



# Taking Action to Become a Socially Inclusive School

## Mini-Lessons



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools**

In the sequence of activities found in these lessons, students in a Unified Club will be introduced to the story of Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of Special Olympics, to illustrate what is possible when someone sees what is, imagines what can be, and then makes it happen. They then will reflect and make connections between her story and what is happening within their own community.

Using the issues and solutions that were developed in “Visions of Community,” students will determine one or more plans they would like to implement as a group. Next, they will develop a plan to create their intended change including a timeline, list of steps and stakeholders, and measures for success. They also will create a method for sharing their actions with others and celebrating their successes.

“

**You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city, every nation.**

**A message of hope. A message of victory. ”**

**- Eunice Kennedy Shriver**

# Taking Action to Become a Socially Inclusive School

## Mini-lesson 1: Who is Eunice Kennedy Shriver?

### Time Required

30 minutes (Discussion time can be adjusted by reducing or adding to the questions posed in the activities at the discretion of the teacher)

### Materials Needed

Internet access

### Preparation

Before beginning this lesson, you may want to review stories and videos about Eunice Kennedy Shriver at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org>

### Steps

1. Play the audio recording of an excerpt from Eunice Kennedy Shriver's opening remarks at the Opening Ceremonies for the 1987 Special Olympics World Games, found at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org>.
2. Refer students to the quote from the audio, "You are the stars and the world is watching you. By your presence, you send a message to every village, every city, every nation. A message of hope. A message of victory. The right to play on any playing field? You have earned it. The right to study in any school? You have earned it. The right to hold a job? You have earned it. The right to be anyone's neighbor? You have earned it."
3. Ask students what words they would use to describe the excerpt, how Mrs. Shriver's words likely made the audience feel, and what her purpose may have been. Share with students that the speaker is Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Founder of Special Olympics. The excerpt was from her speech at the Opening Ceremonies from the 1987 Special Olympic World Games and the audience was the Special Olympics athletes. Ask students what they know about Mrs. Shriver and her legacy, her accomplishments and her family. Take time to share her biography and some of the highlights from the website about Mrs. Shriver at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/bios/eks>.
4. Tell students about the first Opening Games in 1968, when the Mayor of Chicago turned to Mrs. Shriver after she declared the games open and said, "The world will never be the same." Divide the group into small groups. Ask them to discuss:
  - What did Mayor Daley mean by this?
  - What type of person sees what can be, rather than what is, and works to make it happen?
  - Who else have you heard of or do you know personally who have displayed these same qualities?
  - What positive changes have these people created?
  - How might the world be different had these people not made their visions a reality?
  - Do you think you possess these same qualities? Why or why not?

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Students will:

- Make connections between Eunice Kennedy Shriver's work to create Special Olympics and their own possible actions.

**"Disabilities are yet another manifestation of global diversity. Let us always be committed to the fundamental principles of dignity and equality for all human beings."**

- Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General, United Nations

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## Mini-lesson 2: Lessons from the Work of Eunice Kennedy Shriver

### Time Required

45 minutes

### Materials Needed

Internet access for students to work in pairs  
Copies of "Turning Vision into Reality" (found on the next page)

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Students will:

- Make connections between Eunice Kennedy Shriver's work to create Special Olympics and their own possible actions.

### Steps

1. Eunice Kennedy Shriver was a visionary who dedicated her adult life to making the world a better place for those who are intellectually disabled. She saw what was, imagined what could be, and did all she could to make it happen. Divide students up into pairs. Give them time to read the articles and watch the videos about Mrs. Shriver found at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org>.
2. Distribute copies of "Turning Vision into Reality." Instruct students to research Eunice Kennedy Shriver in order to complete the worksheet "Turning Vision into Reality."
3. When students have completed their worksheets, bring the group back together. Ask them to share what they learned about how Mrs. Shriver moved from having a vision to taking concrete steps toward making that vision a reality. Discuss: How did this work pave the way for the work we want to accomplish, making our school a socially inclusive place?

