



*Disability Awareness*  
**activities**

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# ***Introduction***

All people are people first, and all have needs and rights. Everyone wants to enjoy life, to feel productive and secure.

Most people have disabilities of one kind or another. The differences lie mostly in degree, and in whether our disabilities are overt or hidden.

The Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities is a change agent. The Council identifies needs, researches the best possible answers, and assists in bringing about changes to increase the independence, productivity and inclusion of children and adults with disabilities.

The activity suggestions and discussion guides contained in this booklet can help you explain the message of disability awareness to both children and adults. The activities will help participants develop positive attitudes about and behaviors toward people with disabilities. The suggested activities are simple, yet enlightening, and can prompt many interesting discussions. Participants — including students, community groups and other organizations — can benefit from participation in these educational activities.

These activities are designed to be universal and adaptable for various settings. Although the school classroom is ideal in most cases, activities can be easily adjusted for use in public buildings, outdoor recreation areas and work environments.

In schools, some teachers have used these activities in their own classrooms — sometimes in conjunction with regular subject areas, such as a distinct unit on disabilities. These ideas can be used school wide with a separate classroom designated for each activity and students rotating among the rooms. The tools and instructions can be kept centrally in a resource room or library to be borrowed by teachers throughout the school year.

As part of a total awareness program, adults and children with disabilities could be invited to speak to a class or other group. The format for presentations might be a panel discussion in which several individuals discuss their disabilities. A single speaker could discuss one disability or what it's like to have a disability.

Friends and family members of people with disabilities are good resources to talk to students and community groups about living with a person with a disability. Some consumer and family groups have lists of members who volunteer to do so. A list of such organizations is available on the Council's Web site at [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd). Click on "Links" on the main page, and then choose "Indiana Statewide Organizations." Agencies that serve people with disabilities in your area may be willing to talk about conditions causing disabilities or to recruit people with disabilities and their family members to speak to students, businesses and organizations.

# **disability**

# **Quiz**

This quiz can be used before beginning the activities. It helps participants discover the concerns and assumptions they have about people with disabilities and prompts discussion. Explanations for the correct answers can be found on the next page.

1. **Is a person with a disability usually sick?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
2. **Can a person who is blind go to the store?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
3. **If someone can't talk, does he or she have an intellectual disability?**  
 Yes     No     Sometimes
4. **Are people with disabilities born that way?**  
 Yes     No     Sometimes
5. **Should you feel sorry for someone who has a disability?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
6. **Can people who are blind hear the same as other people?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
7. **If a person has an intellectual disability, does it mean that he or she will never grow up?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
8. **Are all people who are deaf alike?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
9. **Can a person in a wheelchair be a teacher?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure
10. **Do all children have a right to go to your school?**  
 Yes     No     Not Sure

## Discussion

1. **No.** Disabilities are not illnesses. They cannot be cured. Children may understand the explanation that the disability is part of the person, just like blue eyes or athletic ability.
2. **Yes.** If there are no Braille numerals on elevator buttons, ramps into a store or buses that are accessible to people with mobility impairments, children often may not see people with disabilities in stores and other public places. People with disabilities adapt and adjust to their limitations; often their communities do not.
3. **Sometimes.** Some people who cannot talk may not be intellectually limited at all. They may have a disability like cerebral palsy, which may physically prevent them from speaking. They may have a hearing loss, which has kept them from modeling speech. Or they may have learning disabilities, which hinder their ability to translate what they want to say into spoken language.
4. **Sometimes.** Some children fear that they can “catch” a disability. This, of course, is not true. Many disabilities are evident at birth or soon after, although some are caused by accident or illness in later years.
5. **No.** Feeling sorry for a person with a disability, or thankful that you do not have one, often creates an extra burden for the person with a disability. Most people have come to see their disabilities as a part of themselves, a part which may make their lives different from other people’s, but not necessarily tragic.
6. **Yes.** People who are blind or who have limited mobility are often talked to in loud voices, but a visual impairment by no means indicates a hearing impairment. As a matter of fact, people with disabilities are often thought to have superpowers in their non-disabled senses. A person may be both mobility-impaired and deaf, or a person who is visually impaired may have developed more acute hearing than most people. In any case, people with disabilities want to be accepted, but do not want people to expect other disabilities or extraordinary powers they do not have.
7. **No.** People who have intellectual disabilities learn more slowly than other people, but they deserve the dignity and the experience of learning skills and living in the community as adults.
8. **No.** People with even the same disability are as different from one another as are other people. Each person is unique. Some people who are deaf are married, some are single. Some enjoy skiing, some prefer reading. Degree of disability may be different, and the same disability can affect different people in different ways.
9. **Yes.** The biggest barrier people with disabilities face is other people’s perceptions of them. Wheelchairs are simply devices, like glasses or bicycles, that help people with disabilities to better do what they want and need. Just because someone uses a device to help does not mean that he or she cannot be independent and productive.
10. **Yes.** Federal and state laws mandate that all children with disabilities be granted access to an education in mainstream public schools and in mainstream classrooms when possible. The Americans with Disabilities Act also prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, much like the laws that prohibit discrimination because of race, sex, religion or ethnic background.

