

Just Like Me

Physical Limitations Unit



Dear Physical Limitations Unit Volunteers,

Welcome to the 'Just Like Me' program. If your experience as a volunteer is anything like that of the many volunteers that have preceded you, you are in for an enriching experience. This program offers us the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the fourth grade curriculum and to the social and moral development of our students. This program is fun for the students and for the volunteers, but it can also be a challenge. Students certainly can have fun, but will benefit from help to keep their focus on the purpose and deeper meaning of each activity.

The purpose of the following background information is to provide volunteers with more information about Physical Limitations. It is hoped that this information will help you to avoid misconceptions, to use appropriate disability-positive ('People first') language and to feel more comfortable answering questions that may arise during class activities.

In this unit, disability is considered an equal opportunity circumstance and does not discriminate according to race, class, gender, ethnic background or religion. Physical limitation can present at any time in our life and chances are good that almost all of us will personally experience disability, temporary or permanent, at some point in our lives. Viewed from this perspective, disability is a natural occurrence—something to be expected and accepted, and should not be viewed with irrational fear as it is something we all will and can live with.

The focus of physical limitation definition used in this unit is the category of chronic limitations. As a teaching tool, the section on different types of disabilities has been grouped according to their method of onset, although there can be some overlap between categories:

- **Birth:** Cerebral Palsy, muscular dystrophy, spina bifida, dwarfism, cleft lip/palate
- **Injury:** Severe burns, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury, amputation
- **Chronic Illness:** Heart disease, stroke, cancer, amputation, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, Parkinson's disease, Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's disease), post-polio syndrome

Many physical limitations caused by injury or chronic illness, have a dramatic onset and are accompanied by a wide range and degree of severity of physical symptoms and accompanying issues. While most will persist throughout life, some secondary aspects of a physical limitation can be managed with treatment such as medication or rehabilitation therapies such as physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy. The presence of a physical limitation does not indicate the presence of a cognitive limitation.

It is important to remember that the vast majority of people with physical limitations are **not 'sick'** and do not want to be treated as such, no matter how great their limitations may appear to others. The **medical model** of labeling people as if they are a bundle of symptoms and the **rehabilitation model** with the goal of treating people in need of being 'fixed' have tainted our perceptions of people with disabilities. Although they may still be viewed as 'patients' in the doctor's office, just like you and me, persons with limitations have the same roles in life to fulfill—that of mother, father, husband, wife, student, sibling, employer, employee, etc.

A physical limitation can also be a **hidden disability**. Sometimes a person with a physical limitation or chronic illness looks just like everyone else. (Examples of hidden limitations include arthritis, heart disease, fibromyalgia, diabetes, Crohn's disease and many more.) Schoolmates, as well as adults, may misunderstand the need for deferential treatment and extra privileges. It might be thought that someone with a hidden disability is spoiled, overprotected, or that they don't have a limitation when that is simply not the case.

This unit also offers a unique opportunity to explore the kinds of barriers between people with physical limitations and those without them. The discussion will include two types of obstacles that people with limitations encounter: architectural and attitudinal barriers.

Architectural barriers can be seen and touched, like stairs or a heavy door. There are numerous federal and state laws designed to improve accessibility and limit the continued presence of architectural barriers. Numerous organizations exist that are charged with the mission of monitoring compliance to these laws. While numerous obstacles still abound, in school, sports, community and home life; the growing availability of assistive technology has helped to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. A relatively new concept that is beginning to take hold is that of **universal design**. This is also known as inclusive and human-centered design, a way of thinking about and constructing more accessible environments for humans in all stages of life. Universal design means designing products, buildings and constructed environments (i.e. playgrounds) in such a way that it is maximally usable by everyone, without additional changes or retrofits. The goal of universal design is to create a world that fits everyone, whether you are an active child, someone advancing in years, a mother pushing a stroller or a person who uses a wheelchair or crutches for mobility.

Attitudinal barriers are obstacles that can be heard or felt, such as when a person assumes someone who uses a wheelchair can't drive themselves or play basketball, so he or she are not invited to come along or to join a game. Programs like 'Just Like Me' strive to eliminate attitudinal barriers by helping children learn about disabilities in their early years and grow up without the prejudices of '**ableism**.' (Discrimination against people with disabilities in favor of people who are not disabled is called ableism. Advocates of the term argue that ableism is analogous to racism and sexism in that mainstream society devalues and oppresses people with disabilities, while privileging those without disabilities.)

'The Just Like Me' program acknowledges the differences between individuals with the goal of recognizing what we have in common. The needs of all persons for respect, self esteem, family bonds, friendship, accomplishment and independence are emphasized. These goals are underscored to help us counter the stereotypes and inappropriate generalizations that can still be seen in society.

Labels create a barrier to understanding and effective relationships. Avoid using words that label people with their disability—such as amputee, quadriplegic. Use 'people first' language to emphasize the person not the physical limitation. (i.e. Boy with a congenital amputation, child with cerebral palsy)

The Physical Limitations unit focuses on building communication skills as an important way of bringing students together to explore and share their commonalities while

preventing isolation or bullying of peers who may act or look different. Underlying these objectives is the basic premise of teaching tolerance and understanding. The following points are emphasized:

- **Learning to ask for help or wanting to offer assistance** can be difficult and may bring up uncomfortable feelings. This is true for **both** people with physical limitations and people without physical limitations.
- **It is natural to feel uncertain about how to interact** with someone who has a physical limitation and it very often can be a rewarding experience to try.
- Some people with physical limitations will take **extra time** to complete a task or may perform it in a **different way**.

