

*8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week*  
December 1–5, 2008

# Celebration Ideas: Activities and Resources for Schools, Classrooms, and Families



Great things happen in  
inclusive schools.™

  
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SCHOOLS**  
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## INTRODUCTION

### *Great things happen in inclusive schools™!*

The 8th Annual Inclusive Schools Week™ will be celebrated December 1–5, 2008. This year's theme "Together We Learn Better: Inclusive Schools Benefit All Children" provides an opportunity to focus on the advantages of inclusive schools in providing a quality education toward better educational outcomes for all students. The Week also continues to highlight the ongoing challenges associated with changing global attitudes, practices, and policies toward better educational outcomes for all children and youth, especially those who may be marginalized due to disability, gender, socio-economic status, cultural heritage, or language preference.

Highlights of the 2008 Celebration Kit include a report and resources focusing on the benefits of inclusive education for all children. There are also additional resources on topics including international inclusive schooling, ideas for connecting with international schools and classrooms, and inclusive strategies that will be relevant to classrooms and communities throughout the world.

*Inclusive Schools Week* is an event sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) and Education Development Center, Inc (EDC). The Inclusive Schools Network is a web-based resource for families, schools, and communities including publications, events, products, and news concerning inclusive education around the world.

The Week offers an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the progress the international community has made in providing a supportive and quality education to an increasingly diverse student population. The Week also provides an important opportunity for educators, students, and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate *all* children. Since the inaugural celebration in 2001, the Week has been celebrated by tens of thousands of students, families, and educators in schools and communities in every state in the United States as well as several foreign countries.

The goals of *Inclusive Schools Week* are to:

- ◆ *Celebrate the progress* of schools in educating an increasingly diverse student population
- ◆ *Acknowledge the hard work and commitment* of schools, families, and communities in creating inclusive opportunities for all students, particularly those with disabilities and those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ◆ *Encourage reflection* on what still needs to be done to expand these opportunities
- ◆ *Promote action* to increase the capacity of schools and communities to serve and embrace a diverse population of students

## Making a Difference in the Lives of Students

*Inclusive Schools Week* promotes an international dialogue on the importance of building inclusive schools and communities, where *all* students have full access to educational, social, and vocational opportunities. We thank all of those who have supported the mission of the Week by hosting events in their local communities,

bringing information about inclusive education to local and state policymakers, incorporating inclusive practices into their work, and promoting inclusive education in hundreds of different ways.

The following statistics reflect the significant national and international impact of the Week:

- ◆ Over 300,000 products and materials related to inclusion and inclusive educational practices distributed
- ◆ Celebrations and reflective events reported in every state in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, South America, and other nations across the globe
- ◆ More than 120,000 copies of “Celebration Ideas: Resources and Activities for Schools, Classrooms, and Families” downloaded over the last seven years
- ◆ More than 50 organizational and corporate partners formally committed to promoting the Week
- ◆ Hundreds of Web links to <http://www.inclusiveschools.org>
- ◆ Coverage of the Week by several local and national newspapers, including *The Boston Globe*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, and *The Washington Post*
- ◆ Endorsements of the Week by the White House and the U.S. Department of Education
- ◆ State and local government declarations supporting the Week

Even more important are the benefits that these activities have had on families, schools, and communities. We have received hundreds of e-mails, phone calls, and letters from around the world describing the impact that the Week has had on their local schools and communities.

## Getting Involved

There are many ways to get involved in *Inclusive Schools Week*. The following materials are available to support your celebration and continuous efforts to promote and develop inclusive education practices in your community.

- ◆ *Inclusive Schools Network Web site* is both the source of information and resources about the Week and the site to find information on promoting inclusive practices throughout the year. For updates, new ideas, and events, we encourage you to visit often at <http://www.inclusiveschools.org>.
- ◆ *A Celebration Kit*, available at <http://www.inclusiveschools.org>, contains everything you need to participate in the Week:
  - *Celebration ideas*: Dozens of examples of actual celebrations from participants across the country to help you plan your own celebration.
  - *Theme-based resources*: Ideas, links, and resources to promote learning about inclusive practices across the globe.

## Share Your Stories

How will you celebrate the Week? We encourage you to share your ideas, photos, and stories with us by e-mailing [inclusiveschools@edc.org](mailto:inclusiveschools@edc.org). We will do our best to post artwork, stories, and ideas on <http://www.inclusiveschools.org> for others to read and enjoy.

- **Support materials:** Publications, a sample proclamation, press releases, and other materials help you spread the message about the Week.
- **Promotional materials:** Posters, stickers, pencils, and other materials help you promote your celebration of the Week and serve to highlight your school's commitment to inclusive education. The purchase of these items also assists in underwriting the costs of supporting the Week as an annual event.

## Celebration Ideas

“Celebration Ideas: Activities and Resources for Schools, Classrooms, and Families” serves as a practical guide for facilitating the inclusion of all students in the general education setting. As the diversity of learners within our classrooms continues to grow, the need to structure curriculum, lessons, and activities that not only meet the needs of all students, but celebrate the diversity among those learners, becomes critical.

