusivity for this child. It is more likely they will be engaged in play when there is an interest area for them.

Things to Discuss:

- “They are still learning how to ____.” This is a phrase that is typically well-understood by children in regard to their peers current skills. Use this phrase to advocate for a child's developing skillset.
- “All of our bodies are different and need different things.” “Their body needs ____ just like your body needs ____.” Use examples of any kind such as “You need water when your stomach is hurting.”
- Encourage the other children to invite the child with Autism to play. “Sometimes, it can be hard to get ____'s attention. They are experiencing different feelings and thoughts in their body. ____ is still a kind friend and has interests just like you do! Try inviting them to play a different way. Start by playing next to them or play something you know they like first. Slowly allow you and them to grow comfortable!”

Scenario 6 – Glasses

A child in your classroom has either a visual impairment or low vision. They require glasses. Children in your room have noticed it.

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - It is important to understand the child’s vision with and without their glasses. Vision is tied very closely to safety. What are the risks of the child not wearing their glasses?
- *Context*
 - Glasses can be fragile. What are things to keep in mind for this child playing with peers inside and outside?
- *Task*
 - Does this child’s pair of glasses add responsibility for you? If so, make sure you are comfortable with the additional duties.
 - What level of support does this child need to adjust, put on, take off, or request help for their glasses?

Things to Discuss:

- “____ is wearing glasses today. Glasses are a type of tool! Glasses are used to help our friends be able to see as best as possible. Some of us are able to see without glasses. Some of us need glasses to see better. Do you know anyone who wears glasses to help them see? It doesn’t mean we can’t play with them or be friends with them. Our friends who wear glasses are just as fun to play with, we just have to respect their tool. We can respect their tool by not touching their glasses.”
- This is an opportunity to facilitate connection between two children. When referring to the child’s glasses as their “tool,” ask peers what their “tools” could be. Find ways to connect glasses to another friends’ needs, even if it is something like a blanket. For example, “____ wears glasses to see better just like ____ cuddles a teddy bear to sleep better.”

Scenario 7 – Hearing Device

A child in your classroom utilizes a hearing device to promote improved hearing. Some of the children have noticed the device or implant near or in the child's ears or head. Here are some things you could discuss:

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - It would be helpful to understand this child's level of hearing without use of their device. Utilizing our hearing abilities is another way we can keep our bodies safe. Have you talked to this child's parents about their hearing abilities?
 - Think of this child's hearing device as an extension of their body. Be mindful of this when touching or helping with a child's device.
- *Context*
 - Consistent communication with parents will be most useful for the success of this child. Consider asking parents for updates in the child's medical care, cleaning instructions, what to do and what not to do with the device, what-if scenarios, and anything else you find useful.
 - Some children with hearing devices use caps or headbands to keep their device protected. This can be bothersome and hard to maintain for some children. If this is the case in your situation, be sure to support the child by assisting in putting the cap or headband back on their body.
- *Task*
 - Are they waterproof? Ask parents how to plan for days with water play, rainy weather, application of sunscreen, etc. This way, you will be more equipped to help the child get outside!
 - How are they powered?
 - What level of support does this child need to adjust, put on, take off, or request help for their hearing device?

Things to Discuss:

- “ ____ wears something behind their ears so they can hear better! Their hearing device supports them because they are able to hear their friends better while at school. We can support ____ and their hearing device by not touching it. They still like to talk and play! We can still be their friend even though they are using a tool to help them hear.”
- This is yet another opportunity to facilitate similarity and connection between peers. Compare tools that each student is using. For example, “Their hearing device is similar to the fork you use during lunch. Their device helps them hear better just like your fork helps you eat better. It is also similar to your parents' cars! Their cars help your parents get places better just like this friend's hearing device helps them hear better.” Examples can be silly, as long as they are appropriate and facilitate understanding between children. “This tool is something _____ needs to be able to do _____ better/easier.”

Scenario 8 – Sensory Sensitivity

There is a child in your classroom who appears to be experiencing their sensory system in a different way. What might this look like? You might notice this child frequently asking teachers or peers for big squeeze hugs, having a hard time keeping their body safe or still, or appearing to be very fidgety throughout the day. Here are some things that could help:

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - Understand that this child is experiencing things inside of their body that we cannot see. Their body is craving or avoiding specific types of input, which we can see in the ways they are moving.
- *Context*
 - If you feel that this child's sensory experiences are interfering with their success in the classroom, this may be an appropriate time to seek a second opinion regarding potential referral to receive services.
- *Task*
 - Give them methods to receive this sensory input to meet his needs. Examples include squeeze hugs, joint compressions, gross (large) motor movements, and/or sensory play with various textures.

Things to Discuss:

- “___ is experiencing different things in their body. Sometimes, they really feel like they need a hug which is why you might see them get more hugs.”
- “Each of us have different preferences for what feels good to us. ___ really likes the feeling of the toys on their legs which is why they may be playing with them like that.”
- “We cannot always see what other friends are feeling or needing. Sometimes there are things that we feel inside our bodies that people can't see from the outside.”
- Individuals with sensory needs may use a fidget to assist with regulation. There may be peers in the classroom who ask questions like, “Well why do they get to play with that?” In this case, you can explain to peers, “___'s body works different. For their body to feel safe and healthy, they need to use this tool.”

Scenario 9 – Communication Deficit

Many times, there are children in the classroom who may use different communication styles than us. Maybe English is their second language or maybe they have a version of a speech-language deficit. This can be challenging as the leader of a classroom with a large percentage of the other children who are speaking English without difficulty.

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - It can be very challenging and overwhelming for both the child and the teacher when there is a communication barrier. Keep in mind how frustrating it can be for the child when they are trying to express something to you or understand what has been said to them.
- *Context*
 - Ask the child's parents how they would like you to communicate with their child who has a communication deficit.
- *Task*
 - Rely on other methods of communication. Words are not the only way! Use multimodal cueing. You can offer a combination of these types of cueing as well, such as simultaneous verbal and tactile cueing. Here are some examples:
 - Visual – Demonstrate what you would like them to do! Point to the toy you are referring to. Visually gesture towards the chair you would like them to sit in. Utilize sign language with the child.
 - Tactile – Tap their shoulder to get their attention. Tap the chair you would like them to sit in. Place a toy in their hand.
 - Verbal – Continue to speak to them! Speak slower and articulate your words clearer. Use simpler sentences. Substitute words for more common terminology.

Things to Discuss:

- Remind the children to find other ways to interact with their classmate with a communication difference. Just because they have a different way of communicating does not mean they do not deserve acceptance and inclusion.
 - “They are still learning English! We are all learning English at a different pace. You can still play with this friend. They may not be able to use the same words as you, but they may still want to play. Try inviting them by handing them a toy, using hand gestures such as waving, or even just giving them a big smile.”
 - If ESL: “The really cool thing is that they are also learning ____ (Insert other language)!”
 - “____ is still learning how to speak, so sometimes it can be hard to understand _____. It's okay to say, ‘Say it again so I understand.’ or come get my help.”

