

# “Everyone Can”

A project of the Disability Law Center

Reaching Youth - Creating Change - Growing Leaders  
Promoting the Abilities of Every Person

## Lesson Plan

<b>Title</b>	“Everyone Can”
<b>Grade Level(s)</b>	Third or Fourth Grade
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<b>Length of Unit</b>	30-45 minute reading and discussion program
<b>For more information</b>	<a href="http://www.disabilitylawcenter.org/everyonecan.html">http://www.disabilitylawcenter.org/everyonecan.html</a> or by e-mail at <a href="mailto:snewton@disabilitylawcenter.org">snewton@disabilitylawcenter.org</a>

### 1. Abstract

Negative attitudes and perceptions remain some of the most challenging barriers faced by people with disabilities. Incidents of discrimination and intolerance are typically the result of prejudice, paternalism or ignorance toward disability in general. One of the most effective ways to influence negative attitudes and create social change is through early youth intervention. This lesson plan is part of the broader “Everyone Can” program and is designed to reach children during the time in their development when they are forming opinions about diversity, relationships and an understanding of community. The core message of this program is one of inclusion.

This lesson plan introduces the idea that everyone has unique talents and abilities, everyone can promote the strengths of others, and everyone can be part of making our communities more inclusive for people with disabilities. It encourages children to think critically about ideas of fairness, inclusion and equality. Our hope is that these early interventions will plant the seeds that will lead to a community that is more aware of the needs and rights of all its citizens.

### 2. Overview

#### A. Learning Objectives

After implementing this lesson plan, students will understand that:

1. Disability is a natural part of the human experience.
2. Everyone has natural abilities to be discovered and shared.
3. Our families, schools and communities are stronger when we promote the abilities of others.

## B. Core Curriculum

This lesson plan will help you meet the Utah State Office of Education Core Curriculum Requirements for Elementary Students, Third or Fourth Grade. Current requirements are under revision. This lesson plan addressed the following objectives from the previous requirements:

1. Show how communities change over time through the influence of people. (3<sup>rd</sup>)
2. Recognize why acceptance of self and others is important in life. (3<sup>rd</sup>)
3. Model ways to contribute to healthy relationships among peers, family and community members. (3<sup>rd</sup>)
4. Participate in activities that promote cultural understanding and good citizenship (Social Studies, 4<sup>th</sup>)
5. Understand and respect self and others related to human development and relationships (Health Education, 4<sup>th</sup>)
6. Show respect for the uniqueness of others, regardless of gender; e.g., abilities, talents strengths, characteristics, and hopes for the future. (4<sup>th</sup>)

### Preparation

#### A. For Teachers

1. Read *Thank You Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polloco
2. Read *Mandy* by Barbara D. Booth
3. *If you choose to include the optional activity, prepare materials as described.*

#### B. For Students

None

### 3. Materials Needed

- A. *Thank You Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polloco
- B. Book: *Mandy* by Barbara D. Booth
- C. "Everyone Can" Poster
- D. Picture of a brain (optional)
- E. Signs that read: **KNOW & DO** (optional)
- F. Survey Card with "Everyone Can" wristband attached

#### 4. Lesson

##### A. Introduction

1. Introduce yourself and explain that you are visiting the class to talk about an idea that will make school and our community a better place for everyone.
2. The idea can be summarized in two words: "EVERYONE CAN".
3. Hold up the KNOW side of the sign and state: "Everyone Can kids KNOW and they (flip the sign) DO something with that knowledge."

##### B. Concept 1: "Everyone Can" kids KNOW about science

###### a. Discussion:

Teach the children that everyone is born with innate talents and abilities. You may choose to use the following as a way to explain the concept: "Everyone Can" kids know about science (Show the picture of a brain). Scientists have studied the brain and made an important discovery. They learned that everyone born with a brain, (Everyone) has within that brain at the time of birth, things that it is good at. In other words, everyone is destined to be good at certain things. Everyone is smart at something. This scientific knowledge is important because then we know that if we work at it, we will find out how we are smart. Your brain is in charge of everything you do. All we have to do is find out what we are smart at."

##### Questions To Explore Concept 1

- a. **How do you discover what you are great at?** (By trying lots of things)
- b. **What have you discovered that you're great at?**  
Give the students an opportunity to name something that their brain likes to do. You can also name different things and have students raise their hand if they like to do those things. (Example: Who is good at: soccer, dance, building, using your imagination, cheering people up, reading, rollerblading, cooking, getting their mom to do what they want her to do? etc.)
- c. **What do "Everyone Can" kids know?** (Everyone is smart at something)

##### C. Concept 2: "Everyone Can" kids DO look for strengths in others.

###### a. Discussion:

Now lead a discussion that helps children understand that "Everyone Can" Kids look for what others do well and what is great about them, and **then they tell them!**

### Role Play

- a. Take a few moments to role play situations where students practice complimenting others.
- b. Teach children to give specific compliments that describe what is great about another student.