# Section One: Communication

## Language Assessment

This quiz can be used before beginning the activities. It helps participants discover the concerns and assumptions they have about people with disabilities and prompts discussion.

### Choose the better phrase:

1. The Johnsons' next-door-neighbor is an epileptic.  
The Johnsons' next-door-neighbor, Bill, has epilepsy.
2. I met with John last week. Did you know that he has a mobility impairment?  
I met with John last week. Did you know that he is crippled?
3. The blind have an active consumer group in our state.  
People who are blind have an active consumer group in our state.
4. Mary is afflicted with muscular dystrophy.  
Mary has muscular dystrophy.
5. I have 21 cases with epilepsy.  
I have 21 clients with epilepsy.
6. Bill is a victim of cerebral palsy and is confined to a wheelchair.  
Bill has cerebral palsy and is a wheelchair user.

### Discussion

While these phrases are appropriate for learning exercises in language use, it should be remembered that it's not necessary to describe a person in terms of his or her disability, unless it is relevant to the conversation.

1. The second phrase is better. People with a disability are often stereotyped as having a "personality type." The first phrase suggests that Bill has a prescribed set of personality characteristics because he is "an epileptic." Avoid presenting physical characteristics as a determining factor of the personality. The focus should be on the person and his or her uniqueness.
2. The first phrase is better. In referring to a specific disability, avoid terms that are offensive. Using terms like retard, schizo, spastic, cripple and dumb are insulting and degrading. Preferred terminology is: people who have intellectual disabilities, who are emotionally disabled, who have cerebral palsy and who have speech impairments.
3. The second phrase is better. A common use of offensive terminology occurs when an adjective that describes a disability is used as a noun. This implies that the person is the disability. For example, the term "the blind" implies that blindness is the predominate characteristic rather than only one aspect of the person.
4. The second phrase is better. Some words, such as "afflicted" and "patient," foster the notion that people with disabilities are ill. A disability is not contagious. You can't "catch" it like you can a cold. Although some people with disabilities have accompanying health problems, our

language should not promote the fallacy that people with disabilities have an illness and should be avoided.

5. The second phrase is better. It is offensive to refer to a person with a disability as a “case.” It is dehumanizing to be considered a set of records or an object to be dealt with. The first phrase is not intended to insult, but it does. It depersonalizes the individual.
6. The second phrase is better. Some terms have a negative meaning and distort the reality of the disability. For example, a person is not confined by a wheelchair, but most likely liberated by a wheelchair. A person is not dying with cancer, but rather living with cancer. Other phrases, such as “victim of” and “suffering from,” imply that the person leads a life of despair. Most people with disabilities are not saddened or preoccupied with their disability. They may do things differently than a person without a disability, but with the same result or with equal participation.

## Epithets – The Power of Words

**Activity:** Ask the participants if they know the differences between “connotation” and “denotation.” Every word has both a connotation (subjective, evaluative dimension) and denotation (an objective reference). When we respond to other people’s words, we respond to what the words connote to us as well as what they denote. The connotations of words vary from person to person and group to group according to their positive and negative values and standards.

An epithet is a negative name that people use about others. Often epithets have to do with a person’s race, religion, disability, sex, appearance, political beliefs — all things which are important to a person’s identity. Have the participants give examples of epithets they’ve heard. Make a chart indicating epithets referring to each of these aspects of a person’s identity.