Scenario 10 – Developmental Delay

You have a child with a significant developmental delay. You are teaching in an older classroom where children can play imaginatively and create narratives that they are able to carry out with toys. Whereas the child with the developmental delay is not at a point cognitively or social-emotionally where they can participate in this type of play. Here are some things to consider:

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - It is very important for this child to feel accepted, included, and supported in this classroom despite their differences in development. Consider other ways of accomplishing this.
 - Lean into the child's special interests! Utilize them as frequently as possible to allow the child more opportunity to engage in the classroom.
- *Context*
 - Are the toys in the room appropriate for their stage of development or play? If not, ask your management team about obtaining toys that match this child's abilities. Could you order new toys or could you borrow toys from other classrooms? For example, you could borrow "Cause & Effect" toys from the toddler room.
- *Task*
 - Play looks different between different children. Find ways for this child to engage in play in your classroom. It is okay if one child plays differently than another child.

Things to Discuss:

- Explain to the OTHER children that this child wants to play. Explain to them that they are still learning how to play ____ (insert game they are playing).
- Offer the developmentally delayed child an option to play. "They are playing X. I know you wanted to play that one too. You can either play Y or Z."
- Explain that: "We all have different tools and skills, and they don't always match. Sometimes some activities are out of our or our friends' skillsets or interests and that's okay."
- When giving directions or having children in the classroom complete a task, you may get asked, "Well why doesn't ____ have to?" It is okay to explain that this child is still learning how to do specific skills. For example, you can say:
 - "____ is still learning how to follow directions."
 - "____ is still learning how to do that activity, so we are going to find one that works better for their skillset."

Scenario 11 – Down Syndrome

You have a child in your classroom who has Down Syndrome and presents differently than their classmates. The other children may or may not notice how their friend is a bit different. It is important to be non-judgmental when discussing this friend's abilities.

Things to Consider:

- *Person*
 - This child is developing at a different rate than their peers. Be mindful of this when you are considering classroom expectations and responsibilities of the children when they are in your room.
- *Context*
 - Is this child using adaptive equipment? If so, make sure you feel comfortable using it in the way it is intended to be used. The people who will be most informational regarding adaptive equipment will be this child's parents and health care professionals.
 - A helpful way to prepare for a child's transition into the classroom, especially when they present differently, is to learn about the child's differences through stories or books. Consider reading stories about Down Syndrome prior to and during the child's transition into your classroom. Allow the other children, as well as yourself, to feel more informed.
- *Task*
 - Be factual about their needs! It is okay to be honest with the children about this child's different needs. It is okay to share the fact that this child's body needs different things to be safe and successful.

Things to Discuss:

- “_____ uses this chair in the classroom so that we can keep their body safe.”
- “_____ uses this cup/plate at mealtimes to keep their body safe. It is important that we each use our own tools to keep us safe and healthy.”
- “_____ is still learning how to follow directions.”

Discussions & Activities for the Children

Affirmations

There is a list of 8 affirmations for students to chant about themselves (“I”), their peers (“You”), and their class as a whole (“We”). The purpose of this step is to familiarize the children with appreciating their own individuality so they can then take the step of appreciating the individuality of others. These affirmations are an activity targeting the **person**.

As the teacher and leader, it will be your job to initiate this chant each time. Here are some instructions to help you facilitate this activity:

You will begin by reading the affirmations aloud in a “repeat-after-me” style. More specifically, you will read the affirmation before encouraging the class to repeat the affirmation. First, you will complete the “I” statements. Before reading the first “I” statement, you will tell the class to put their hand over their heart. You will read each of the “I” statements, allowing the class to repeat after you. These are self-affirmations. Second, you will complete the “You” statements. Before reading the first “You” statement, you will tell the class to point to the child next to them. You will then read the “You” statements in a “repeat-after-me” style. These are peer affirmations. Third, you will complete the “We” statements. During the “We” statements, encourage the children to hold their arms out wide as if they are speaking to the whole class. These are group affirmations. This allows all the children to celebrate the individuality and uniqueness of the classroom as a whole.

This is not an exclusive list – feel free to add your own! You can ask for the children’s input as well. If there are other affirmations you like to speak over yourself or your students, those can be added in as well. The ones written in this packet are specific to individuality and therefore acceptance, inclusivity, and support. As the expert of your classroom, it is ultimately your decision as to when these affirmations could be chanted. Get creative! Try them out at group time, chant them while the children are waiting patiently for lunch to be served, say them aloud while applying sunscreen before heading outside. Celebrating individuality can and should be done all day, every day.

One large component to Disability Awareness is being able to discuss and appreciate others’ differences. As the teacher, you can facilitate these affirmations by stating each of them and then allowing the children to repeat after you.

“I Am Different” Affirmations

Self

During the self-affirmations, have the children place their hands over their hearts.

I am Different!
 I am Unique!
 I am Special!
 I am Interesting!
 I am Original!
 I am Distinct!
 I am an Individual!
 I am ME!

Peer

During the peer affirmations, have the children point to the peer next to them.

You are Different!
 You are Unique!
 You are Special!
 You are Interesting!
 You are Original!
 You are Distinct!
 You are an Individual!
 You are YOU!

Everybody

During the group affirmations, have the children hold their arms out wide.

We are Different!
 We are Unique!
 We are Special!
 We are Interesting!
 We are Original!
 We are Distinct!
 We are Individuals!
 We are US!

We Are Different

This section is a resource to encourage children to appreciate their peers' differences, as well as their own. This is a way to discuss individuality with the children. These prompts are targeting the **person**.

Why We're Different

Use the following prompt as talking points to discuss with the class. Depending on the developmental abilities in your classroom, you may leave this conversation quite brief. You may also elaborate on differences and be able to have a conversation about it. As the expert of your classroom, share with the children what you feel they will understand. Add in your own as you feel comfortable:

We are different and that's okay! Different is different and different is okay. If you are different, that also means you are unique, special, interesting, original, distinct, and an individual. Each of us are different. We have different bodies, different minds, different needs, different preferences, and different wishes. Since we are different from one another, we are able to learn from each other. If everybody looked the same, talked the same, walked the same, and worked the same, what would we have to talk about? How fun would it be to play? It is good to be different! Let's celebrate our differences!

What Makes Me Special

Encourage peers to go around the room and share something unique or special about them. Teachers can join in this too! Have everyone share a fun fact about themselves. After each individual shares their special fact, the rest of the class can "cheer" for them. This could be a class-wide response such as "You are special, ____!" or everyone clapping for the peer and their individuality.

How to Include A Friend

In order to expect inclusivity within the classroom, we must be able to educate children on how to actually include peers. This resource provides ways to invite a friend to play to promote inclusivity, yet also provides support for children when they are denied. For example, just because a child found an effective way to include a peer does not guarantee that peer is going to play with them. This will help children understand why peers might say “no” and why it is okay to try again later. These prompts are targeting the **context**.

