

"People with Disabilities at Work"

Objective:

To help children understand that people with disabilities work in various jobs, contribute to society, and can be successful in their careers with the right support and accommodations. The activity also aims to teach children about inclusion and how everyone has something valuable to offer.

Materials Needed:

- Pictures of different types of jobs (e.g., teacher, doctor, artist, chef, office worker, etc.)
- "Meet the Worker" cards (these cards include short, fictional stories of people with disabilities and their jobs and can be found at the end of this document)
- Large poster paper or whiteboard
- Markers or crayons
- A small prize or sticker for participation (optional)

Activity Steps:

1. Introduction to Disabilities and Work (10 minutes):

- Start by discussing the idea of jobs. Ask the children: "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and "What kinds of jobs do you know about?"
- Introduce the concept that people with disabilities also have jobs. Explain that people with disabilities can work in many different fields, just like anyone else. Some might need special tools or help, but they can do amazing things at work.
- Share some examples of famous people with disabilities who have had successful careers, such as:
 - **Helen Keller** (author and activist who was Deaf and blind),
 - **Temple Grandin** (animal scientist with autism),
 - **Stephen Hawking** (physicist with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) also known as Lou Gehrig's disease)

- **Thomas Edison** (inventor who was hard-of-hearing/Deaf)
 - **Simone Biles** (Olympic gymnast who has ADHD)
 - **Kendrick Lamar** (rapper who has depression)
 - **Billie Eilish** (singer/musician who has Tourette Syndrome)
 - **Daymond John** (entrepreneur who has dyslexia)
 - **Frida Kahlo** (artist/painter who had polio)
 - **Lin-Manuel Miranda** (song writer who has dysgraphia and partial hearing loss)
 - **Satoshi Tajiri** (creator and designer of Pokémon who has Asperger's Syndrome)
 - **Mark Zuckerberg** (Founder of Facebook who has color blindness)
 - **James Earl Jones** (actor who had a speech disability/stutter)
 - **Thomas Jefferson** (third US President and author of the Declaration of Independence who was dyslexic)
 - **Franklin D. Roosevelt** (former US president who used a wheelchair).
- Discuss how these individuals used their talents and strengths to succeed in their careers.
 - Show one of the On the Job videos.

2. Activity: "Meet the Worker" (20 minutes):

- Create several **"Meet the Worker" cards** that describe fictional people with disabilities in different types of jobs. Each card should include a short story about a person's disability and their job. Here are a few examples:
 - **Sarah:** Sarah uses a wheelchair and works as a **graphic designer**. She uses special computer software that helps her create beautiful designs, and her workplace is wheelchair accessible.
 - **Carlos:** Carlos has a hearing impairment and works as a **chef**. He uses visual signals in the kitchen, like flashing lights when timers go off, to help him know when his dishes are ready.

- **Liam:** Liam has a learning disability and works as a **librarian**. He helps organize books and assists people in finding the right books to read. He has a special computer program that helps him with reading and writing.
- Divide the class into small groups and give each group a few "Meet the Worker" cards. Ask the groups to read through the cards and discuss the following:
 - What is the person's disability?
 - What is their job?
 - How do they manage their work with their disability?
 - What special tools or help might they use?
- After 10-15 minutes, have each group share one story with the class, discussing how the person works and how their disability doesn't stop them from having a successful career.

3. Discussion: Understanding Work and Support (10 minutes):

- Ask the class: "What did you learn about people with disabilities and their jobs?" and "What tools or help do some people with disabilities use to do their work?"
- Discuss the idea that everyone has different needs, and sometimes people with disabilities need an accommodation which might be doing a job in a different way, a change in their workspace, or tools to do their jobs well. These accommodations can be things like ramps, assistive technology computer software, sign language interpreters, or modified work schedules.
- Emphasize that having a disability doesn't mean someone can't work or be successful. With the right support, everyone can contribute to society through their work.

4. Activity: "Create Your Dream Job" (15 minutes):

- Give each student a piece of paper and some markers or crayons. Ask them to imagine their dream job and draw what they would look like in that job. They can include things like the tools they would use, the office or work environment, and any special accommodations they might need.

- Have the students write a few sentences about their dream job, explaining:
 - What the job is,
 - What accommodations or tools they might need to do their job,
 - How they would feel working in that role.
- After everyone has finished, invite the students to share their drawings and ideas with the class.

5. Reflection and Closing Discussion (5 minutes):

- Wrap up the activity by discussing the importance of **inclusion** and **supporting people with disabilities** in the workplace.
- Ask the students: "What can we do to make sure everyone has the same chance to work and do well(succeed) on their job?"
- Reinforce the idea that everyone has something valuable to offer, no matter their abilities, and that workplaces should be welcoming and supportive for everyone.

Extensions:

- **Guest Speaker:** If possible, invite a guest speaker with a disability who works in the community to talk about their job and how they succeed at work. This will give students a real-world example of someone with a disability in the workforce.

Meet the Worker Cards

Sarah: Graphic Designer



Sarah uses a wheelchair and works as a **graphic designer**. She uses special computer software that helps her create beautiful designs, and her workplace is wheelchair accessible.

Carlos: Chef



Carlos has a hearing impairment and works as a **chef**. He uses visual signals in the kitchen, like flashing lights when timers go off, to help him know when his dishes are ready.

Liam: Librarian



Liam has a learning disability and works as a **librarian**. He helps organize books and assists people in finding the right books to read. He has a special computer program that helps him with reading and writing.