Whether students in your school and community are already sharing a common learning environment or you are just beginning to create an atmosphere of accessibility and acceptance for all, these resources will help to encourage and inspire movement toward a more inclusive community. The 2008 “Celebration Ideas” includes activities, lesson plans, and other resources for educators, families, students, and community leaders who are committed to embracing diversity and providing access to learning for all students.

To assist you in planning for the Week, we have categorized the activities into ideas for classrooms, schools and districts, and communities. Within the categories you will find three levels of implementation:

1. **Activities that Promote Awareness:** Activities in this section can help create awareness of the benefits of inclusive education. Awareness is the first step in promoting positive change. Once people are able to recognize the promise of inclusive education, they can begin to seek the knowledge and skills necessary to realize their goals.
2. **Activities that Build Knowledge and Skill:** Activities in this section reflect the importance of taking awareness to the next level—Action! Building the knowledge and skills of students, families, school staff, and members of the community increases the likelihood that inclusive practices will become integrated into the framework of the community.
3. **Activities that Influence the System:** Activities in this section reflect the importance of taking knowledge and skill to the next level—Change within the system! By changing the policies, procedures, and culture of our schools, it is more likely that positive advances in inclusive education will become an integral part of the community framework.

You will also find examples of what other schools and districts have done to celebrate the Week. There are several links to Web sites that have fun and educational activities that may be helpful in your celebration planning. Many school districts across the nation have celebrated the Week with their own resource-sharing events for general and special education teachers.

## Celebrations in Action

The **School District of Philadelphia** organized a variety of celebrations for Inclusive Schools Week 2007 using the *Inclusive Schools Week Celebration Kit* as a guide. The district targeted the three levels of implementation:

- ◆ **Activities that promote citywide awareness:** window displays and site visits for school district personnel, the community, and the media
- ◆ **Activities that increase knowledge and skills:** professional development and training activities highlighted materials from the “Celebration Ideas: Activities and Resources for Schools, Classrooms, and Families” (e.g., *Teaching the Levees*, a Spike Lee film)
- ◆ **Activities that change the system:** inclusive practices mini-grants, collaboration with Arcadia University, and a district proclamation

## Inclusive Celebrations

As you prepare for district, school, and classroom celebrations, it is important to ensure that the materials and activities are accessible to all members of the school and community. You may want to encourage faculty members trained in special education and/or bilingual education to participate in the planning process to help make suggestions for providing access and accommodations. Examples of adapting materials and events include:

- ◆ Interpreter services for programs and events
- ◆ Printed material available in languages spoken in the community as well as in Braille
- ◆ Wheelchair accessibility to all events
- ◆ Assistive technology devices available
- ◆ Peer support or other support providers for those people with disabilities who need physical and/or other kinds of assistance in order to participate.

The classroom activities and lesson plans included in this document can be adapted for use with a diverse group of participants. For additional information on adapting curriculum, please consult the resources section.

## CLASSROOM, SCHOOL, DISTRICT AND COMMUNITY-WIDE CELEBRATION IDEAS

### Classroom Celebration Ideas

The following ideas are geared toward implementation in classrooms. For even more learning and fun, team up with another classroom in your school to put some of these ideas into action.

#### Activities that Promote Awareness

*Activities in this section can help create awareness of the benefits of inclusive education. Awareness is the first step in promoting positive change. Once people are able to recognize the promise of inclusive education, they can begin to seek the knowledge and skills necessary to realize their goals.*

- ◆ Expand your morning circle activity to include various modes of communication. Use sign language, foreign languages, and augmentative communication supports (including photos, pictures, and assistive technology devices, etc.) to support those students whose communication systems might not include spoken English, along with exposing other students to the variety of ways that people can communicate.
- ◆ Have students develop a list of the variety of ways that people can communicate. Help them expand the list by discussing different forms of communication, including sign languages, foreign languages, assistive technology devices, etc.
- ◆ Establish a “Five Minutes for Friendship” ritual each day. Have students pair up with classmates on a rotating basis. Provide a topic for the pair to discuss for five minutes. Ask a few pairs to share their conversation with the class.
- ◆ Invite students who are not generally included into your classroom for one of your daily lessons. Try to expand these opportunities in your room and throughout the school.
- ◆ Ask related service personnel (occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech-language therapists, etc.) to include typically developing peers in the activities that they do with children who have disabilities in your classroom. Fun games that target the therapy goals of some students while including typically developing peers in the activity promote the inclusion of all students.
- ◆ Develop a morning greeting routine so that all children, including those with disabilities and English Language Learners, have the opportunity to communicate with each other at the beginning of the day.
- ◆ Assign all classroom tasks/jobs in pairs so that children who aren’t able to complete a task independently don’t feel that they always need a “helper.” This encourages children to collaborate with each other to get a job done.
- ◆ Decorate your classroom with items that support academic development for all children. This can include learning supports such as pictures, large print letters, and clear directions to complete assignments. If there are children who cannot access this information from a distance due to a visual, physical, or other disability, make small copies of these items to be used at the child’s desk.

