

# “Together We’re Better” Diversity Celebration Toolkit



The Arc Maryland, Inc., in partnership with the Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Department of Disabilities, the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, and Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, is pleased to announce its “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign.

The “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign will kick-off October 1 in honor of Maryland’s Disability History and Awareness Month. The Arc Maryland has compiled this [DIVERSITY CELEBRATION TOOLKIT](#) to assist teachers, counselors, volunteers and other staff in preparing lesson plans and activities for students (K-5) to celebrate the diverse abilities of all students.

The highlight of the “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign is a Poster Contest for elementary classes. The Poster Contest and awareness activities enhance students’ awareness of inclusive practices while engaging in activities that create a sense of caring and community.

For more information on the “Together We’re Better” Inclusive Education Awareness Campaign and Elementary School Poster Contest please visit [www.thearcmd.org](http://www.thearcmd.org) or contact Shaneka Harris, Advocacy Events Coordinator, The Arc Maryland at (410) 571-9320 or email [sharris@thearcmd.org](mailto:sharris@thearcmd.org).

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## Alignment with Maryland State Curriculum Indicators:

### Grades K-5

**Primary Subject:** Health

**Additional Subject Area Connections:** Art

### Health

1.A.1.c Demonstrate ways to communicate respect for diversity, including mental and physical disabilities, culture, and race/ethnicity

## Art

3.2.a Identify sources for ideas and describe the processes used to create artworks based on those sources

**Unit Title:** Disability Awareness

**Unit Description:** Students will participate in activities that promote disability awareness and celebrate diversity.

### Experiences:

- Students participate in disability awareness activities (e.g., guest speakers, The “R” Word - Shredding Presentation – see link below for “A Step-by-Step Guide to Planning an Interactive Student Presentation Negating the Power of the “R” Word, Stereotypes, and Bullying”)
- Students read books related to disability awareness and acceptance.
- Students view videos (links shown below) to understand disabilities.
- Students design and create posters demonstrating knowledge gained.
- Students complete one-page post-activity surveys to demonstrate attitudinal changes and increased knowledge following campaign activities.

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## BACKGROUND

### What are “Inclusive Schools?”

Inclusive Schools are characterized as those that:

- Make every student feel welcome and provide the supports they need to learn.
- Embrace the understanding that every student is unique, and therefore, learns differently.
- Understand that all children learn better if teaching is tailored to their abilities and interests.
- Collaborate with families.
- Hold high expectations for student success.

Schools that use inclusive education practices accept and embrace students of all abilities and disabilities as members of their age-appropriate general education classes. Students with disabilities in the school belong there because they live in the neighborhood jurisdiction; there is no group or regional “special” program based on a disability type or label. Special education services are delivered through a collaborative instructional model in which special educators and general educators plan to provide services within the general education curriculum. Students who have disabilities – no matter how significant – receive their special education services in general education settings; there is no group program that they must attend in order to receive instruction. Inclusive schools seek to find solutions when students are challenging; use collaborative problem-solving in team work; welcome students who traditionally have been sent to separate special programs; and work with families to develop truly individualized services for each student.

***Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling*** (see link to booklet below under *RESOURCES*) includes a laundry list of more than two dozen practical ways educators can make their classrooms more inclusive. Those inclusive practices, previously published in national reports, include:

- LESS whole-class, teacher-directed instruction
- LESS classroom time devoted to fill-in-the-blank worksheets
- LESS effort by teachers to thinly "cover" large amounts of material in every subject area
- LESS tracking or leveling of students into "ability groups"
- MORE active learning in the classroom
- MORE emphasis on higher-order thinking and learning of key concepts and principles
- MORE responsibility transferred to students for their work
- MORE attention to affective needs and the varying cognitive styles of individual students
- MORE delivery of special help to students in general education classrooms.

## RESOURCES

### PRESENTATIONS/ASSEMBLIES

- The “R” Word – Shredding Assembly – A Step-by-Step Guide to Planning an Interactive Student Presentation Negating the Power of the “R” Word, Stereotypes, and Bullying [http://www.thearcmd.org/files/R%20WORD%20TOOLKIT\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.thearcmd.org/files/R%20WORD%20TOOLKIT_FINAL.pdf)  
(best suited for grades 4 and above)
- Disability Awareness Day – invite guest speakers to come to your school – including individuals with disabilities as well as representatives from nonprofit and community service agencies.
- Puppet Show – Puppets and scripts to help younger children learn about disabilities and chronic illnesses. <http://www.pacer.org/puppets/count.asp>

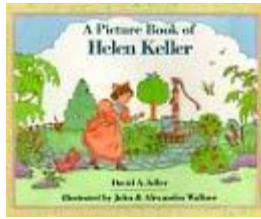
### VIDEOS

- “Offense Taken” - 20-minute documentary  
<http://rtc.umn.edu/rtcmedia/offensetaken/>

*NOTE: A copy of this video may be borrowed from The Arc of Maryland by contacting Shaneka Harris at [sharris@thearcmd.org](mailto:sharris@thearcmd.org) or (410) 571-9320.*

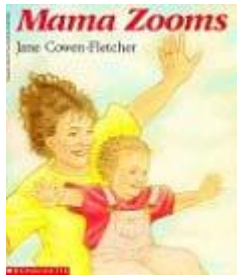
- Blueberry Shoes Productions “30-second Public Service Announcement”  
“R” Means RESPECT  
Written and produced by Will Schermerhorn; Photos by Will Schermerhorn  
Music created by Will from guitar loops licensed from [GuitarWavs.com](http://GuitarWavs.com)  
ENGLISH - <http://www.blueberryshoes.com/psa/index.html>  
SPANISH - <http://www.blueberryshoes.com/psa/espan/index.html>
- Spread the Word to End the Word – Special Olympics –  
<http://www.youtube.com/endtherword>

**BOOKS for Students (K-5)**



**A Picture Book of Helen Keller** - David A. Adler

A factual look at the life of this amazing woman, told for early readers.



