

Friends Like You. Friends Like Me.

VIDEO TRANSCRIPT

Adrienne: “So, the first question I would like to ask you is, can someone tell me what a friend is? Yes”

Young girl: “You can hang out with your friends and do whatever with them.”

Adrienne: “Absolutely. So you have fun with your friends, right?”

Lady being interviewed: “We created the Friends like you friends like me program really to promote awareness and understanding and acceptance among children to really try and foster meaningful social inclusion for all children not just children with special needs.

Narrator: “ You are about to watch children in an elementary school class participate in an interactive discussion as they learn about autism and other types of disabilities. They discover how to appreciate differences and find similarities that can lead to friendships. This train the trainer film provides tools for you to use to facilitate positive relationships between children of all abilities. The program is adaptable to children of different ages, communities and types of special needs. The common thread is reinforcing everyone’s desire to be accepted and to have friends. “

Adrienne: “You guys cheer a friend up when they are sad so you can be a friend and have a friend they’re kind of the same thing? You would like to be treated the same way?”

Jeannie: “The program started with a letter written to me by a fifth grader at the time who has a brother who has autism, and he wanted to find a way to help his brother.”

Patrick: “I wrote a letter to Ms. Myer and said that I wanted to do something, like a fundraiser.”

Jeannie: “Once I received this letter we were going to find a way to help **Patrick** and help his family and help his brother and other children that have autism.”

Adrienne: “Are all you and your friends the same or different?”

New young girl: “They’re different because everyone has like a different personality, but you can still be friends.”

Adrienne: “Right. And how are you guys the same? “

Young boy: “ You both like the same things. Like if you both like sports or if you both like a certain food or movie or.”

Adrienne: “ So can you be the same and different?”

(Children all nod)

Jeannie: “The exciting thing is that it can be a nice component added to your character education program and once you bring that program in and you teach the children about all other children that may have some differences and how they can assimilate into the culture and climate of your school then it adds to the program you already have in place.”

Jill: “As part of the flexibility of this program we really feel that it can be implemented in schools where there already is some type of character education program or anti-bullying program and that this is just a really nice interface with those kind of programs. It could also be used in schools where that is kind of a new concept or maybe they haven’t incorporated that as much as some other school districts have.”

Adrienne: “Okay let’s talk about ice cream. Who here likes ice cream? (children all raise their hands) Everybody likes ice cream. Now, tell me who likes vanilla? (some students raise hands) Who is chocolate? (some raise their hands) Who eats the ice cream from the side when you lick your ice cream cone? (some students raise their hands) Who licks from the top? (a few students raise their hand) Okay, so you all like ice cream right? You like different flavors, different cones, and you eat it differently. So we’re the same and different. That’s okay, different is okay. But even though you are all different could you all go out and eat ice cream together?”

Students in Harmony: “Yes”

Adrienne: “It doesn’t matter if one person likes one flavor or the other flavor?”

Students: “No.”

Adrienne: “Different is okay, and that’s a good thing.”

Erika: “One of the messages is that different is okay because we are all different and we have friends for different reasons. You might have your friend that you like to watch sports with and your friend that you like to kind of just sit and be quiet with, um or that friend that you know go on vacation with your families. Um and that’s okay to have your different friends for different reasons. And having a friend with autism you might maybe play a little bit differently, um but that you can still be friends and share that common ground.”

Adrienne: “Now here’s the next question, are you guys good at the same things you and your friends? Who can tell me something they are really good at?”

Young boy: “I’m pretty good at drawing, but I’m not good at math.”

Adrienne: “Is it okay not to be good at everything? (students nod) Yea it’s okay. Now, how about the things that you’re really, really good at... Could you help somebody else who is not so good at it?”

Students: “Yes.”

Jeannie: “These are character education programs to help us teach children about respect and kindness. And the beauty of our program is that it’s interwoven in everything we do, from the time students walk through the door until the time they leave at the end of the day the principles we are teaching them are found in their classrooms, they’re found in the playgrounds, they’re found in the cafeteria, they’re found in the hallways.”

Erika: “Of course the program is focusing on autism and autism awareness and tolerance and being friends with children with autism. But I think that the program touches on so much more than that and really um looks at just children with all needs um disabilities, abilities and recognizing the common ground that we share. Um and that we can make friends with everyone, even when they are different we don’t need to be frightened or scared to talk to someone who might act a little bit different, that we can keep trying or trying a different way and make the school day a much friendlier place for all.”