Different Ways to Approach a Friend

You could use your words! You could go up to your friend and say, “Hi! Do you want to play with me?” You could also gently tap your friend on the shoulder before you say, “Hi! Do you want to play with me?”

Maybe you want to invite your friend to a specific activity. Here is a way you could ask: “Hi _____. We are going to build a tower. Do you want to build with us?”

Maybe you don’t have any activities in mind. You could say: “Hi! Do you have any ideas of what we could play together? What do you like to play?”

Here is an example of how you could include a friend without using words. You could tap your friend on the shoulder and then show them the toy you want to play. You could even try handing them the toy. Maybe they will want to play that toy with you too!”

It can be really helpful to choose toys that you and your friend both like to play with. What do you both like to do?

If Someone Says “No” To Your Invite

First, it is okay to be sad about a friend saying no. It can be really sad when we want to play with someone but they don’t want to play back.

Just like we don’t always want to do something, sometimes our friends aren’t going to want to do what we want to do. We are different! We have different wishes and that’s okay.

Here are some choices for what you can do! You can offer a different activity. You can find a different friend to play with. You could still play with that toy by yourself!

It feels sad when a friend says “no” to us, but you can still play!

You can always try again later. Maybe your friend will be ready.

Games to Promote Back and Forth Connection

Within this section, there are a list of games or activities to encourage reciprocity, or a mutual interaction, between peers. This list ranges from different activities such as passing a ball back and forth to turn-taking while playing with MagnaTiles. These are ideas you can rely on to teach children about the fulfillment of interacting with peers, even the ones who are different from us. Use these to engage children in social interaction while simultaneously using them as talking points. Encourage the children to engage in activities that require equal input from both parties; encourage them to work together to become successful. These prompts are targeting the **task**.

Rolling a Ball Back & Forth

Although a seemingly simple task, rolling a ball back and forth can have large impacts in connecting two individuals. This is an activity that can be adapted to different children depending on skills and/or abilities. Consider the best way to adapt this for the children to complete and enjoy. Examples of methods to complete this activity include rolling, throwing and catching, or even just handing the ball off to each other. Other modifications could be the size of the ball (a bigger ball will be easier), the speed of the rolling (slower will be easier), as well as body positioning of the two children. Adaptations can and should be made depending on each child's physical and cognitive skillset. Establish these methods with the class prior to prompting the activity, while always ensuring that safety is the priority.

Children can and should ask each other if they are ready prior to throwing or rolling the ball. This is one additional way of encouraging children to communicate with each other. You can incorporate strategies from earlier sections such as "How to Include Someone" into this activity. For example, before rolling the ball back and forth, encourage a child to invite another friend to play the activity.

Turn-Taking While Playing With "Manipulatives"

Two or more children contributing equally to a project or activity is a way to promote back and forth connection. An example of this could be turn-taking with manipulatives. Rather than two children building their own block tower, encourage them to take turns and build one together. One friend can place a block down on the floor which the next friend can place another block on top. The children can continue going back and forth, equally placing blocks as part of the tower. The children get to watch the tower come together as a team.

Take this opportunity to talk about this tower with the children. Remind them that they did this together. Remind them that this tower would not have been built this exact way if it weren't for each of their help. Remind these children that they are a team.

Mirror Image or Copy the Face

In each of these two games, there are two children facing each other. One child will go first and make an action, such as a face or a movement, where the other child will then

attempt to “mirror” and copy. This game facilitates social interaction between two children. This is a way to encourage two children to notice each other and match the other’s movements. Examples for actions could be making a silly face, waving their right arm, patting their left knee, tapping their nose, and anything else. The ideas are endless! (*16 Partner Games for Kids (for Ages 3-7)*, 2020)

Nursery Rhymes

Each of these are examples of interactive “sing-along” songs that children can complete together. These are ways to positively interact with another child while involving both a singing and an action component. Demonstrate an example for the children so they know how to do the activity and then encourage them to do so with partners.

“Row, Row, Row Your Boat”

Have the two children sit on the floor while facing each other, if able. Have them hold each other’s hands with their legs in a “V” shape. Tell the children to sing along to the rhyme while holding hands and swaying back and forth to the rhythm of the nursery rhyme. You can vary the speed of the song for added fun, going both slower and faster.

Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream.

(Bailey, 2000)

“Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”

Have two children sing this song to each other. Encourage them to swap out words for “child” such as friend or classmate.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What a wonderful child you are!
With bright eyes and nice round cheeks,
Talented person from head to feet.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What a wonderful child you are!

(Bailey, 2000)

“Peter Peter Pumpkin Eater”

Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater,
Had a friend he loved to greet.
Treated her with kind respect,
And in the morning hugged her neck.

Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater,
Had a friend he loved to greet.
Treated him with kind respect,
And in the morning hugged his neck.

(Bailey, 2000)

“Georgie Porgie” & “Margie Pargie”

These two interactive nursery rhymes can be completed between teacher and child, as well as between child and child. This is a way to get two children to positively interact with one another, including a smile or a handshake at the end.

Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Gave his friend a big high five!
With his friend he loved to play,
A gift of a smile he gave each day.

Marge Pargie, pudding and pie,
Gave her friend a big high five!
With her friend she loved to play,
A gift of handshake she gave each day.

(Bailey, 2000)

“A Sailor Went to Sea Sea Sea”

Show children how to sing this song while clapping along. This is a way for two children to interact with one another in a positive way with eye contact and smiles.

A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea!

(*A Sailor Went to Sea, Clapping Game*, n.d.)

Parallel Play is Okay Too!

