HOW TO USE LITERATURE TO TEACH DISABILITY AWARENESS
Work with your Media Specialist on locating books appropriate for disability awareness in your grade level.

When selecting books consider the following suggestions. For children in High School you might have them read one of the books off the list and evaluate the book using these guidelines.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS EVALUATING CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Children enjoy books with characters and events with which children can identify. When choosing books about people with disabilities, it is important to select those that portray people with disabilities in a positive way. When previewing books, use this guideline to select the most appropriate publications for your class.

1. **Does the book have an interesting plot or is the disability the only theme?** Choose books that show people with disabilities in the mainstream of life. The characters should be included in real situations that are relevant and enjoyable for children to read aloud.

2. **Does the book deal with the whole person or just the disability?** Often, books will focus on the character’s disabilities rather than on the character himself/herself.

3. **Is the individual shown as a capable person with strengths as well as needs?** People with disabilities have abilities, strengths and individual interests.

4. **Does the book foster positive attitudes toward others?** Often, books about disabilities show pity towards people with disabilities and give them an image of being helpless people instead of capable people.

5. **Does the book use “people first” language?** “People first” language emphasizes the person and not the disability. For example, “a person who uses a wheelchair” instead of “a person confined to a wheelchair,” and “a person with Cerebral Palsy” instead of “a Cerebral Palsy victim.”

6. **Does the book highlight similarities as well as show differences?** A child with a disability is more like his/her peers than different.

7. **Do the illustrations/photos/graphics enhance and clarify the text?** Young children are visually oriented. Attractive and interesting pictures are appealing to them.

8. **Can children understand the book by looking at the pictures?** Include books in your collection that children can look through, understand and enjoy on their own.

9. **Does the book carry oversimplified generalizations or present stereotypes about persons with disabilities (objects of pity, dependent, isolated)?** Be sensitive to the negative images of people with disabilities and avoid selecting books that perpetuate these stereotypes.

Information adapted from New Friends: Mainstreaming Activities to Help Young Children Understand and Accept Individual Differences.
Ideas for using books to teach disability awareness in the classroom:

1. Look through the required literature for your grade level and see if there are stories about persons with disabilities. Extend this lesson by bringing in other books from the media-center about this same disability for students to read and discuss.

2. Select an activity(s) from the disability awareness information that is attached to introduce disability awareness in your classroom. Use the literature available in the media center to reinforce the information you introduced in the activity.

3. Also discuss the “people first” attitude. “People first” recognizes that although people with disabilities might appear different, they are people first and their disability comes second. Choose one or more stories that demonstrate the “people first” attitude. Also, have the children make a collage. Have them work in small groups to cut out pictures in magazines that depict people helping each other. Combine the pictures in a large collage to be displayed in the classroom or somewhere else in the school.

4. Have students read one of the books of their choice and write, do a power point presentation, or give an oral book report. Have them focus on the positive information in the book regarding the person with disability.

5. Have students be “book critics” and read one of the books. They should write about what they liked and disliked about the book to display in the book critics corner or bulletin board.

Disability Awareness Material

The following is a list of books that are fiction and non-fiction text that relate to students with disability. Some of these books are professional books. The book list was created in 2010 so there are likely newer print books available. This list will get you started.

Elementary School List:

- ANDY AND HIS YELLOW FRISBEE: THOMPSON
- BE GOOD TO EDDIE LEE: FLEMING
- BECKY THE BRAVE: A STORY ABOUT EPILEPSY: LEARS
- BEN HAS SOMETHING TO SAY: A STORY ABOUT STUTTERING: LEARS
- BEST FIGHT: SCHLIEPER
- COUNT US IN: GROWING UP WITH DOWN SYNDROME: KINGSLEY
DIFFERENT IS NOT BAD, DIFFERENT IS THE WORLD: A BOOK ABOUT SMITH

