



The Kids Project

**Raising awareness
 of developmental disabilities
 For students in grades two through five**

(866) 946-9733

www.opwdd.ny.gov



Imagine going to school one day and finding that all of your teachers are kids. Better yet, they're puppets! That's exactly what happens when second through fifth-graders meet the "Kids on the Block," featured in OPWDD's Kid's Project. Students

learn, through a dynamic, enjoyable puppet presentation, both what it's like to have a disability, and why people with disabilities are just like everyone else.

I encourage teachers or youth-group leaders to spend some time learning the valuable, fun-filled lessons taught by the "Kids on the Block."

Courtney Burke, Commissioner

The Kids Project

The Kids Project features life-like puppets who engage eight and nine year olds by telling their "stories" of what it's like to be developmentally disabled. The program is designed to help children feel comfortable interacting with kids with developmental disabilities; at the same time, it teaches students that children with developmental disabilities are just like them: playing games, having dreams and inspirations and living full lives.

The program can include information about autism, cerebral palsy, blindness, deafness, epilepsy, learning disabilities and mental retardation. The "Kids" talk openly about their disabilities, often dispelling stereotypes and myths.

The "Kids"



Ellen Jane Peterson has Down Syndrome. Ellen demonstrates that people with mental retardation can do many things but, "it just takes a little longer to learn."

Mark Reilly is red-haired and full of energy. Mark has cerebral palsy and uses a wheelchair when he plays sports, travels to school and hangs out with his friends.



Renaldo Rodriguez plays baseball and checkers and sometimes rides a tandem bike. Nothing stops this "kid" who is blind from having fun.

David Franklin is a teen with autism. With the help of his brother Eddie, students learn that David has both a communication and attending disability. With supportive teachers, family members and friends, David can go to school, learn life skills, play in the pool and be the best person he can be.



Mandy Puccini is a dancer and an aspiring actress, who is also deaf. Through sign language, speech and lip reading, Mandy teaches students that there are many ways to express yourself.

Different kids may appear at any presentation

The Presentations

- Presentations run about 45 minutes to an hour. Most often, the “Kids” perform in schools, but during the summer months and school holidays, some teams are available for community groups, fairs, festivals, scout troops, libraries and other gatherings of children in grades two through five. The “Kids” will occasionally make special presentations to adult groups as well.
- Children are prepared in advance of the presentation by being told that they will be seeing a puppet show only. The characters and topics should not be revealed.
- Presentations are most effective when held in a small classroom or multi-purpose room for approximately 75 students. This program does not work well as part of a school assembly. For optimal viewing students are required to sit on the floor.
- Resource material – provided free as part of the program – is used to extend learning in the days and weeks following the performance.

To find out more about The Kids Project and other free educational programs OPWDD offers, or to arrange a presentation, contact OPWDD’s toll-free Information Line at (866) 946-9733 voice; (866) 933-4889 TTY; visit OPWDD’s Web site, www.opwdd.ny.gov; or call your local OPWDD Developmental Disabilities Services Office (DDSO). A listing of DDSO contacts, and a request form, is included on the back of this brochure.

This brochure is published by the OPWDD Communications Office, located at 44 Holland Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12229.

For more information about this program, contact the OPWDD Public Education Program at (518) 473-1190, or contact a regional Public Education team:

Albany
(518) 654-7696

Binghamton
(607) 770-0386

Bronx
(212) 229-3174

Brooklyn/Staten Island
(212) 229-3175 or (718) 642-8669

Buffalo
(716) 517-2165

Manhattan
(212) 229-3173

Queens
(718) 217-4683

Rochester
(607) 776-9800

Rome
(315) 339-0110, Ext. 251

Syracuse
(315) 473-5059

Thiells
(845) 947-6216

Tupper Lake
(315) 379-9667

Presentation Request

School/Organization Name

Address

Zip

Telephone

Fax

County/School District

Name of the person completing form

If your school or organization has already seen a presentation, please note the date of the most recent performance.

Number of Second Grade Classes

Number of Third Grade Classes

Number of Fourth Grade Classes

Number of Fifth Grade Classes