Thank you for volunteering for the 'Just Like Me' Program in the Physical Limitations Unit. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

The Just Like Me Team

Just Like Me: Physical Limitations Unit

Glossary

Ableism is used to describe discrimination against people with disabilities in favor of people who are not disabled. An ableist society is said to be one that treats non-disabled people as the standard of 'normal living', which results in places and services that are built to serve 'standard' people, thereby excluding those with disabilities.

Adaptive Equipment is equipment or tools that have been modified to assist a person in functioning more independently.

Adaptive Physical Education Teacher is a teacher trained in physical education, who adapts a program and/or provides an individualized program that meets the needs of students with disabilities so they can participate in physical activities to the best of their abilities.

Alternative Communication is a way to communicate without speech through the use of gesture or assistive technology.

Assistive Technology is any device or service that enhances a person's ability to move more independently and perform tasks her or she might not otherwise be able to do.

Cerebral Palsy is a brain disorder beginning at or before birth causing uncoordinated or stiff muscles. Speech is often affected.

Congenital Amputation is the absence of development of a body part during prenatal development.

Head Injury is damage to the brain as a result of trauma or external force.

Hemiparesis is weakness on one side of the body.

Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis is a condition in children that can cause swelling, tenderness and pain in one or more joints. It can lead to impaired growth and limited joint motion.

Muscular Dystrophy is a group of degenerative muscular diseases that cause progressive muscle weakness in children and adults.

Occupational Therapist (OT) is a health care professional who assists people to increase their gross and fine motor movement in order to fulfill their life roles including self care (Bathing, dressing, and eating), work and recreation. This may include use of adaptive equipment to enhance independence.

Orthosis is a bracing device designed to support, align or correct deformity or to improve the function of parts of the body.

Paraplegia is paralysis or inability to move one's legs.

Physiatrist is a medical doctor specializing in physical medicine and rehabilitation, primarily treating people with physical disabilities and chronic medical conditions.

Physical Therapist (PT) is a health care professional who assists people to increase their gross motor function and muscle strength, range of motion, decrease pain and maintain/improve their mobility through walking and/or the use of assistive devices (i.e. walkers, crutches, wheelchairs).

Prosthesis is an artificial substitute for a missing body part, used for functional or cosmetic reasons.

Quadriplegia is paralysis of arms, torso and legs. Depending on the extent of the condition, some arm movement may remain in some people.

Speech and Language Pathologist is a health care professional who assists in helping a person communicate, either through the use of an assistive device, writing or speaking.

Spina Bifida is a condition occurring in utero which caused incomplete closure of the spinal column. This may result in weakness and paralysis in the legs and impaired sensation.

Spinal Cord Injury is caused by trauma to the spinal cord, usually a result of external force, which can result in weakness and paralysis of the muscles and impaired sensation. The extent of the injury is dependant of the level of the injury in the spine.

Stroke is a clogged or ruptured blood vessel in the brain, which subsequently may cause damage to the brain, which may result in paralysis or muscle weakness on one side of the body. Speech, sensation, coordination, ability to perform everyday tasks can be affected.

Universal Design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

Physical Limitations Unit

Just Like Me

Schedule Guidelines

Pre-education Videos: Classroom teachers will show each of the pre-education videos, at their convenience, prior to the scheduled classroom activities and guest speaker.

Briefly introduce the topic of the week: Physical Limitations

Show the videos: Kids Just Want to Have Fun! (7 minutes) –should be shown first

What's the Difference? (8 minutes) –should be shown second

Answer questions. Encourage students to write questions for later in the week.

See separate handout containing summary of video content.

Classroom Activities: Each class is scheduled for 90 minutes

Introduction to Physical Limitations: 15 minutes

'Freedom Chasers' (Video): 14 minutes running time plus several minutes for discussion

Small Group Activities: 45 minutes (Three repeating 15 minute blocks of each of the following activities)

Activity 1: Adaptive Equipment & Dressing

Activity 2: Wheelchairs and Walkers

Activity 3: Communication activities

Wrap Up: 10 minutes

Guest Speaker: Each session is scheduled for 30 minutes.

A volunteer briefly introduces the guest speaker. The guest speaker talks with the students and answers questions from the students.

Physical Limitations Unit

Just Like Me

Classroom Activities

(90 minutes)

INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS: (15 minutes, one volunteer)

Note to unit leaders:

The PowerPoint presentation has been designed to:

- Increase student comprehension by providing material in a child friendly visual format
- Provide leaders with an outline of the material that will help eliminate the need for notes or reading from the curriculum guide

This unit can also be taught without the PowerPoint if the technology is not available.

