

Learn with Us: Disability Awareness Month



Teaching Guide for Kids:

- History
- Historical Figures/Heroes
- Book Recommendations
- Film/TV Series Recommendations



Table of Contents

A Letter from Us

3

Let's Grow Big

4

Types

5

6

Historical Figures/Heroes

7

8

Book Recommendations

9

10

11

Film/TV Series Recommendations

12

13

Research Credits

14

A letter from **diversi**TINY

Dear Caregiver or Educator,

Welcome to diversiTINY - where big change starts with the small! We created this website brand for readers to teach their kids about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

diversiTINY was created and rebranded by two Digital Media and Design students from the University of Connecticut. It started as an unfinished site which was originally called Creation Station. We, the team, wanted to make this site to provide positive resources for elementary students to learn about DEI. There are several topics included, such as LGBTQ+, Black History Month, Women's History Month and more!

The main topic of this guide: ***Disability Awareness Month.***

This guide features its history, such as how it started, important heroes, book/film recommendations, as well other resources.

We hope you and your diversiTINY friend enjoy this guide.

Sincerely,

The diversiTINY Team!



Let's grow BIG!

If your child hasn't encountered someone with a disability, it's most likely they can see a child who has it at school. It's important for you and your diversiTINY friend to understand what it means.

What is Disability Awareness Month?

National Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

is an event to raise awareness about including people with developmental disabilities in all communities and the difficulties that they still face when fitting in. It celebrates in the month of **March**.

A **disability** is a physical/mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities.



How did it start?

Before the 19th century, people with disabilities were treated negatively and violently. Social reformers, such as Dorothy Dix became a leading advocate for human rights of people with disabilities. She couldn't speak, due to being a woman speaking in Congress, so she asked reformer, Samuel Gridley Howe, to present. But, sadly, President Pierce rejected it.

More reformers and educationists continued to evolve over the century. On February 26, 1987, President Ronald Reagan declared Proclamation 5613 making this awareness month in March. It was made to celebrate contributions to our communities as a whole and have people to provide understanding, encouragement, and opportunities to help people with disabilities to lead a productive life.

This includes disabilities that refer to impairments in learning and behavior, such as autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and down syndrome



President Reagan

Types of Disability Experiences

There are many disabilities that you and your diversiTINY friend should learn about.

We also listed a few of types as well:

Mobility: a disability that affects movement from gross motor skills, such as walking, to fine motor movement, involving manipulation of objects by hand

- **arthritis** is the inflammation of the body's joints, causing pain, swelling and difficulty with mobility
- **cerebral palsy** is the result of damage to the brain prior to or shortly after birth. It can prevent or inhibit walking, and cause a lack of muscle coordination, spasms, and speech difficulty
- **fibromyalgia** is a form of "soft tissue" causing constant pain in muscles and ligaments. Inactivity, depression, anxiety, chronic fatigue and sleep loss are common.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing:

- **deaf:** refers hearing loss so severe that there is very little or no functional hearing
- **deafened:** refers to a person who becomes deaf as an adult, but faces different challenges than those who had it since birth or early age

- Many people with hearing disabilities use various communication including lipreading and American Sign Language (ASL), using hand shapes, positions, and movement to convey meaning

Continued (types)

Low Vision/Blindness: the inability to see anything, including light

- **low vision:** when a person can't see all the things they should be able to see – this includes low-to-no vision, blurred vision, loss of side vision, or color blindness, not being able to see colors
- **blindness:** when a person is legally blind and have a lack of vision; cannot be corrected with glasses or contacts. It can be either genetic or caused by accident

Autism Spectrum Disorder: is a difference in the way a brain develops; people, especially kids may have trouble understanding the world around them

Chronic Health:

- **asthma:** a long-term chronic lung disease that causes airways to become sensitive to certain things, such as triggers

Down Syndrome (Trisomy 21): genetic disorder which includes certain birth defects, learning problems, and facial features. Also, when the baby currently has 3 copies instead of 2 for chromosome #21, it's called *Trisomy 21*

