

Learning The Value Of Caring

(NAPSA)—Teaching children acceptance could add up to a lifetime of benefits.

That's the idea behind a unique program meant to help youngsters understand what it means to live with a disability and to encourage kids to accept differences. Used by teachers and parents, it explains what differing disabilities are and provides hands-on activities to help youngsters learn how people with disabilities live independent, everyday lives.

The free curriculum explores a range of conditions such as autism, ADHD and intellectual disabilities, and it includes specially crafted learning activities, hands-on exercises, guided discussions and more.

Sponsored by Friendly Ice Cream Corporation, the program—called Friends Who Care®—is offered by Easter Seals online. It's broken into seven units that last 45 minutes each and can be taught during one week or over several.

Here's a look at a sample activity from the curriculum. It's meant to help children develop a better understanding of autism—a developmental disability that's diagnosed once every 20 minutes in the U.S.

Understanding Autism

- Have children find a partner. One partner will try to tell the other partner about what he or she did over the weekend. The other partner will not respond and, instead, will try to tell about the new video game he or she played last night.



A unique program helps teach children what it means to live with a disability.

- Give the children 90 seconds. Then, guide a discussion. Ask students how they felt when their partner didn't respond to their topic. Explain that sometimes people with autism have a hard time holding conversations. The best approach when speaking with a person who has autism is to be direct by saying something such as, "I want to tell you about my weekend and then we can talk about video games."

- Explain that children can help a person with autism learn to have a conversation, and that the person might teach them something in return.

For more information or to download the curriculum, visit www.easterseals.com/friendswho-care. You can also call (800) 221-6827 to learn more.