Purpose:

- To define the terms physical limitation, handicap and attitudinal barriers
- To explain the causes of physical limitations
- To discuss ways to prevent accidents that could cause a physical limitation
- To acknowledge the natural feelings and discomfort that someone might experience when first seeing a person with a physical limitation
- To increase comfort level around people with physical limitations

Materials:

- PowerPoint slides on CD
- PowerPoint projector and compatible laptop computer (Should be requested in advance)

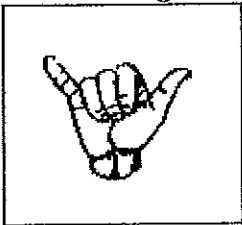
Setup:

- Students should be seated at their desks
- Projector and computer should be set up for proper viewing

Procedure:

- Leader introduces volunteers participating in the activities
- Leader leads the discussion

Introduction to Physical Limitations

Slide #	Slide Contents	Discussion
1	PHYSICAL DISABILITIES	<p>It is nice to be with you as we start the next unit of the 'Just Like Me' program.</p> <p>I would like to take a moment to introduce the volunteers that are helping us today. Please be sure to thank them at some time today, because we could not do this program without their help.</p> <p>In the last units you learned about what? (<i>People with vision impairments and people with hearing impairments</i>)</p> <p>Today we are going to learn about people with physical limitations. We are going to be giving you a lot of information and asking a lot of questions.</p> <p>I would like to teach you a sign and would like to use this sign to help me be sure that you understand what we are talking about.</p> <div data-bbox="673 982 912 1205" data-label="Image"></div> <p>The ASL sign for YOU-ME-SAME, meaning 'we agree'. It is a 'Y' hand shape, with a back and forth movement between the speakers. (Show the sign)</p> <p>Everyone give it a try. We will use this today to help me know that we agree about what we are talking about. (Agree?...use the sign)</p> <p>We will be talking about people who have physical limitation. We will also talk about how this impacts their lives.</p> <p>Think back to the movies that you saw earlier this week. The children that you saw in those movies shared many things about themselves and about their lives. Try to keep them in mind as we talk more today.</p> <p>What is a physical disability?</p>

2	<p>PHYSICAL DISABILITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of the body functions differently • Does not function at all • Is missing 	<p>A person has a physical limitation when</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a part of their body functions differently • does not function at all • is missing <p>Raise your hand if you would like to share if you have ever had a physical disability</p>
3	<p>TEMPORARY PHYSICAL DISABILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broken bones • Torn ligaments • Sprains <p>Temporary physical disabilities go away when the injury heals.</p>	<p>Temporary physical limitations such as broken bones, torn, ligaments and sprains are common examples of temporary physical limitations. These types of limitations usually go away once the injury is healed. If you have experienced this, you know what it's like to have a part of your body that doesn't work the way it did. It can make it harder for you to participate in some of the things that you like to do and need to do to get through the day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are going to be focusing on permanent physical limitations that do not go away. • We are going to talk about how these affect people's lives. • We will learn how accommodations and devices can help people with disabilities to do things more easily.
4	<p>HOW DO PHYSICAL DISABILITIES HAPPEN?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth • Injury • Illness 	<p>Permanent disabilities happen in three ways.</p> <p>Do you know what they are?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth • Injury • Illness

5	<p style="text-align: center;">BIRTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born without all or part of their limbs • Body part not fully developed • Nervous system unable to send clear messages 	<p>Some babies are born without part of their hands, arms, feet or legs. Some may have a part that didn't fully develop before birth.</p> <p>In some children, something happens during development or birth that stops the brain or spinal cord from sending clear messages.</p> <p>Do you know of any conditions that lead to these types of physical limitations? (<i>Spina bifida, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, cleft lip, cleft palate</i>)</p>
6	<p style="text-align: center;">INJURY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automobile accidents • Bicycle accidents • Sports injuries • Falls • Burns • War • Guns 	<p>Physical limitations can also occur as a result of an injury from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automobile accidents • Bicycle accidents • Sports injuries • Falls • Burns • War • Guns
7	<p style="text-align: center;">SPINAL CORD INJURY</p>	<p>Sometimes injury to the body can involve the spinal cord. Where is the spinal cord? (<i>Inside the vertebral column, runs in a canal from the brain to the end of the coccyx/tailbone</i>)</p> <p>Your spine starts at the top of your neck. Messages travel from your brain through the nerves in your spinal cord, to the nerves that tell the body parts to move or that allow the body to feel things. (<i>You may opt to have students stand and feel where their spine is.</i>)</p> <p>If the brain or the spine is injured, these messages cannot get through to the body or the messages may be mixed up.</p> <p><i>What is the result?</i> The muscles move in an uncoordinated way or not at all; a person's ability to feel things may also be impaired.</p>