**Discussion:** Have a discussion on why people call others by negative slang names. Responses might include lack of respect, dislike of a person’s behavior, need to feel important or better than other people, etc. Write down the responses given on the board. Ask each participant to identify, out loud or on paper, names they have been called that make them angry. Talk about these and discuss how it makes them feel and what they do when it happens.

## Words Matter

**Activity One:** Discuss language used to talk about disabilities. Use the language guidelines on page 17 at the back of this booklet to discuss offensive terms and the preferred alternatives. In general, tell participants to keep in mind the rule of “people first” language: Refer first to the person, then — when necessary — to the disability. For example, say “woman who is blind” instead of “blind woman.” Using “people first” language reminds us that people with disabilities are, first and foremost, people. Their disabilities do not define who they are as people, just as a person with brown hair is not exactly like every other person with the same hair color.

Also remind participants that some slang words and phrases can be very hurtful to people with disabilities and their family members and friends. For example, the common phrase “that’s retarded,” used to indicate that something is stupid, wrong or unfair, spreads negative messages about people with disabilities and can cause hurt feelings. Ask the participants to remove such phrases from their vocabulary and to encourage friends and family to do the same.

**Activity Two:** Compare newspaper articles that use proper language to others that do not. Reading the differences in language will give participants a better idea of why “people first” language is preferred.



## Sign Language

**Activity:** Distribute the sign language handout on page 18 that shows the sign language symbols for letters of the alphabet. Practice forming these letters and reading them when someone else forms them. Encourage each participant to practice spelling his/her own name.

Next, sit in a circle. The leader should spell a three-letter word using the hand symbols. The person next to him/her in the circle must state the word that has been spelled and then spell his/her own word, using the last letter of the leader's word as the first letter of their own word. Continue around the circle so that everyone has several chances to play. After the first round, you might try longer words or words that fit into a specific category (e.g., foods or animals).

## A Soundless World

**Activity One:** On the Internet, research Relay Indiana, a phone service for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Work with your local independent living center, college/university student disability services center of rehabilitation agency to identify a person in your community who would be willing to serve as a Relay Indiana "phone pal." Set up a time to call this person using the Relay Indiana service. Using a speaker phone so that everyone can listen and experience the Relay service, have several participants ask questions of the phone pal. Be sure to send a thank-you note afterward.

**Activity Two:** Show a short, interesting video or cartoon with the sound off. Try to find a video that is closed-captioned, but do not turn the caption feature on. Ask the participants to write answers to some questions about the video. Some of the questions should be factual questions about the plot that cannot be answered without hearing the script. Some should be ones that can be answered by what is seen. Show the video again with the captioning on or, if it is not captioned, turn the sound on. Ask the questions again. After someone answers the questions correctly, find out what some of the answers were when no one could hear them.

**Discussion:** What were you able to understand even though you couldn't hear? What senses can a person who is deaf use to understand what's going on? What problems would you have if you couldn't hear? What can video makers do to make sure people who are deaf can also understand the program? Closed-captioning is a common feature required on modern television sets that allows people with hearing impairments to enjoy their favorite TV programs. Captions scroll across the bottom of the screen so that viewers can read what's being said on the show. Ask participants to turn on the closed-captioning at home so they can see what it looks like. Brainstorm other ways captioning might help all people, such as viewers who are learning to read or who want to watch something when it is noisy in the room.

## Code Breakers

**Activity One:** Distribute the Braille Secret Code Activity on page 20 and Braille alphabet handout on page 19. Ask participants to use their Braille alphabet as a code breaker to read the Braille message. Award a small prize to the participant who "cracks the code" first. To continue the activity, ask participants to compose short written "secret messages" to a partner, drawing the Braille dots on paper. Then allow time for them to translate their partner's message.

**Activity Two:** Arrange a “Braille Adventure Trail” with a series of hidden clues directing participants to the next clue locations. All of the clues should be written in Braille, so participants must read each clue (using the Understanding Braille handout) to continue toward the final destination. For younger participants, consider developing a theme for the activity, such as a jungle exploration expedition or pioneer trail. Participants could wear dress-up costumes, if desired, and clues and destination points could also be adapted to the theme.