Communication: includes any impairment in speech or language

- **Childhood-Onset Fluency Disorder (stuttering):** an interruption in the flow of speech; stuttering makes kids repeat certain words

Historical Figures/Heroes

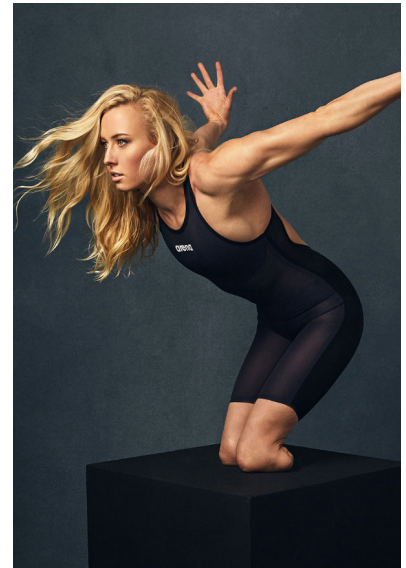
Hellen Keller

- Born on June 27, 1880 in Tuscumbia, Alabama.
- American author
- At 19 months, she became both blind and deaf
- She taught closely by her teacher, Anne Sullivan from the school of blind and stayed with her for her life
- Within months, Keller learned to feel objects and associate them with words spelling out by finger signals on her palm. She also learned how to lip-read as well
- Growing up, she graduated from Radcliffe College and began to write about blindness and books about her life
- She also co-founded the American Civil Liberties Union; her efforts to improve treatment of deaf and blind were influential in removing disabled from asylums



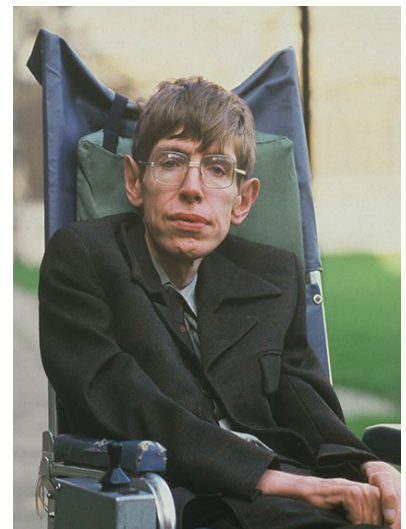
Jessica Long

- Born on February 29, 1992 in Bratsk, Russia
- American swimmer
- She was born with fibular hemimelia, a genetic disorder which caused her lower legs to develop without fibulas, ankles, heels, and most bones in her feet
- She was given up for adoption when she was 13-months-old. Later, was adopted by Steve and Elizabeth Long
- She was involved with sports such as gymnastics and climbing. She began swimming in her grandparents' pool before competing in 2002
- Her achievements included being Maryland Swimming's Female Swimmer of the Year with a Disability
- So far, Jessica won 16 gold medals, 8 silvers, and 5 bronzes



Stephen Hawking

- Born on January 8, 1942 in Oxford, England
- English theoretical physicist
- When Hawking was 21, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a disease that weakens muscles and causes paralysis
- He still continued to work. He studied the basic laws of the universe, theories such as "the mini black holes being formed following the big bang"
- He earned many medals and awards, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2009



Millicent Simmonds

- Born on March 6, 2003 in Bountiful, Utah
- American actress
- She lost her hearing when she was a baby
- Her first role was in the 2017 film, *Wonderstruck*, which put a spotlight on Deaf culture. She believed that it wasn't fair how there is talent out there and those weren't chosen, due to a disability.
- She became a big star in the thriller film, *A Quiet Place*. This film centers how a family must keep quiet or mysterious creatures will hunt them down. They used ASL throughout the movie as well
- She's currently an advocate for the Deaf community and hopes to see more Deaf actors get involved in the industry