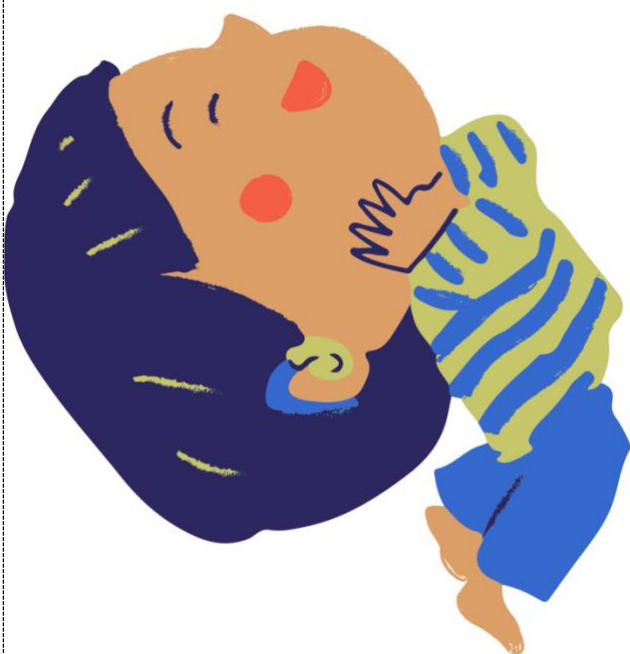
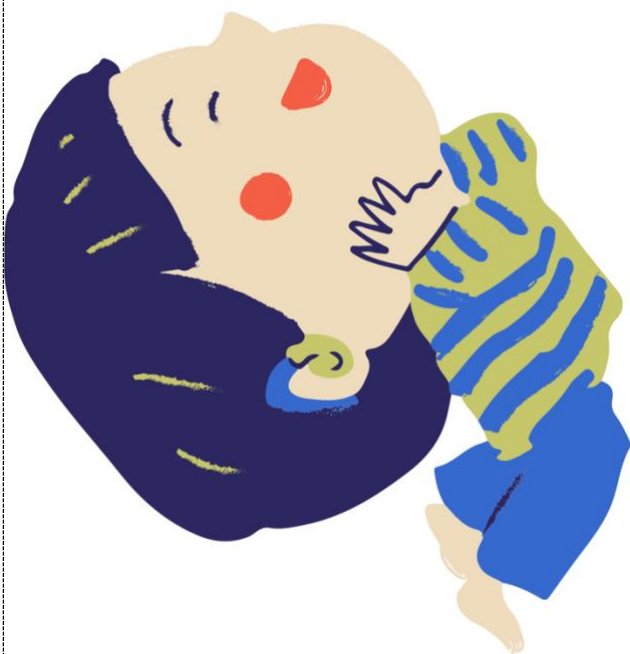
Although collaborative and interactive play is encouraged to promote connection, it is not the only way. Parallel play is an option as well. Rely on your educational expertise on the stages of play. There are many circumstances which justify why a child would not be ready or comfortable for certain forms of play. It may take time to reach an interactive scenario. Allow children to be comfortable with their level of play while still facilitating positive interactions.

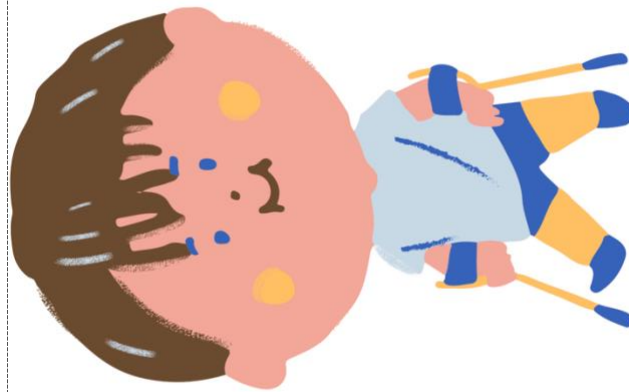
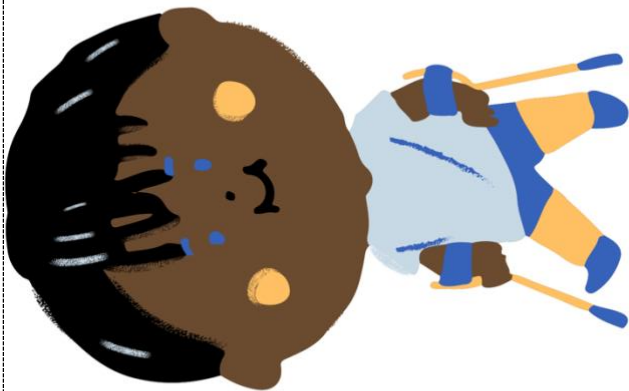
Disability Picture Cards

There are 13 different picture cards total, each of which having 4 options to choose from to increase the likelihood of representation for a child. These images are to bring awareness to various forms of disabilities. This, again, is not an exclusive list. Disability can present itself in many different ways, so this is one way to bring awareness to some of them. Please print these out and cut them into their respective 3" x 5" cards. Laminate the cards and connect them with a binder ring for best results. Before presenting picture cards to the class, be mindful of choosing the picture that is best representative of the child or children in your classroom.

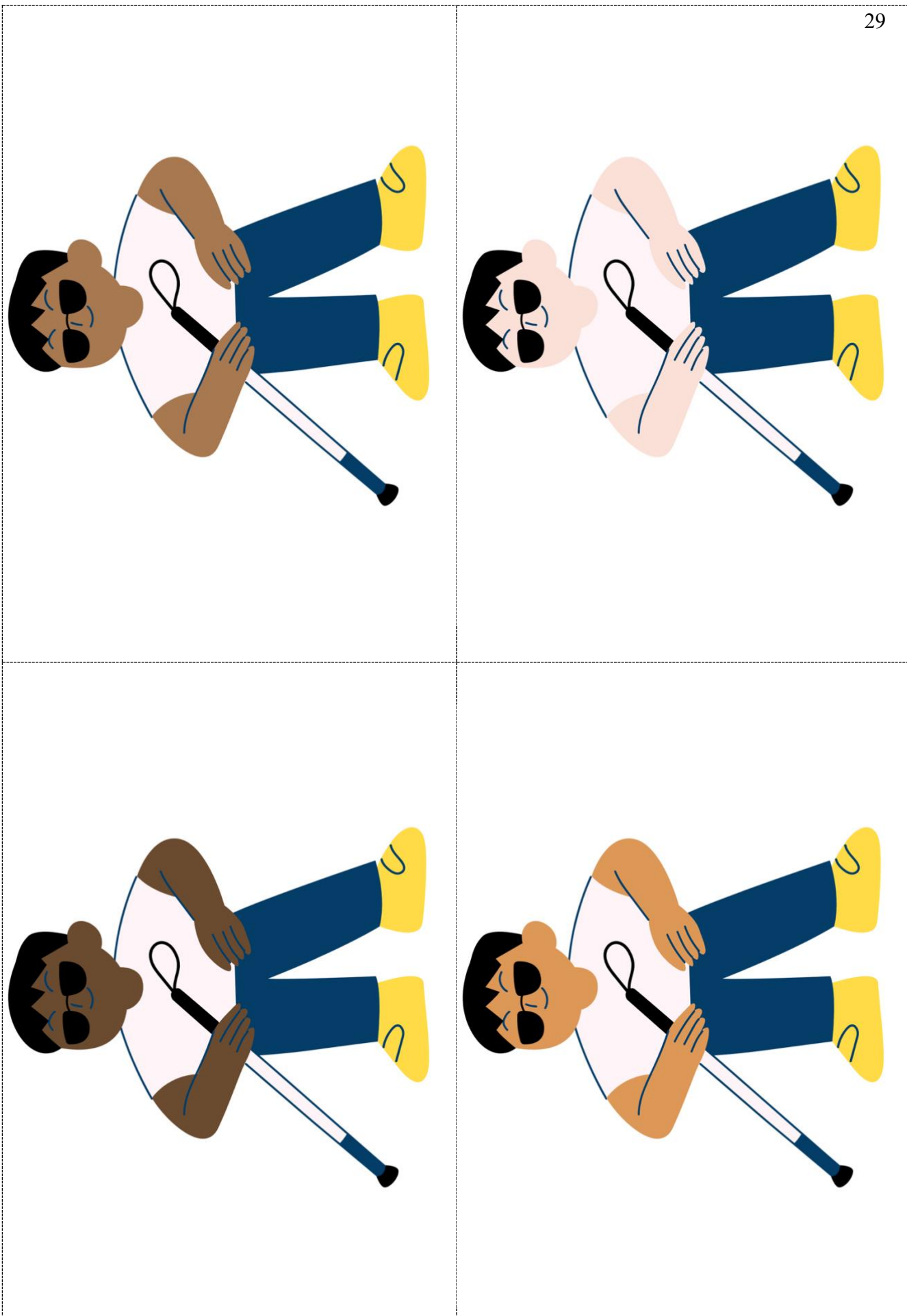
The last four images in the "deck" demonstrate two children interacting with each other. Of the two children, one of which is presenting with a physical disability. In these four images, the idea is to show the children that despite a child's physical impairment or mobility device, they are still able to engage in activities just like the rest of the classmates. These images are to encourage the class that they can and should accept, include, and support their classmates who are presenting with something different than themselves. Take these and adapt them to the current situation in your classroom, if needed.