**Activity Three:** Organize a scavenger hunt to discover where Braille is used in the community. Older participants can complete this scavenger hunt competitively in small groups, if desired. Take along a video camera or digital camera to record each item when it is found. Items on the Braille scavenger hunt list could include:

- A building sign, such as room number, emergency exit or restroom signage, that includes Braille lettering.
- A Braille menu from a local restaurant.
- A Braille-labeled elevator button.
- A public telephone with Braille-labeled buttons and/or instructions.
- A Braille book at the local library and/or bookstore, such as a dictionary, children’s book, religious text and/or novel.
- An ATM with Braille-labeled buttons.
- A Braille brochure, price list, contract or other document prepared by a local business for its customers who are blind.
- An official government document, such as a court document, offered in a Braille format.

## Different Ways to Communicate

**Activity One:** Rent a short movie from your local library that is “audio described.” This type of technology, for people who are blind or have vision impairments, describes out loud what is happening on the screen. Discuss how this technology can benefit people both with and without disabilities.

**Activity Two:** Not all people who are blind read Braille. In fact, there are many other options available to help people read in a non-visual way. Ask participants to research alternatives to Braille, such as screen-reading computer software, books on tape/CD, books that can be downloaded to a computer or digital music player and read aloud, large-print books, magnifying glasses and much more. If possible, work with your local independent living center, college/university student disability services center or rehabilitation agency to arrange a demonstration of some of these technologies.

## **Section Two:**

# **Accessibility**

### **Barriers Checklist**

A barrier is something that makes it difficult or impossible for a person with a disability to get into or around a building. Is your school or building barrier free? Use this checklist to find out. And if your school or building does not do very well on the checklist, don't be too surprised. Most buildings still have barriers, but thankfully, not for long. The Americans with Disabilities Act and other laws and regulations are helping to remove barriers in various facilities. Let's check the accessibility of your building.

**Does the main entrance to your facility have a ramp or a level entrance?**

- Yes     No

**Are the doorknobs of all main doors no more than three feet from the ground so people in wheelchairs can reach them?**

- Yes     No

**Do the hallways have handrails to help people walk?**

- Yes     No

**Are there parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities? Are these spaces near the building entrance? Are they 12 feet wide? Are at least two out of every 100 spaces reserved for people with disabilities?**

- Yes     No

**Are there curb cuts so that people with wheelchairs or with baby carriages or shopping carts are able to easily access walkways?**

- Yes     No

**Are there tactile markings (can be felt by touch) cut into the sidewalk to warn people who are blind?**

- Yes     No

**If your facility has more than one floor, does it have an elevator?**

- Yes     No

**Are the top floor buttons no more than three feet from the ground and are they marked with Braille or raised numbers?**

- Yes     No

**Does the elevator have light and bell signals to help people who are blind or deaf to know when the elevator is ready?**

- Yes     No

**Are the doorways to all bathrooms at least 33 inches wide?**

- Yes     No

**Are the sinks low enough? (Get a chair and see if you can reach the sink while you're sitting in the chair.)**

- Yes     No

**Are the telephones in the building accessible? (Use the same test as for sinks.)**

- Yes     No

**Are there grab bars in the bathroom stalls so that people can lift themselves from a wheelchair to the toilet and back again?**

- Yes     No

**Are the windows 24 inches or 28 inches from the floor so that people who are short and people in wheelchairs can see out?**

- Yes     No

**If in a school building, are the aisles in the classrooms at least 32 inches wide so that people in wheelchairs, or on crutches, or with canes or walkers, can get around easily?**

- Yes     No

**Are there flashing lights for fire alarms so that people who are hearing impaired will know if there's a fire?**

- Yes     No

**Are there picture signs to show the purpose of each room so that people who cannot read will know where to go?**

- Yes     No

As you have learned from the barriers checklist, making a building accessible to people with disabilities is not difficult. But it does require an awareness of the specific needs of people with various disabilities.

If your building needs accessibility improvements, the Governor's Council encourages you to talk with building officials or owners to see if accessibility problems can be solved. In some cases, tax credits or deductions can help finance these improvements.

By solving accessibility challenges, everyone benefits. When people with disabilities have the same accessibility to facilities as everyone else, they are able to more fully contribute their talents and experiences and benefit everyone.

## Assistive Technology

Assistive technology is defined as tools that enable people with disabilities to accomplish daily living tasks and assist them with communication, education, work and recreational activities, thus allowing them to achieve greater independence and enhance their quality of life.