8	<p>BRAIN INJURY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain messages could get jumbled • Muscles may not move in a coordinated way • Speech may be difficult to understand 	<p>The brain is what 'tells' the body to move and how to move. If the brain is injured, what happens to the message? <i>The message may not be received by the body part that is supposed to receive it, or a jumbled message might be received.</i></p> <p>What is the result? <i>Muscles might not move at all or may move in an uncoordinated way.</i></p> <p>This could happen to arms, legs and the muscles used to talk.</p>
9	<p>INJURY TO THE BODY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent damage to arms or legs • Loss of part of all of arms or legs • Severe burns can cause loss of use of limbs 	<p>People can also have limitations caused by injuries that permanently damage parts of their body. We saw kids with these types of injuries in our videos.</p> <p>Trauma can cause damage significant enough for a person to 'lose' that part. (Meaning that, that body part could not survive although the person could.)</p> <p>Severe burns can damage the skin and muscle tissue which can cause limited motion and strength of that part of the body.</p>
10	<p>PREVENTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auto accidents • Biking or skating accidents • Skiing or snowboarding accidents • Diving accidents 	<p>We really can't talk about physical limitations without talking about prevention. We need to talk about what you can do to prevent accidents and the injuries associated with them from ever happening.</p> <p>What can you do to prevent injuries associated with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car accidents? (<i>Seatbelts, never get in a car with a driver who has been drinking</i>) • Bike/scooter/skating/skiing/snowboarding? (<i>Wear helmets and pads, be aware of your surroundings</i>) • Diving? (<i>Don't dive in shallow water, be aware of what is under the water</i>)

<p>11</p>	<p>ILLNESS can affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body organ functions • Ability to move • Ability to think or speak clearly 	<p>Some people have a physical limitation as the result of a serious illness that affects their body organs or ability to move or speak clearly.</p> <p>Do you know any conditions that can result in a physical limitation? (<i>i.e. Multiple sclerosis, stroke, heart or lung disease, Parkinson's disease, ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, arthritis, polio</i>)</p> <p>Many of the examples that we have talked about are adult illnesses. It is fair to say, that many people will have some sort of physical limitation as they get older. We might be able to think of a relative who may have a physical limitation. (<i>Use the 'I agree' sign</i>)</p> <p>We have just talked about physical limitations that can happen at birth, as a result of injury or as a result of illness. Now we are going to talk about feelings some people may have about people with physical limitations.</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>FEELINGS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncomfortable, shy or curious, but don't want to stare? • Wanting to be a friend, or offer help, but not sure what to say or do? • Wanting to avoid people with disabilities? 	<p>People are likely to have a variety of feelings when they see a person in a wheelchair or a person with a disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe you are uncomfortable, shy or curious, but don't want to stare. Has anyone felt this way or had this experience? (<i>Use the sign for I agree</i>) • You might want to be their friend or offer help, but you're not sure what to say or do. Has anyone felt this way or had this experience? (<i>Use the sign</i>) • You may want to avoid the person completely. Has anyone felt this way or had this experience? (<i>Use the sign</i>) <p>All of these feeling are very natural. As you participate in this program, you will learn things that will help you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can anyone share an idea about how you could help make this situation positive for of the people involved? (<i>Taking the time to talk, asking a friend or adult for help, asking respectful questions</i>)

<p>13</p>	<p>HANDICAPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accessible transportation • A step instead of a ramp • People's attitudes 	<p>We have all heard the word 'handicap'. <i>(Use the sign for I agree)</i>. Did you know that many times that word is used incorrectly?</p> <p>What is a handicap? Handicap is an old fashioned way of referring to people with disabilities, but, what handicap really means is something that makes something more difficult or is a disadvantage to somebody or something. A handicap is a limitation placed on a person by others.</p> <p>People are not handicapped.</p> <p>Some examples of a handicaps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation that is not accessible • A step instead of a ramp • People's attitudes <p>This can be a tough point to understand. Just remember that it is the limit factor that is the handicap, not the person.</p> <p>Now let's talk about barriers that can prevent people with physical limitations from working, playing and doing things they like to do.</p>
<p>14</p>	<p>ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS</p> <p>Are excluding barriers because they assume people with disabilities can't do certain things</p>	<p>What do you think of when you hear the word 'barrier?' (i.e. A fence, a wall?) A barrier prevents access and keeps things separate, it emphasizes differences.</p> <p>Peoples attitudes can be excluding barriers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By assuming people with physical limitations can't do certain things • By assuming that people with physical challenges do not have 'strengths' • We call these ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS <p>What are some examples of attitudinal barriers? <i>(Not being picked for a team or for a cooperative learning group or other group activity in school, judging people or their ability to do something because of how they look, speak or move)</i></p> <p>Sometimes adults with disabilities do not get hired for jobs because the employer thinks they can't do the work, even though they may be very competent and capable.</p>

15	<p>Ways to be a friend:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking together and treating everyone the same way • Including everyone • Offering help • Never teasing or bullying anyone 	<p>You could be friends with people with physical limitations by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking with them • Treating them the same • Including them • Offering to help (Being able to accept the answer 'no thanks') • Never teasing • Never making fun • Never bullying <p>Doesn't this sound like how you would be a friend with anyone? Could you be a friend to someone who has a physical limitation? <i>(Use the sign)</i></p>
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VIDEO: 'Freedom Chasers' (15 minutes, one volunteer)

Purpose:

- To facilitate the understanding that individuals with physical limitations are striving to be independent while dealing with their varying degrees of dependence
- To identify that this challenge is one that we all share in life

Materials:

- 'Freedom Chaser' videotape and VCR/television

Procedure:

- An introduction is given and the movie is shown.
- Brief time for questions

Sample Discussion:

In the movie that we are about to watch we will listen to several teenagers share their experiences and knowledge about life and about living with a physical limitation. What we would like to have you think about, just as when you saw the other movies, is how the people in this movie are a lot like you.

