

Movies Featuring Characters with Disabilities

This list was developed by Del-Corazon.org and not all movies were previewed. It is suggested that a movie is previewed before showing it to students. Additional information, including specific content advisories, about each movie can be obtained from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) at <http://www.imdb.com/>. Search for the film name and read the content advisories under the heading "Parent's Guide". In addition, we recommend checking with your school district office regarding procedures to follow including possible requirements that the movie be licensed for showing at a school site.

We recognize that some schools have a Family Fun Night where they often show a movie for free. If you choose to show a movie as part of the Wheelchair Project fundraiser we suggest that it be done during a different time of the school year. You may also choose to provide talking points to parents for both before and after the movie, especially at the elementary level. If you have suggested additions or deletions to this list please contact don@del-corazon.org.

A Beautiful Mind — 2001 PG-13

Disability: Schizophrenia

Summary: Russell Crowe plays Nobel Prize-winning mathematician John Forbes Nash, who is diagnosed with schizophrenia. The movie is based on the Nash biography of the same title.

Oscar awards: Best picture, director (Ron Howard), supporting actress (Jennifer Connelly), adapted screenplay.

Oscar nominations: Best actor (Crowe), film editing, makeup, score.

Benny & Joon — 1993 PG

Disability: Mental Illness

Summary: Benny (Aidan Quinn) cares for his sister Joon (Mary Stuart Masterson), who has a mental illness. He also inherits the care of Sam (Johnny Depp), who has a personality disorder. Sam and Joon fall in love while Benny struggles to decide if he should send Joon to a group home.

Bubble Boy — 2001 PG-13

Disability: Immune Deficiency

Summary: A man who was born without an immune system has lived his life in a plastic bubble. When he finds out the woman he loves is about to be married, he builds a portable bubble suit and takes off after her.

Butterflies Are Free — 1972 PG

Disability: Blind

Summary: Edward Albert plays Don Baker, an adult who has been blind since birth. Goldie Hawn stars as his neighbor Jill, helping Don live independently of his clinging mother.

Oscar awards: Best actress (Eileen Heckart)

Oscar nominations: Best cinematography, sound

Charly — 1968 PG

Disability: Intellectual Disability

Summary: Scientists inject Charly (Cliff Robertson) with a drug that takes him from someone with an intellectual disability to a genius.

Oscar awards: Best actor (Robertson)

Daredevil — 2003 PG-13

Disability: Blind

Summary: Matt Murdock (Ben Affleck) becomes blind after being exposed to hazardous waste as a youth. The accident leaves his other senses with superhuman sharpness. By day, Murdock is a lawyer. By night, he fights injustice as the masked superhero Daredevil.

Dolphin Tale – 2011 PG

Disability: Amputation

Summary: A story centered on the friendship between a boy and a dolphin whose tail was lost in a crab trap.

The Elephant Man — 1980 PG

Disability: Proteus Syndrome

Summary: Based on the true story of Victorian Englishman John Merrick, who had proteus syndrome, a disfiguring condition. With the help of his doctor Frederick Treves (Anthony Hopkins), Merrick attempts to regain his self-worth.

Oscar nominations: Best actor, art direction-set decoration, costume design, director, film editing, score, picture, adapted screenplay

Finding Nemo – 2003 G

Disability: Short Term Memory Loss and Physical Challenges

Summary: After his son is captured in the Great Barrier Reef and taken to Sydney, a timid clownfish sets out on a journey to bring him home. Dory has short term memory loss, and Nemo has a "lucky fin," which was disfigured and smaller from his birth. He overcomes this physical challenge near the end of the movie and surprises everyone. Gil, a mentor of Nemo's, also has a disabled fin.

Gattaca — 1997 PG-13

Disability: Congenital Heart Defect, Mobility Injury

Summary: This science fiction movie stars Ethan Hawke who plays Vincent Freeman, a character with a congenital heart defect, who wants to experience space travel. Jude Law, playing Jerome Eugene Morrow, an athlete with a paralyzing injury, enables Vincent to progress on his mission.

Oscar nominations: Best art direction-set decoration

How to Train Your Dragon – 2010 PG

Disability: Prosthetic Device

Summary: Hiccup ventures out into battle and downs a mysterious Night Fury dragon with his invention, but can't bring himself to kill it. Instead, Hiccup injures the dragon, whom he dubs Toothless. They begin a friendship that would open up both their worlds and the boy creates a flight assisting "prosthetic" wing for Toothless. But even as the two each take flight in their own way, they find that they must fight the destructive ignorance plaguing their world.