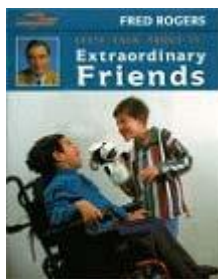
**Mama Zooms** - Jane Cowen-Fletcher

A simply told story of a young child's mother who zooms - in her wheelchair!



**Moses Goes to School, Moses Goes to a Concert** - Isaac Millman

At a public school for deaf children, Moses and his friends share experiences like those at all public schools.



**Extraordinary Friends** - Fred Rogers

In this latest of the "Let's Talk About It" series, Mr. Rogers talks about children with all types of disabilities.



**Susan Laughs** - Jeanne Willis

Rhyming couplets describe common emotions and activities experienced by a child in a wheelchair.

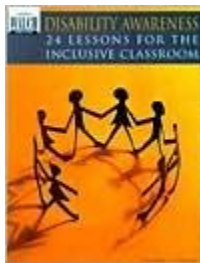


**The Secret Garden** - Frances Hodgson Burnett

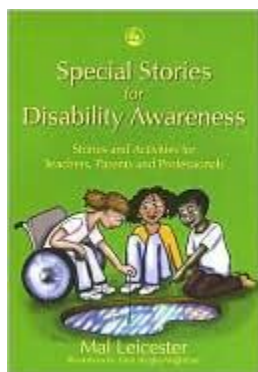
Ten-year-old Mary comes to live in a lonely house on the Yorkshire moors. She and her cousin, Colin (who believes he is an incurable invalid), soon discover the mysteries and magic of a locked garden. (Also available in audio book format)

## READING FOR ADULTS and OLDER STUDENTS

- Booklet: Improving Education: The Promise of Inclusive Schooling –Urban Schools Institute  
[http://www.urbanschools.org/pdf/IE02.pdf?v\\_document\\_name=Improving%20Education%20Booklet](http://www.urbanschools.org/pdf/IE02.pdf?v_document_name=Improving%20Education%20Booklet)
- Inclusive School Communities for Students with Disabilities: 10 Reasons Why  
[http://ici.umn.edu/products/inclusive\\_schools.pdf](http://ici.umn.edu/products/inclusive_schools.pdf)

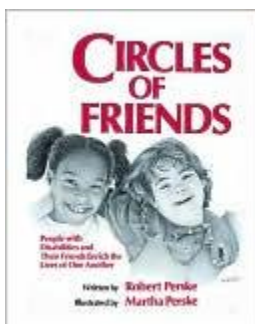


**Disability Awareness**  
by Kimberly Williams  
Paperback  
ISBN-13: 9780825138270  
Pub. Date: 08/01/1999



**Special Stories for Disability Awareness : Stories and Activities for Teachers, Parents and Professionals**  
by Mal Leicester , Taryn Shrigley-Wightman

ISBN-13: 9781843103905  
Pub. Date: 11/15/2006



**Circles of Friends : People with Disabilities and Their Friends Enrich the Lives of One Another**

by Robert Perske , Martha Perske  
ISBN-13: 9780687083909

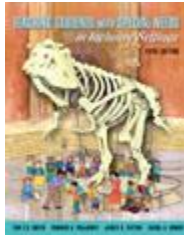


Kids with Special Needs : Information and Activities to Promote Awareness and Understanding

by Veronica Getslow , Beverly Armstrong , Veronica Getskow

ISBN-13: 9780881602449

Pub. Date: 01/28/1996



Teaching Students with Special Needs in Inclusive Settings 5th Edition

[Tom Smith](#), [Edward Polloway](#), [James Patton](#), [Carol Dowdy](#)

Apr 2007, Paperback, 640 pages

ISBN13: 9780205530571

ISBN10: 0205530575

## WEB SITES

- [Band-aids and Blackboards](#) - This is a site about growing up with medical problems. Three areas (one for kids, one for teens, and one for adults).  
<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides/>
- [Count Me In](#) – A puppet program designed to help children learn about disabilities and chronic illnesses. <http://www.pacer.org/puppets/count.asp>
- [Disability Awareness Resources](#) From the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)  
<http://www.nichcy.org/familiesandcommunity/pages/awareness-inclusion.aspx>
- [Disability History Museum](#) A searchable, theme-based digital collection that exists only online offering documents and images related to disability history in the United States, drawn from public and private collections around the country.  
<http://www.disabilitymuseum.org/>
- Building Disability Awareness & Inclusion -  
[http://kcsos.kern.org/SpecialEd/stories/storyReader\\$263](http://kcsos.kern.org/SpecialEd/stories/storyReader$263)
- Disability Social History Project <http://www.disabilityhistory.org/index.html>.
- All Kids Can – class project ideas <http://www.allkidscan.com/classprojects.htm>

- Lesson 1: Getting To Know People with Physical Disabilities (Grades K – 2)  
[http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum\\_connections/fall\\_2005/fall\\_lesson\\_1\\_2005.asp?cc\\_section=lesson\\_1](http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/fall_2005/fall_lesson_1_2005.asp?cc_section=lesson_1)
- Disability Awareness Core Information  
<http://www.openroad.net.au/access/dakit/disaware/handout12.htm>
- Developing Peer Support in the Inclusive Classroom, Sue Watson  
<http://specialed.about.com/od/integration/a/awareness.htm>



The Arc Maryland works to create a world where children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities have and enjoy equal rights and opportunities.

For more information, please see our website [www.thearcmd.org](http://www.thearcmd.org) or email [info@thearcmd.org](mailto:info@thearcmd.org).