## RESOURCES THAT CELEBRATE DIVERSE ABILITIES AND CULTURES

The following is a collection of ideas and activities from a variety of sources that are included to inspire classroom, school, and community leaders to engage all students, families, and faculty members in thought-provoking and unifying activities that serve to strengthen the message and mission of *Inclusive Schools Week*.

### Outside My Window

Outside My Window is a club at Evergreen Valley High School (San Jose, CA) that connects people worldwide through photos and e-mails of varying cultures and locations. The group strives to create an international network through which people trade photos and e-mails about where they live, and make new friends around the world. This network helps people see the world as other people see it—the first step toward understanding and friendship. To connect with the group and to see some of the fascinating photos online go to [www.outsidemywindow.org](http://www.outsidemywindow.org).

### Band-Aides and Blackboards

Band-Aides and Blackboards is a site about children who are growing up with medical issues. The goal of the site is to help people understand what it's like, from the perspective of children and teens, to have a medical condition that impacts your school, social, and home life. Go to <http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/faculty/jfleitas/bandaides/> to find out more information.

### The ABCs of Classroom Management

Teaching Tolerance, a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, offers a three-part series about culturally responsive teaching on their Web site. The series profiles teachers who have succeeded in building diverse classroom

communities where students are engaged in positive ways. Other topics include differentiated instruction and behavior supports. There are detailed lesson plans for each series, with online videos and additional resources available. Go to [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org) to find out more about this feature and for free educational materials that promote respect for differences and appreciation of diversity in the classroom and beyond.

### Building Inclusive Communities

PBS, the Public Broadcasting Service, offers an online resource for parents to learn about improving the overall quality of life for children with or without disabilities by promoting inclusion and respect for differences. The purpose of the information is to help parents and caregivers create more inclusive communities for their children. Some of the topics available include inclusive education, building friendships, family rights, challenging behaviors, and assistive technology. This resource can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/parents/inclusivecommunities/index.html>.

### Preschool Multicultural Activities

Explore a variety of early childhood educational activities and lesson plans with multicultural themes at [www.preschoolrainbow.org](http://www.preschoolrainbow.org).

### ReadWriteThink

ReadWriteThink is a partnership between the International Reading Association (IRA), the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), and the Verizon Foundation. The purpose of the site is to provide educators and students with access to high-quality practices and resources in reading and language arts instruction through free, Internet-based content. Access lesson plans, students materials, and more at [www.readwritethink.org](http://www.readwritethink.org).



## LESSON PLANS

The following lesson plans are summarized and can be accessed in full by following the links provided.

LESSON PLAN 1: ACCESSIBLE ALPHABET	
<b>Grade Level(s):</b>	Pre-K–K
<b>Subject(s):</b>	Language Arts/Children’s Literature
<b>Class time:</b>	20 minutes per each letter of the alphabet over an extended period of time.
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphabet book <i>Obvious LETTERS: The associative alphabet every child will remember</i>, by Gisela Hausmann</li> <li>• One copy of the relevant letter page per child</li> <li>• Crayons</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	Young students will enjoy this activity-based introduction to the alphabet. The related activities are designed to address visual, auditory, and kinesthetic processes in order to increase learning and meet the needs of diverse learners. The author encourages teachers to make copies of book pages in order for each child to have a copy of the page for himself.
<b>Objective(s):</b>	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn the alphabet letters via auditory, visual, and kinesthetic methods</li> <li>• Incorporate language and motor skills into a pre-reading activity</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Source:</b>	The Educator’s Reference Desk
To access the complete lesson plan, please visit: <a href="http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Language_Arts/Alphabet/ABT0201.html">http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Language_Arts/Alphabet/ABT0201.html</a>	

<b>LESSON PLAN 15: CULTURAL SHOCK</b>	
<b>Grade Level(s):</b>	6–8
<b>Subject(s):</b>	Geography, Social Studies, History, Art
<b>Class time:</b>	2–3 hours
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Computer with Internet access</li> <li>• Construction or poster paper</li> <li>• Markers or colored pencils</li> </ul>
<b>Overview:</b>	“This lesson asks students to think about how cultural customs differ throughout the world.”
<b>Objective(s):</b>	<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the topics they would include in a <i>Culture Shock!</i> book for the United States</li> <li>• Research other cultures and take notes on their customs</li> <li>• Discuss what they have learned from their research</li> <li>• Write stories pretending they are on a trip with a friend from the country they have researched, visiting a country that neither person is familiar with and describing their reactions to the new culture.</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson Source:</b>	National Geographic Xpeditions
To access the complete lesson plan, please visit: <a href="http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/04/g68/cultureshock.html">http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/04/g68/cultureshock.html</a>	