

# IECSS/Shaking the Movers Workshop 2018

---

## Can Disability Be Positive?

---

Presented by:



Inclusive Early Childhood Service Systems Project



Landon Pearson Resource Centre  
for the Study of Childhood  
and Children's Rights



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

---

*This report was prepared by Erin Benincasa, youth-facilitator Amanda St. Dennis and Dr. Virginia Caputo with photographs by Fangliang Xu.*

## **Inclusive Early Childhood Service System Project**

The Inclusive Early Childhood Service System (IECSS) is a longitudinal study in which we are interviewing families once every year for a period of 6 years, starting in the pre-school years. Our goal in this research is to examine how the organisation of early childhood institutions is understood from the standpoint of families and children when they have a disability. Our ultimate goal is to re-consider what it means to have healthy institutions that are informed by the standpoint of those who may be most harmed by those institutions.

The STM/IECSS Children's Rights event is being funded by the IECSS project (through a SSRHC partnership grant) in order to engage young people in an advisory capacity. All materials developed from this event will serve to advise the project researchers and partners in their research activities over the 7 year duration of the project. We are committed to engaging with children and young people who identify with disabilities.

The IECSS partnership was developed with community, academic and policy organizations through eight geographic areas, including the County of Wellington (Ontario), District of Timiskaming (Ontario), City of Hamilton (Ontario), City of Toronto (Ontario), Constance Lake First Nation/Hearst (Ontario), Brandon (Manitoba), Comox Valley (British Columbia), and Yellowknife (NWT). Insights of diverse cultural perspectives and different approaches to family support will be gained through the partnership. Additionally, our partners have experience with childcare, family support, early intervention, health, development, and indigenous services.

*More information can be found on the project website: <http://inclusiveearlychildhood.ca>*

### **Shaking the Movers: A rights-based youth engagement model**

The IECSS disability and children's rights event uses the Shaking the Movers youth engagement model (STM) developed by the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights. STM is a youth-led, youth-driven consultation workshop model that is rights-based and aims to provide children and young people with a unique opportunity to exercise their right to engage in important civil and political processes. Guided by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), STM's design ensures that children and young people's perspectives will be listened to, heard, and acted upon. In accordance with Article 12 of the Convention, children have a right to be heard and to participate in matters that affect their lives. For the IECSS partnership, STM offers an inclusive and accountable method for working with children and young people in planning and designing research on children's experiences of disability with early childhood institutions. The STM model fully complies with the requirements of quality participation. The model is: transparent and informative; relevant to children's lives; voluntary; respectful; child friendly; inclusive; supported by trained adults; safe and sensitive to risk; and accountable to children (Lansdown, 2014). Its three design features make it unique: 1) a mechanism that brings together experiential young people to go beyond tokenistic participation, 2) a knowledge sharing protocol to achieve impact beyond each individual workshop, and 3) a model that features youth animators and facilitators to work collaboratively with STM participants. STM views children as rights-holders and adults as duty-bearers. With regard to participation, STM participants offer perspectives on matters that affect them that are to be listened to, valued, and heard. As a creative and collaborative space, STM is a model that assists in informing decisions made on behalf of children and young people based on their experiences before these decisions are finalized. The model is successful because young people are the ones who lead 'movers' to make informed, meaningful decisions. The STM model starts from young lives to offer unique insights into the experiences of disability in childhood.



# Overview

The Inclusive Early Childhood Service System project (IECSS), in partnership with the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, hosted a two-day youth advisory workshop on children's rights and disability. The event took place on Saturday October 13th and 14th, 2018 at Carleton University with the aim to hear from young people about their ideas and perspectives on issues related to their lived experiences of disability in childhood using a rights-based approach.

- The workshop was an opportunity for young people with disability, disability experiences or who are deaf to:
  - Share ideas about what the term 'disability' means
  - Learn about children's rights and discuss challenges they have faced. In particular, the workshop focused on Articles 2 and 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as well as Articles 3, 4, 13, 16, 18, 23, 24, 25, and 30 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).
  - Offer their experiences, ideas and perspectives to adults in positions of power and who make decisions on their behalf.

As a youth-led and youth-driven workshop model, Shaking the Movers positions all children and young people as rights-holders. The workshop brought together children and youth living in different areas in Canada to consider issues important to them and to learn about the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The CRC notes that children with disabilities have a right to a "full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community." The CRPD states that, "children with disabilities are to be treated equally, along with the ability to express themselves on any matter affecting their lives, while allowing the best interests of the child to be taken into consideration." This report highlights the discussions and activities that took place at the IECSS/Shaking the Movers workshop using three broad themes: (1) Advocacy and Identity, (2) Education, and (3) Participation and Involvement in Their Communities.