# Turning Vision into Reality

Conduct research on Eunice Kennedy Shriver at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org> to understand who she was, her vision and her accomplishments. Be sure to use the articles and videos to better understand her life story. When you have finished your research, answer the questions below.

What was life like for people with intellectual disabilities in the 1960's that inspired Eunice Kennedy Shriver to want to change things?

**Read the story about Mrs. Shriver's family at <http://www.eunicekennedyshriver.org/articles/article/61>.**

What influence do you think her sister Rosemary had on her life?

In what ways did she think their lives could be better? What did she think was possible?

How did she make her vision a reality?

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## Mini-lesson 3: Reaching Consensus

### Time Required

45 minutes

### Materials Needed

Student copies of "Social Inclusion in Our School" from Mini-lesson 4, "Visions of Community"

### Steps

1. Have students refer back to the vision and issue they identified in "Social Inclusion in Our School." Allow each group to review their plan and make any adjustments they would like based on what they have learned since they created the plan.
2. Have each group of students present and explain their plan to the rest of the club.
3. As a whole group, decide if they are going to all work together to carry out one of the plans presented or if each small group will work on their own plan.
4. Based on their decision, have the students determine how to narrow down which project(s) they will work on implementing. Challenge students to select a problem that is authentic, that they can truly impact, and that is interesting and meaningful to them. Options for helping them to select a project(s) include:
  - a. Have each group tally their score for their SAWE (Saleable, Affordable, Workable, Effective) ratings. Identify the top three scores and discuss which of those three is agreeable to the whole group.
  - b. Post all of the plans on the wall. Give each student 3 dot stickers. Ask each student to place their stickers on the plan(s) they would most like to implement. They may place 3 dots on one plan, one dot on three different plans, or any combination they choose. Ask them not to discuss their voting with others. Tally up the dots to find the plan(s) that have the most consensus for moving forward.
  - c. Combine small groups that have similar plans to create a smaller number of plans that can be implemented jointly.
  - d. Allow each small group to implement their own plan or join another group of their choosing.

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Students will:

- Identify problems or challenges within their school related to social inclusion for those with intellectual disabilities.

# Taking Action to Become a Socially Inclusive School

## Mini-lesson 4: Making It Happen

### Time Required

This phase of the process will likely take a number of Unified Club meetings to complete, in addition to time students may spend on their own outside of meetings. Allow students sufficient time to complete each step, reflect on their progress, and share their progress with others.

### Materials Needed

Copies of "Social Inclusion Action Plan" (found on the next page)

### Steps

1. Complete the "Social Inclusion Action Plan." This should be considered a work in progress, adding to and revising the plan as students expand on their learning, make adjustments to overcome barriers and refine the steps necessary for fulfilling their vision.
2. Learn about the identified issue. This will be one of the most time-consuming steps. Help students understand the benefit of learning as much as they can about their issue. Give them access to as many resources as possible. Encourage students to interview students with and without intellectual disabilities, school staff, parents and other stakeholders.
3. Plan the actions that are needed to achieve the identified vision. Again, students may need to pause in their planning to gain additional input, seek assistance or obtain permissions.
4. Be sure to take time to revisit the plans as they progress and to reflect meaningfully on how they are progressing, what obstacles they might have encountered and how they might work through them, and what they are learning along the way. Thoughtful reflection is a critical part of the process, as it allows students to deliberately think about their process, their role within the project and their role within the school community. It is most valuable when it is intentional and ongoing throughout the planning and implementation process. Reflection can be done in writing, verbally or any other creative method you and your students may identify. At appropriate times in the process, pose the following reflection questions:
  - a. Why did you choose this problem? Why is it meaningful to you? What influenced your group's final decision? What will happen if no one addresses it? How can addressing it make a difference?
  - b. How did you feel about the process of researching the issue you identified? What went well? What challenges did you face? What surprised you? What did you learn about your school community?
  - c. What are you most looking forward to implementing regarding your plan? How will you define success? Will you be able to make adjustments if necessary?
  - d. What have you learned about yourself? How can what you've learned help you as your work continues?
  - e. How did you come up with your solution? How will it impact the problem or issue? What will be different about your community if your project is successful? How will this make you feel?
  - f. How is your plan working? Is your group working well together? Does your plan need to be adjusted? Can anyone outside the group help you? What have you learned?
  - g. Of what are you most proud? Who have you helped? How have you helped to get closer to "what can be?" How can you extend this to other areas of your life?