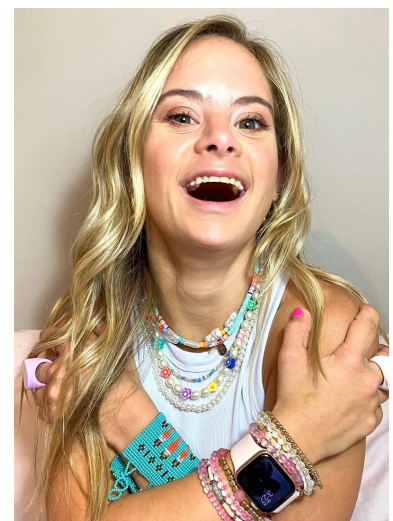
Frida Kahlo

- Born on July 6, 1907 in Coyoacán, Mexico City, Mexico
- Mexican painter
- At age 18, she got into a bus accident which left her with two broken ribs, a broken leg, and a broken collarbone
- She gave up studying pre-med and began painting with some tools that her parents gave her, like the easel and brushes
- She has created 143 paintings, including 55 that are self-portraits. Her self-portraits often include her wounds
- Married with Mexican painter, Diego Rivera. They got divorced through an affair and got remarried later
- In 1953, Frida opened her first solo exhibition in Mexico
- After her passing, the rise of feminism in 1970s led to Frida becoming both a feminist and LGBTQ+ icon



Sofía Jirau

- Born on March 26, 1996 in Puerto Rico
- Puerto Rican model
- She has down syndrome
- She always wanted to work for fashion since she was a child
- At 23, she began working as a model
- At 24, she made her debut at New York Fashion Week, along with other models with down syndrome as well
- At 25, she became the first model of Victoria Secret with down syndrome
- Sofía currently has her own brand called Alvavett with accessories, such as notebooks, mugs, tote bags with a heart



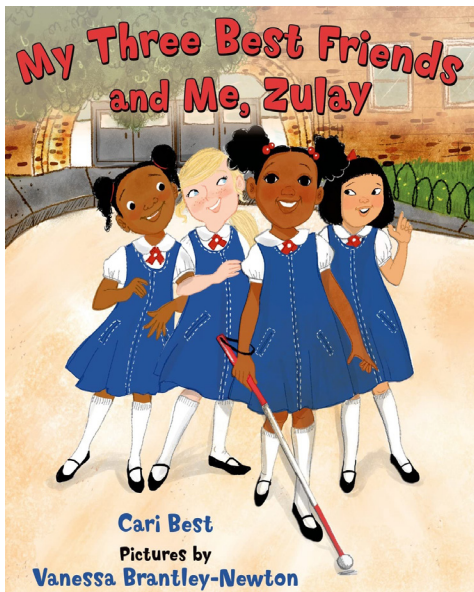
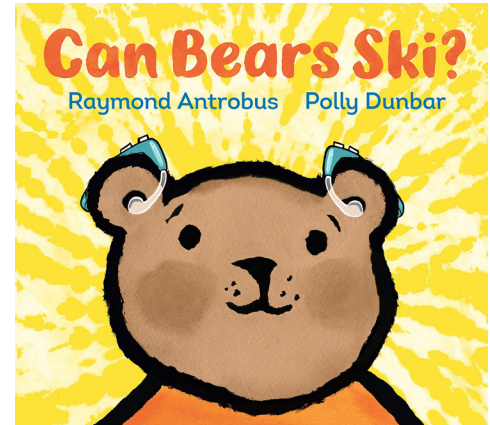
Book Recommendations

Can Bears Ski?

By Raymond Antrobus • Illustrated by Polly Dunbar

A young bear shares his early experiences with deafness. Others keep asking him something that sounds like, "Can bears ski?" He is able to understand the question, "Can you hear me?" from his family

Ages 4 and up



My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay

By Cari Best • Illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton

Zulay and her three best friends are all in the same first grade class and study the same things, even though Zulay is blind. When their teacher asks her students what activity they want to do on Field Day, Zulay surprises everyone when she says she wants to run a race. With the help of a special aide and the support of her friends, Zulay does just that.

