

“Everyone Can”

A project of the Disability Law Center

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

Lesson Plan

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

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 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.
2. Recognize why acceptance of self and others is important in life.
3. Model ways to contribute to healthy relationships among peers, family and community members.

Preparation

A. For Teachers

1. Read *Little Squarehead* by Peggy O'Neill

B. For Students

None

3. Materials Needed

- A. *Little Squarehead* by Peggy O'Neill
- B. "Everyone Can" Poster
- C. 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. It is not a new idea. It is in our Pledge of Allegiance, so we say it often. (Recite the last line of the Pledge of

Allegiance: “one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”)

2. When we say those words do we really mean them?
 - a. Indivisible: united, strong
 - b. With liberty and justice: freedom and fairness
 - c. For ALL: not just the smart, the rich, the pretty, the professional athletes, the movie stars, the politicians, or people with certain color hair or skin, or who live in certain areas, etc.
3. The idea can be summarized in two words: “EVERYONE CAN”.

- B. Concept 1: “Everyone Can” people understand that everyone has differences, and that we show respect for one another’s differences by treating people with kindness and respect (fairness).
- a. Discussion: There is a word that is the opposite of “Everyone Can” that describes how we treat people if we are not showing respect for their differences, and if we are being unfair to them. That word is “prejudice.” (If there is time, you could play a guessing game—like hang-man—to let the students guess the letters of this word until someone guesses the right word.) Look at the spelling of the word. It means to “pre-judge” someone before we know them. We make up our minds about them, usually based on the way they look or based on something someone else tells us about them, before we get to know them.
- C. Concept 2: Everyone Can kids look beyond people’s differences and find the gifts each person has to offer.
- D. Concept 3: Read *Little Squarehead* and ask students to identify examples of prejudice, and examples of Everyone Can behavior throughout the book.
- E. Discussion About the Book

Q: At the close of the story explain that *Little Squarehead* is obviously a make-believe story. What parts of the story are make-believe?

A: People don’t have square heads like Rosa. The enchanted pool. People don’t really have diamond hearts inside of them.

Q: Make believe stories are often written to teach us important lessons. What lessons do we learn from this story?

A: We all have goodness inside of us; we are all basically the same on the inside, no matter what we are like on the outside; we have similar needs; everyone needs friends.

Q: Rosa gains three precious gifts that are wonderful “Everyone Can” words that can help us remember the greatness in ourselves, and look for the greatness in others. What are the three gifts and how does she find them?

A: Courage (she finds this by not listening to the other kids laughing at her and calling her names).

B: Confidence (she finds this by trying to make friends instead of turning away from others)

C: Compassion (she finds this by looking to see what is inside of others and treating them with kindness, love and respect)

A final note to this book: Peggy O’Neill is a 3’8” tall “Little Person” who delivers a big message. Her motto is WALK TALL—BE BIG ON THE INSIDE. She lives her motto with courage, confidence and compassion—Rosa’s three priceless gifts in Little Squarehead. Like Rosa, Peggy has experienced the challenges of prejudice and physical limitations. A certified psychotherapist, she conducts seminars and workshops nationwide, inspiring audiences with her dynamic approach to life. (From the author summary)

5. Summary

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

A. We all have differences, and that is what makes us great.

B. We should learn to accept ourselves, and accept others.

C. Though we may be different, there is room in our society for everyone to fully participate and be accepted regardless of how those differences make them look or act.