Narrator: “These principles apply to all aspects of a child’s life and the message can be adapted to any special needs population.”

Adrienne: “Does everyone have strengths and weaknesses?” (Students nod.) and that’s okay right? Absolutely. Now, tell me something. What do you call something the things that you are really strong at, what do you call those?”

Students: “abilities.”

Adrienne: “Abilities. Now, the things that you might have a really hard time doing or when your body or your mind won’t let you do something that you want to do. What might you call that? Yes.”

Different boy student: “Your disabilities”

Adrienne: “We could call disabilities many things, but usually a disability is when your arm doesn’t work, or your leg doesn’t work, or your mind doesn’t work. So tell me something, a physical disability is something you can see. Correct? Okay so that is a visible disability. Let’s pretend now that I went skiing and I went down this really big slope and I fell down and I broke my arm and my leg. Okay, now you’re all my friends and I am in a wheelchair a little bit because I can’t get around can we go bowling? No? Oh c’mon I love bowling with you guys. I got an idea. Who could be my friend and push my wheelchair at the bowling alley? (most students raise their hands) You can. Thank you. And which one of you my friends can get - you know, they have a ramp up at the main desk. Who could get the ramp for me for the ball? Thank you. You could do that for me. So now I’m set up, I’m ready to go bowling. I’m going to sit here, in my wheelchair, and I’ll have my friend who pushed my wheelchair up. I have my friend who got the ramp and the ball, and then... Now what did I get?”

Young boy: “A strike.”

Adrienne: “I got a strike. Okay so that is so great. I just bowled with you guys. Did it matter that I was in a wheelchair and I couldn’t bowl the same way that you did? (children shake their head no) But did we still have fun together?”

Students: “Yes.”

Adrienne: “That’s what’s important so different is okay.”

Jeannie: “At school it’s important to foster friendships and for the leaders of the school whether it’s the teachers, the administrators, the secretaries, the custodians, to assist in this area.”

Erika: “We really feel that schools deal with the whole child, so it’s not just a question of teaching academics, but also teaching kids how to get along with each other. So I think that anybody who is interested in taking this type of program and introducing it into their school program could do that and make it their own. So, whether it’s a teacher or a guidance counselor, or a school administrator, or a parent, it depends on the school district whether they want to approach the principal or the superintendent, or the director of special services we found that really depending on the school district anyone of those people could be the way to start off.”

Adrienne: “Now, can you all tell me are all disabilities physical? Can we see them? Are they all visible? (students shake their heads no) They’re invisible disabilities. So let’s talk about some of those. What do you call the disability where a person has trouble hearing? (students raise hands) Yes.”

Boy student: “Um deaf.”

Adrienne: “Deaf. Okay so a person who is deaf has a hearing disability. The person who can’t or has trouble speaking, they call that mute. What ways are there available for a person to communicate?” (students raise their hands)

Girl student: “Um sign language.”

Adrienne: “So we can use sign language. Okay how about somebody else?” (students raise their hands)

Another girl student: “You could use writing.”

Adrienne: “You could use writing. Excellent! Any other thing that we want to use? Yes.”

Boy student: “You could draw what you’re talking about.”

Adrienne: “Right, so we could use pictures. So, if I had a picture of pizza and I gave you the card that says pizza what do you think I may want to eat? Everybody!”

Students: “Pizza!”

Adrienne: “So I can use pictures to communicate without any words.”

Erika: “Knowledge is power and understanding more about the children around you whether that they are typically developing children or children with special needs, we really uh feel we will help to reduce any kind of uh anxiety or fear that someone may have about being around somebody who acts differently or talks differently, expresses themselves differently and behaves differently.”

Adrienne: “What do you call an invisible disability where someone might have a little bit of trouble focusing or staying still or quiet for a long period of time? What might that be called? Yes.”

Boy student: “ADHD.”

Adrienne: “ADD or ADHD great! Okay does anybody know what that is?”

Girl Student: “You could have trouble sitting still like through a long movie or something.”

Adrienne: “Right and how could you be a friend to someone maybe in that long movie? What might you be able to do?”

Same student: “You could maybe get up and take a break and walk around and then go back in like five minutes and keep watching it for a while.”

