



GGC Make A Difference Days

# International Day of Persons with Disabilities

## Breaking Barriers: Accessibility for All

Thursday December 3

International Day of Persons with Disabilities (IDPD) is celebrated each year on December 3 to bring awareness to those who are living with disabilities. To commemorate this day, Girl Guides of Canada–Guides du Canada (GGC) has created an instant meeting with various activities and games to celebrate and learn about some of our differences and similarities – whether they're physical, developmental, cognitive or other.



### INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

People come in all shapes and sizes. Some people have light hair, some people have dark skin; some people are tall and others are short. People have different abilities, too. IDPD aims to share knowledge about how to make sure our differences do not prevent us from participating in everyday life and to ensure respect and equality is given to each and every one of us.

Barriers to accessibility make it difficult, and sometimes impossible, for people living with disabilities to complete simple, day-to-day tasks, which many people take for granted. When we think of these challenges we often think of physical barriers such as stairs for someone in a wheelchair. But there are many types of barriers: information or communication barriers, attitudinal barriers, or even technological barriers. International Day of Persons with Disabilities is a day to bring awareness to these kinds of barriers to ensure that we support, promote and encourage an inclusive society for all.

### INCLUSIVITY AT GGC

Girl Guides of Canada recognizes and values the richness of human diversity in its many forms, and therefore strives to ensure environments where girls and women from all walks of life, identities, and lived experiences feel a sense of belonging and can participate fully. This commitment to inclusion means GGC's culture, programming, and practices encourage self-awareness and awareness of others; room for difference; and environments where girls and women feel safe, respected, supported, and inspired to reach their potential. For more information, go to [girlguides.ca > Parents > Who We Are > Inclusivity and Accessibility](http://girlguides.ca > Parents > Who We Are > Inclusivity and Accessibility).

### GUIDABILITY

**Guideability** helps Unit Guiders provide support and create modifications for girls living with various levels of ability in their unit. Check out this resource to help you create an inclusive space and programming that encourages every girl's participation in Guiding!

#### What Is a Disability?

Just like people, disabilities come in many different forms. The GGC Guideability resource explains that “disabilities can be intellectual or physical; they may be very apparent or invisible. Some disabilities may involve activity and mobility limitations. Others such as a hearing or sight impairment may not be apparent.”<sup>1</sup>

The most widely accepted definition of disability is provided by the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the WHO, “disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An ‘impairment’ is a problem in body function or structure; an ‘activity limitation’ is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while ‘participation restriction’ is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations.”<sup>2</sup>

1. <http://forms.girlguides.ca/InclusivityAccessibility/Shared Documents/guideability.pdf>

2. <http://www.who.int/topics/disabilities/en/>



Guideability will help you recognize and better understand:

- Disabilities and chronic health conditions
- Planning to make your unit accessible
- Ideas for modifying the program
- Women with disabilities
- Placing girls and women in the appropriate branches and units

For more information go to: [girlguides.ca](http://girlguides.ca) > Forms > Inclusivity and Accessibility > Guideability

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- To learn about International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- To become aware of the different types of disabilities that affect people in our communities
- To be accepting of differences
- To consider how to reduce barriers and improve accessibility for people living with disabilities

### LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Girls will be able to understand that there are different types of disabilities, with varying characteristics
- Girls will understand the importance of accepting all types of people, regardless of their skills and abilities
- Girls will become more aware of the types of obstacles that exist daily for people living with disabilities
- Girls will learn to take action for themselves or other persons with disabilities

### MATERIALS:

- |   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| • Craft supplies (glue, markers, crayons, pipe cleaners, construction paper, etc.)    | • Reaching device                    |
| • Accessibility Audit Template  | • Tissue paper                       |
| • A laptop/computer/tablet (only required for one activity and is therefore optional) | • Glasses                            |
| • A cane/crutches   | • Small object (e.g., a golf ball)   |
|   | • Large ball                         |
|   | • Plastic cups                       |
|   | • Scrambled words on sheets of paper |

Complete three or four of the below activities in commemoration of International Day of Persons with Disabilities. There is no crest for this instant meeting.

Before beginning this instant meeting, please consider the different abilities and backgrounds of girls in your unit. Some of these activities may have an impact on girls in your unit if they themselves, or someone they know, lives with a disability. Please use your discretion and consider the experiences of those in your unit when facilitating this meeting topic.