The way you utilize these cards is ultimately up to you. These can be used prior to, during, or after a child's transition into your classroom. You can choose to prioritize the cards that apply to your classroom (i.e. a child in a wheelchair and a child using glasses), or you can choose to use all of them for discussion. If you choose to use cards which apply to your classroom, it is imperative to not single out one child. All 13 cards could be utilized as a teaching moment for your class; there is value to discussing other disabilities that children may interact with in the community. This can be an added way to prepare children for other life experiences outside of their early childhood education.



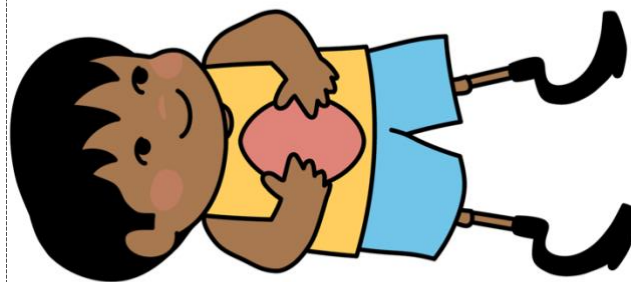
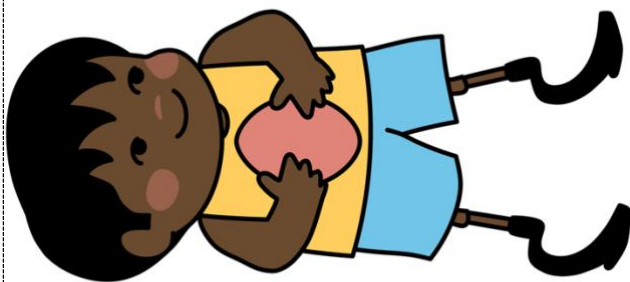
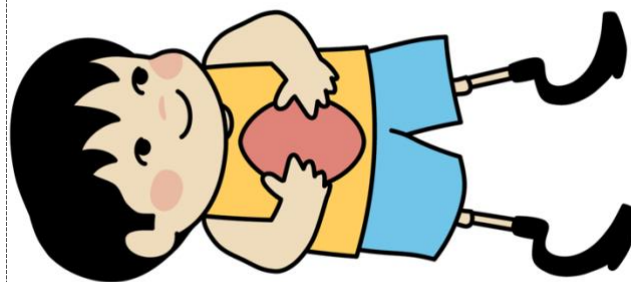
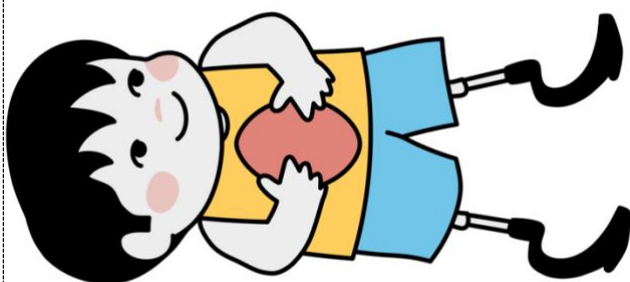


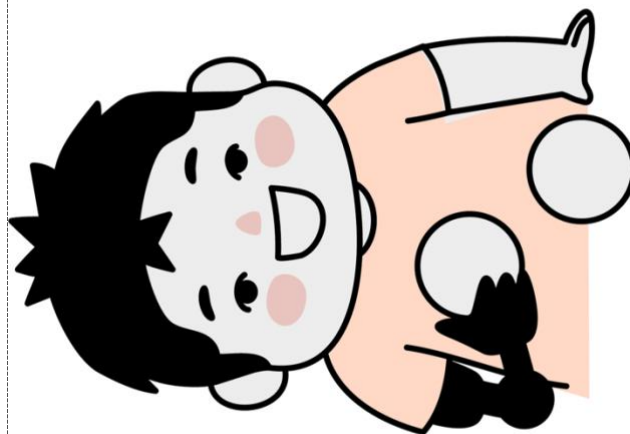
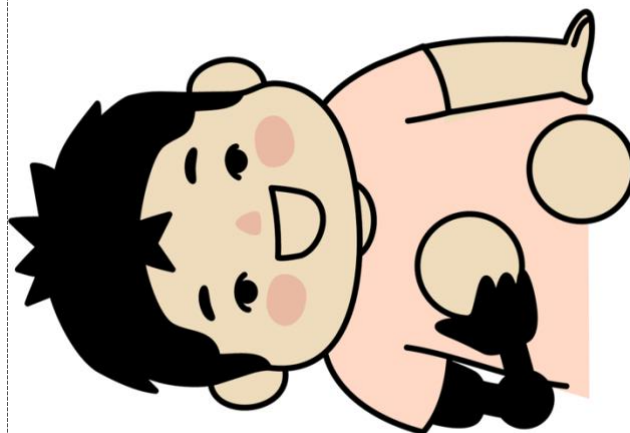
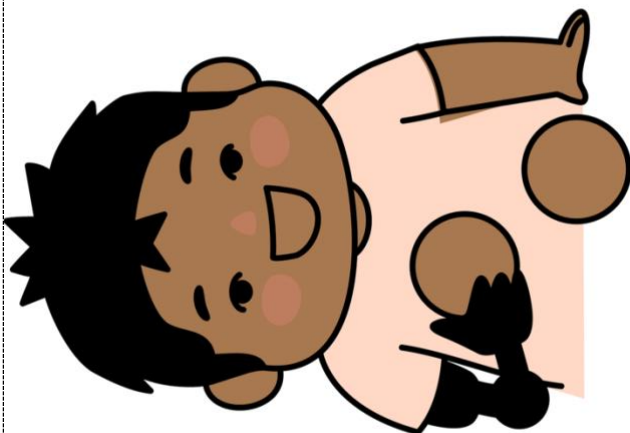


