



National AccessAbility Week High School Lesson Resources

National AccessAbility Week is a campaign to celebrate Canadians with disabilities and raise awareness of the critical need for accessibility and inclusion for all in our communities and workplaces.

2025 Theme: Applying inclusive thinking and actions in everyday life.

Objective: Easter Seals BC/Yukon invites you to take part in the conversation about accessibility and inclusion happening this spring.

Other Important Dates:

May 1 – Deadline for Easter Seals NAAW Design Contest submissions

May 25 - 31 – National AccessAbility Week

May 28 – Red Shirt Day

May 29 – Webinar with Easter Seals BC/Yukon and Rick Hansen Foundation

Original lesson plan by Alexis Wardle from the Surrey School District in collaboration with Easter Seals BC/Yukon.

About Easter Seals BC/Yukon

For over 75 years, [Easter Seals BC/Yukon](#) has been dedicated to enhancing the quality of life, self-esteem, and independence of individuals with disabilities. Through the Easter Seals House, summer camps and other specialized programs and services, we help break down barriers and help create a more inclusive, accessible, and equitable society, empowering our community to grow and thrive.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Define ableism and describe its impact on individuals with disabilities.
2. Identify and challenge ableist attitudes and behaviors.
3. Develop strategies to promote inclusion in schools and communities.
4. Create advocacy materials that foster awareness and inclusion.

Activities:

Introduction to Disabilities:

- Watch a TED Talk or documentary about living with disabilities.
- Discuss the video and reflect on the experiences shared.

Understanding Inclusion: Discuss the Concept of Ableism:

- **Definition:** Ableism is prejudice or discrimination against people with disabilities, based on the belief that typical abilities are superior.
- **Examples:** Discuss both overt (e.g., denying someone a job because of their disability) and subtle (e.g., using ableist language) forms of ableism.
- **Intersectionality:** Explain how ableism can intersect with other forms of discrimination, such as racism or sexism, creating unique challenges.
- **Combatting Ableism:** Encourage students to challenge ableist attitudes and behaviors, support disability rights, and promote accessibility.

Brainstorm Actions to Promote Inclusion (Examples):

Easter Seals BC/Yukon Tote Bag Design Contest

<https://www.eastersealsbcy.ca/accessibility-week-design-contest/>

- Explain the contest and its theme.
- Have students create designs that promote inclusion and awareness.

Classroom Activities:

- Create posters that promote inclusive language and behaviors.
- Organize an "Inclusion Day" where students participate in activities that simulate different disabilities to build empathy.

School-Wide Initiatives:

- Start a disability awareness club or campaign.
- Advocate for accessible facilities and resources in the school.

Community Engagement:

- Volunteer with local organizations that support people with disabilities.
- Host community events that raise awareness about disabilities and inclusion.

Inclusive Actions Workshop (Teaching Lesson and Resources below):

- Conduct a workshop where students role-play different scenarios involving inclusion and exclusion.
- Discuss the outcomes and how inclusive actions can make a difference.

Reflection:

- Have students present their designs and explain the message behind them.
- Discuss how they can implement inclusive actions in their daily lives and community.

Resources

TED Talk Examples:

"The Importance of Inclusion" by Sara Mauldin: Sara Mauldin discusses the importance of including students with disabilities in the classroom and on the playground. [The Importance of Inclusion](#)

"I'm Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much" by Stella Young: Stella Young challenges the notion of disabled people being seen as inspirational simply for living their lives. [I'm Not Your Inspiration, Thank You Very Much](#)

"Our Fight for Disability Rights -- and Why We're Not Done Yet" by Judith Heumann: Judith Heumann shares her experiences as a disability rights activist and the ongoing fight for equality. [Our Fight for Disability Rights and Why We're Not Done Yet](#)

Documentary Examples:

"Forget Me Not: Inclusion in the Classroom": This documentary follows a family's fight for their child with Down syndrome to receive an inclusive education in New York City public schools. (available to rent on Youtube released 2022 1:43:11)

"Including Isaac": A short film about a boy with Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) and his story of inclusion in a private Christian school in Michigan. [Including Isaac](#)

"The Miracle Worker": The story of Anne Sullivan's struggle to teach the blind and deaf Helen Keller how to communicate. [The Miracle Worker](#)



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Video Examples:

FairnSquare: Making the World Better for Kids with Disabilities: This animated video by Handicap International Mozambique and UNICEF teaches children how to make the world more inclusive for kids with disabilities. [FairnSquare](#)

Kids Talk About Inclusion: In this video, children answer questions about inclusion, sharing their thoughts and experiences. [Kids Talk About Inclusion](#)

Amazing Things Happen: This animation by Alexander Amelines introduces autism to young audiences, aiming to raise awareness and promote understanding. [Amazing Things Happen](#)

Discussion Prompts:

After Watching a TED Talk, Documentary, Video:

- What was the most impactful part of the video for you?
- How did the video change your perspective on disabilities and inclusion?
- What challenges did the individuals in the video face, and how did they overcome them?
- How can we apply the lessons from the video to our school and community?