### ACTIVITY 1: ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

Physical disabilities can sometimes make it challenging to get around public spaces. Places like your school, your unit meeting space, parks, clothing stores and restaurants might not be fully accessible for someone who has difficulty with mobility.

As a unit conduct an accessibility audit. Pick a public place such as your meeting space, a community centre in your town or your local library. Using the Accessibility Audit Template (see page 13), review each space and determine if the building has the right resources for someone with a disability. Feel free to add other questions or areas of the building you are auditing if you think they would be useful to review. Also, if you have access to a stroller, or even a wheelchair, encourage your unit to use this while auditing the space. Using a stroller or wheelchair to travel through the building can help girls to understand why certain things such as ramps and wide doorways are necessary.

Once you have completed the audit, consider how certain areas of the building might be improved to help someone in a wheelchair, using crutches, a cane, glasses, or any other accessibility device. Also, see the list below for some provincial resources that you may find useful.

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### PROVINCIAL RESOURCES:

B.C. Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation: <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/pwd.htm>

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (AODA): <http://www.aoda.ca/>

Manitoba Disabilities Issues Office: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/dio/>

Alberta Human Services: <http://humanservices.alberta.ca/departement.html>

City of Calgary Access Design Standards: <http://housing.cpa-ab.org/images/files/Access Design Standards.pdf>

Saskatchewan Office of Disability Issues: <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/government-structure/boards-commissions-and-agencies/office-of-disability-issues>

Quebec Health and Social Services: <http://www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/en/reseau/services.php>

New Brunswick Social Development: [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social\\_development/persons\\_disabilities.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/social_development/persons_disabilities.html)

Nova Scotia Community Services: <https://novascotia.ca/coms/disabilities/index.html>

PEI Family and Human Services: <http://www.gov.pe.ca/ssss/disabilitysupports>

Newfoundland & Labrador Health and Community Services: <http://www.health.gov.nl.ca/health/>

NWT Municipal and Community Affairs: <http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca/>

Yukon Health and Social Services: <http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca/disabilites.php>

Nunavut Disabilities Makinnasauqtiit Society (Nunavut): <http://www.nuability.ca/>

## ACTIVITY 2: LET'S GO TO THE FAIR!

This activity can be done instead of the accessibility audit with younger branches, or if your unit is unable to explore a building space to conduct the audit. Or, you can do both.

Sometimes it's easy to take our abilities for granted. Running up a steep staircase, reading signs that tell us where to go, or focusing on instructions that are being given to us isn't easy for everybody to do. In order to be as inclusive as possible, it is important to try to accommodate all types of people so that everyone can access – and enjoy – all aspects of life. To do this we need to consider what obstacles may exist that could hinder someone's accessibility, and what we can do to remove those barriers.

In small groups, look at the picture of the fairgrounds (see page 17). Ask girls to find any obstacles that might affect someone with a disability getting into and around the fairgrounds, rides, concession stands, etc. Consider all types of disabilities: ones that you can see, and ones that you can't.

Looking at the illustration, consider the following questions and list/circle all the barriers that you see:

- What barriers do you see at the front gate that may cause trouble for people entering the fair?
- Are the signs clear and accessible?
- Are there things around the gate that might be distracting for some people?
- Can you see rides or games that are accessible for those of all abilities visiting the fair?
- What rides do you see that might not be accessible?
- Is there a clear pathway so that everyone can easily move around the fair?
- What other barriers do you see that might impact someone living with a disability trying to get into the fair?

Once the groups have completed their review of the image, come back together as a large group and share what obstacles they saw in the picture. How could this scene be changed to reflect a more inclusive and accessible environment? After a brief discussion about what they found, have girls re-draw this scene in a way that would make it accessible to everyone. Encourage them to create/invent/design things that would make the scene barrier-free!



## ACTIVITY 3: CONCENTRATION

Sometimes it can be hard to concentrate on a task. If you've had a bad day, have lots of thoughts in your mind, or are stimulated by many things happening at once, it can be hard to focus. There are some people who struggle with disabilities that make focusing particularly difficult. You may know someone with a disability like this, or even have one yourself. This activity explores what it might be like to have a disability that limits your ability to concentrate on something, or causes you to be sensitive to things like noise, movements and background sounds.