**Activity One:** Arrange a visit to a local rehabilitation agency or hospital, medical device supplier or other local organization that sells, rents or uses assistive technology products for people with disabilities. Some examples of items to explore include:

- Computer technology, such as voice-recognition software, Braille displays and screen readers.
- Assistive communication devices, such as text-to-speech and teletypewriter devices.
- Braille note-takers and embossers.
- Mobility devices such as canes, wheelchairs, and walkers
- Athletic equipment, such as tandem bicycles, bell/beep balls and racing wheelchairs.

If possible, allow participants to try out the items. Be sure to leave time for them to ask questions of the organization's representative. Afterward, emphasize that these devices allow people with disabilities to accomplish almost any task.

As an alternative, assign each participant to research one of the above items and prepare a poster or presentation to share with the group.

**Activity Two:** Using the definition of assistive technology at the start of this section, have participants discuss different items that might help a person with a disability accomplish a task or activity. Explain that assistive technology can be something very simple and that everyone uses common items every day to help them accomplish tasks. People with disabilities are no different. Have them brainstorm a few items that they used this week to help them with daily living tasks, communication, education, work or recreation. People with disabilities often use things in creative ways to accomplish tasks.

Break participants into small groups and give each group a common household item. Tell them to write down or talk about how the item is ordinarily used. Next, have them brainstorm other ways the item could be used to accomplish different daily tasks, by either people with or without disabilities, in communication, education, work or recreation. Tell them to be creative — no idea is too wild! Allow each group to report on their most creative ideas for other ways to use the household item.

For example, a piece of paper could be rolled up and used to extend your reach, allowing you to tap someone on the shoulder to get their attention. It could also be used to jot down a to-do list for the day. Or, you can have some fun and use it to make a hat! There's no limit to what's possible.

### Suggested items:

Straws	Tape
Flashlight	Paper bag
Piece of rope	Pipe cleaner
Tongs	Trash can
Ruler	Coffee cup
Piece of paper	Rubber band

## Section Three:

# Inclusion

### The Importance of Inclusion

**Activity:** Have participants sit in a circle and ask them to name some activities that are performed in groups. They might mention playing board games, a team sport or a musical performance. Next, ask the participants what these activities would be like if they did them alone. Would soccer be fun if you always played by yourself? How could you play in an orchestra by yourself? Emphasize that these activities are not fun or even possible unless many people participate.

Next, ask participants how they would feel if they were excluded from such activities while everyone else participated. Ask them to raise their hands if they've ever felt "left out" of an activity or conversation. What did it feel like? How did they react?

Finally, ask participants to discuss ways to make other people feel welcome in a group. How can they adapt activities to include children or adults with disabilities? Brainstorm specifics on how to include people with disabilities in some common activities. What modifications would be needed for a person who is blind? Deaf? Someone who cannot read? Explain that people with disabilities have the same thoughts and feelings as people without disabilities and want to participate in the same activities.

### Inclusion Theatre

**Activity:** Have a discussion with participants about correct ways to interact with people with disabilities and the proper language to use when discussing disability. The Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities offers a "Power of Words" brochure that includes information on proper behavior and language to use when interacting with someone with a disability, and this brochure can serve as a good guide. (The brochure is available on the Council's Web site at [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd).) Another popular resource is The Ten Commandments of Communicating with People with Disabilities, a video available at most libraries.

When participants understand the guidelines, ask them to divide into groups and role play two- or three-minute disability-related scenarios, such as:

- A group of friends, one of whom is deaf, enters a restaurant to eat lunch. The server approaches the table to take the order.
- Your teacher asks you to play host to the new girl in class, who is blind.
- You and your friends go to the movies. When you sit down in the theater, you notice that the person next to you has an assistance dog.
- The substitute teacher for the day is a woman who uses a wheelchair.
- You and your family are invited to a party at the neighbor's house. Although you never met him, you know their son has an intellectual disability.

In the first round, each group's skit should contain language and interactions that are intentionally incorrect, and the other participants should point out the mistakes. In the second round, each group should role play its situation using proper language and following the interaction guidelines.

If desired, these skits can be presented to parents, students or others in your community.

