

20 Things You Can Do

Grade Level: all ages

Possible class environment: theatre class, language arts, health class

Time commitment: 1 or 2 class periods depending on how involved you get

Overview:

We have created a list of “20 Things You Can Do” to help someone with Special Needs. Often, people have no idea what to do or say around someone who is severely disabled. This list will help inspire different ways to get involved with someone special.

Required Materials:

- Work sheet list provided at end of this lesson plan
- Pencils

Goal/Purpose:

- To expose students to different ways of helping someone in need
- To encourage creative thinking

You may elect to turn this into a class project where students pick something from the list and do something with a special needs student at the school or in the community. Small groups of students can even be “student helpers” with a school therapist!

Background:

Girls with Rett Syndrome are severely disabled. They have no hand function or speech. Most cannot walk and suffer from uncontrollable seizures and pain. Yet these girls are very smart and very brave. Because of their disabilities, they often feel isolated from friends and the community. Their families struggle as well. Use this list to find new ways you and your students can participate in the life of someone with Special Needs.

Procedures:

STEP 1: Brainstorm

Ask your students the following:

- Do you know anyone who is in a wheelchair?
- What kinds of things might be hard to do if you were in a wheelchair?

STEP 2: Read through worksheet

- Let each student in your class read from the list (provided at end of this lesson plan). Stop and talk about each item. Answer questions. Jot down their thoughts.
- After you have gone through the list, ask your students to think of up to 5 more ideas they might have.

STEP 3: SHARE

Once your students have completed their worksheets with their new ideas, collect the papers and display them in the hallway for everyone to read. You may submit their ideas via email to us! We will post the best ideas on our website! Send ideas to 5morethings@dressup2cure.org.

If your class would like to “adopt” a particular girl with Rett Syndrome (if you are not already aware of someone in your community), we can help you find someone. Or visit www.girlpower2cure.org/thegirls to pick someone to “adopt” and help out.

Questions? Comments? Suggestions?

Please contact:

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20 Things You Can Do

Here are 20 Things YOU could do to help out someone with special needs.

Read the list, then see if you can come up with 5 more!

Email your ideas to: 5morethings@dressup2cure.org. We will post the best ideas on our web site!

1. Smile and say hello.
2. Take someone on a walk on a nice warm day. Pushing a wheelchair can be fun!
3. Visit with your pet. Oh the joy a wiggly, warm ball of love can bring to someone who is confined to their wheelchair.
4. Make something for them. A drawing, a paper flower, a pretty button to wear. Show your friendship with a special homemade item.
5. Visit the special needs classroom at your school. Offer to read books, help with a craft, help the teacher.
6. Dance! Visit with your favorite music and have fun "dancing!" Even if you can just hold their hand and move to the beat! Bring a few fun scarves with you!
7. Invite a family with a special needs child to a church function. Offer to help with the child so the parents can talk and enjoy their time. Many families do not get out much because it can be very difficult to manage all by themselves.
8. Have a picnic! You will have to know what special diets the person is on and learn how to make some of the special foods. But an afternoon with a few families at a park is a wonderful time to be together.
9. Bring your special friend to a school event or game! Having kids their own age meet them at an event really helps.
10. Blow bubbles. This is a fun outdoor activity, especially with our Rett girls!
11. Find a park with a handicapped swing. Meet up at the park and push her on the swing.
12. Help a family out. Offer to help with yard work, cleaning out the garage, etc.
13. Be a grocery shopping buddy! If you are too young to babysit, you can still go with the family and help in the store. The extra pair of hands to push a cart or entertain a baby sibling is a big help. You can imagine it would be hard for a mom to push a cart and a wheelchair at the same time!
14. Help out at a doctor's appointment. Go with the family to the appointment. You can stay in the waiting room with your special friend so the parents can speak with the doctor without distractions.
15. Car wash! This is a fun activity you can do right in the driveway on a warm sunny day. Help your friend squirt the water, dip her hands in bucket of suds, sing some songs!
16. Beauty time! Get together with your friend and brush her hair. Put in all kinds of bows. Do your hair too! Sit in front of a mirror and pose and make faces. Take a picture of the two of you that you both will cherish forever!
17. Go with your mom to their house to babysit. Even if it is just so the parents can go for a walk.
18. Make flash cards and other helpful items. Talk with the family about what kinds of things they use to communicate with their daughter. Many use flash cards and other homemade items that are time consuming to make. You could be a very big help with this!
19. Make dinner for a family with a special needs child.
20. Make up a game. This is a big challenge! You have to come up with something you can do without walking, talking or using your hands!

21. _____

22. _____

23. _____

24. _____

25. _____