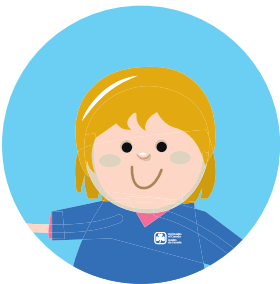
Divide your unit into groups of five. Each person in the group will have a specific role. If you can't make equal groups (i.e., there are more or less than five people in a group), either omit a role or have girls share a role. Review each role with the group members and let them know the activity will begin when you give them the signal.

Each group should consist of the following roles (if possible):



### Girl #1

This person will have the concentration disability. Your job is to focus on what Girl #2 is saying to you. Try to ignore everything else.



### Girl # 2

Using your normal voice (i.e. do not shout or raise your voice) read a few sentences from a book, song lyrics, or a nursery rhyme to Girl #1 and then ask her about what you read. Do not try and drown out the other noises in the room. For younger girls they can sign a song if reading from a book is too difficult.



### Girl # 3

Tell a funny joke in a **very loud** voice as close to Girl # 1 as you can. Try "Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7, 8, 9." Repeat it over and over until the activity is done.



## Girl # 4

Stand behind Girl # 1 and begin to walk around her in circles clapping your hands, staying as close to her as possible as you circle her. Repeat it over and over until the activity is done.



## Girl # 5

Stand next to Girl #1 and pat her on the head and/or shoulder the whole time.



## Girl # 6

Stand somewhere in the room and make a typical classroom noise (e.g., using an electric pencil sharpener, opening and closing doors, pushing a chair in and out of desk, etc.). Repeat your action over and over until activity is done.

Continue this activity until each girl has had a chance to perform her role several times. Once it is done, switch and allow other girls to experience the role with the concentration disability. Once everyone has had a chance to do this, invite them to share what that felt like. How difficult was it to understand the story/song/lyric that was being said to them? Was it frustrating? What obstacles might someone with this kind of disability face, on a day to day basis?

\*This activity is based on a game found in the “Disability Awareness Activity Packet” found here:

<http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/C-SAL/downloadables/PDF/DisabilityAwarenessPacket.pdf>

For additional activities related to disability awareness feel free to refer to this activity pack and incorporate into your meeting.



## ACTIVITY 4: MY BADGE

What struggles have you experienced in your life? What obstacles have you had to face at school, on a sports team, or with a friend or sibling? Think about an issue or a time that you've had to deal with something challenging, and what you did to overcome that challenge. Perhaps you didn't make the soccer team and you and your friend practiced really hard to improve your skills for the next year. Or maybe you and your sibling got in a fight and your mom or dad helped you find a solution. Perhaps you've experienced living with a disability yourself and have had to overcome barriers. Whatever it is, we all have experience overcoming challenges. This activity will highlight how we overcome challenges and the importance of using the resources around us to do this.

Tell your unit that they will each be creating their very own badges to represent their best problem-solving skills. The goal is to make a badge that displays how they deal with challenges that arise in their day-to-day life. They can think about a particular time that they overcame an obstacle and what steps they took to do that, or they can think generally about how they find solutions. The badge can have images of the people that they turn to for help like their friends, teachers, or families; the problem itself (for example a soccer ball if they want to get better at it); or maybe a pair of glasses if they use glasses to help them see better. They can cut out images, draw pictures, use materials like cotton balls, pipe cleaners or whatever craft supplies you have handy.

Once each girl has had a chance to create her own badge, play a round of show and tell! Have each girl stand up in front of her unit and share what she has created and why. What problem-solving skills did she use to find a solution? How was each scenario different? Or, the same?

Discuss how interesting it was to hear from everyone as each girl had something different to say about herself and how she dealt with the challenge.