Group Discussion:

- What are some common misconceptions about disabilities that you learned from the video?
- How can we combat ableism in our daily lives?
- What actions can we take to promote inclusion in our school and community?

Reflection:

- Share a personal experience where you witnessed or participated in inclusive actions.
- How can you implement inclusive actions in your daily life?
- What message do you want to convey through your tote bag design?

Inclusive Actions Workshop Resources

Objective:

Students will role-play different scenarios involving inclusion and exclusion, discuss the outcomes, and understand how inclusive actions can make a difference.

Materials:

Scenario cards (printed or written on index cards)
Role-play guidelines
Reflection worksheets

Preparation:

Create Scenario Cards:

Prepare a set of scenario cards that depict various situations involving inclusion and exclusion. Each card should describe a scenario and assign roles to students.

(Example Scenarios)

Scenario 1: Playground Inclusion

Description: A new student with a physical disability joins the class. During recess, some students invite them to play, while others ignore them.

Roles: New student, inviting students, ignoring students, teacher.

Scenario 2: Group Project

Description: A student with a learning disability is assigned to a group project. Some group members are supportive, while others are frustrated.

Roles: Student with a learning disability, supportive group members, frustrated group members, teacher.

Scenario 3: Classroom Participation

Description: A student with a speech impairment wants to participate in a class discussion. Some classmates are patient, while others interrupt.

Roles: Student with a speech impairment, patient classmates, interrupting classmates, teacher.

Role-Play Guidelines:

Provide students with guidelines on how to conduct the role-play. Emphasize the importance of empathy and respect during the activity.

- Listen carefully to your role and the scenario.
- Act out your role to the best of your ability.
- Be respectful and considerate of others' feelings.
- Focus on understanding different perspectives.

Reflection Worksheets:

Prepare reflection worksheets for students to complete after the role-play. These worksheets should prompt students to think about their experiences and the importance of inclusion.

Reflection Worksheet Questions:

Describe the scenario you participated in. What happened?
How did you feel during the role-play? Why?
What actions did you or others take to promote inclusion?
What actions could have been taken to improve inclusion?
How can you apply what you learned from this role-play in real life?

Workshop Activities:

Introduction:

Explain the purpose of the workshop and the importance of inclusion.
Introduce the concept of role-playing and how it can help us understand different perspectives.

Role-Play Activity:

Divide students into small groups and assign each group a scenario card.
Give students a few minutes to read their scenario and understand their roles.
Have each group act out their scenario in front of the class.

Discussion:

After each role-play, facilitate a class discussion using the following prompts:

What happened in the scenario?

How did the characters feel?

What actions were taken to promote or hinder inclusion?

What could have been done differently?

Reflection:

Distribute the reflection worksheets and give students time to complete them.

Encourage students to share their reflections with the class if they feel comfortable.

Conclusion:

Summarize the key takeaways from the workshop.

Discuss how students can implement inclusive actions in their daily lives and community.

Easter Seals BC/Yukon Stories

[Read more stories here](#)

- 1) The Bus Stop Story: An Excerpt from **Potential to Purpose** by **Marco Pasqua** (former Easter Seals Camper and active member of the Board of Directors)

Remember in Chapter 1 when I told you about my Electronic Arts (EA) job? I never told you about the early days and how one pivotal moment changed my life and view on accessibility, all thanks to a bus driver named Chris. A bus driver? You say, what does that have to do with accessibility? Well, at one point in our lives, most of us have had to deal with the daily grind when commuting for work, and I am no different. Whether having to wait in a massive line of morning traffic while driving or waiting for a bus and praying it's not late so you can get to work on time, we all know the struggle is real. Now, what if, on top of all that, you also had a disability? Not only would that change how you planned for your day, but also the accessibility considerations you'd have to make throughout your journey. My job at EA was very early in my career, and with little money to my name, I was at the mercy of public transit.