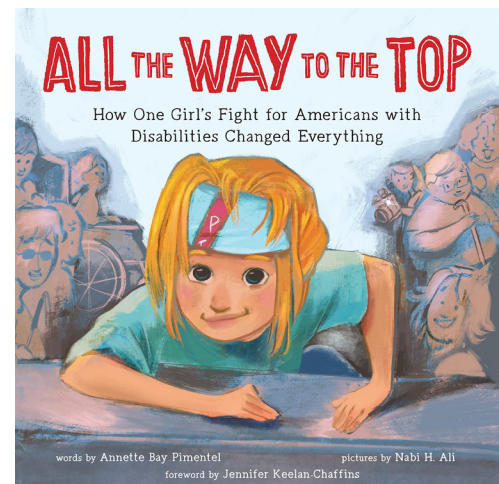
Ages 4 and up

All the Way to the Top

By Annette Bay Pimentel • Illustrated by Nabi H. Ali

Before the Americans with Disabilities Act was law, people with disabilities faced accessibility issues. Jennifer Keelan left her wheelchair and crawled the steps of the Capitol Building to fight for disabled children and adults in the US.

Ages 4 and up

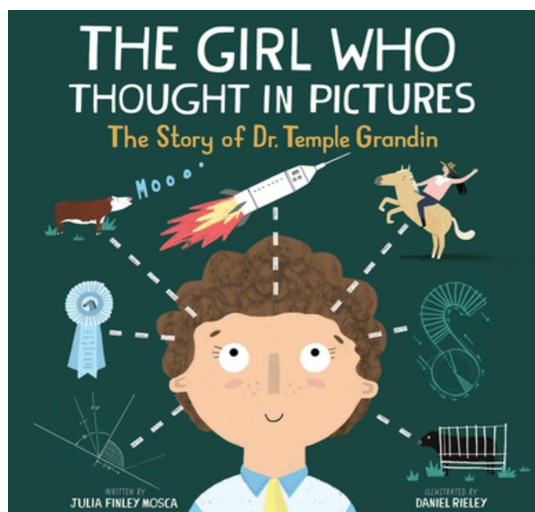
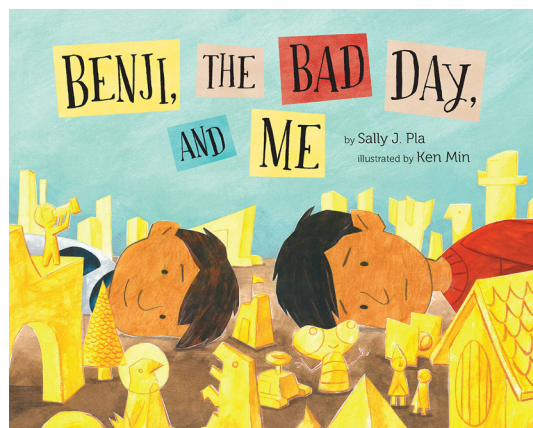


Benji, the Bad Day, and Me

By Sally J. Pla • Illustrated by Ken Min

Nothing seems to be going right for Sammy today. He recently got into trouble at school. After he comes home, he finds his autistic little brother Benji is having a bad day too. On days like this, Benji has a special play-box where he goes to feel cozy and safe. Sammy doesn't have a special place, and he's convinced no one cares how he feels or even notices him. But somebody is noticing, and may just have an idea on how to help Sammy feel better

Ages 5 and up



The Girl Who Thought in Pictures: The Story of Dr. Temple Grandin

By Julia Finley Mosca • Illustrated by Daniel Rieley

This story talks about Temple Grandin, one of the world's quirkiest science heroes. When she was young, she was diagnosed with autism and not expected to speak ever. As she grew up, she learned to cope with it and allowed her to connect with animals, which later helped to create improvements for farms