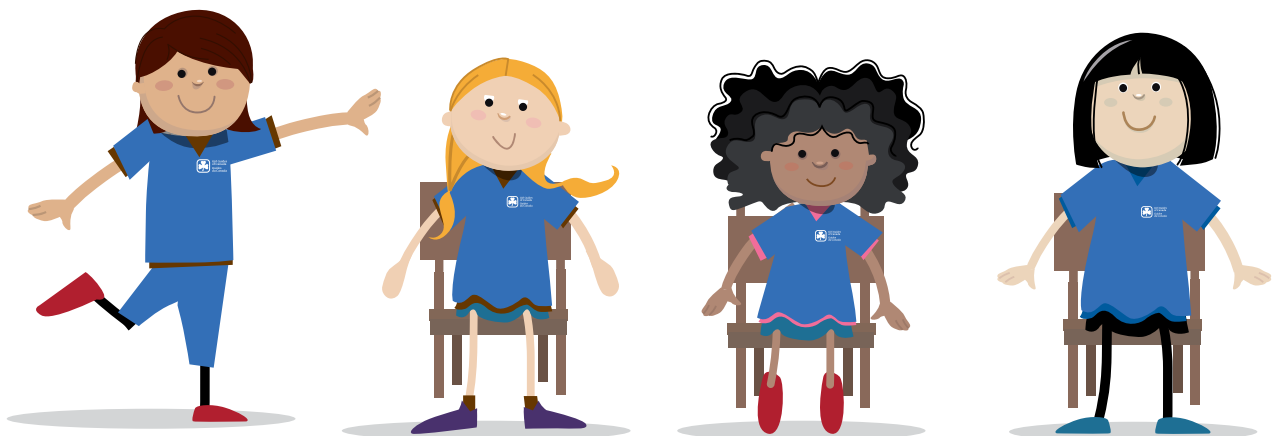
## ACTIVITY 5: HANDS AND FEET

There are many different types of physical disabilities, some of which require the use of a wheelchair or mobility device, and others that do not. Sometimes it can also be hard to know if someone is living with a physical disability, and even harder to understand the barriers that they may face each and every day. Although this activity does not demonstrate every type of physical limitation, or the barriers that may be associated with them, it is a simple way for girls to learn about some of the challenges that may arise.

Use this activity to do simple tasks using only one hand or foot (or even none). You can modify the level of difficulty based on the ages and abilities of your unit. Have them try the following activities, or create your own:

- Tying a shoe with one hand
- Drawing a picture using no hands
- Reading/turning pages in a book without using your hands
- Playing a game like “duck, duck, goose” with one foot
- Putting on and taking off a coat or sweater with one hand
- Musical chairs with one hand and/or foot

Have each girl try three or more of these tasks. Let them experience what it might be like to have a physical limitation. Once everyone has tried the different activities ask what the most challenging thing to do was, and why. Discuss what type of help you needed; help from a friend, or perhaps something that could have been modified to help you like having a ramp, assistive device or special clothing to make it easier. Also, discuss what it would be like to have help with these types of tasks. Would you rather people assume that you need help and jump right in, or would you prefer that they ask if you need help? How would you approach someone with a physical limitation if you think they need help with a task?



## ACTIVITY 6: RELAY-ABILITIES!

**This activity requires access to several items (a computer or tablet, crutches, a cane, glasses, etc.). Consider planning your meeting in advance so that these items are available.**

To ensure that our schools, community centres, shopping centres and other public spaces are accessible to all, we need to understand the different types of disabilities that people live with and the barriers that they face. In this activity, girls can explore a variety of disabilities and experience the types of obstacles that someone might experience living with a particular disability. Remember that these are general characteristics and may not apply to all individuals living with a disability.

Split your unit into two equal groups. The groups will compete against each other to complete the relay race first!

Each girl in the group will need to complete a task in the relay, with a different obstacle associated with the task (a list of suggested tasks is provided below, but feel free to develop your own, too). Have the girls in each group stand in a line side by side. The two girls at the front of the lines will be the first to go. On your mark, the girls will begin; they must complete the first task in the relay. Once the first girls have completed the task, they must return to their line and “tag in” the next girl. The next girl must complete a different task with a different obstacle. Continue the race until each task has been completed. Try repeating the relay several times so that each girl has a chance to try a task with a different obstacle.

Ensure that all the task stations are set up before the relay starts. Identify each station so that it is easy to recognize which is the first, second, third, and so on. The girls may need to move around the room, depending on the size of your meeting space, to complete the task.

Suggested relay tasks include:

- Carry a golf ball (or any small object) in a plastic cup from one side of the room to the other without using your hands. (This task may represent someone who does not have use of their hands and/or arms.)
- Kick a ball through a few obstacles (e.g., between chairs, shoes, etc.) only using one leg. You may need to provide a cane or crutch to girls so they can use that as a balance item while kicking the ball. (This task may represent someone who does not have use of both of their legs.)
- Set an object on a table top that the girls have to retrieve without standing up (may want to provide a reach stick or tool to help do this). (This task may represent someone who uses a wheelchair.)
- Using a laptop, navigate through [girlguides.ca](http://girlguides.ca) (or another website of your choice) with several layers of tissue paper on the computer screen and locate the **“Make a Difference Days”** page. If you are using a tablet instead of a laptop, cover a pair

of glasses with some sheets of the tissue paper and have the girls wear the glasses while using the touchscreen tablet. (This task may represent someone with a vision impairment.)