Listen as they share their challenges, their connections and their adventures.

Sometimes the things that we see in this movie can make us feel sad or uncomfortable because you may feel 'bad' for the kids in the film. As you watch the video, try to remember that these students and their families are proud of their accomplishments, and are trying to share their successes with you.

After viewing the movie, provide a brief opportunity for questions or comments from the students. For the purposes of time management, students should be instructed to write down any additional questions and ask them of the unit leader or guest speaker later in the unit.

SIMULATION ACTIVITIES: (45 minutes total, 3 repetitions of 15 minutes)

The class will be divided into three groups. The teacher, prior to the class, determines the groupings. Each group will spend 15 minutes at each of the three simulation activities. The groups will simultaneously rotate to the next activity as directed by the timekeeper.

Students may need to be reminded that although these activities may be fun that we as students are able to 'walk away' from the imposed physical limitation. In reality, people with physical limitations are unable to do that.

It is sometimes helpful to acknowledge the student's feelings associated with trying some of these activities. Students will share feelings of embarrassment, pride, frustration, fear and many other emotions while struggling with these activities. Also, talk about the joy, happiness and pride elicited by their success with some of these activities. They may need to be reminded that the goal of these activities is not necessarily to 'succeed' or to be 'first'; rather the goal is to think about how someone may feel about having to live with this challenge every day.

Guiding Questions: Listed below are general questions for the students to consider during each of the simulation activities. The parent volunteers in each of the activities may use these questions to assist the students in thinking about what it is like to deal with a physical limitation and to foster discussion during the activities. The answers are not considered to be 'right or wrong' but it is hoped that students are able to experience these activities with sensitivity and thoughtful observation.

- How do think a person with a physical limitation feels when it takes him/her longer to do these activities as part of their daily life?
 - How did it make *you* feel?
- How do think a person with a physical limitation feels when they rely on others to do certain things?
 - How did it make *you* feel?
- Do you think a person with a physical limitation ever feels embarrassed?
 - Did anything make *you* feel embarrassed today?
- What do you think about when you see a person with a physical limitation that is independent? When they may need help?
 - How did *you* feel today when you needed help? When you accomplished what you were trying to do?
- How and when do you think you should offer to help?
- How could your school, home or play environments be changed to make it easier for all people to participate?
 - What do you see that already is designed with accessibility in mind?

Activity 1: DRESSING AND ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT (1 or 2 volunteers)

Purpose:

- To show how Universal Design is useful for EVERYONE
- To show how aids and adaptive equipment can help a person with a physical limitation to do everyday tasks

- To recognize that technology is playing an increasingly important role in allowing people with physical limitations to function independently
- To appreciate that it may take extra time for a person with a physical limitation to complete a task
- To recognize that some people with physical limitations may need assistance from other people
- To recognize that the decisions regarding the use of equipment, personal assistance and technology are unique to each individual's needs and strengths

Materials:

- Eating devices: Forks, spoons, knives, scoop plate, plate guard, cup holder
- Personal aids: Buttonhooks, long handled shoehorn, long handled reacher, dressing stick, long handled sponge, zipper pull, toothbrush, hairbrush, sock aid
- Dressing activity: Shirts with buttons, jacket with zipper pull; sneakers with laces, sneakers with spiro laces
- Assorted devices: pencil grips
- Notebook: Contains pictures of a variety of adaptive equipment with explanations of the use of each device.

Set up:

- Set up adaptive equipment devices on tables. Make sure that there is room for students to either sit at the tables or to be able to move around to see the equipment.
- Place shirts with buttons, or jacket with zipper, over the backs of chairs.

Procedure:

- Demonstrate and discuss how equipment may enable a person with a physical limitation to be more independent.
- Allow students to handle equipment items and explain how each piece of equipment is used.
- Have students practice putting shirt (Or jacket) on using only one hand. Use buttonhook to help with fastening buttons.
- If time permits, have students practice one handed shoe tying.
- Students may carefully handle the equipment. They can try to figure out what a piece of equipment is called and what it is used for. Some are more obvious than others! There is a notebook provided that describes each piece of the equipment and the indication for its use.

Sample Discussion:

Adaptive Equipment:

This equipment is designed to make many of the activities of daily living easier for someone with a physical limitation.

- If you have a physical limitation involving your hands and arms, how would that affect your life? (You might have difficulty writing, eating, dressing, etc.)
- Let's look at some devices that might be able to help you do these things.

- Emphasize the importance of Universal Design. These aids could be used and be helpful to everyone.
- The equipment may be designed to save a person's energy, substitute for an action that the person's body cannot do or provide support of a part of the body so that another part of the body can be used more efficiently.
- Not all persons will use adaptive equipment for every task.
- The prescription and training in the use of equipment like this is often determined with the assistance of Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Speech Therapists and Doctors.
- Family involvement is also very important.
- People that have a physical limitation will also experiment independently with equipment to see if it is helpful. They may decide not to use any equipment and may decide to use the help of another person.

Eating devices:

These are a cup holder, plate guard, scoop plate and built up silverware. These eating devices assist a person who has decreased hand strength or coordination, or can only use one hand.