"Those who have no vote, need their voices heard. It's your right." - Hon. Landon Pearson, Opening remarks

"This is not just consultation but true involvement in issues that affect us."  
- Youth facilitator

"It is my right to go [on a field trip] because it is my right to have an equal education."  
- Youth participant

# Important Articles in the CRC and CRPD

## **UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD (CRC)**

Article 2 of the CRC enforces that no child should encounter discrimination on the basis of “race, colour, sex language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.”

Article 23 of the CRC enforces that children with disabilities have a right to a “full and decent life in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child’s active participation on the community.”

## **UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD)**

Article 3 outlines general principles, such as equality, dignity, respect, and non-discrimination for persons with disabilities.

Article 4 defines the general obligations of the Convention. It states that governments must include children with disabilities in the process of legislation and policy creation, and informing and enforcing these bodies of law through accessible means.

Article 7 states that children with disabilities are to be treated equally, along with the ability to express themselves on any matter affecting their lives, while allowing the best interests of the child to be taken into consideration.

Article 13 enforces that persons with disabilities receive accessible means to justice with age- appropriate accommodations.

Article 16 stipulates that all persons with disabilities are to be free from “...all forms of exploitation, violence and abuse, including their gender-based aspects.”

Article 18 enforces that States must recognize persons with disabilities as having the ability to choose their residence and nationality without discrimination.

Article 23 states that all Parties must ensure that persons with disabilities are not discriminated against “...in all matters relating to marriage, family, parenthood and relationships.”

Article 24 imposes that all persons with disabilities have the right to a discrimination-free, and equal education.

Article 25 ensures that persons with disabilities have the right to high standards of healthcare. Yet 25(b) promotes early intervention in order to prevent and minimize additional disabilities.

Article 30 obliges that persons with disabilities have the equal right to partake in all aspects of society.

# Youth Participants

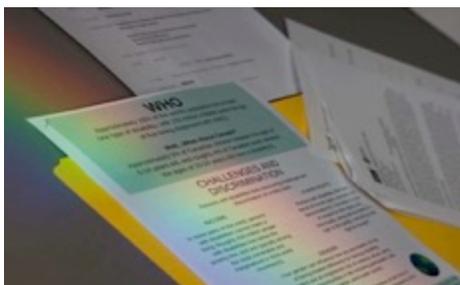
In the summer 2018, the IECSS project launched recruitment efforts to connect with young people ages 10-18 living in Canada who identify as having a disability, as deaf, or as having gifts (consistent with an Indigenous worldview). Recruitment materials included a poster and website video to advertise the event. Youth were invited to attend the workshop and were informed that their views would be shared with numerous children's rights organizations, researchers, and decision-makers across Canada over the next year. They were asked to respond to a survey question asking them which issues they wished to discuss at the workshop. Youth facilitators worked with these responses to design the workshop materials and program.



# Youth Facilitators

---

Youth facilitators led the workshop discussions and activities. Using their own knowledge and experiences of disability and deafness, they designed workshop activities using the main organizing question: "Can Disability Be Positive?" Facilitators met both virtually and in person in September and October to prepare for the event. Their main task was to review the feedback received from participants regarding issues they wished to see addressed at the workshop and to design activities and facilitate discussions related to these themes. A young person prepared background information on the CRC and CRPD articles related to disability. See Appendix One.



# Day One

## Arrival

On the first morning of the workshop, youth volunteers welcomed participants. They were given a nametag and asked to circulate around the room to look at information displays on three themes that emerged from the feedback they had provided earlier in the summer. Youth participants were asked to rank their top two choices. These rankings were used later in the day to organize the small group discussions. The formal welcome began with a territorial acknowledgement by Dr. Kathryn Underwood who also offered information on the IECSS project and how the young people's participation in the workshop served as the first youth advisory event for the project. The Hon. Landon Pearson followed with welcoming remarks. She reminded the youth of "the important work that they have to do today" and their right to be involved in decisions that affect their lives even if they do not have the right to vote. Four youth facilitators then addressed the participants by discussing the issues of safe space, ethics, confidentiality and their participation in the workshop. The facilitators outlined the schedule for the day that began with a large group ice-breaker activity; they invited youth participants to move to the activity room. Youth facilitators used jellybeans to help participants get to know one another in a friendly activity. It also gave the facilitators time to work out a number of accessibility issues such as setting up FM transmitters and positioning ASL interpreters where they could be seen at all times in the circle.