DOLL ON THE TOP SHELF TURK

DON'T-GIVE-UP-KID: AND LEARNING DIFFERENCES GEHRET

EAGLE EYES: A CHILD'S GUIDE TO PAYING ATTENTION GEHRET

EUKEE THE JUMPY JUMPY ELEPHANT CORMAN

FRIENDS AT SCHOOL BUNNETT

GIFT OF THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T HEAR SHREVE

HOORAY FOR HAROLD: DEALING WITH HEARING LOSS PETERS, TIM

HOWIE HELPS HIMSELF FASSLER

I'M SOMEBODY TOO GEHRET

IAN'S WALK: A STORY ABOUT AUTISM LEARS

JOEY AND SAM: A HEARTWARMING STORYBOOK ABOUT AUTISM, A FAMI KATZ

JOEY PIZZA LOSES CONTROL GANTOS

JUST CALL ME STUPID BIRDSEYE

MANY WAYS TO LEARN: YOUNG PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO LEARNING DISAB STERN

MOTHER GOOSE IN SIGN COLLINS

PAY ATTENTION, SLOSH! SMITH

PROBABLY STILL NICK SWANSEN WOLFF

RADIANCE DESCENDING FOX

SAFE PLACE PETERSEIL

SCHOOL SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR KIDS WITH LD*: CUMMINGS (LEARNING DIFFERE
SLAM DUNK: YOUNG BOY'S STRUGGLE WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT

SOMEONE SPECIAL, JUST LIKE YOU

SPECIAL PEOPLE, SPECIAL WAYS

SPECIAL RACCOON: HELPING A CHILD LEARN ABOUT HANDICAPS AND

STAY AWAY FROM SIMON!

SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR KIDS WITH LD: (LEARNING DIFFERENCES)

T.J.'S STORY: A BOOK ABOUT A BOY WHO IS BLIND

TAKING DIABETES TO SCHOOL

THANK YOU, MR. FALKER

TIBBY TRIED IT

VIEWS FROM OUR SHOES: GROWING UP WITH A BROTHER OR SISTER W

WAY TO GO, ALEX!

WE'LL PAINT THE OCTOPUS RED

WHAT WOULD JOEY DO?

INCLUSION: 450 STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE F

AUTISM AND LEARNING: A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE

TEACHING MATHEMATICS TO STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

Middle/High School List

Jan Osier, Graf Field Office
ALFRED SUMMER
ALL KINDS OF MINDS: A YOUNG STUDENT’S BOOK ABOUT LEARNING A
ARE YOU ALONE ON PURPOSE?

AUTISM AND LEARNING: A GUIDE TO GOOD PRACTICE
AVI

CAN YOU FEEL THE THUNDER?
COUNT US IN: GROWING UP WITH DOWN SYNDROME
CRAZY HORSE ELECTRIC GAME
DIFFERENT IS NOT BAD, DIFFERENT IS THE WORLD: A BOOK ABOUT
DISABILITY RIGHTS MOVEMENT

FREAK THE MIGHTY
GIFT OF THE GIRL WHO COULDN’T HEAR
I’M SOMEBODY TOO

I’M TOUGHER THAN ASTHMA!

INCLUSION: 450 STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE F
JOEY PIGZA LOSES CONTROL

JOEY PIGZA SWALLOWED THE KEY
LEARNING DISABILITIES: THE ULTIMATE TEEN GUIDE
LESSONS LEARNED: STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

MY BROTHER’S A WORLD-CLASS PAIN
ONLY ALIEN ON THE PLANET
PUTTING ON THE BRAKES: YOUNG PEOPLE’S GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDIN

SILENT SPILLBILLS
SOMEBODY SOMEWHERE: BREAKING FREE FROM THE WORLD OF AUTISM  WILLIAMS

SOMETIMES I GET ALL SCRIBBLY: LIVING WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT  NEUVILLE

TEACHING MATHEMATICS TO STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES  BLEY

TEACHING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES  HEARNE

WHEN PIGS FLY  WOOD