- The plate guard and scoop plate help keep food from being pushed off the plate.
- The built up handle of the silverware is larger so a person doesn't need as much strength or flexibility to hold it.

Personal Aids

These are shoes with elastic spiro laces. These are for people who lack the coordination or strength to tie their shoes or to use their hands well. What other ways can shoes be made easier to keep on? (i.e. Velcro closure)

These are devices to help get dressed: shoe horn, dressing hook, long handled reacher, sock aid, and long handled sponge. These assist a person who has limited ability to bend and use their arms. They can also be helpful for someone with problems with balance, walking or standing. They are used to help put on shoes, socks, and pants, to reach and to help with washing.

Dressing activity: Students will be asked to put on a shirt while dealing with the imposed physical limitation of a weak/paralyzed arm. Students will be instructed to role play that only one of their arms functions and to actively use only one of their arms to put the shirt on. They should dress the weak arm, but cannot use this arm to help them get the shirt on.

- Instruct the student to put the shirt on. They should dress both the 'weak arm' and their 'strong arm'.
- They should also try to button the shirt. They may use the button hook or dressing stick if they like.
 - To use the button hook: Insert the wire through the button hole and over the button, then pull through the hole (It is not as easy as it sounds!).
- Then have the student try to get the shirt off.

- **HOT TIP!** It is easier to dress the weak arm first. When getting undressed the student should take his or her 'strong' arm out of the shirtsleeve first and then undress the arm that is weak.
- Children should be allowed to struggle with the activity. Observe the various strategies that students employ to achieve at this task. Sometimes another student will step in to help. This provides an opportunity to discuss the feelings of both the helper and the student with the imposed limitation. There are interesting feelings that can be brought out of both students and this can be a nice way to talk about how someone with a real physical limitation might feel (Or how their friend might feel).

One Handed Shoe Tying: Have the children attempt to tie a sneaker using only one hand. They may use their own shoe or one that is provided. There is no one right way to accomplish this task.

Discussion:

Although it may seem that there is a device for everything that someone may need to do over the course of a day; the amount of equipment that someone may use will vary greatly.

It is a personal choice, as to how someone may choose to use his or her energy.

Resources or help available to person with a physical limitation will vary.

Although it may be possible to be totally independent with activities, with or without the use of equipment, the choice may be to utilize the help of another person so that energy is conserved for other activities throughout the day. Independent activities may take much more time and energy to accomplish.

Physical, occupational and speech therapists are trained professionals who teach people to do things more easily on their own. People may work to learn to things and move in alternative ways to accomplish a task. This can be frustrating and may take a lot of time to learn.

These activities can generate thought provoking dialogue with students.

- What choices might they make...
 - If it took an hour every morning to get dressed?
 - If it took 10 minutes to get my coat on to go outside?
 - If it took 30 minutes to eat my snack?
 - What if someone offered to help me get dressed?
 - ...to help me eat?
- What are the things that I would want to do by myself?
- What am I willing to accept help with?
- Where am I willing to accept help?
- What do I do if I need help and there isn't any?
- What might I do differently, now, if I saw someone in need of assistance?
- How does this make me feel?

Activity 2: AMBULATORY DEVICES AND WHEELCHAIRS (2 volunteers)

Purpose:

- To provide students with the chance to experience the physical limitation of impaired ambulation (walking) through the use of wheelchairs and walkers
- To raise the student's consciousness of the existence and significance of architectural barriers
- To sensitize students to some of the difficulties and limitations of wheelchair locomotion and ambulation with assistive devices
- To develop an understanding that wheelchairs and walkers are important assistive devices and that they are not toys

Materials:

- Wheelchairs
- Walkers
- Empty backpacks, books, lidded cups filled with water

Set up:

- Plot a route that includes some or all of the following: textured surfaces, a threshold, a drinking fountain and doorways. (Avoid stairways and ramps)
- Place books, backpacks and water containers on a table near the start of the course.

Procedure:

- Students and parent volunteers gather at the beginning of the route.
- The safe use of a wheelchair is demonstrated and the route described.
- The safe use of a walker is demonstrated. Show the students how to walk and keep one leg off of the ground. Describe the route to be walked.
- If two volunteers are present: Divide the students in to two groups (One for walkers and one for wheelchairs). Students should rotate to the other piece of equipment once they have finished with the trial at the initial station. Adult volunteers will need to coordinate the 'traffic flow.'
- If only one volunteer present: Depending on the size of the group, you may need to use wheelchairs only. Supervision and safety are key concerns. Rotate to walkers as time permits.
- Allow student to maneuver through the course as time permits.
- Students can try to carry a backpack with a book in it or a container of water and experience the additional challenge.

Sample Discussion:

- Possible activities to try include for both the use of the wheelchair and the use of the walker (You will not have time for all of the list):
 - Maneuvering over different surfaces (i.e. rug, linoleum, tile)
 - Maneuvering through an obstacle course
 - Getting up/down from a chair

- Opening a door and moving through a doorway
- Trying to drink from a water fountain
- Carrying a book, lunchbox or backpack
- Getting in to the bathroom (This is a good discussion topic even if the activity is not actually done)

Wheelchairs:

- Demonstrate the proper use first!
 - Students should lock the wheelchair before getting in or getting out of the chair. Demonstrate how to propel a wheelchair forward using two arms. Push forward on the outer rims of the wheels (These do not touch the ground and therefore stay clean.). Demonstrate how to propel backwards by pulling back on both rims. Demonstrate turning by pushing forward on one rim and pulling back simultaneously on the other.
 - It is important to begin by reminding the students that these pieces of equipment are not toys and that they need to be used carefully. Equipment like this is relied on for mobility; just as those without physical limitation rely on their legs to walk.