Following the ice-breaker activity, the facilitators used the CRC and CRPD information sheets with the participants. They designed a beach ball game for the discussion. Quite a few participants jumped into the discussion by sharing challenges they had faced regarding disability and rights. They talked about moments when adults would make decisions about their lives based on generalized understandings of their disabilities. They also talked about the constant challenge they faced in accessing services. The facilitators used their feedback to discuss ways to change the social perception of disability. Many more of the youth then spoke about their experiences of social exclusion and labeling they had experienced as children.

"Often we feel like asking for things is impolite but the language of human rights reminds us that this is not too much to ask." -  
Youth  
Facilitator

"People with disabilities can sometimes do stuff better than those without. The problem is that people don't think we are able to do anything."

"The thing that is the most frustrating is being left out of the conversation. I am right there and everyone is fighting about accommodations and no one bothers to ask me. Even when I speak up they don't seem to want to listen."

"On EQAO, I was denied access to text to speech because it was 'too distracting.' Accessibility devices are part of the right to education. "

# Small Group Discussions

## Small Group Discussion: Advocacy and Identity

After a round of introductions, the facilitators began by unpacking the following five questions with participants: How is the world a better place with you in it? What is the greatest gift you can give to others? What are the most important things for others to understand about disability, deafness and child rights?" "What are your best hopes for future action?" and "what is most important for you for generating action?" Two final questions were used at the end of the session: "What do other people think you are like?" and "What do you think you are like?" After about ten minutes to jot down some ideas for each of these questions, the youth shared their experiences that provided a stark look at the stigma surrounding disability and the human rights issues that stem from that stigma.

"People think I am a retard, yes they actually call me that."

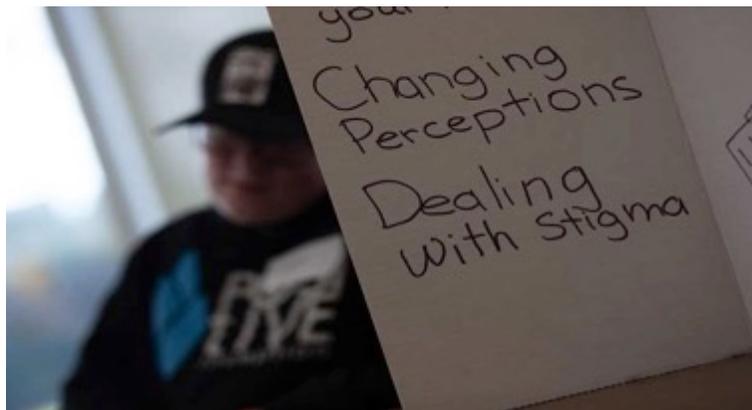
"I want people to know that I am creative, and brave although I seem shy. "

People think I am a monster and that the way I act is psychopathic."

"I want people to know that I am nice and would be there for anyone in times of need."

"People think I slow and an embarrassment. They think I am unable."

"I want people to know that I am capable and blind. I'm not always what you see on the outside."



This small group also discussed the meaning of advocacy and voice. The participants noted that they were often left out of conversations about their lives. They discussed the importance of standing up for themselves and the importance of having adult and other allies who make standing up much easier. The slogan "nothing about us, without us" emerged in this discussion.

"I want to be a voice for those who cannot speak."

"It takes us longer time but we can accomplish it as well. Why? Have our thoughts to be heard to make a difference in the world."

"Teachers need to be able to understand our needs and should be met....I am scared to talk to teachers about how I feel and need more advocacy."

"Sometimes it may take time for me to share my thoughts but I still have them so give me time to think and share."

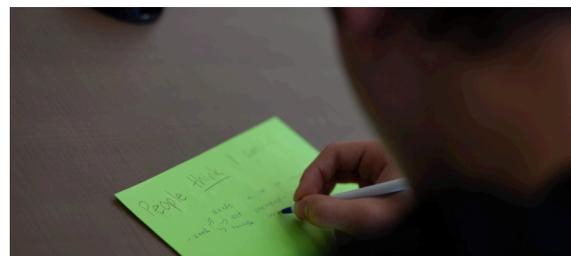
"Children have a right to speak out. Adults should listen to them."

"Respect children and people with disabilities and what they have to say."

