

Exceptional Children's Week 2024

Toolkit

Exceptional Children's Week is an annual celebration of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents. The week-long celebration is a national event started by the [Council for Exceptional Children \(CEC\)](#), an international professional organization dedicated to improving the success of children and youth with disabilities and/or gifts and talents.

Dates: April 15 - April 19, 2024

Theme: Accessibility for All

Programming:

- Monday: Open Your Books to Access
- Tuesday: Assistive Tech Tuesday
- Wednesday: Wear Your Colors!
- Thursday: Door Decorating
- Friday: FriendGram Friday

Monday: Open Your Books to Access

- Take a chance to pick out a book, story, or article highlighting inclusion and assistive technology. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase diverse people and perspectives to your students and to kick off Exceptional Children's Week with a chance to learn and ask questions.
- Suggested Reading
 - **Infants + Toddlers**
 - [All Are Welcome](#) by Alexandra Penfold
 - A story that highlights people of all different backgrounds and abilities, with a focus on inclusivity
 - [The ABCs of Inclusion](#) by Beth Leipholtz
 - A picture book that introduces 26 children with a range of disabilities and the importance of inclusion
 - **Pre-K + Elementary School**
 - [Special People, Special Ways](#) by Arlene Maguire
 - A story that portrays children with disabilities in positive and empowering ways, with a focus on empathy
 - [My Brother Charlie](#) by Holly Robinson Peete and Ryan Elizabeth Peete
 - A book about Charlie, a boy with autism, told from his twin sister's perspective

- [A Boy and a Jaguar](#) by Alan Rabinowitz
 - A story about a boy with a speech impediment that connects with a jaguar at the zoo and wants to be an animal advocate
- **Middle School**
 - [Roll With It](#) by Jamie Sumner
 - A story about a girl with cerebral palsy who wishes to become a professional baker
 - [Izzy at the End of the World](#) by K.A. Reynolds
 - A book featuring an autistic preteen who must survive the end of the world with her dog by her side.
 - [Jessi's Secret Language](#) by Chan Chau
 - A graphic novel featuring Jessi from the Baby-sitters Club as she begins to babysit Matt, who has been Deaf from birth.
- **High School**
 - [“Products mocked as “lazy” or “useless” are often important tools for people with disabilities”](#) (Vox)
 - This article explores the world of “As Seen on TV” products and how they serve vital purposes for people with disabilities.
 - [“This Is What Disabled Looks Like”: The Sometimes Hard-To-See Line Between Visible and Invisible Disabilities”](#) (Medium)
 - This essay dives into the differences between visible and invisible disabilities and the importance of disability awareness and inclusion.
 - [“I’ve Been Paralyzed Since I Was 3. Here’s Why Kindness Toward Disabled People Is More Complicated Than You Think”](#) (Time)
 - This essay explores the author’s experience living in a wheelchair and provides insight into the ways that “kindness” can be misguided and harmful.
 - [“Ad Campaign Challenges Assumptions About Down Syndrome”](#) (Disability Scoop)
 - This article talks about a new ad for World Down Syndrome Day, in which a young woman with Down syndrome challenges the assumptions made about her and her abilities.

Assistive Tech Tuesday

Assistive technology includes products, equipment, and systems that enhance learning, working, and daily living for people with disabilities. Use this day to teach your students about assistive technology and its impacts.

- **Families**

- [Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology](#)
 - A fully searchable database of more than 600 abstracts, books, articles, videos, websites and other resources concerning assistive technology.
- **Pre-K + Elementary School**
 - [Play Map: Designing Inclusive Spaces](#) (Disability Equality in Education)
 - This lesson plan prompts students to look at the world around them and reflect on the accessibility of their environments and how to improve them.
- **Middle School**
 - [Inventions: How do innovation and design help people with disabilities?](#) (PBS)
 - This lesson plan outlines the role of innovation and invention in improving the lives of people with disabilities. It guides students in creating paper or cardboard prototypes of their inventions.
- **High School**
 - [Lesson plan: Inventing assistive devices that give people their independence](#) (PBS)
 - This lesson plan outlines how assistive technology plays a vital role in the lives of people with disabilities. This lesson will explore innovation, invention, 3D printing, and design.

Wear Your Colors

Wednesday is a chance for your students to express their support for those with disabilities by wearing the disability pride colors. Students can choose to wear:

- Green - Sensory disabilities
- Blue - Emotional and Behavioral disabilities
- White - Invisible disabilities and Giftedness
- Gold - Neurodivergence
- Red - Physical Disabilities

This is also an excellent opportunity to teach your students about disability pride. There are resources about disability pride available:

- [What is Disability Pride?](#) (AmeriDisability)
- [What Is Disability Pride Month? Plus, Ways To Celebrate With Students](#) (We Are Teachers)
- [Reflections on Disability Pride Month from Disabled Students Across the Country](#) (Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Blog)

Door Decorating

Get out that construction paper and tape; it's time to decorate your door! Incorporate this year's theme, "Accessibility for All," in your design and get the word out to your school about Exceptional Children's Week. Snap a picture of your door and use the hashtag #ECW2024 and the Council for Exceptional Children will share it on our social media. For our infants and toddlers, creating artwork with themes of inclusion, friendship, and positivity can be used to adorn classrooms and hallways.

Check out these great doors for some inspiration:



Friendgram Friday

Spread kindness and friendship around your school! There are several ways to participate:

- Have your students write kind and friendly phrases on sticky notes and hang them on your door, on lockers, or around the school
- Students can write encouraging messages about friendship and inclusion and display them in a central location, such as bulletin boards or cafeterias.
- Students write messages of friendship and kindness and give them to others. This can be contained within your classroom, across the school, or grades (ex. 5th-graders writing notes to 1st-graders, etc.).
- Infants and toddlers can use this day to practice making friends and including their peers in activities.

Resources

These resources can help you and your school plan a great Exceptional Children's Week:

- [Exceptional Children's Week](#) - The Council for Exceptional Children has created a page on its website with information about Exceptional Children's Week and how to celebrate it.
- [Exceptional Children's Week Social Media Toolkit](#) - The Council for Exceptional Children put together a social media toolkit to help promote Exceptional Children's Week.
- [Exceptional Children's Week Flyers](#) - The Council for Exceptional Children has created flyers that can be shared and printed to promote ECW.
- [Book Read Alouds](#) - Disability Equality in Education put together a playlist of YouTube videos featuring people reading aloud from books that feature characters with disabilities.
- [Lessons in Social Inclusion A Collection of 5 Mini-Lesson Units](#) (Special Olympics Unified Champion School) - This booklet outlines five units of lessons that you can utilize to teach about social inclusion and disability.
- [Disability Awareness Class Activity Lesson Plans](#)- The HIE Help Center compiled various lesson plans designed to help teach students about disability and inclusion.
- [Disability Equality in Education Lesson Plans](#) - Disability Equality in Education has created lesson plans for all grades that can be used to teach about disability awareness in your classroom.
- [Family Information Guide to Assistive Technology](#) - A fully searchable database of more than 600 abstracts, books, articles, videos, websites and other resources concerning assistive technology

If you have any questions, please contact the Council for Exceptional Children at service@exceptionalchildren.org or (703) 620-3660.