#### D. Read *Thank You Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polloco

Explain that you are going to read/tell a story. Instruct the students to think about who the “Everyone Can” characters are in the book. (Note: this is a longer story – you may want to tell the first part of it and focus the reading on Tricia’s school experiences)

#### E. Discussion About the Book

1. At the close of the story lead a discussion using some of the suggested questions.

#### Questions – Thank You, Mr. Falker

- **Who were the “*Everyone Can*” characters in the book?** (Mr. Falker, family members, Tricia, Ms. Plessy)
- **Who were NOT “*Everyone Can*” believers?** (Eric, her classmates)
- **Was Tricia stupid like her peers thought?** (no)
- **What did Tricia need in order to learn?** (to be taught another way)
- **How would the world be different today if Mr. Falker did not understand that Tricia needed to be taught in a different way?**( We would not have the books that Tricia/Patricia wrote and illustrated.)
- **What could her peers have done that would have shown an “*Everyone Can*” attitude?**
- **How would that have made a difference?**

Explain that *Thank You, Mr. Falker* is a great story that teaches about the power of an “Everyone Can” attitude. It also gives us a hint about what one of the greatest strengths that humans have. The story is the true story of the author’s childhood. There is one part of it that is not true. The author did not learn to read in the fifth grade. She learned to read in the eighth grade.

#### F. Read *Mandy* by Beverly D. Booth

Explain that there is another book that hints about one of the greatest of human strengths. The strength is the reason that the human race survived, even though the earth has changed. It is a strength that you see people around you use every day. It is a word that starts with an A (ADAPT). Tell them that you will read a bit from the book *Mandy* then give them an opportunity to guess what the strength is. Read the first six pages of the book *Mandy*.

### G. Discussion from *Mandy*

Let the children tell you how Mandy's body worked differently. Explain that the story show how Mandy perceives the world. It is a great illustration of ADAPTING. Explain that ADAPT is the great strength that you were hinting at.

#### Questions – *Mandy*

- **How did Mandy show sensitivity to her grandmother that was hearing?** (She didn't talk much when the radio was on.)
- **When they were dancing, how did her grandmother show courtesy to Mandy?** (She kept dancing after the music stopped)
- **How did Mandy know when the cookies were done?** (She could smell them halfway down the hallway)
- **What is the word that describes how Mandy was able to function in a world where most people hear and how Tricia was able to learn to read and write in a world where most people see letters in a different way?** (ADAPT)
- **What do you think that you can do when you have classmates whose mind and body work a different way to make it easier for them to adapt?**

### H. Discussion about ADAPT

1. You may choose to give the students examples of barriers that an individual may encounter in our society and let the students talk about how to overcome the barrier. Be sure to avoid using examples where the disability was eliminated by effort. You may include examples of how ingenuity, adaptive devices, removing physical barriers, medical advancements and technology aid a person in ADAPTING.
2. Explain that the greatest barrier for people to overcome is when others assume that they cannot do something because their mind or body works a different way.

## 5. Summary

At the close of the lesson briefly review the key "Everyone Can" concepts.

- A. Everyone is "smart" in their own way.
- B. We should look for strengths in others, and tell them about it.
- C. We can adapt so that people who's minds and bodies work in unique ways can participate

## 6. Optional Supplemental Activity

### A. Drawing the “Everyone Can” Concept

1. Invite the students to draw a picture showing what “Everyone Can” means. This activity is important because art engages the mind in thinking about a theme on a deeper level and children can often show through art what they are unable to verbalize.
2. Display the art for others to learn from.
3. Discuss the art of other students and how it relates to the “Everyone Can” concepts.

## 7. Optional Book Discussion

Hank Zipzer, Niagra Falls, or Does It by Henry Winkler

A reading from this book can be substituted for *Thank You, Mr. Falker*.

Introduction to the book: Explain to the students that you would like to give them an opportunity to practice what Everyone Can kids DO. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group to focus on one of the following four characters in the book selection that you will read.

Hank

Frankie

Ashley

Robert

Tell the students that their assignment is to focus on the strengths of the character. Proceed by starting on page 16 of Chapter 3 and continue to read the outlined portions through the end of the chapter.

### Discussion about Hank Zipzer

Give each group an opportunity to list the strengths of each character. Explain that the book highlights how a group of friends supported their friend who has dyslexia. None of the characters know that Hank has dyslexia yet. They find that out later. For now, they are focusing on his strengths and trying to help him cope with how difficult it is for him to write.