They also discussed the organizing question "Can disability be positive?" The youth participants offered a variety of opinions on this question. Some youth felt that the "dis" in front of ability made the term disability seem negative. They discussed how they felt "enabled, not disabled" because they could do things that people without disability could not do like turning their hearing aids off to tune out the world, read with their hands or be more compassionate with others facing social exclusion. The youth facilitators continued the discussion with the participants regarding how the "dis" in disability was negative as well as using the discussion time to consider how disability had been positive in their experiences.

The youth facilitators ended the session by summarizing some of the main points raised by the youth participants this session:

- Everyone has a right to respect.
- People should be aware of how much bullying happens
- There is a lot of overgeneralization and people should never assume what others are capable of.
- People should talk to youth themselves rather than just talk to their parents.
- Parents need to let youth struggle sometimes and adults in general need to understand the difference between being talked at and talking with someone.



What youth had to say in response to the five questions designed for this small group discussion on Advocacy and Identity:

### **1. How is the world a better place with you in it?**

- \* Because I am awesome
- \* Because I make life more exciting
- \* Because I am kind a funny
- \* Because I have a voice and can make change and advocate
- \* Because I can work to make a change

### **2. What is the greatest gift you can give to others?**

- \* Laughter
- \* Music- I can sing, play piano and the drums
- \* Acceptance for everyone in the world
- \* Kindness
- \* Helpfulness
- \* Balance

### **3. What is most important for others to understand about disability, deafness or children's right:**

- \* Uniqueness among people
- \* Never underestimate a person until you know what they can do
- \* Surprise people at what we can do
- \* No less of a person. I'm not contagious. Disability is not a disease (Once people understand this it will reduce discomfort).
- \* As people with disabilities we have the right to equipment

- \* Demolish stereotypes that those with disabilities aren't smart. Don't can't categorize under one umbrella
- \* Talent of adaptability- No matter the skills you have a unique way to accomplish tasks—I constantly have to adapt to broken equipment.

#### **4. From all the conversations and feedback, what are your best hopes for future action?**

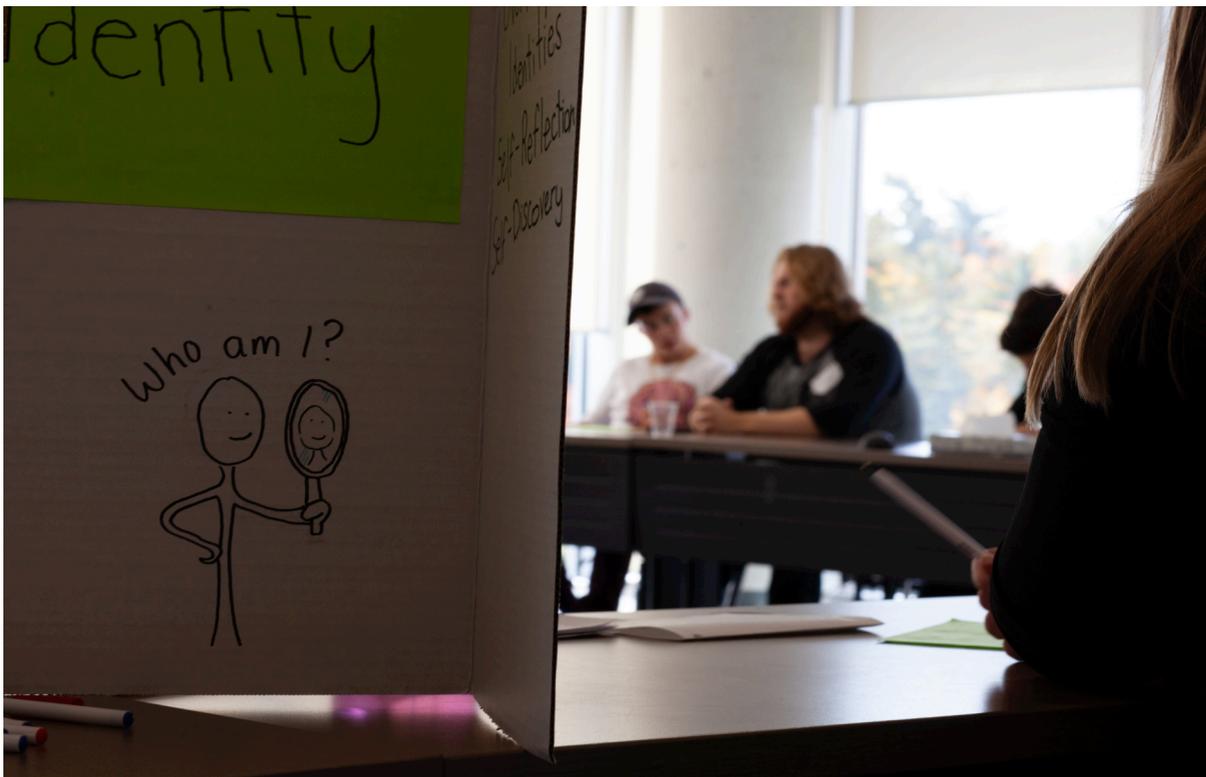
- \* More acceptance while living amongst people and their rights—norm to see people with disabilities
- \* Make things more comfortable and better for people with disabilities
- \* More inclusive and safe for everyone- Awareness- People would know more about disabilities (maybe teach in school)
- \* More employment for people with disabilities- people with disabilities can do this type of work with these accommodations