### DESIRED OUTCOMES:

Students will:

- Work collaboratively in the planning and implementation of a plan to positively impact the issue they chose.
- Communicate their progress and consider how they can sustain their efforts.

# Taking Action to Become a Socially Inclusive School

## Mini-lesson 4: Making It Happen

### Steps (continued)

- h. Whose responsibility is it to help improve your school community? What lessons can you share with others? What skills have you learned?
- i. What feedback did you receive on your work, and what was your reaction to it? What do you think people understood about your project? What did they misunderstand?
- j. What did you learn about yourself as you completed this project? What did you learn about working with others?

5. Throughout the process, take time to demonstrate outcomes and celebrate the success students are having. Regardless of the specific outcomes, the process of trying to change the school to become a more socially inclusive community should be shared and celebrated by students. Each group should be encouraged to share what they have learned, celebrate their progress, and look ahead to next steps. Help students find opportunities to share their work with the entire school as well as the wider community. They might contact the school or community newspaper, ask to have their work highlighted on the school or district website, or even see if they could get an interview on the local radio station.

Examples of solutions students in other schools have implemented include:

- Organizing a school-wide campaign to end the use of the R-word.
- Hosting a social inclusion day where the entire school is engaged in a task or activity that intentionally pairs students with and without disabilities to accomplish the task (such as decorating for Homecoming or participating in a school-wide Earth Day activity).
- Development of a mentor or buddy program where younger students with intellectual disabilities are paired with an older student.
- Holding a Ability Awareness Day, where students with and without disabilities work together to share their strengths and talents with community members.
- Implementing an Elementary School Blitz, where high school students with and without intellectual disabilities speak about social inclusion at local elementary schools.
- Working with a school club or sports team to intentionally include students with and without intellectual disabilities.
- Decorating store windows in the community to encourage tolerance and inclusion.

# Social Inclusion Action Plan

This activity sheet asks you to justify the issue you've chosen, conduct research, determine how you can positively change/impact the problem, and create and implement a detailed action plan for achieving your vision.

*The issue/problem we have chosen is:*

*I know it is a problem because:*

*It is meaningful to me because:*

## **Learn about the Issue**

Now that you have selected the issue, spend time learning about it. You can learn from a variety of resources - online or in hard copy, community members, other students and staff. Develop a list of questions and find the answers. Some possible questions you might want to answer include:

*What are you unsure about?*

*What resources are available in the school and wider community that might be able to help you?*

*Does the solution you've identified conflict with any school policies?*

*What permissions might you need?*

*Has this solution been tried in the past? What was the result?*

What data is available to help you better understand your starting point (baseline)? For example, you might want to find out what percentage of students with intellectual disabilities are currently involved in after-school activities.

*What other questions does your group have that would be helpful to answer?*

# The solution we are going to implement is:

## Create a plan

Now it's time to create a plan to implement your solution. Your plan should include the steps you will take, your timeline, who can help you, what you will need to implement your plan, what challenges you may encounter, how you will overcome them, and how you will know when you've reached success.

MAJOR TASKS	COMPLETION DATE	WHO WILL OVER-SEE THE TASK?	WHAT RESOURCES DO WE NEED?	WHO ELSE CAN HELP?
1. a. b. c. d. e.				
2. a. b. c. d. e.				
3. a. b. c. d. e.				
4. a. b. c. d. e.				
5. a. b. c. d. e.				

Issues that we may need to address	Challenges or obstacles to addressing this issue	Resources to help	Strategies for addressing this issue
Gaining administrator permission and support			
Gaining parent permission and support			
Making logistical arrangements (for example, scheduling, space, chaperones)			
Materials and equipment needs			
Other issues			

Our baseline was:

As a result of our work, the outcomes we achieved are: