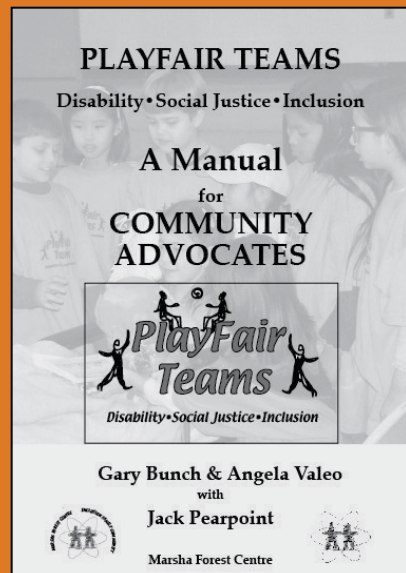


PlayFair Team Resources

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VIII

PlayFair Teams A School Culture Strategy

PlayFair Teams is a leadership opportunity for schools and students. It is an opportunity for students, both typical and with challenges, to contribute to the development of a culture of acceptance, respect, and positive action in terms of diversity. PlayFair Teams is a background extra-curricular activity for schools. It is a strategy aimed at creating a culture of understanding and acceptance. The objective is to acculturate the entire school to the fact that students experiencing disabilities are simply other students who should be accepted as full members of the school community. It is a strategy aimed at moving students experiencing disabilities from the margins of the school to the status of just being other students. The focus is Disability-Social Justice-Inclusion.



The Eight Steps of Setting Up a PlayFair Team

1. Consider the fairness of the situation of people marginalized in society. Use the students in your school experiencing disability as an example. Are all groups of students being treated with equity? If not, consider the responsibility of schools in doing something positive and leading students to be involved.
2. Have a look at the PlayFair Teams resource materials as a way to introduce the concept of: Disability – Social Justice – Inclusion to students in your school.
3. Select staff members to become advisors to your PlayFair Team.
4. Bring on board a community person with disability as your Community Mentor for Disability. (If your PlayFair Team is a blend of students with and without disability, it is a good idea to extend that model to the adults involved.)
5. Make the PlayFair Team opportunity known to all students, with and without disabilities, and call for volunteer Team members.
6. Work with the ideas of Team members to develop a presentation based on Disability – Social Justice – Inclusion. (The presentation can take any form the students think will get the ideas across to others.)
7. Make presentations to others in your school, other schools, and the community around your school. (It is good to sensitize as many as possible to the issues involved.)
8. Support the PlayFair Team as you would any other extra-curricular activity. (If another group of students obtains support from your school, this new group should as well.) This step ensures that your PlayFair Team is seen as something the school intends to continue. Just as a sports team, or other extra-curricular activity, becomes part of the fabric of your school, so should your PlayFair Team.



PlayFair Teams



What Do High School Students Say About PlayFair Teams?

PlayFair has been an experience like no other. It was definitely nothing like I had expected. When I was first told about PlayFair, my initial thought was that as Grade 12s, we would be leading the Special Ed students in developing a presentation. As soon I learned, the true experience was for me. I've discovered the joy of meeting new people. Despite physical and mental disabilities, the Special Ed students are like any other teenager. During this experience, we talked, played, laughed, and cried.

Michelle, Grade 12

PlayFair gave me the opportunity to meet and get to know 12 different, amazing people, all of who taught me something. The things I've learned about the process of a presentation and about myself are lessons that'll stay with me for life.

Florence, Grade 11

All my life I was judged, put down and left out of things just because I am physically disabled, but, for once, I'm not. I guess it's true. People really have no clue how powerful they are.

Megan, Grade 11

The day was perfect and it took me to another world. It reminded me of all the problems I had in my life. If I can help other kids like me, what a difference we could make in this world.

Jennifer, Grade 12

I personally feel that my group did an extraordinary job displaying how important acceptance is to everyone and how everybody, no matter what age and ability level, just wants to be accepted. I think by the end everybody realized how much impact it could have on someone by simply accepting him or her.

Crystal, Grade 10

The PlayFair Team Teacher Advisor Manual and the supporting DVD will give you a lot more information and many ideas.

PlayFair Teams Have a Role in Bullying Prevention

Though PlayFair Teams have the overall objective in realizing social justice for learners experiencing disabilities, some schools have noted that it impacts on bullying in schools. Research and experience indicate that students with disabilities are the most bullied group in schools. A PlayFair Team brings together typical students and students experiencing disabilities in a setting where equity of status and contribution exists. Often this is the first time typical students have associated with peers experiencing disabilities in a setting that is not based on some version of the charity model. The impact on both groups of students is obvious in the student comments above. The impact is not only on the students involved in the PlayFair Team. Other students in the school are less liable to engage in inappropriate behaviour directed toward those with disability. In fact, the typical students on the PlayFair Team begin to note and react to inappropriate behaviour. Their sensitivity has been increased, and that begins an effect, which spreads throughout the entire school.

Here is a review of PlayFair Teams published by the Ontario, Canada Ministry of Education. Ontario is where PlayFair Teams originated. PlayFair Teams was selected as a bullying prevention program by the Ministry and all schools were made aware of its potential.