Ages 5 and up

Thank you, Mr. Falker

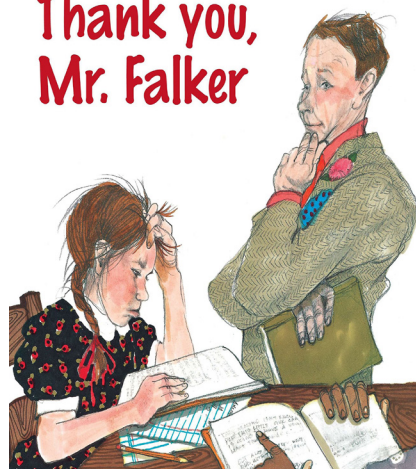
Patricia Polacco

Little Trisha enjoys learning how to read, but struggles when she finds all the letters and numbers get mixed up. Classmates have called her mean names like "dummy". In fifth grade, she was lucky to have a teacher, Mr. Falker, who recognizes her artistic ability, understands her problem, and takes the time to help her to read.

Ages 6 and up

PATRICIA POLACCO

Thank you, Mr. Falker

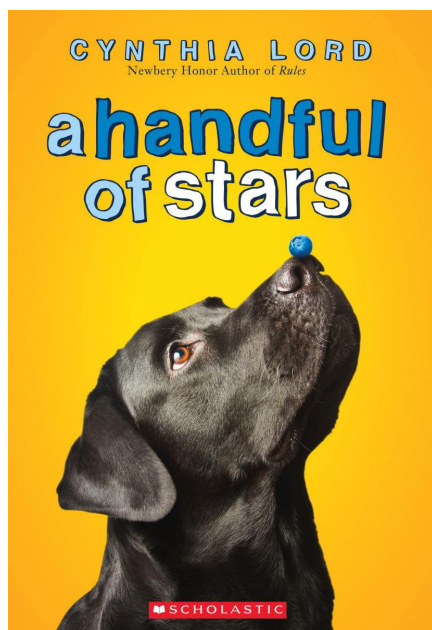
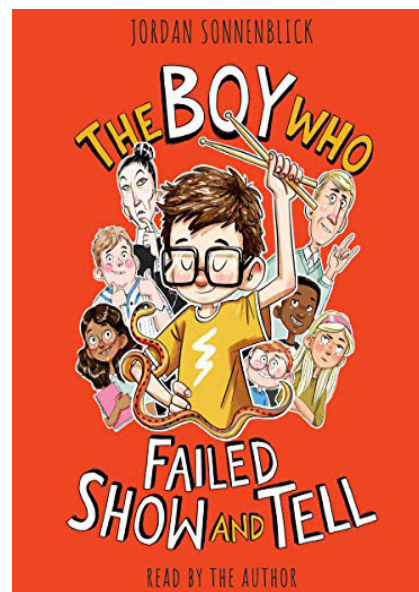


The Boy Who Failed Show & Tell

By Jordan Sonnenblick

In a typical school year, every kid has one or two things go wrong. But for Jordan, there's A LOT going wrong ALL THE TIME, such as having breathing problems and dealing with bullies. By keeping his cool, Jordan's going to try to make it through the year . . . and grow up to write a book about it!

Ages 8 and up



A Handful of Stars

By Angela Cervantes

When Lily's blind dog, Lucky, slips his collar and runs away across the wide-open blueberry barrens, it's Salma Santiago who manages to catch him. Salma, the daughter of migrant workers. After their initial chance meeting, Salma and Lily bond over painting bee boxes for Lily's grandfather, and Salma's friendship transforms Lily's summer. But when Salma decides to run in the upcoming Blueberry Queen pageant, they'll have to face some tough truths about friendship.

Ages 8 and up

The Chance to Fly

By Ali Stroker

The author of the book was the first person in a wheelchair to be casted in Broadway. Her experiences includes making friends, becoming independent, and sticking up for herself.

Ages 8 and up



Film/Series Recommendations

Sesame Street: Meet Julia

Sesame Street
Youtube

Meet Julia, an old buddy of Elmo's and the newest friend on Sesame Street. Julia has autism... and she and Elmo share an amazing friendship.