### Community Service

**Activity:** Arrange a community service activity that participants can perform alongside — not on behalf of — people with disabilities. For example, participants might work with people with disabilities to sponsor a canned food drive or prepare care kits for the homeless. The most important aspect of this activity is that it allows participants to interact with people with disabilities while working toward a common goal. Contact a local independent living center or disability service provider to determine its interest in establishing such a partnership.

## Section Four:

# Attitude

### Stereotypes

**Activity:** The goal of this activity is to consider stereotypes of people with and without disabilities. Tell the participants you are going to take a survey about how they would describe people with and without disabilities. Hand out a sheet with two columns: “With Disabilities” and “Without Disabilities.” Have participants list the words they think best describe each group of people. Compare the results.

Another way to approach the same question is to have participants place the following adjectives in either, or both, the “With Disabilities” or “Without Disabilities” column.

smart	sloppy
serious	hardworking
sad	strong
slow	ill
likes sports	cries
lazy	brave
noisy	serious
quiet	likes people
polite	afraid
neat	friendly
good in school	alone
complains	different

**Discussion:** Which adjectives did you choose for the “With Disabilities” column only? Why? Which adjectives did you choose for the “Without Disabilities” column only? Why? Which did you choose for both? Why? Were there certain words that most people put in the “With Disabilities” column? What are stereotypes? Are they good or bad?

### It Bugs Me

**Activity:** All of us experience frustrations daily, and we must learn to accept feelings of frustration and cope with frustrating situations. A common reason for frustration occurs when a person wants something, but his or her wish is blocked. The obstacle may be physical, temporal, interpersonal or cognitive. Sharing personal frustrations and ways to deal with them can help children accept their feelings and hear creative solutions. Have the class or smaller groups make a “bug list” on the blackboard. Make five columns to record individual frustrations in terms of goal, block, source of block, location and feelings. You can then summarize by identifying common incidents and talk about solutions or coping strategies.

# Miscellaneous activities

## Star Search

**Activity:** Ask participants, individually or in small groups, to research famous people with disabilities. What did these people accomplish? What role did their disabilities play in achieving their goals? Some examples of famous people and historical figures with disabilities include:

Muhammad Ali	Frida Kahlo
Ludwig van Beethoven	Helen Keller
Ray Charles	Rush Limbaugh
Winston Churchill	Marlee Matlin
Max Cleland	Itzhak Perlman
Tom Cruise	Christopher Reeve
Walt Disney	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Bob Dole	Harriett Tubman
Thomas Edison	Luther Vandross
Albert Einstein	Montel Williams
Michael J. Fox	Stevie Wonder
Stephen Hawking	

## Speaker

**Activity:** Invite a speaker, preferably a person with a disability, to talk with participants about disabilities. Some possibilities include:

- A local teenager with a disability.
- A person who is deaf or a sign language interpreter.
- An adult who acquired a disability as a result of an illness or injury.
- An athlete with a disability, such as a member of a wheelchair basketball team.
- A staff person from the local independent living center or other organization that advocates for people with disabilities.

Ask the speaker to address his or her own experiences with disability, as well as ways the participants can include others with disabilities in their everyday activities.

Before the speaker arrives, give participants some background information and ask them to write down questions. Be sure to allow time at the end of the presentation for participants to ask these questions.



## Credits

Barnes, Ellen; Berrigan, Carol; and Biklen, Douglas,  
*What's the Difference? Teaching Positive Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities*,  
Human Policy Press, P.O. Box 127, University  
Station, Syracuse, New York 13210.

Bradley, Kriss M. and Egan, Nora A.,  
*Handicapped - Disabled, What's the Difference?*  
An unpublished paper, Louisiana State University  
Medical Center, Department of Rehabilitation  
Counseling.

*Just Like Me! Disability Awareness Activities*,  
Maine Planning and Advisory Council on  
Developmental Disabilities, Statehouse Station #40,  
Augusta, Maine 04333.

Manus, Gerald L.,  
"Is Your Language Disabling,"  
*Journal of Rehabilitation*,  
September/October, 1975.

## Resources

A list of state resources is available under the  
Publications section on the Governor's Council's  
Web site at **[www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd)**.

Resources for activities are included on the  
following pages.

**The Council encourages input, reactions and suggestions regarding this brochure. Please forward comments to:**

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Web site - [www.in.gov/gpcpd](http://www.in.gov/gpcpd)

This booklet is available in accessible formats upon request.