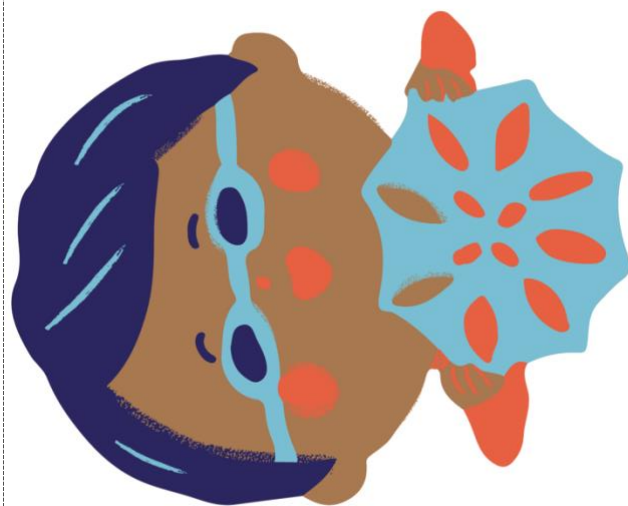
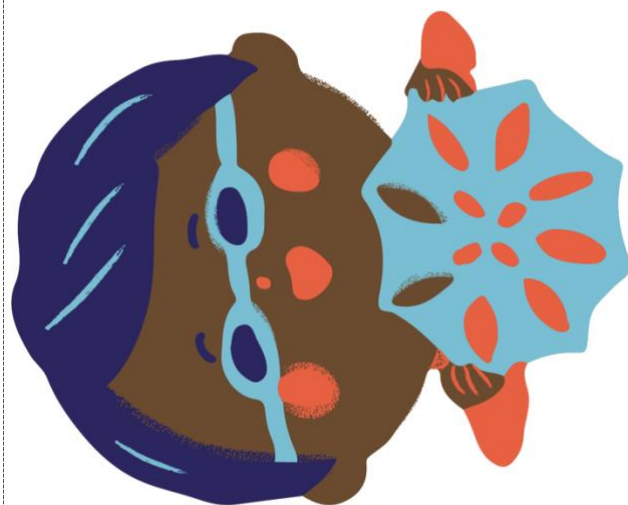