Adrienne: “That’s a great idea so that’s a great way to be a friend. All these people who have some kind of challenges, what do you think their strengths are? Do they have strengths? (students nod yes) Yes they do, just like you have things that you’re good at and not so good at so does a person with a disability. They have things that they are good at too. So just as much as you can help somebody who might have a visible or invisible disability could they help you?”

Students: “Yes!”

Adrienne: “Yes they can so they may be really good at puzzles, they might be really good at a computer game, they might be really good at a certain subject at school and they can help you. They might not be able to speak the same or they might not be able to communicate the same, but at least we know that they have strengths and weaknesses just like you.”

Narrator: “Reinforce the message that every person has abilities and difficulties. Each of us can share our strengths and support others’ challenges.”

Erika: “We found that when we do this program in a classroom, sometimes parents who have been on the edge about whether or not to talk to the child about his or her diagnosis can see that there is a way to do this that is supportive. So they could take this as a model for talking about people have different strengths different challenges and it’s really so important we feel for the child to have some way of understanding what’s going on with himself or herself to really build self-advocacy from an early age.”

Adrienne: “Okay one more invisible disability let me have one other that you know.”

Boy student: “Autism?”

Adrienne: “Autism, has anyone here heard of autism? (students raise their hands) Okay does anybody here know anyone that has autism? (nearly all students raise their hands) Alright so let’s talk about autism for a little bit okay? So sometimes kids with autism might say things out of context or they may not always know the appropriate time to say something or they might not even know that it’s the right thing to say or wrong thing to say. They also might repeat the things that you say. Does anybody know what an echo is? Raise your hand if you know what echoing is. (all students raise their hands) Okay so there is something that is called echolalia, if you talk to them they might repeat it. Now some people with autism may not understand some of the expressions that you use, for instance if i said come over to my house. Does that mean we are going over the house, or are you coming to my house?”

Students: “To”

Adrienne: “To, right.”

Student who has brother with autism: “If my friends like don’t know him it would be harder for them to understand, but like most of my friends know him and like him a lot. He likes to be around us so like we could let him join us. It’s important to understand autism because if you know about autism and you see somebody like on the street or at a game or something you would be able to approach them and like talk to them. They’ll understand that you are trying to help.”

Adrienne: “Now some kids with autism, those senses that you have, are more sensitive than your senses are. Sounds might be too loud for them so maybe a crowded, where does it get loud in your school? “

Girl Student: “At lunchtime.”

Adrienne: “At lunchtime in the cafeteria it might get very loud so a person with autism might have a really hard time sitting in a really loud place. Okay so tell me how can we help the environment of the cafeteria for someone that might be really sensitive to the sound?”

Boy Student: “ You could like tell the people around you to like quiet down.”

Adrienne: “Right so we could talk a little softer. We can control the volume in the room, excellent.”

Narrator: “Work with children to brainstorm about practical and meaningful ways to support each other in both structured and unstructured environments. Activities and lessons about disabilities and inclusion should be incorporated into natural settings.”

Adrienne: “Who can tell me what is a social rule in the library? When you go to the library give me a social rule.”

Boy Student: “You have to stay quiet.”

Adrienne: “That’s right so a social rule in the library is to stay quiet. Who can tell me a social rule in the classroom, when the teacher asks you a question what are you supposed to do?”

Boy Student: “You raise your hand.”

Adrienne: “You raise your hand so that’s a social rule. We don’t call out we raise our hands. Kids who have autism don’t always know those social rules. They might not understand that they need to be quiet in a library or might not know in the playground how to come and ask to play. We could all help each other understand those social rules right? And it’s not always only somebody with autism it’s anybody who doesn’t understand a rule or what’s expected of them, we could help each other.

Jeannie: “Sometimes you do have children who have autism and they do feel that they are isolated or they do feel like they are excluded and sometimes they do have differences that other students just don’t understand the differences and when children don’t understand the differences it can be scary for them. So a lot of things we will do as a school we will educate the other students so they have more knowledge of what the child’s perhaps disability is that is in their classroom.”

Erika: “You know we do have families who have children you know with autism or other disabilities in this school that are very private about that. We are not trying to go around and pinpoint you know who might have a hearing problem, or a learning problem, or autism. It’s just hey recognize that we all have you know some things that we are struggling with, some things that we are really good at and how can we be friends, how can we get along regardless?”

Adrienne: “Can you guys ask me some questions. What questions do you have about autism and kids with autism?”