- Discussion points (While students are using the wheelchairs)
 - Does the world look different to you while using the wheelchair?
 - What is it like to be looking at people's waists rather than their faces?
 - Imagine what it might feel like in a crowded place?
 - What problems might you have going to a movie? A sporting event? A restaurant?
 - Sometimes to gain access to some places, a person who uses a wheelchair has to call in advance to make arrangements to go in through the back door or ride up in the freight elevator. How would you feel if every time you wanted to go to a public place that you had to call ahead to make these arrangements?
 - Can all people propel their own wheelchair? Why not? (*Their bodies may be too weak*) What might they do to get around? (*Choose to use a power wheelchair, a scooter or help.*)
 - People who use wheelchairs for mobility can be totally independent.
 - People can use different types of wheelchairs for different purposes. People may use a manual wheelchair if they have the strength and endurance. Others may use a power wheelchair if they don't have the arm strength or endurance, or they may want to save their strength for other activities. Racing wheelchairs are used for competition. Shower wheelchairs can be used in a 'roll in' shower.
 - What obstacles do you see in your school? Your home? Your community?
 - What might you like to change?

Walkers:

- The use of crutches and walkers provides support and assist with balance when walking. These assistive devices require a fair amount of strength in the arms and hands to be able to use them effectively.
- A walker will provide greater support, as compared to crutches, for someone who needs assistance with walking. Someone with weak arms and impaired balance will potentially be able to walk with the support of a walker (Crutches may be too difficult to use).
- Demonstrate the proper use first: For the purpose of today's activities, students will be instructed to keep one foot off of the ground when walking with the walker. Students should place the walker slightly in front of them and as they take step forward students should use their arms to lift their body weight by pressing into the handgrips of walker and then take a step forward with the stronger leg.
- **HOT TIP!:** Do not refer to the 'weak leg' as the 'bad leg' as this sends the wrong message.
- Describe the route.
- Have students go the table and take a book and/or backpack. Ask them to carry it while walking the route. An alternative task, have the student carry the lidded container of water.

- Discussion Points (While students are using the walker)
 - How do you think you would feel to use this all day?
 - Could you carry something that might spill or break? Did you notice how much the water splashed inside your container today?
 - How would you compare walking with a walker to walking without one?
 - What makes it more difficult? (*Tiring, ties up your hands, awkward in doorways, hard to get through narrow places*)
 - Would you enjoy using the walker forever? Why? Do you think that you would get used to it?
 - Would you want people to help you when you were using a walker? How would they know you if wanted help or didn't want help?
 - Can you think of places where you could not use a walker? What might you need to do? (*Use crutches, need help, might not be able to go somewhere*)

HOT TOPIC!: Remember that today we able to experience the use of the walker and the wheelchair as an activity. When we are done, we move on to the next part of our day and can leave the walker and the wheelchair behind. It is hoped that we will bring with us the sensitivity to be aware that there are people with physical limitations that may not be able to leave these things behind. These items should not be looked at as toys, but as important mobility aids.

Activity 3: COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES

(1 volunteer)

Purpose:

- To help students recognize that technology plays an increasingly important role in allowing people with physical limitations to communicate more easily
- To help students understand that without communication a person can feel, and in fact can be, isolated
- To sensitize students to the challenges faced by individuals using alternative communication systems

Materials:

- Communications boards
- Index cards with questions for guiding discussion with partner
- Straws

Set up:

- Students sit at a table large enough for half of the group to be using the communication boards

Procedure:

- An introduction is given
- The students will work with a partner. One student is given the communication board and instructed not to talk. The other student is given the dialogue card.
- The student with the index card asks the other student the guiding conversational questions. The student using the board participates by pointing with a finger to the appropriate answers on the board.
- The students should then switch roles
- If time permits, students will use a mouth stick (A straw) to answer the questions
- Leave a few minutes for discussion questions

Sample Discussion:

How do we usually communicate? (*Speech, using our voice*) Some people with physical limitations who cannot speak clearly may use sign language, computers, gestures, facial expressions, communication boards or writing.

- If someone does not communicate with speech, it doesn't mean that they do not have anything to say.
- Without communication people can feel lonely.

Do you know that we use HUNDREDS of muscles in our mouth, neck, face and chest to speak? Think about what it takes:

- We take a breath in and then let it out as we talk.
- Air is forced through our voice box (Larynx), which is in our neck. Then the air comes out of our mouth as we speak.
- Our lips, tongue and jaw work together to make the different sounds.

Some people with physical limitations may have weak muscles or very little muscle control. They may have slurred speech or no speech at all.

