

Include

Include people with disabilities in service roles with children and youth. Seeing people with disabilities in service roles shows that everyone belongs and everyone contributes. It teaches that individuals with disabilities are not always recipients of service, but providers of service, too.

- *Volunteers*
- *Guest speakers*
- *Employees*
- *Program participants*

Explore

Explore the ways people with varying abilities use technology in their daily lives. Looking at technology, children and youth see a wide variety of ways in which individuals interact in the world. It focuses on what individuals can do rather than on what they are unable to do. For example:

- *Teach kids about assistive devices like wheelchairs, hearing aids, and TTY services.*
- *Look at accessibility features on computers/tablets and at software that enables people with disabilities to communicate, learn, and create.*
- *Discuss how new ideas might change people's lives in the future.*

Model

Model respectful ways to talk about disability. Children and youth learn the language that they see and hear. Language used to describe people can be damaging or empowering. Part of creating an inclusive environment involves keeping children and youth safe from hurtful language.

- *Speak respectfully about disability, using language that is neither belittling nor patronizing*
- *Communicate directly with individuals with disabilities rather than talking about them.*

Invite

Invite individuals with disabilities to share their experience. The best way to learn about people is to be intentional about getting to know them. People with disabilities have unique perspectives to share. It is best to learn directly from them.

For example:

- *Ask an individual who uses a wheelchair to talk about physical barriers and accessibility.*
- *Ask individuals with disabilities to talk about their interests, their work, and their lives*

Encourage

Encourage children and youth to ask questions about disability. Most kids have questions and curiosities about disability. Telling a child or youth not to look or not to ask questions teaches them to fear and avoid people with disabilities.

- *Give straight-forward answers*
- *Respect confidentiality*
- *Be willing to admit that you don't know all the answers*

This resource has quick tips on how to incorporate disability awareness in your program. Program Leaders can use this Tip Sheet as an outline for staff training. Program staff can use this Tip Sheet to spark ideas for disability awareness activities.

Teach

Children & Youth To...

Learn About Disability Culture

This is a great way to celebrate diversity and to recognize the contributions of the disability community. Learning about disability culture can give children and youth with disabilities a space to feel a sense of pride about this aspect of their identities.

- *Integrate disability awareness as a regular part of your program culture instead of limiting it to a specified day/month.*
- *Read stories written by people with disabilities.*
- *Learn about it and share it:*
Disability Social History Project: www.disabilityhistory.org
Disability History Museum: www.disabilitymuseum.org



Question Norms

Children and youth are often taught to value what is normal. They feel pressure to be like everyone else and need to know that it is okay to be unique. Learning to question norms can also encourage them to be accepting of others. Be careful about representing things as normal.

- *Ask, "Do we all have to be the same?"*
- *Say, "All girls do not like pink."*
- *Say, "Some kids don't like football."*



Recognize Disability Stereotypes

Understanding what a disability stereotype is can help children and youth question the misconception that all people with disabilities are alike. Really understanding someone requires getting past stereotypes and learning the individual characteristics that make him or her unique.

- *Common stereotypes portray people with disabilities as: tragic, incapable, burdensome, comical, etc.*
- *When reading stories and watching movies, talk about the depictions.*
- *Discuss examples that counter these stereotypes.*
- *Do not use simulation activities to teach kids what it's like to have a disability.*