The Present

Directed by Jacob Frey
Filmakademie Baden-Wuerttemberg

The film tells the story of a boy who rather spends his time indoors playing videogames instead of going outside. One day, his mother decides to get a little surprise for her son, which makes it hard for him to concentrate on his video game any longer.

CODA

Directed by Sian Heder
Apple TV+

Ruby is the only hearing member of a deaf family from Massachusetts. At 17, she works mornings before school to help her family keep their fishing business afloat. But while joining her school's choir club, she finds herself drawn to her duet partner and a passion for singing.



Float

Directed by Bobby Rubio
Short/Animation
Pixar Animation Studios

A father discovers that his son is different from other kids in the most unusual way. To keep them both safe from judgement, Dad covers him and keeps him out of sight.



Finding Nemo

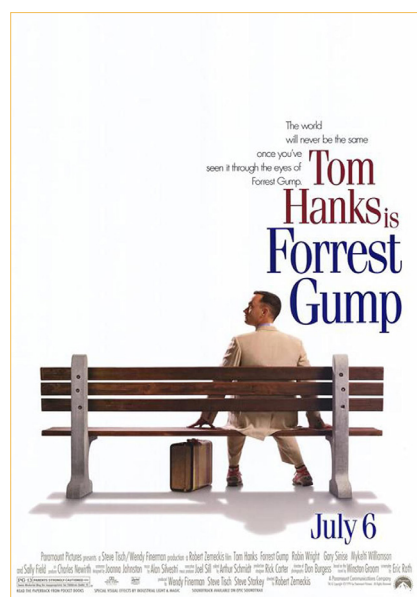
Directed by Andrew Stanton
Family/Comedy
Pixar/Walt Disney Pictures

Marlin, a clown fish, is overly cautious with his son, Nemo, who has a foreshortened fin. When Nemo swims too close to the surface to prove himself, he is caught by a diver. Marlin must set out to find him. A blue reef fish named Dory -- who has a really short memory -- joins him on the journey.

Forrest Gump

Directed by Robert Zemeckis
Drama/Romance
Paramount Pictures Studios

Forrest Gump has never thought of himself as disadvantaged, and thanks to his supportive mother, he leads anything but a restricted life. So far, he inspired everyone for his optimism. But one person Forrest cares about is his childhood love, Jenny.



Research

All about asthma in children. Johns Hopkins Medicine. (2019, November 19). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/asthma/asthma-in-children>

Blanc, E. (2022, February 23). Who is Sofia Jirau, the first model with down syndrome to pose for victoria's secret? Vogue France. Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.vogue.fr/fashion/article/sofia-jirau-model>

Books about physical disabilities: The Scholastic Parent Store. The Teacher Store – Books, Resources, Supplies, Tools, Classroom Decor & More from Scholastic. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://shop.scholastic.com/parent-ecommerce/featured-shops/physical-disability.html>

Chronic health disabilities. Center for Students with Disabilities. (2014, April 10). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://csd.uconn.edu/chronic-health/>

Hartnett, J. K. (Ed.). (2022, March). Stuttering (for parents) - nemours kidshealth. KidsHealth. Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/stutter.html?ref=search>
Home. Center for Students with Disabilities. (2018, April 2). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://csd.uconn.edu/>

How are the terms deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, and hearing impaired typically used? How are the terms deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, and hearing impaired typically used? | DO-IT. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.washington.edu/doit/how-are-terms-deaf-deafened-hard-hearing-and-hearing-impaired-typically-used>

Mobility impairments. Mobility Impairments | Disability Resources & Educational Services - University of Illinois. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.disability.illinois.edu/instructor-information/disability-specific-instructional-strategies/mobility-impairments>

What is a mobility impairment? What is a mobility impairment? | AccessComputing. (n.d.). Retrieved April 27, 2022, from <https://www.washington.edu/accesscomputing/what-mobility-impairment>



*"I want to show everyone that
our differences are what makes
us beautiful and unique."*

– Jessica Long

Thank you for learning with us.

diversiTINY
big change starts with the small

1 University Place
Stamford, CT 06901