

# Here's How You Can Join Variety KC's: #INCLUSIONREVOLUTION



Believe it or not, inclusion doesn't come naturally!

What we don't understand may frighten us and that results in ignoring or turning away from someone who may desperately want to be included. This wariness of others leads to what we call the "invisible population."

At Variety KC (Variety, the Children's Charity of Greater Kansas City) we've compiled this guide to the Inclusion Revolution through the help of healthcare professionals, builders and engineers, and the real experts- parents of kids with special needs and the kids themselves!

One quarter of our population has a member with a disability and it is time to include ALL people in our community.

**Inclusion is a skill, and like any skill, it needs to be learned and continually practiced.**

What can we learn about inclusion, and what can we teach our children?

Some people have visual clues related to their disability – a wheelchair, hearing aid, maybe an unusual gait or appearance. However, not all children with developmental or physical disabilities have obvious disabilities. We may expect a behavior different from what we experience. Teachable moment?

## 1. Look for similarities instead of differences.

People are different in so many ways. We communicate differently, we move differently, we look and behave in different ways. Ask your child to look for things that they share with a classmate or neighbor with a disability.

**"We both like school! We go to the same church."**

**"We both like soccer and ice cream, but we don't like homework or onions."**

**"We have pets and younger siblings!"**

**2. Be the first to say "hi."** Children with disabilities have experienced being invisible. They may be reluctant or unable to speak first. Just saying "hi" can lead to a discussion of their differences and how to work together. Understanding differences is the best way to overcome them! A child with cerebral palsy may not walk like you do because their brain is working differently, telling their limbs to behave differently. What's the best way to be a friend? How about opening the door so they can get

through faster and safer? A child with autism may not look at you when speaking or may flap their arms and run away if they get anxious. How can you help to calm the situation?

**3. Be brainstormers!** It's recess and a group of friends want to play a game - how can your classmate using a walker play too? Kids love a challenge and coming up with creative ways to include all kids – that's half the fun!

**4. Don't assume a child "can't" or "doesn't want to."** Birthday parties, sitting at your table for lunch, hanging out and watching movies, school projects – make a special effort to include a child with disabilities! Not only will you be surprised at your similarities, but soon including everyone will be natural and just a way of life.

**5. Challenge your kids to view the world differently.** Who says a ballerina must balance on her toes, maybe he or she spins in a wheelchair! Why is a race won by the fastest, could it be won by the person with the most flair, or having the most fun? Let's award teams for diversity instead of baskets scored and for creativity rather than touchdowns.

## Inclusion in Community Spaces

**Look for inclusive efforts in your environment. Point them out to your kids.** Maybe you are at the neighborhood pool and there is a lift that allows a child in a wheelchair to easily and safely enter the pool. Explain how that works and why. Respect parking spots. Discuss the importance of leaving those spaces open for people who need them. It isn't just illegal - it isn't kind to use those spots. How about power shopping chairs in the grocery store? Those aren't for taking a joy ride, they are for people who aren't able to walk through all the aisles to shop.