Girl student: “Why do all kids...Do all kids with autism want to be alone or can you hang out with them at times?”

Adrienne: “The answer to that is probably no, they might just not know how to come up and ask you, or they might not know social rules of friendship. So I would probably encourage you to think a little differently and maybe go up to somebody who may be out or being alone and try to either do something that they are doing or inviting them to be part of what you are doing.”

Boy Student: “How do I play with someone who has autism?”

Adrienne: “You can play with someone who has autism the same way you play with anybody else, but remember they might not understand the rules or they might play a little different so either you could adjust the rules of the game for them or explain the rules a little simpler and sometimes somebody who has autism might be able to show you how they are playing, you might play the way they are playing, you might learn a way to play the game that you never thought of before. Remember we talked earlier about different

forms of communication. Well we have some forms of communication that might be through our body expression or sign language or pictures, but sometimes our body language tells a lot. When we are upset sometimes our body language is alone and we are alone or sometimes our body language is very open and excited.”

Narrator: “Help friends of children with autism realize that they can communicate more effectively if they label their feelings or show them through gestures.”

Adrienne: “Well sometimes kids with autism may not be able to read your facial expressions. They may not know when you’re sad or angry by what your face looks like or what your body is saying. How can we help a person who has autism understand when you are sad or angry at something? What would you be able to say or do?”

Girl student: “Tell them that you are angry.”

Adrienne: “Right. So instead of just using your facial expression or body language sometimes we have to use our words too and tell them why we might be upset and why we might be angry. (student raises hand) Yeah, go ahead.”

Boy Student: “Can I catch autism?”

Adrienne: “The answer to that question everybody tell me!”

Students: “No!”

Adrienne: “No you can’t catch autism. Pretty much all visible and invisible disabilities you can’t catch it. So you can go up and help and be a friend with kids with autism or any disability just as you do with any friend and you can’t catch it. Now, we all talked earlier about we’re all different and we’re all the same, but when you’re upset or angry how do you calm yourself down? Do we all calm ourselves down the same or differently?”

Student: “Different.”

Adrienne: “Different, we all are different. So when you are upset or angry how do you calm yourself down?”

Girl Student: “I go in my room and then listen to music.”

Adrienne: “I do too. I listen to music. Who else could tell me what they do to calm down?” (Students raise their hands)

Boy student: “I watch television.”

Adrienne: “How about over here how do you calm yourself down when you are upset?”

Jeannie: “I read a book.”

Adrienne: “So we all have different ways to calm ourselves down. It’s a form of expression. Well even people who have autism have ways to calm themselves down so just like we are all different people with autism are also very different. So one way they might calm themselves down or one form of expression even if they are excited some kids with autism will flap their hands like this. (*she demonstrates*) Another way that a person with autism might express themselves is by rocking back and forth. (*she demonstrates*) Perhaps they might vocalize, they may say things really loud and maybe they are doing it because it is so loud in the cafeteria they might need to talk even louder that might mean that something is bothering them. Is that something that we should just look at and stare at?”

Students: “No!”

Adrienne: “No that’s correct. So that’s not something we should talk about behind their backs or with our friends to each other. We just have to learn about each person learn about our friends and find out what their strengths are and their weaknesses, how they express themselves because then we begin to understand who that person is, what upsets them and how they act and react to things. Do we accept our friends for who they are?”

Students: “Yes.”

Adrienne: “Absolutely.”

Jeannie: “I think autism awareness is so important for the students because it teaches children about respect for others, it teaches them about acceptance and tolerance.”

Jill: “The friends like you, friends like me program can be used in any setting it’s not just designed for a classroom, it can be used in a setting such as scouting, cheerleading, sports team any group of kids where you really want to encourage awareness and meaningful inclusion.”

Erika: “The program is so easy to implement it really comes along with what you are already doing in all capacities in all of your character ed programs. So it’s easy. It’s fun. It makes sense for the children and it’s something they can take with them as they grow.”

Jill: “Part of the friends like you friends like me program is not just what we are showing in the video where we are going into the classroom and we are working with the kids directly, but we also developed a lot of other resources that a teacher in a school district could use to support this visit with the kids. We really encourage people to visit the website of Children’s Specialized Hospital where they can download any of these resources.”

Narrator: “Visit www.friendslikeyoufriendslikeme.org. There you will find supportive materials from the “Friends Like You. Friends Like Me” program.



www.childrens-specialized.org