

# Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month Activities

## Infants (Birth–12 months)

### 1) “Hello, Friend” Responsive Play

**Goal:** connection, social-emotional comfort

**Materials:** mirror, soft toy, board books with faces

**Directions:**

1. Sit face-to-face with the baby and mirror their sounds/expressions.
2. Say: “I see you. You are safe. You belong.”
3. Read a simple book with faces. Point: “Eyes... smile... happy.”

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### 2) Sensory Choice Board (Comfort + Regulation)

**Goal:** noticing preferences, co-regulation

**Materials:** 2–3 safe options: soft blanket, textured fabric, gentle rattle, teether

**Directions:**

1. Offer two items at a time and watch the baby's choice.
2. Narrate: “You chose soft.” “You like the rattle sound.”
3. Use calm voice to model regulation: “Slow... gentle...”

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## Toddlers (1–2 years)

### 1) “All About Me” Choice Cards



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**Goal:** respecting preferences, simple communication

**Materials:** picture cards (or drawings) of choices: ball/book/music/swing; “yes/no” cards

**Directions:**

1. Hold up two choices: “Ball or book?”
2. The child points or touches a card.
3. Respond immediately: “You chose the ball—great telling!”
4. Practice “yes/no” with silly questions: “Do you want a shoe on your head?” (No!)

**Inclusive message:** We can communicate with words OR pictures/pointing.

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## 2) Turn-Taking with a “My Turn/Your Turn” Tool

**Goal:** social skills, patience

**Materials:** a simple “turn card” or a small object to hold (turn token)

**Directions:**

1. Give the turn token to the child whose turn it is.
2. Say: “My turn... your turn.”
3. Keep turns very short (10–20 seconds).

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# Older Toddlers (2–3 years)

## 1) Tools That Help Center

**Goal:** normalize supports

**Materials:** headphones (not plugged in), visual schedule cards, fidget, pencil grip, step stool, timer, picture choice board

**Directions:**

1. Show each item: “This is a tool that can help.”



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2. Let children try tools briefly during centers (with supervision).
3. Practice asking: “I need help,” “Break please,” “More,” “All done.”

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## 2) “Different Ways to Play” Station Rotation

**Goal:** flexibility, inclusion

**Materials:** blocks, cars, playdough, crayons

**Directions:**

1. Model: “Some friends build tall. Some build wide.”
2. Children choose how they play—no “right way.”
3. Reflect: “What did you try today?”

**Inclusive message:** Different ways are okay.

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## Preschool (3–5 years)

### 1) Read-Aloud + Belonging Talk

**Goal:** empathy, respectful language

**Materials:** inclusive book featuring differences (communication, mobility, learning)

**Directions:**

1. Read the book. Pause to ask: “What helps this character?”
2. List helpers on chart paper: “time, tools, friends, quiet space.”
3. Practice a class phrase: “Everyone belongs here.”

**Inclusive message:** We can notice support without judging.

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## 2) “Helper Signs” Classroom Visuals

**Goal:** accessible classroom communication

**Materials:** paper, markers, picture icons

**Directions:**

1. Make 6–10 signs together: “Help,” “Stop,” “Break,” “Bathroom,” “All done,” “More,” “Quiet,” “My turn.”
2. Practice using them during play.
3. Hang them where kids can access them.

**Inclusive message:** Visuals help everyone.

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## 3) Sensory-Friendly Choices Menu

**Goal:** self-regulation, respecting sensory needs

**Materials:** chart with choices + simple tools (calm corner items)

**Directions:**

1. Teach choices: “quiet corner,” “headphones,” “squeeze ball,” “deep breaths,” “movement break.”
2. Role-play: “When I feel overwhelmed, I can choose...”
3. Let children practice choosing proactively before transitions.

**Inclusive message:** It’s okay to need breaks.

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## School Age (6+)

### 1) Accessibility Walk (Respectful Observation)



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**Goal:** awareness of environment

**Materials:** clipboard/paper

**Directions:**

1. Walk around the building/playground.
2. Ask: “Is it easy for everyone to use this space?”
3. Look for: stairs/ramps, narrow doorways, loud areas, unclear signs.
4. Make a “We can help by...” list.

**Inclusive message:** Inclusion is built into spaces and routines.

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## 2) “Inclusion in Action” Kindness Challenge (Week-long)

**Goal:** real-world practice

**Materials:** checklist

**Directions:**

1. Choose 5 actions for the week, such as:
  - invite someone to join
  - wait patiently while someone communicates
  - offer a choice
  - use kind words
  - help a friend find a tool (visual, timer, step stool)
2. Reflect daily: “What did we do that helped someone belong?”

**Inclusive message:** Inclusion is something we DO.

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# **Whole-Group Activity (Works for Most Ages): “We All Learn Differently” Poster**

**Materials:** large paper, markers, photos/drawings

**Directions:**

1. Ask: “What helps you learn?”
2. Add responses: “quiet,” “music,” “movement,” “pictures,” “help from a friend.”
3. Turn it into a poster: “In our class, we help each other.”

**Tip:** Keep responses general—no personal medical details.



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