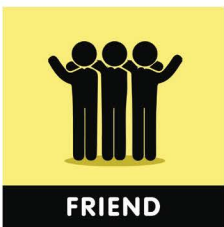
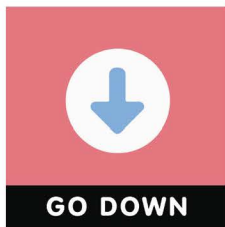
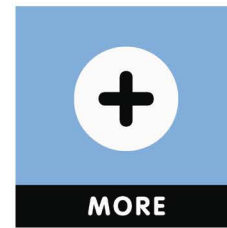
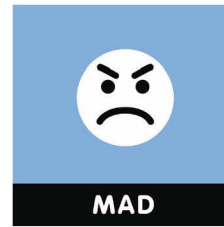
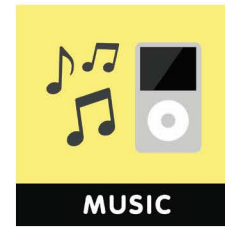
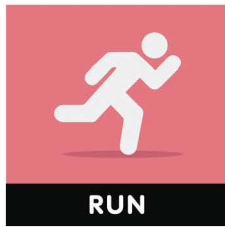
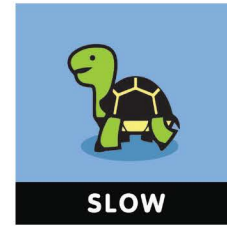
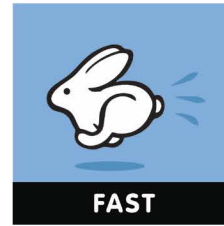
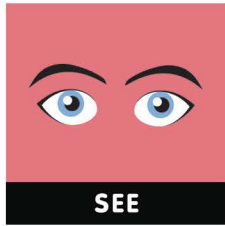
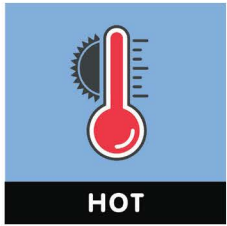
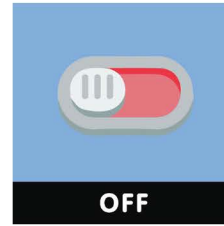
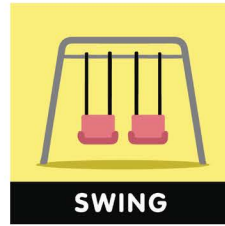
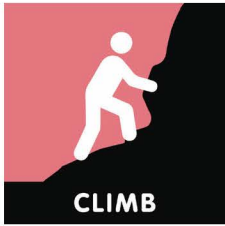
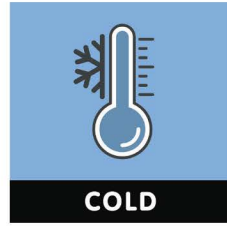
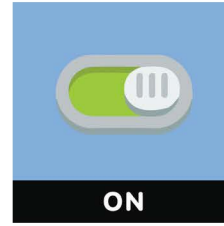
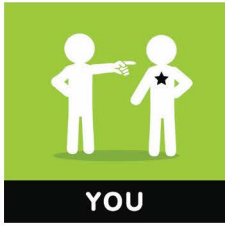
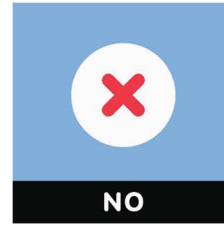
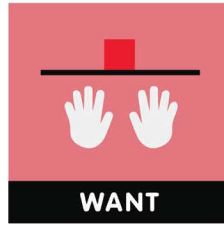
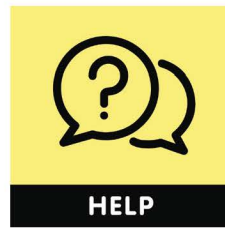
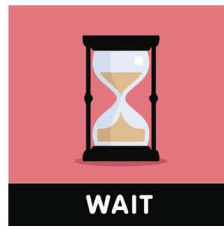
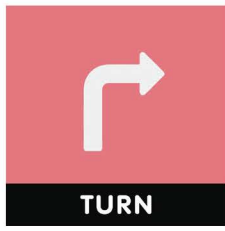
We've created a list of inclusive considerations for building or remodeling public spaces – especially those used by families. Variety KC has built many inclusive playgrounds, ball fields, sensory rooms, family spaces, and activity areas. We've learned what works and what is missing in truly inclusive efforts. Please feel free to use this resource in creating a public space in your community and don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions – [varietykc@gmail.com](mailto:varietykc@gmail.com)



Visit us at [VarietyKC.org](http://VarietyKC.org)

[#inclusionrevolutionkc](https://varietykc.org/project/inclusive-playground-guide/)

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Please donate to Variety KC using this QR code to allow us to create more inclusive opportunities in the KC community for ALL kids to play together!

