

# EVERYONE IS ABLE



**E**veryone Is Able is a new resource from the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario about abilities/disabilities. It consists of a DVD and a CD containing a Guidebook. The resource is designed to increase awareness of and sensitivity to issues around ability/disability. This resource will spark conversations and ongoing dialogue among viewers.

In the 30-minute DVD, Karen Shopowitz, the filmmaker, interviews ETFO members, administrators, students, and others about their experiences around abilities/disabilities. The DVD is designed to challenge our assumptions, stereotypes, and myths

about disabilities; share new insights about people with disabilities; and offer educators practical strategies to make their classrooms inclusive for all. The DVD can be watched in its entirety or by chapters. It is available in English, and with French or English subtitles.

The *Everyone Is Able* DVD is divided into seven chapters that are accompanied by corresponding Guidebook lessons at the primary, junior, and intermediate levels. There is also a professional development component for educators for each chapter. The lessons and professional development components are framed around the concepts of courageous conversations, courageous reflections,

and courageous actions that require members and their students to take a social action approach to bring about change. The Guidebook includes curriculum links, practical applications for engaging students and educators, web links, character development connections, extensions/community engagement, and related resources.

The lessons that follow are excerpted from the Guidebook.

The *Everyone Is Able* resource is available at [shopetfo.ca](http://shopetfo.ca).

## CHAPTER: INTRODUCTION

## Division: Primary

### BIG IDEA/OBJECTIVE/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CONNECTION

#### Acceptance, Compassion, Empathy, Open-Mindedness, Tolerance

The big idea is that everyone is different, and that we need to accept and respect each other for our varying abilities.

### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND CULMINATING TASKS

#### Courageous Conversations

 View the Introduction to *Everyone Is Able* with your students.

Give each student a small sheet of white paper and a pencil. Have them write down one word or phrase for what it means to be “normal” (*ordinary, just like me, safe*). Tell them to crumple their papers into snowballs. Have the students stand in a circle and throw their snowball far enough that another student can reach it. Have them throw their snowballs four times in total, hanging onto the last snowball they receive and then reading aloud what’s written there. Repeat the exercise, but this time have the students write a word or phrase for what it

means to be “different” (*unusual, strange, weird*). When you have the students read out the words on their snowballs, take time to explore any discriminatory words that come up. Teach inclusive language for any discriminatory terms. (Refer to pp. 15-18 of *A Way with Words and Images: Suggestions for the portrayal of people with disabilities*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/way\\_with\\_words.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/way_with_words.pdf).)

Read *It’s Okay to Be Different*.

Ask the students to reflect on two questions: “In what ways are you different that you are proud of? In what ways are you different that you are ashamed of?” Allow sharing time for those who are willing.

#### Courageous Reflections

 Have students write in their journal about a time when they were unkind to someone, or a time when they saw someone else being unkind because someone was different. Have them write about the incident as though they were the person who received the unkind treatment. How did it make them feel? What would have helped them? What could others have done?

### Courageous Actions

 Have each student make a pledge that one day this week they will play with someone with whom they have never played before, or play with someone whom they have seen as “different.” At the end of the week, ask the students whom they played with. Did they keep their pledge?

### EXTENSIONS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/RELATED RESOURCES

- Make your own page for the book *It’s Okay to Be Different*.
- Read *Don’t Laugh At Me*.
- View this YouTube video based on the book, *Don’t Laugh At Me*: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTNVXlirF4Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HTNVXlirF4Y).
- *A Way with Words and Images: Suggestions for the portrayal of people with disabilities*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada [www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/way\\_with\\_words.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/way_with_words.pdf).

## MATERIALS

- *Everyone Is Able* DVD and Guidebook
- Two pieces of white paper per student, approximately recipe card size
- *It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr  
ISBN-13: 978-0316666039



- Journals
- A pencil for every student
- *Don't Laugh at Me* by Steve Seskin and Allen Shamblin  
ISBN-13: 978-1582460581



- *A Way with Words and Images: Suggestions for the portrayal of people with disabilities*, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/way\\_with\\_words.pdf](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/disability/arc/way_with_words.pdf)

## MINISTRY EXPECTATIONS

### English Language KINDERGARTEN

#### Language

- 1.2
- 1.9
- 2.6
- 4.3
- 4.6

#### GRADES 1-3

#### Oral Communication      Writing

- |     |     |
|-----|-----|
| 1.2 | 2.1 |
| 2.2 | 2.2 |
| 2.3 | 2.5 |

#### Health and Physical Activity

#### KINDERGARTEN

- 1.4
- 1.5

#### Health and Physical Education

#### Healthy Living

- C2.3 (Grade 1)
- C3.1 (Grade 2)

## CHAPTER: EMBRACING DIFFERENCES

### Division: Junior

#### BIG IDEA/OBJECTIVE/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CONNECTION

**Acceptance, Advocacy, Caring,  
Compassion, Consideration, Courage,  
Courtesy, Empathy, Perseverance,  
Respect, Self-Esteem**

#### SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND CULMINATING TASKS

##### Courageous Conversations



Show students the last chapter of the DVD and stop after Wesley makes his comment:

“They said, ‘Wesley, don’t worry about it. If they can’t see past the chair, they are not going to make it anywhere in life.’”

Ask the students what they think of this comment and if they can remember a situation where they were insulted by someone. How did their friends help and support them? Knowing what they do today and having listened to the class discussion, what would they say or do differently the next time someone insults them?

Complete viewing the DVD.

##### Courageous Reflections



Read *Hope Is an Open Heart* to the students, then ask them to reflect quietly for a couple of minutes on this book and how it relates to

people with disabilities. This is an opportunity for the students to develop empathy and understanding about some of the issues that people with disabilities face on a daily basis. Have them then write a short journal entry about their reflections.

On another day, have students share their journal reflection with a friend, in a small group, or in front of the entire class.

##### Courageous Actions



After students have read their journal reflection, focus on how this picture book related to

people with disabilities. Have the students create their own version of *Hope Is an Open Heart*; each student will write a page using the book’s pattern (“Hope is...”) and design an illustration to go with it. When students develop their page, have them think about hope and how this applies to people with disabilities. You may wish to model a few

samples for them. Once everyone has completed their writing and illustrations, compile and publish their work as a class book. You may wish to have students make the book in an electronic format so that it could be used in future for various purposes (e.g., students could take the book home on a flash drive and share it with family members; a PDF could be posted on the school’s website, etc.) Involve your students in thinking about all of the ways they can share their class version of *Hope Is an Open Heart*.

#### EXTENSIONS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/RELATED RESOURCES

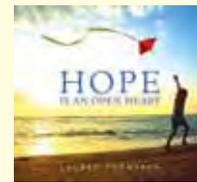
Have students share their understanding of hope at a school assembly where they present the class book to the whole school. They could take turns reading their pages and screen the book so everyone could view it as they read it aloud. Students could also act out or create short skits to share this information with the school.

Have students brainstorm ideas about others in the community with whom they could share their book.

Teach the students about developing their own advocacy skills.

## MATERIALS

- *Everyone Is Able* DVD and Guidebook
- *Hope Is an Open Heart* by Lauren Thompson  
ISBN-13: 978-0545037372



- Student journals
- Access to computers

## MINISTRY EXPECTATIONS

### English Language

#### Media Literacy

- 1.1
- 3.1
- 3.2
- 3.4

#### Reading

- 1.5
- 1.6

#### The Arts

Drama: B1.2, B1.4

#### Oral Communi- cation

- 1.2
- 2.3

#### Writing

- 1.2
- 2.2

**BIG IDEA/OBJECTIVE/CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT CONNECTION**

**Acceptance, Compassion, Empathy, Engagement, Open-Mindedness, Optimism, Respect, Self-Esteem**

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES AND CULMINATING TASKS**

**Courageous Conversations**

 Show the first part of the Hearing Differently section of the DVD up to the 4:00 minute mark. Have students write a blog entry about how it would have felt to have received the hearing aid that Cheryl MacMillan received when she was 12 years old. This was the first time that she used a hearing aid. Have students write in the first person as though they were Cheryl, and describe what that experience possibly may have been like. How would wearing the hearing aid have helped her? How might it have caused other issues? Once students have written their entry, have them share with a peer or in a small group who will provide suggestions and feedback. Ask students to try and incorporate this into their revisions of their blog entry.

Once students have completed their revisions, have them share their blog entries with the class. Record the adjectives that students use to describe their feelings and their experiences with the new hearing aid. Ask students to sort the adjectives into groups (e.g., positive, negative, etc.) Have a large group discussion about what they think someone who wears a hearing aid today might experience.

**Courageous Reflections**

 Have students brainstorm the types of questions they would want to ask someone who wears a hearing aid.  
 Have each student record three questions on three separate Post-it notes. In small groups, have them share their questions. Ask students to group similar questions and record a list of their top five questions on chart paper. Have each group post their charts and have a gallery walk (students have time to walk around the room and look at each group's ques-

tions). The teacher will review the lists and compile a list of questions that will be asked of a guest who will be visiting your class to talk about using a hearing aid. Contact the Canadian Hearing Society ([www.chs.ca](http://www.chs.ca)) and arrange to have a speaker come in and discuss the different ways in which deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing persons communicate. (Alternatively, the task of arranging for a speaker may be assigned to some students. A good resource to help students make these types of arrangements is *Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship*. See the Materials section.)

**Courageous Actions**

 Have a speaker from the Canadian Hearing Society talk to the students about how persons who are deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing communicate. Have different students pose the questions that they previously brainstormed. Students should record important points that they can later incorporate into a presentation to help educate and inform others.

After the visit, brainstorm with the class what courageous actions they could undertake in the school or community to raise awareness about people who are hearing differently.

Choose one or two courageous actions and plan the what, why, how, when, and where that students will undertake.

Have students carry out their plans and implement them.

**EXTENSIONS/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/RELATED RESOURCES**

Have students put together a multimedia presentation about the information they learned from the speaker from the Canadian Hearing Society (e.g., PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.) that they could share with other junior students, the parent council, school staff, etc.

Have students learn how to sign their names and some basic words that they could then share with primary classes. You might use the “Baby Signs” word list and video demonstration as a starting point ([www.signingsavvy.com/wordlist/babysigns](http://www.signingsavvy.com/wordlist/babysigns)).

**MATERIALS**

- *Everyone Is Able* DVD and Guidebook
- Access to computers and a word processing program
- *Take Action! A Guide to Active Citizenship* by Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger ISBN-13: 978-0978437510



- Chart paper, markers, and Post-it notes

**MINISTRY EXPECTATIONS**



**English Language**

**Media Literacy**

- 3.1
- 3.2
- 3.3
- 3.4

**Oral Communication**

- 1.2
- 1.4
- 2.2
- 2.4

**Reading**

- 1.4
- 1.5

**Writing**

- 1.2
- 1.4
- 1.5
- 1.6
- 2.2
- 2.3
- 2.5
- 2.7