



# The Toy Box: Introducing Disability



# Lesson title: The Toy Box: Introducing Disability

## Subjects:

ELA, science

## Topic:

creative writing,STEM

## Grade level:

K-1st

## Duration:

30 minutes

## Lesson summary:

In this lesson students will get to explore and examine toy and adult versions of accessibility devices. The idea is to introduce disability to students using tactile and observational learning. Students will learn that all these devices are for people with disabilities to live their lives, enjoy themselves and access the community. It is no different from the everyday tools we use throughout our lives.

## Standards:

- CC.1.5.1.E- Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation.
- CC.1.5.1.A- Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

## Objectives:

- SWBAT explore accessibility in the community
- SWBAT identify and discuss what makes a good helper
- SWBAT interact with sample mobility devices and discuss the purpose of mobility devices

## Essential Questions:

- EQ1: What accessibility needs in my community?
- EQ2: What are characteristics of a good helper?
- EQ3: How can I be a good helper?



- EQ4: What are the purposes of mobility devices?

### Vocabulary:

- Wheelchair
- Crutches
- Mobility devices
- Service animal
- Accessible
- Communication device

### Materials:

- Wheelchair Barbie and Wheelchair Lego
- Print out page 2 in [Communication Board Image](#)
- Toy set with 5 figurines
- Toy or kid sized crutches
- Toy guide dog with white cane
- Toy box (could be a cardboard box)
- [https://youtu.be/Kq\\_m\\_mtQmhl](https://youtu.be/Kq_m_mtQmhl) Youtube video for “Me and My Chair” from Sesame Street (1 minute)
- Projector, computer and internet access for the video
- Book: Susan Laughs by Jeanne Willis  
or ability to play [Readaloud video of Susan Laughs](#)
- Copies of Homework handout
- Educator’s Document: [Explaining Disability Related Things In The Community](#)
- Teacher’s Note: This lesson can be adapted if you have access to full size mobility/disability devices.

### Lesson Procedure:

Once students are settled sitting on the carpet (or in wheelchairs or regular chairs). Say “Today I have this wonderful box! What do you think is going to be inside?”

Wait for some answers....

Then open the box and take out one toy at a time.

Go through each item and ask a series of questions all leading students to see that independence and community are key for these accessibility devices. Make sure to let students observe and inspect the toys so they can have that tactile information.

Basic Question Prompts for each toy:

- What is this item? What do you notice about it?



- Who uses this? Why would they use it, how does it help them?
- Do you know anyone who uses these?
- Why are they important?

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Examples of conversations:

Now go through each mobility device and ask the students questions.

- Hold up the cane and ask “Does anyone know what this is? It is a cane! A cane can help people who have trouble walking. Have you seen a cane before? Do you know anyone in your family who uses a cane?”
  - Students may say they have seen a cane before because of their grandparents.
  - Pass the cane around for students to take a look.
- Hold up the wheelchair Barbie and wheelchair Lego and point to the wheelchair “Ask have any of you seen this before? Do you know what it is? Yes, it’s a wheelchair!” “What do wheelchairs do?”
  - Students may say “Wheelchairs roll! While people sit!” Affirm their answers if they are correct.
  - Explain “A wheelchair is another way to get around the world. What do you think would happen if someone who uses a wheelchair suddenly finds their wheelchair broken? Maybe one of the wheels popped off. What do you think would happen to the person?”
    - Prompt the students if they seem lost. “If that person wheels everywhere and they suddenly can’t wheel, what would they do?”
      - Answer: They will have to stay home instead of going to work or seeing their friends.
      - Say “Wheelchairs are freedom to go out and live! They are a great thing for people who need them. Wheelchairs come in all shapes and sizes. Some you have to push like Barbie and Lego over here. Other types of wheelchairs you push a button or use a video game stick to control it.”
    - Pass around the wheelchairs for students to look at more closely.
    - Collect the toy wheelchair users
- Hold up the toy guide dog and the white cane. Ask students “Have you seen these before? What are they?”
  - Some students may say “That’s a dog! And a stick!”
  - Say “This dog has a very important job; do you know what that job is?”
    - Allow students to answer and then say “This dog is a service dog. Service dogs help people who have trouble seeing. They are trained by their person to take certain streets so their person can get to wherever they need to go safely. Sometimes service dogs help people in wheelchairs and other people with disabilities.”



- “Service dogs have to follow lots of rules. Like they can’t run after a bunny or eat before they are asked. That’s why you can’t pet a guide dog without permission because they are busy working.”
  - Pass around the dog. Ask students to read what the Service dog’s harness says. The toy’s harness says “Please don’t pet me, I’m working.”
- “What is this (cane) used for?”
  - See what students say.
  - “This cane is used for people who have trouble seeing. How do you think it is used? Can anyone show me?”
  - “The cane is used for keeping people who have trouble seeing or are completely blind safe so they don’t accidentally walk into the road or anything else in their path.”
  - “Do you know anyone who uses a cane like this one?” Hold up cane.

### Concluding Discussion:

“What is the same about all these toys, tools and things we just looked at?”

- “They all help people with difficulty (disability may not be in their vocabulary just yet), move around and live in our world just like me and you!
- Quickly introduce the term disability: A disability means “Different in what you can do” so people who use all of this stuff just have a different way of getting to the same place. It’s totally normal and a lot of people enjoy their lives living with disabilities.
- Show [Sesame Street: Me and My Chair Song](#)
- Conclude the lesson by reading “Susan Laughs” out loud by Jeanne Willis (or show the [Read aloud of Susan Laughs](#))

### Related materials:

- Documents below

### Evaluation:

Ask your students this question related to this lesson to gauge how much they learned.

**Did this lesson help you understand that people do things in different ways?**

Thank you for bringing the conversation about disability into your classroom.



Help us evaluate this lesson plan by visiting [our evaluation page to assess this lesson](#). You will find an evaluation both for you and your students to complete there.

