

# #NTDSEquity: Ability Awareness

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE NTDSE EQUITY TEAM



**DIVERSITY IS  
BEING INVITED  
TO THE PARTY.  
INCLUSION IS  
BEING ASKED  
TO DANCE.**

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## ABOUT #NTDSEQUITY

During the 2019-2020 school year, the NTDSE Inclusive Practices committee was formed to spread awareness about our students' abilities, help spread the word about how our schools and communities can be inclusive of people with disabilities, and to provide resources for our staff and students to feel confident in talking about ability awareness and inclusive practices.

In the summer of 2020, this committee was expanded to address more issues of (in)equity in our schools. While our first issue of #NTDSEquity focuses on ability awareness and inclusive practices, we will work hard throughout the school year to bring you information about other equity topics through this newsletter series. We hope you find this information informative and helpful, and know that we are here as a committee to support both staff and student learning about these important equity topics. Thanks for reading!

-The NTDSE Equity Team

# STAFF RESOURCES

## DEFINITIONS

- **Ability Awareness:** Instead of regarding students as suffering from deficit, disease, or dysfunction, it suggests that each student brings unique abilities and differences to the classroom including disabilities.
- **Ableism:** Ableism is discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities or who are perceived to have disabilities
- **Inclusive Practices:** Educational approaches that values each child in the community and is committed to creating a school environment that does not see diversity as a problem but as a positive.
- **Neurodiversity:** A theory that asserts that atypical neurological development is a normal human difference that is to be recognized and respected as any other human variation.

## COMMON LANGUAGE

- It is expected to use person first language when talking about a person with a disability. Instead of saying "she's autistic" you can say "she has autism/she is a person with autism."
- When describing people with physical disabilities using a wheelchair, it is proper etiquette to describe them as a "person who uses a wheelchair" instead of saying "she's wheelchair-bound" or "confined to a wheelchair."
- Try to stay up-to-date with terms and refrain from saying outdated phrases or words such as "cripple" or "deaf and dumb." Instead use person centered language such as " he has a physical disability" or "he has a hearing impairment and intellectual disability."
- If you are not sure what language to use in a certain situation, it is appropriate to ask the person/family what language they prefer to use to describe themselves/their disability.

## CHECK THESE OUT!

- [Understood.org](#): A great website for empowering individuals, families, and educators. Visit the "Through Your Child's Eyes" section for simulations, videos, and other tools!
- [Inclusion Checklist](#): Use this checklist when meeting with general education teachers and staff to ensure you touch on all important inclusion topics
- [Inclusive Practices Powerpoint](#): Put this presentation to use with staff and/or students in general education to raise awareness of abilities and differences within our community. Feel free to make a copy and tweak as needed!
- [My Very Special Abilities](#): Read this article from the perspective of a person with a disability to gain insight in challenges and positives of having a disability.
- [Understanding and Challenging Ableism](#): Check out this informational article from the Anti-Defamation League about ways to challenging ableism in different realms.
- [My Child Has a Disability](#): A NY Times article about the uncertainty and challenges associated with special education during COVID.
- Looking to get into a new TV show? Catch Netflix's "Love on the Spectrum" for a look into the dating world of people who are on the autism spectrum. It is both engaging and informative about relationship challenges and often ableist world of dating that people on the spectrum face.

“ I am also so much more than the disability that has been defined on my behalf

-Meredith Talusan, My Very Special Abilities



# STUDENT RESOURCES

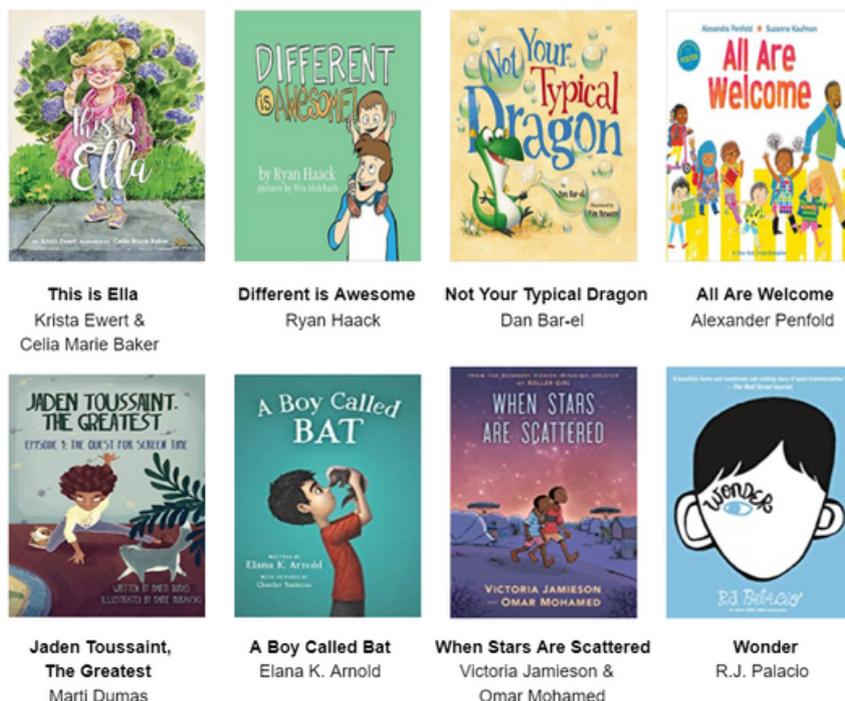


- Inclusive Practices Kit for Kids: Check out this folder for inclusive practice lesson ideas for students
- Student Activities Folder: Visit this folder for different activity ideas to do with your students regarding ability awareness
- Julia Wears a Mask: Informative video clip about the importance of wearing a mask, featuring Sesame Street's Julia, a Muppet with autism
- Ian: Watch this YouTube video about a boy named Ian and the challenges he faces due to his cerebral palsy.
- Epilepsy Video: Watch this informational video that teaches kids about epilepsy.

## BOOK NOOK

Here are some recommended books on the topic of ability awareness. Visit the corresponding links for read alouds, activity ideas, and more!

- 1) **This is Ella**
  - [Informational Video](#)
- 2) **Different is Awesome**
  - [Read aloud](#)
  - [Author Interview](#)
- 3) **Not Your Typical Dragon**
  - [Read Aloud](#)
  - [Author's Website](#)
- 4) **All Are Welcome**
  - [Read aloud](#)
  - [Poster](#)



- 5) **Jaden Toussaint, The Greatest**
  - [Video Trailer](#)
  - [Teacher Resources](#)
- 6) **A Boy Called Bat**
  - [Video Trailer](#)
  - [Digital Book Talk](#)
  - [Educator's Resource](#)
- 7) **When Stars Are Scattered**
  - [Book Review/Talk](#)
  - [Educator Guide](#)
- 8) **Wonder**
  - [Author Discussion](#)
  - [Lesson Plans](#)
  - [Read Aloud](#)

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