The Horse Whisperer — 1998 PG-13

Disability: Amputee

Summary: A young girl (Scarlett Johansson) and her horse are injured in a riding accident and the girl's leg is amputated. The girl's mother (Kristin Scott Thomas) takes her and the horse to a man known for rehabilitating horses.

Oscar nominations: Best song ("A Soft Place to Fall")

I am Sam — 2001 PG-13

Disability: Developmental Disability

Summary: Sam (Sean Penn) must fight for the right to maintain custody of his 7-year-old daughter (Dakota Fanning).

Oscar nominations: Best actor (Penn)

If You Could See What I Hear — 1982 PG

Disability: Blind

Summary: Based on a true story. Marc Singer plays Tom Sullivan, a successful, determined singer/piano player experiencing situations in his early adulthood without sight.

It's a Wonderful Life — 1946 Not Rated (Preview first)

Disability: Deaf, Mobility

Summary: George Bailey (James Stewart) finds out how much he means to his friends and family when he gets a glimpse of what the world would have been like had he never been born. George is deaf in one ear and Mr. Potter uses a wheelchair.

Oscar nominations: Best picture, director (Frank Capra), actor (Stewart), film editing, sound

Miracle Run — 2004 — PG

Disability: Autism

Summary: Single mom Corrine discovers that her twins are autistic. She refuses to give up on their potential, even though it seems that the rest of the world has turned its back on them. Thanks to this incredible mother's support, her boys accomplish the unimaginable. Cast includes Aidan Quinn and Zack Efron as the male leads and Mary Louise Parker as the mother.

The Miracle Worker — 1962 Not Rated (Preview first)

Disability: Blind, Deaf

Summary: Anne Sullivan (Anne Bancroft), who has a vision impairment, tries to teach young Helen Keller (Patty Duke), who is deaf and blind.

Oscar awards: Best actress (Bancroft), supporting actress (Duke)

Oscar nominations: Best director (Arthur Penn), costume design, adapted screenplay

Molly — 1999 PG-13

Disability: Autism

Summary: Molly McKay (Elisabeth Shue) is released from an institution and undergoes an experimental medical treatment that turns her into a genius

Mozart and the Whale --- 2005 PG-13

Disability: Asperger Syndrome

Summary: A love story between two savants with Asperger's syndrome, a kind of autism, whose conditions sabotage their budding relationship

The Other Sister — 1999 PG-13

Disability: Developmental Disability

Summary: When Carla Tate (Juliette Lewis) finishes her training school, she seeks independence. Her wealthy family overlooks her abilities and underestimates her relationship with Danny (Giovanni Ribisi), who also has a developmental disability.

Pride of the Yankees — 1942 Not Rated (Preview first)

Disability: ALS

Summary: Gary Cooper portrays baseball great Lou Gehrig.

Oscar awards: Best film editing

Oscar nominations: Best picture, actor (Cooper), actress (Teresa Wright), art direction, cinematography, special effects, score, sound, original story, screenplay

Radio — 2003 PG-13

Disability: Intellectual Disability

Summary: The story of a high school coach and the developmentally challenged man whom he took under his wing. (Cuba Gooding Jr, Ed Harris)

Regarding Henry — 1991 PG-13

Disability: Head Injury

Summary: Lawyer Henry Turner (Harrison Ford) gets caught in the middle of a convenience store robbery and is shot, leaving him with a closed head injury. Henry does not remember former colleagues and must relearn even simple tasks such as tying his shoes.

Soul Surfer — 2011 PG

Disability: Amputation

Summary: Teenage surfer Bethany Hamilton overcomes the odds and her own fears of returning to the water after losing her left arm in a shark attack.

Temple Grandin ---2010 TV-PG (HBO Film)

Disability: Autism

Summary: A biopic of Temple Grandin, an autistic woman who has become one of the top scientists in the humane livestock handling industry.

Unbreakable — 2000 PG-13

Disability: Osteogenesis Imperfecta

Summary: When David Dunn (Bruce Willis) survives a major train wreck without a scratch, Elijah Price (Samuel L. Jackson) takes notice. Elijah, who has osteogenesis imperfecta, thinks he has found a person who is at the opposite end of his condition — someone who is never sick or injured.

What's Eating Gilbert Grape — 1993 PG-13

Disability: Autism

Summary: Gilbert (Johnny Depp) must care for his brother (Leonardo DiCaprio), who has autism, and his mother who is obese. Oscar nominations: Best supporting actor (DiCaprio)

X-Men — 2000 PG-13

Disability: Spinal Cord Injury

Summary: Professor X runs an academy for “mutants” — people with superhero powers. The X-Men team must defend themselves against anti-mutant legislation and the villainous mutants. Professor X (Patrick Stewart) uses a wheelchair.