

“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)	Kindergarten through 2 nd grade
Developed by	Sheri Newton, Advocate & Outreach Specialist at the Disability Law Center. B.S. Special Education from Utah State University
Length of Unit	20 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. Skill Objectives

After implementing this lesson plan, students will:

1. Apply information and make connections from the reading.
2. Summarize text from the reading.
3. Follow oral and written directions.
4. Will use information from the discussion to increase their vocabulary and enhance language usage.

C. Core Curriculum

This lesson plan will help you meet the Utah State Office of Education Core Curriculum Requirements for Elementary Students, K – 2; Fine Arts, Health, Physical Education, Science and Social Studies (2007-2008). Specifically, this lesson plan will help meet the requirements described in Standard 2: Students will develop a sense of self in relation to families and community.

1. For Kindergarteners: Standard 2, Objective 1(a)(d) and (e).

Students will

- Identify ways individuals are alike and different.
- Identify behaviors to initiate plan and develop friendships.
- Demonstrate positive interactions with peers and adults.

2. For First Graders: Standard 2, Objective 1(d) and (e).

Students will

- Recognize that choices have consequences that affect self, peers and family.
- Describe behaviors that initiate and maintain friendships.

3. For Second Graders: Standard 2, Objectives 1(d) and 2(d).

Students Will

- Recognize how choices and consequences affect self, peers and family.
- Participate in activities that promote public good (e.g., respect cultural and ethnic differences, identify community needs) and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Preparation

A. For Teachers

1. Read *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis
2. Read *A Walk in the Rain with a Brain* by Edward Hallowell and review the discussion guide for parents and teachers at the back of the book.

B. For Students

None

4. Materials Needed

- A. Book: *A Walk in the Rain with a Brain* by Edward Hallowell
- B. Book: *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis
- C. “Everyone Can” Poster
- D. “Everyone Can” wristbands (available to order at no charge)

5. Lesson

A. Introduce The Concept

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. Point out that the idea you will talk about today is written on the poster. Point to it and say the words “Everyone Can.” Have the students repeat the words with you.
3. Explain that you will tell them more about “Everyone Can” later but first you want to read a great book to them. It is called *A Walk in the Rain with a Brain*. It is their job to figure out which characters in the book believe “Everyone Can.”

B. Read *A Walk in the Rain with a Brain*

1. While reading this book, take the opportunity to help the students understand how the villain, Complain, changed society by lying to others and leading them to believe that only certain skills are valued, that there is only one kind of smart, and that not being able to perform in certain ways made the others invaluable.
2. Notice how the illustrations show how happy the characters are when they explore and learn together all of the things that they are great at.

C. Discussion About the Book

1. At the conclusion of the book, lead a discussion about the following **concepts** using the suggested **questions**.

- i. Concepts and Questions

1. Concept 1: Everyone can be great at something

- a. This book showed us what scientists have discovered. Everyone with a brain was born with things that the brain is already smart at. "Every brain abounds with the beginnings of talents, skills, attitudes, and enthusiasms that can prove to be useful in life. **This is a core concept in the "Everyone Can" program – that everyone can be great at something.** Actually, everyone can be smart at lots of things.

2. Questions To Explore Concept 1

- a. **If you could name a body part that is the commander of the rest of your body, what would it be?** (Your brain)
- b. Take a moment to name all of the things your brain does.
- c. **How do you discover what you are great at?** (By trying lots of things)
- d. **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.)
- e. **What is the first concept of "Everyone Can"?** (Everyone is good at something)

3. Concept 2: Everyone can help others find out what they are great at

- a. 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!**

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

D. Read *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis

1. Explain that you are going to read another book. The book is titled *Susan Laughs*. Invite the students to look for things that Susan does that they like to do too. Read *Susan Laughs*.

E. Discussion About the Book

1. The last page of *Susan Laughs* reads: “That is Susan through and through, just like me, just like you.” This is the first page that students see that Susan uses a wheelchair. The kids often react with surprise or alarm. They ask what happened to Susan. You can give them a minute to explore possibilities of why she is using a wheelchair. Then state “I think she might have always used a wheelchair. We just didn’t notice because we were busy noticing all the things that she likes to do that we do too.”
2. Compliment the kids on being “Everyone Can” kids. They noticed everything Susan does and they didn’t care that walking is difficult for Susan. Explain that “Everyone Can” kids don’t care what is hard for someone, like hearing, speaking, walking, learning to read, coloring, etc. **“Everyone Can” Kids want to be friends with everyone** because they know that you can always find greatness in everyone.

6. Summary

At the close of the lesson briefly review the two “Everyone Can” concepts. See Section C(1)(i)(1) and (3)

- A. Everyone can be great at something.
- B. Everyone can help others find out what they are great at.

7. Optional Supplemental Activities

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.

B. Drawing Your Favorite Activity

1. Invite the students to draw a picture of their favorite activity.
2. When they are finished, ask each student to describe their picture and explain their favorite activity.
3. Use the examples to solidify the concept that “Everyone Can” be great at something.