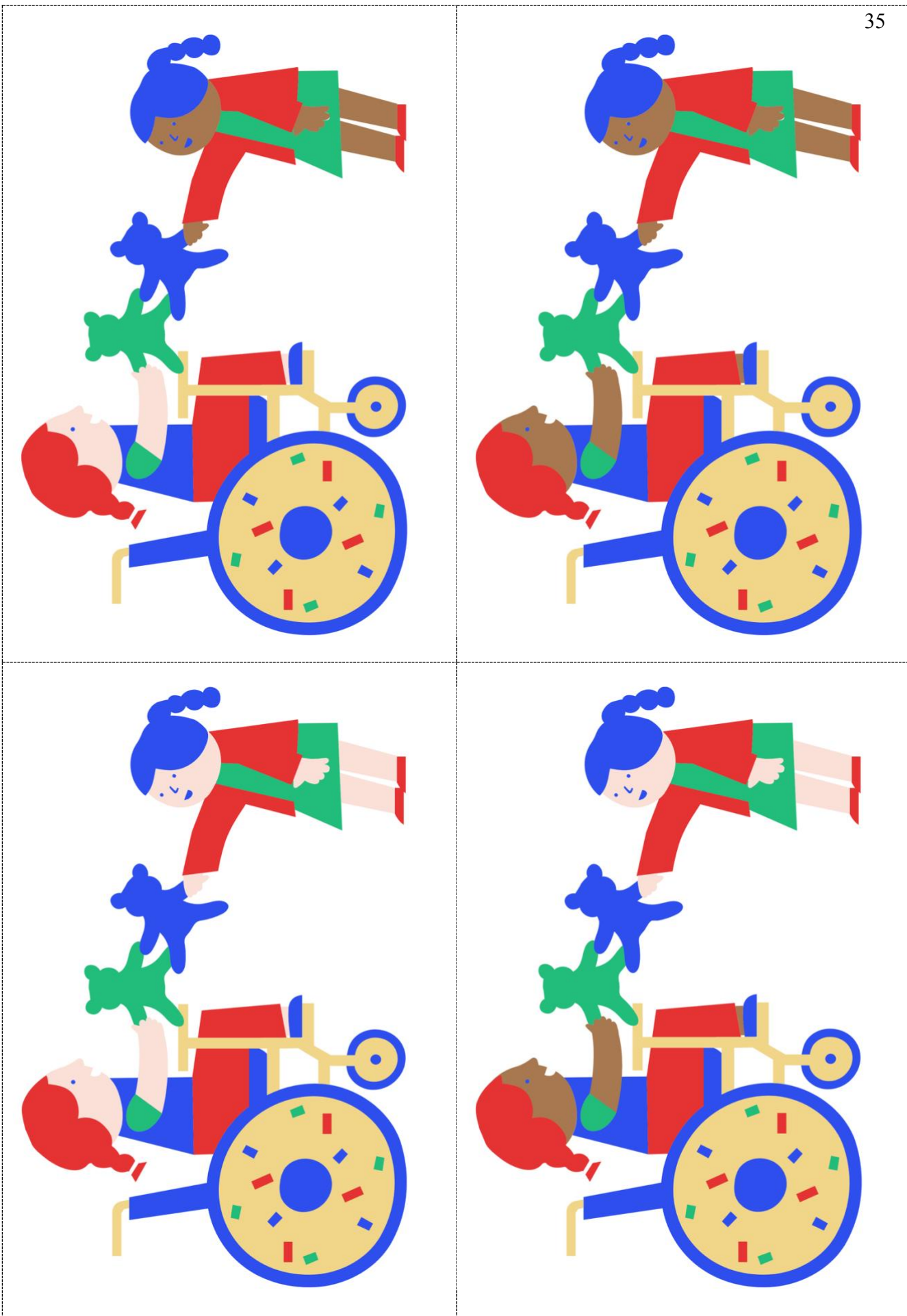


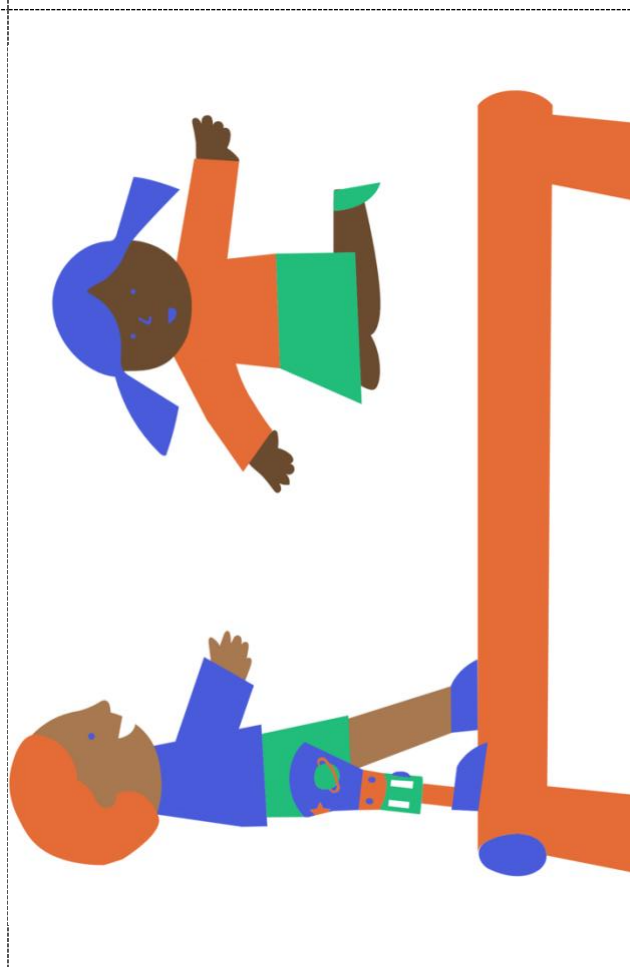


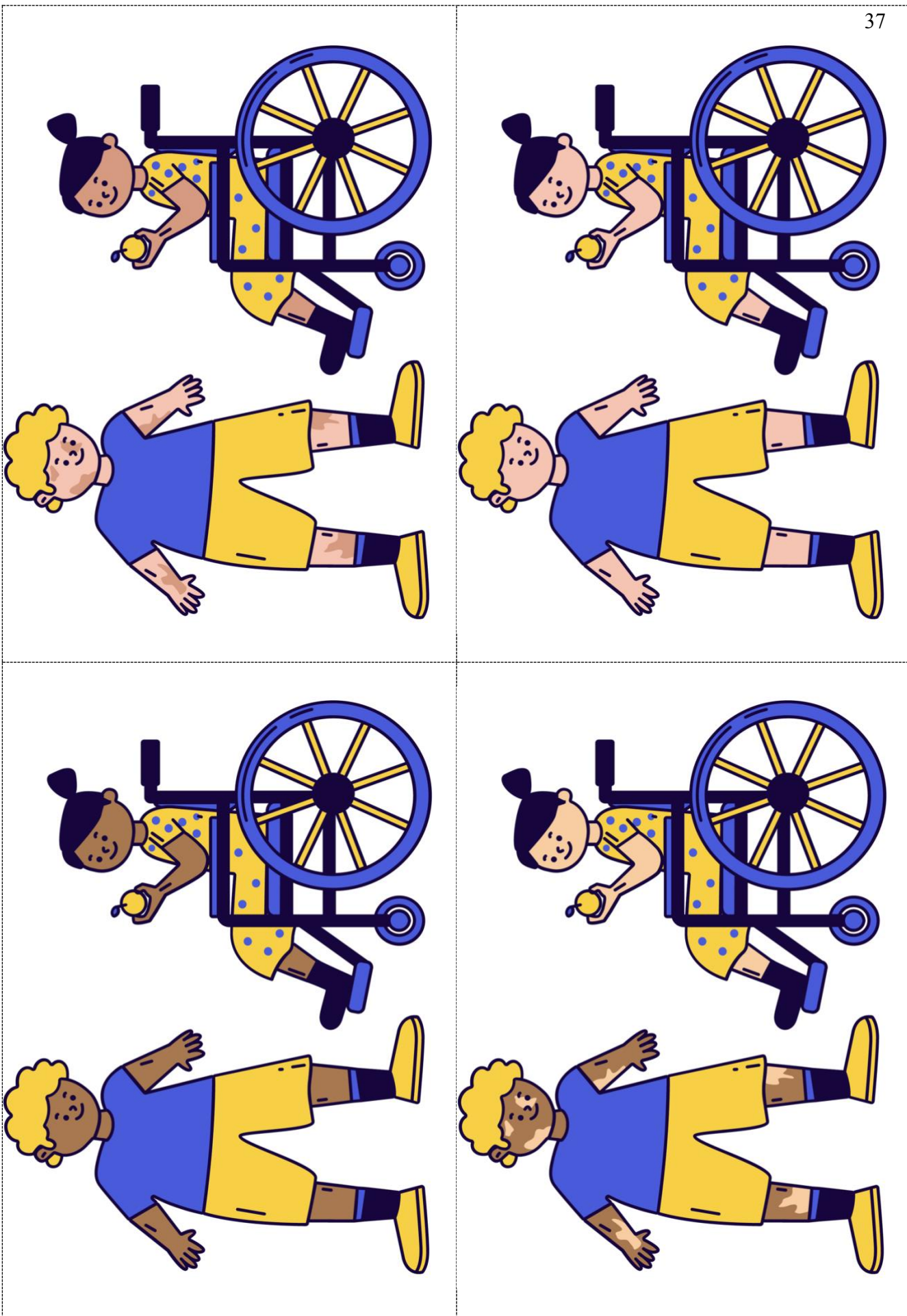


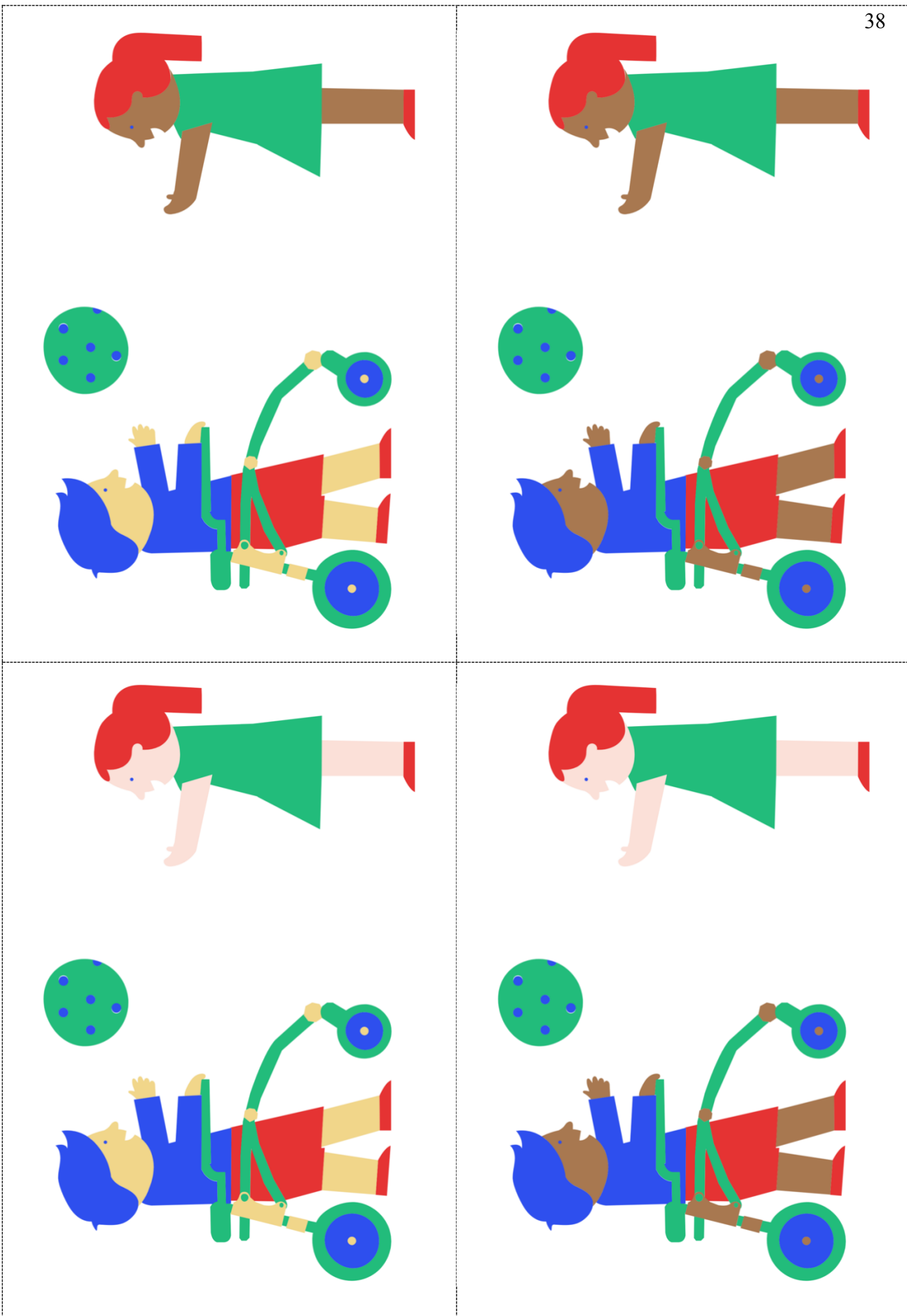












Disability Picture Cards Information Handout

These talking points are in correspondence to the above picture cards. They are each labeled accordingly. Use these talking points and prompts alongside the picture cards so the children can maximize their learning about what they see in each image. You are encouraged to prompt additional questions and allow the conversation to lead itself. This activity is targeting the **task**.

Card #1 – Hearing Device

- *Person*
 - This is a child with a hearing device. Sometimes our bodies are different and need different things. In this photo, this is a child whose ears needed a little more help. This friend's ears have a harder time hearing on their own.
- *Context*
 - Hearing devices are like tools. These hearing aids are going to help this friend whose ears hear differently.
- *Task*
 - You can still say hi to this friend! When they have their hearing device in their ear, they will be able to hear us better. What are other ways to say hello to someone if we aren't sure if they can hear us? What if we don't think they can understand us? You could smile. You could wave. You could hand him a toy to see if he wants to play with you.

Card #2 – Mobility Aids

- *Person*
 - This is a child who is utilizing forearm crutches to assist with stability. For this friend and his body, he is needing a little bit more support to keep his body safe.
- *Context*
 - All bodies work differently. Some people have the ability to stand and move without crutches, and some people do not.
- *Task*
 - There are many things this friend is still able to do. How could we invite him to play? What games would be fun to play with this friend?

Card #3 – Wheelchair

- *Person*
 - This child is utilizing a wheelchair for mobility. She is reading her book!
- *Context*
 - Some people use wheelchairs to move around just like others move around with their feet. The wheelchair that this friend is using is almost like another part of her body, so, we have to ask her before we can touch it.
- *Task*
 - What questions do you have about her or her wheelchair?

Card #4 – Visual Impairment

- *Person*
 - This child has a visual impairment. They are using a guide cane for safety.
- *Context*
 - Some friends are able to use their eyes to see while they move around the room. There are some friends, though, that cannot see with their eyes. Many times, people will use a guide cane like this to help protect them if they cannot see with their eyes. This protects them and keeps them safe so they can feel for things in space. This is their way of protecting their body, just like many of us use our eyes to protect our bodies.
- *Task*
 - What are other tools we use to keep ourselves safe?

Card #5 – Communication Deficit

- *Person*
 - This is a child who is communicating with sign language. The girl in this photo might have a hard time hearing, learning words or speaking out loud.
- *Context*
 - Many times, people use sign language as their way to communicate without having to hear or talk.
- *Task*
 - How can we still include her? What are other ways to invite this friend to play?

Card #6 – Wheelchair