# Language Guidelines

Disrespectful/inappropriate terms	Respectful terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crazy/insane/deranged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychiatric disability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cripple/crippled person</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with a disability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deaf and dumb/deaf-mute</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deaf or hard of hearing, as appropriate — Deafness refers to a profound hearing loss, while a person who is hard of hearing has mild to moderate hearing loss. When the person is also unable to speak, say “person who is deaf and unable to speak.”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differently-abled/Handi-capable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a disability — Avoid trendy or “cute” terms, which are viewed by many people with disabilities as condescending.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The disabled/the blind/the deaf</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with disabilities/people who are blind/people who are deaf</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handicap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handicapped parking/restrooms/seating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessible parking/restrooms/seating</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental retardation/mentally retarded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intellectual disability/person with an intellectual disability — “Cognitive disability” is also widely used.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mongoloid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with Down syndrome</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Person with an intellectual disability</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stricken with/victim of/suffering from [a particular disability]</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had or has [a particular disability] — Do not use negative terms that imply illness or suggest that people with disabilities should be pitied.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheelchair-bound/confined to a wheelchair</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a wheelchair — For a person with a disability, a wheelchair is a liberating, not a confining, tool; it creates freedom of movement for people who cannot walk.</li> </ul>

# Sign Language: Letter Symbols



A



B



C



D



E



F



G



H



I



J



K



L



M



N



O



P



Q



R



S



T



U



V



W



X



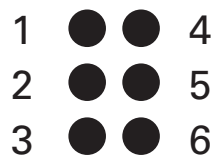
Y



Z

# Understanding Braille

People who are blind often use Braille to read. Braille is written with patterns of raised dots, which can be “read” with the fingertips. Braille symbols are based on a grid made of six dots:

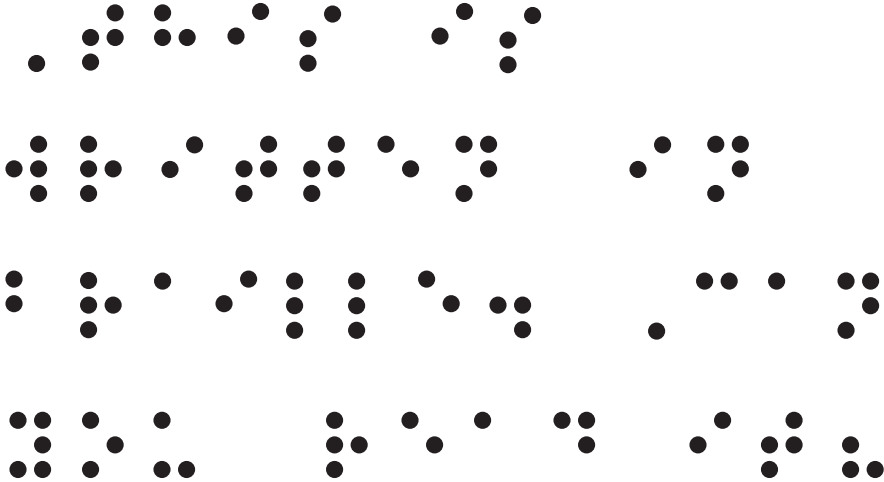


Letters are capitalized in Braille by adding a dot at the number-six space on the grid, just before the letter to be capitalized. Numbers are shown by adding a number sign (dots three, four, five and six) in front of one of the first 10 letters of the alphabet. For example, a number sign and the sign for letter “C” means “three.”

●	● ●	●●	●● ●	● ●	●●	●● ●●
a	b	c	d	e	f	g
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
●●	● ●	●●	● ●	● ●	●● ●	●● ●
h	i	j	k	l	m	n
8	9	0				
● ●	●● ●	●● ●● ●	● ● ●	● ●	●● ●●	● ●●
o	p	q	r	s	t	u
● ● ●	● ● ●	●● ●●	●● ● ●	● ●	●	●● ●
v	w	x	y	z	,	.
● Capital Sign		● ●● Number Sign			●● ?	

# Braille Secret Code Activity

The three-dimensional symbols of Braille enable people who are blind or have vision impairments to read quickly using their sense of touch. How quickly can you crack the code of a two-dimensional version?



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Source: "Braille Alphabet and Numbers Used by the Blind," American Printing House for the Blind, Louisville, Ky.