- Problems with speech do not necessarily affect a person's ability to think, or indicate how smart he or she may be.
- Difficulties with eating may also be related to problems with the use of one's hands and arms but may be related to control of the face, mouth and neck muscles.
- It can take a person a great deal of energy to talk and can be very frustrating.
- Drooling may be caused by problems with muscle control, problems with swallowing or with difficulty closing the lips.

As **listeners** it is important that people are patient and pay attention. Listeners may also need some help with understanding someone with impaired speech. This help may come from another person, through the use of an assistive device or by repetition.

Communication Board:

This is an example of a communication board. These boards may include pictures or letters that someone may point to in order to communicate.

- Show students the photographs of the children and adults using communication devices
- Show students the front and back of the communication boards that will be used for today's activity
- Boards are designed with the help of Speech Therapists
 - Symbols, letters and pictures can be used
 - Must be age appropriate (*A preschooler could not use a word or letter board as well as an older student.*)
- There are other devices that are electronic and generate speech.

For this activity you are going to try to communicate without speech. Everyone will have a partner. One partner will use the communication board, without speaking, to answer some questions. Use a finger to point to the answers. Using speech, the other partner will ask the questions on the card.

- Pass out the laminated communication board to half of the students
- Pass out the laminated index cards to the other half of the students
- Instruct the students to use the communication board to answer the questions. After they have finished with the questions on Card A, they should switch roles and then ask the questions on Card B.
- If there is time, give the students using the communication board a straw. Ask them to use this as a mouth stick pointer to answer the questions:
 - What is the name of your favorite book? Sports team?
 - What are you going to do after school today?

Card A:

Speaking partner: Tell your partner that they have come to the office of the school nurse with a problem. Use the questions to help figure out what is wrong. Instruct your partner to spell out the answer if they can't find a picture.

- Are you not feeling well?
- Tell me what is wrong?
- Tell me what I can do to help?

Non-speaking partner: Think of a reason that you might need to see the school nurse. Use your finger to point to pictures or letters on the communication boards to 'talk' with your partner.

Card B:

Speaking partner: Tell your partner that they have just been to the dentist. Use the questions to 'talk' with your partner about his/her trip to the dentist. Instruct your partner to spell out the answer if they can't find a picture.

- Why did you have to go to the dentist?
- What happened while you were there?
- Did anything hurt?

Non-speaking partner: Use the communication boards to describe your visit to the dentist. Use your finger to point to pictures or letters on the communication boards to 'talk' with your partner.

Discussion points:

- How did it feel to not be able to use your voice to communicate?
- How did it feel to talk to your partner who could only communicate with the use of the communication board?
- What happened to the pace of the conversation?
- Which role was harder for you? Why?
- What are some of the challenges that you had? What challenges might a person with a physical limitation face?

People have many different kinds of conversations and have many things to share in school, work, and while out having fun or just hanging out at home.

- Can you see why it would be important to have different kinds of communication boards or different strategies to communicate ALL that you want to say?
- Can you think of other pictures you would want to have on your communication board if this were the way you communicated with others?

WRAP-UP: (5 minutes, time permitting, one volunteer)

Purpose:

- To provide a summary of the day's activities
- To provide students with a preliminary introduction to the guest speaker and the format of that class time

Materials:

- None

Set up:

- Students should be seated at their desks

Procedure:

- Brief summary is given
- The upcoming time with the guest speaker is explained
- Provide opportunity for student questions

Sample Discussion:

- I hope that you have learned that people with physical limitations have many of the same wants and needs as people without physical limitations.
- Thoughtful construction of environments like playgrounds and buildings, and adaptations to equipment, allow people with physical limitations to do all of the things that our world has to offer.
- A guest speaker will be joining us to share his/her experiences.
 - Provide brief introduction about the guest speaker that is scheduled, at a later time, to join the class.

Possible guiding questions:

- Did you learn anything today that surprised you?
- What might you share from this unit with someone who has not participated in the 'Just Like Me' program?
- Has your attitude or feelings toward people with physical limitations changed as a result of your experience?
- Are there any actions you can take to include all people?

GUEST SPEAKER: (30 minutes at a time scheduled for each class, one volunteer)

Purpose:

- The purpose of the speaker's visit is to put a personal face on the unit information.
- The speaker will tell the students a little about him/herself, about his/her experiences and perhaps about his/her feelings about living with a physical limitation.

- The students will have an opportunity to ask questions, express their curiosity and their understanding.
- This experience reinforces the concept that a physical limitation is only one of the many traits that contribute to a person's identity.

Materials:

- None, unless requested by the guest speaker.

Set Up:

- One volunteer should greet the guest speaker at the entrance to the school and assist the speaker in finding the classroom.
- Students sit at desks/tables or on the floor.
- Access to the classroom and to the area where the guest speaker will sit should be cleared for wheelchair accessibility.

Procedure:

- The volunteer introduces the guest speaker to the class.
- The guest speaker leads the classroom discussion as he/she gives a presentation and answers questions.
 - A volunteer or teacher can help facilitate discussion or questions if needed.
- The volunteer should keep track of the time and let the speaker know when 5 minutes remain.
- The volunteer should escort the guest speaker to the exit of the building and assist as needed.

Sample Discussion:

I would like to introduce our guest speaker, _____ . This is a chance for you to listen and learn more. There will be plenty of time for questions.