- Girls must “unscramble” a sentence with letters mixed up (e.g., het tca sta no het rfoo = the cat sat on the roof). Adjust according to ages and abilities of your unit. You can leave one sheet of paper per girl in each group so each girl unscrambles a sentence. (This task may represent someone who has a learning disability.)

Once your unit has completed the relay race, come back as a group for a quick debrief discussion. It is important that girls understand that this is a game, and that it does not reflect each and every disability, or the experience of every person living with a disability. Consider asking some of the following questions:

- How did this activity make you feel?
- Did you learn something new about disabilities and differences?
- How challenging was it to complete some these tasks?
- Did you gain a new perspective on the obstacles someone with a disability might face?

Emphasis should be placed on having thoughtful discussions following each activity. Without strong follow-up discussions, certain activities could unintentionally perpetuate over-simplified ideas of disabilities.

## Additional resources you may find useful when hosting this meeting:

World Health Organization: <http://www.cnib.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx>

Autism Society Canada: <http://autismsocietycanada.ca/>

Canadian Association of the Deaf: [http://www.cad.ca/index\\_en.php](http://www.cad.ca/index_en.php)

March of Dimes Canada: <https://www.marchofdimes.ca/EN/Pages/default.aspx>

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society <http://www.cdss.ca/>

CNIB website: <http://www.cnib.ca/en/Pages/default.aspx>



**Let's connect!**  
Share your photos  
and stories using  
#IDPD and  
tag us with  
@GirlGuidesofCan



**APPENDIX**

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## ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT TEMPLATE

Note: Guiders should review Safe Guide guidelines for community activities before completing this activity.

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Parking Lot/ Exterior		Y	N	Comments
1.	Pedestrian paths are wide enough for wheelchairs and other mobility devices.			
2.	Paths are not obstructed by plants, poles, garbage bins, etc.			
3.	There are accessible parking spaces near the entrance.			
4.	The parking lot is well maintained and free of potholes and other obstructions.			
5.	Accessible entrances are clearly marked with large signs/lettering in bright colours.			
6.	The parking lot is equipped with outdoor lighting to keep it bright and safely lit in the dark.			
7.	Accessible loading zone for buses, taxis or accessible vehicles.			
8.	There are ramps easily accessible to enter the front door.			
9.	Other:			

## ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT TEMPLATE

Note: Guiders should review Safe Guide guidelines for community activities before completing this activity.

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrance		Y	N	Comments
1.	Entrances are accessible to people using wheelchairs and/or scooters.			
2.	Automatic doors open safely and slowly for people using mobility devices.			
3.	Door mats are flat to the ground and not a tripping hazard.			
4.	People can easily find information (e.g., a reception counter) for persons requiring assistance.			
5.	Other:			

## ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT TEMPLATE

Note: Guiders should review Safe Guide guidelines for community activities before completing this activity.

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Building		Y	N	Comments
1.	Doorways are wide enough and not obstructed so a person in a wheelchair or using a mobility device can easily pass through them.			
2.	Bright lighting throughout the building so people with vision disabilities can clearly identify signage.			
3.	Open concept, accessible routes for people using mobility devices.			
4.	A working elevator that is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair/scooter with buttons and signage in braille and/or voice notifications.			
5.	There are no obstacles or tripping hazards in accessible routes.			
6.	All counter spaces, (e.g., an information desk) are at a height that someone in a wheelchair or scooter can access.			
7.	A fire and safety plan is in place for the evacuation of people with disabilities			
8.	Fire alarms have visual and audible signals.			
9.	Other:			



## ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT TEMPLATE

Note: Guiders should review Safe Guide guidelines for community activities before completing this activity.

Building Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Building Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Washroom		Y	N	Comments
1.	There is an accessible stall available within the regular washrooms or a standalone accessible washroom nearby.			
2.	<p>The following features are accessible to people with a wide range of disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-grab bars</li> <li>-coat hooks</li> <li>-flush controls</li> <li>-wash basins</li> <li>-toilet paper dispensers</li> <li>-call button for emergencies</li> <li>-hand-dryers and paper towel dispensers</li> </ul>			
3.	Large signs in bright colours and/or large letters/braille identify exits and accessible washroom stalls.			
4.	Other:			

## LET'S GO TO THE FAIR!