- *Person*
 - This is another child who is utilizing a wheelchair for mobility. He likes to play basketball!
- *Context*
 - The wheelchair is used to help the child get from one space to another.
- *Task*
 - What other activities could you invite this friend to play with you?

Card #7 – Prosthetic Legs

- *Person*
 - This friend has two prosthetic legs. This means that his legs work differently. He is still able to move around with these legs.
- *Context*
 - His body works differently and that's okay. These legs were made just for him to be able to get around.
- *Task*
 - In the photo, he is holding a football. What other games or activities do you think he might like to play? What could you play with this friend?

Card #8 – Prosthetic Hand

- *Person*
 - This individual has one prosthetic hand. His body works differently and that's okay.
- *Context*
 - Some bodies and hands are different. His team of helpers were able to make this hand just for him so that he can play with toys too!
- *Task*
 - What toys could you play together?

Card #9 – Glasses

- *Person*
 - This child uses glasses to be able to see better. His body works differently and that's okay.
- *Context*
 - Everybody's bodies are different and this can include our eyes. Some of us have eyes that can see without glasses, and some of us have eyes that need extra help to see better! When we see better, we are able to be safer. Glasses are a tool to keep us extra safe!
- *Task*
 - Look at the craft he was able to make! What other activities do you think he would like to do?

Card #10 – Friends with Stuffed Animals

- *Person*
 - In this picture, there are two friends. One friend is utilizing a wheelchair to move around, and the other friend uses her legs to move.
- *Context*
 - They are using different things to move around and that is okay. It is okay to be different. They are best friends even though they are different!
- *Task*
 - They like to share their bears with each other. What toys can you share with your classmates?

Card #11 – Friends on Balance Beam

- *Person*
 - These two friends are playing together on the balance beam. One friend has a prosthetic leg and one friend does not.
- *Context*
 - They look a little bit different than each other, and that is okay! It is okay that they are different.
- *Task*
 - The balance beam is a fun place to play! Where else could you play with this friend? How could you ask them to play?

Card #12 – Friends Chatting

- *Person*
 - These two friends are talking to each other before snack time. One of them uses a wheelchair to move around and the other does not.
- *Context*
 - They use different ways to move around and that is okay! It is okay that they are different.
- *Task*
 - What do you think they are talking about?

Card #13 – Friends Playing Catch

- *Person*
 - In this picture, the two friends are throwing a ball back and forth. One friend is using a walker and the other friend is not.
- *Context*
 - The friend is using it to keep himself safe. The other friend is using their legs to keep them safe. They use different ways to keep themselves safe and that is okay!
- *Task*
 - Even though two friends are different, they can still play catch with each other! What else could these friends play with each other?

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