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# What Would It Be Like?

What would it be like to be in a wheelchair? It is difficult for able-bodied people to truly understand all the inconveniences a wheelchair-bound person encounters. With this activity, your children can begin to understand what it would be like to be in a wheelchair at their school.

## Materials

- a wheelchair (or a rolling office chair with arms)
- paper
- clipboard
- pencil

## Activity

It would be best to have only a few children at a time participate in this activity in order not to cause a commotion in your room and school hallways.

Follow these steps to complete the activity:

1. Choose a few pairs of children to begin. One child sits in a wheelchair and his/her partner will act as the tour guide. The seated child holds the clipboard, paper, and pencil.
2. The teams now make trips to the common areas around the school, such as the bathroom (go into a stall, wash hands in the sink), the office (go up to the counter to talk to the secretary), the lunchroom (wheel up to a table to pretend-eat lunch), the library (choose books and check one out), and the playground (go to the swings or seesaw area). Warn the children to be careful not to take the chair down stairs but to look for ramps instead (the accompanying child assists in guiding the chair down the ramp).
3. Along the way, have the seated child record the things the pair discovered that caused trouble for the child in the wheelchair or the child guiding the wheelchair.

After all the children have had a turn role-playing one of the two roles, gather the children together in a large group and ask them the following questions:

- *Was it easy to get to the office?*
- *Was it hard to get into the bathroom? Did you try to take the chair into a stall?*
- *Could you reach the sink to wash your hands?*
- *Did you try to use a drinking fountain?*
- *Were there things for a person in a wheelchair to do on the playground?*
- *Did you find ramps at the school? Where were they?*



# A Wheelchair-friendly Environment

How easy is it for a person in a wheelchair to move around at your school?  
Answer these questions.

1. Are there large bathroom stalls for wheelchair users?

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2. Are the bathroom sinks easy to reach?

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3. Are the drinking fountains wheelchair-accessible? Where are they?

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4. Are there ramps around the school? Where?

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5. What kind of P.E. program is offered to children in wheelchairs?

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6. Are there handicapped parking spaces in the parking lot? Where?

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7. Are there special buses for handicapped children?

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