It was my first day starting at EA. I remember being incredibly nervous, as anyone would be starting a new job. I did everything I could to prepare—Map-quested the route (Google Maps hadn't been invented yet), made sure I knew the exact stops, and got on the bus with a bunch of other people, all wearing EA lanyards, so I figured that I was in the right place. As the bus approached my stop, I pulled the cord to let the driver know I needed to get off. For context, when you're in the priority seating or accessible area, pulling the cord makes a ding sound twice, as opposed to only once if you're in a standard seating area. It's like Pavlov's dog signaling to the driver that someone who needs assistance is getting off. I even called out, "Wheelchair getting off next stop," just to make sure. Funny thing, sometimes, you'd get a cheeky driver, and he'd respond, "Just the wheelchair? What about the rest of you?" we'd laugh, and that would be that.

When the bus stopped, the driver didn't respond this time. Not thinking much of it, I unbuckled the straps holding my wheelchair in place and made my way to the front of the bus. One by one, my colleagues stepped off, and I figured when it was my turn in line, the bus driver would see me next to him, lower the hydraulics of the bus down, flip the ramp open, and I'd be on my merry way. However, as the last person in front of me got off, the driver looked me right in the eyes, didn't say a word, closed the doors, and started driving away, even though I was right beside him in my wheelchair. Figuring he must have just been distracted, I looked at him and said, "Driver, driver, wait! I need to get off here too." But I wasn't expecting what he was going to say next. He turned to me and said, "I can't do that." He pointed to the bus stop sign, saying it didn't have the accessible symbol, which meant he couldn't let me off. The city had determined that the stop wasn't safe for someone in a wheelchair, so the next stop he could drop me off would be three blocks later.

Imagine that—I'm already nervous about starting a new job and proving myself. Now I realize that not only do I have to wheel up the steep hill to get to EA's campus, but I also would have to backtrack three blocks just to get to the bottom of the hill where everyone else was "allowed" to get off. Not only

would this mean that now I would likely be late on my first day, but by the time I'd reach the campus entrance on this wet and dreary day, I'd be drenched, my hair a mess, sleeves covered in mud. Further perpetuating a stigma that not only do people with disabilities arrive to work late, but also not presentable and ready to start their day. But the driver told me, "Sorry, that's just the policy," and that's how things went for a while.

Then, one day, I met a driver named Chris, and everything changed. You see, Chris bothered to get to know me more meaningfully. He asked me what I did for work, told me about how his nieces and nephews loved EA Sports games, and shared stories of gaming escapades of his early years. After about 2 months of being my regular driver on the route, I could tell Chris had a burning question on his mind. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore. He looked at me and said:

"Marco, I gotta ask you, man... every day, you sit on this bus and patiently wait for your stop, but I noticed that all your colleagues are getting off at a much closer stop to the EA campus 3 blocks earlier. What's the deal? Wouldn't it be easier to get off there?" Now, at that moment, I figured Chris must have missed the memo from his superiors, so I sort of puffed my chest out as though I was the smartest person on the bus and said to him:

"Well, you see that bus stop sign there? See how it's missing the accessible symbol? That means that this bus stop isn't safe for you to let me off at, and that's why I get off 3 blocks later."

But Chris just looked at me and said, "Well, I think that's stupid."

I agreed with him, but what could we do about it? I had just started at EA a few months earlier, and no offense to him, but he was just a bus driver. But Chris wasn't about to accept that. He took it upon himself to speak with his manager, who then spoke with the city planner and talked to the technicians who reviewed the stops. They determined that when this bus stop was installed, tree roots may have been lifting the pavement or other shrubbery in the way of flipping the ramp safely open. Still, after reviewing the space, there was no reason why this stop couldn't be considered "accessible."

Wouldn't you know that within two weeks, that bus stop was permanently deemed accessible? They updated the sign to reflect that. All because one person decided to speak up and say something. That's the difference between "accessibility" and "meaningful access;" technically, the bus company had an accessible stop for me; however, it would be far more meaningful and impactful if I could get off at the same stop as everyone else, not just for me but for anyone else with a disability, an elderly person, or even a mother or father with a stroller. One simple action that created a ripple effect that changed so many people's lives was updating a sign.

Chris helped me do that. And it's a lesson that I've carried with me ever since. I saw real-time change take place, and it gave me an understanding of what I could do as an accessibility consultant myself.

This wasn't just about following rules or ticking boxes but real human advocacy. Chris saw something that didn't make sense and decided to do something about it. **It's a reminder that accessibility is not just about compliance; it's about making meaningful changes that impact people's lives.**



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There are days when I go back to that stop and see that sign, and it all comes back to me. The struggle, the overcoming of that struggle, and the altruistic behavior of a man who didn't have to go out of his way to do something for me, but he did anyway.

In my mind, Chris creatively utilized his best energy and put it to use not for his benefit but for mine. In my book, that's a hero right there.

[From Potential to Purpose: Your Guide to Authentic Connections: Pasqua, Marco: 9781068829505: Books - Amazon.ca](#)