#### **5. Of all things we discussed, what is most important to you for generating action?**

- \* Education
- \* Jobs
- \* Safe environment
- \* Positive vibes
- \* Inclusivity
- \* Incorporating people with disabilities into the discussion

- \* Asking more questions at schools and universities
- \* Exposure is the best way for education
- \* Activities like Shaking the Movers
- \* Having role models
- \* Seeing yourself represented in other mediums
- \* We need to start awareness and advocacy young- more people involved, more experiences = More change
- \* Hearing from youth and adults
- \* Youth are having a hard time finding a voice
- \* Not a lot of creative freedom- Not very collaborative/ authoritative
- \* Not allowed to learn or ask questions- how can we do this when we have an authoritative presence?



## Small Group Discussion: Education

The Education Group had a lively discussion. The facilitators began the discussion by asking participants to brainstorm both the positive and negative sides of education. Using a bristol board and sticky notes, participants noted their ideas and concerns. The general consensus that the participants agreed to was that "the education system has more of a negative side than a positive one." The youth were concerned about **"misunderstandings from their teachers about their abilities"** and **"generally low academic expectations."** They were concerned that **"decisions about their lives are being made based on generalized understandings of disability"** and they felt that they had been **"left behind during field trips without explanation"** and **"constantly being asked to state their disability in public by classmates and teachers."** They felt that the school system had perpetuated **"labeling and social exclusion"** and agreed that there was a general **"lack of accessible technology/resources in schools."**

The youth in this group spoke passionately about the need for educational reform, the importance of accessibility devices, educational programs to combat stigma, and the active participation in choices made about their school life.

"It shouldn't be only the person with the disability to always adapt."

"Teachers and school officials need to stop seeing the disability before they see the person himself."

Bullying in schools is a big issue. School officials need to stand up to it and kids need to learn more about disabilities.

"We need to be treated as equal to anyone else studying in the school. That includes going on field trips."

"Teachers need to have a better understanding that we need to develop good skills, we are not just people in need."

"I want the movers to know that kids with disabilities can do stuff just as much or better than kids without."



The participants offered many examples of challenges they had faced in school. They had a number of suggestions to improve the school system that they thought would be good for school officials, teachers and parents to hear. Here's what the youth participants had to say:

“Bullying should be dealt with more. Add more supervision.”

“People like me with disabilities get bullied a lot so listen to me when I try to tell you what happened.”

“Social studies should have a unit about disabilities.”

“People are afraid of the unknown. Teach people about disabilities in school.”

“A solution for bullying could be to show paralympics at school.”

“Supply teachers should have a folder on the student with a disability. For example, if a student needs a quiet place, and the supply teacher doesn't know this, the supply teacher might not let the child go in the room.”

“More access to technology and don't generalize on the same technology for every disabled student. Give options to a student.”

“Make buildings accessible.”

“Sign language should be taught in school.”

“Make a special program in university and high school. Some people say that people with disability can't go to university.”

“Children learn through play, its more accessible to involving children in school and involving her.”

“If there is a hard of hearing or deaf kid in the classroom that uses an FM receiver, and if a teacher has a supply teacher, the teacher should write to the supply teacher to give you the FM.”

“When the announcements are playing, the teacher should write what applies to their grade on the board.”

“More quiet rooms.”

“A disability club at school so that disabled students can get together and talk about their experiences.”

## Small Group Discussion: Participation and Involvement in Their Community.

This group focused on how children and youth can be more involved in decisions about their lives and understanding current barriers to participation in their communities. They talked about the importance of understanding each person as an individual, the importance of educating people about disabilities to reduce stigma, and the importance of access to services and understanding persons with a disability as uniquely talented at adapting to the barriers that they face each day. The need for services such as community centres that offer low-cost para-sports, particularly wheelchair basketball, was discussed and the group also explored the negative treatment of deaf students in sports. Two deaf participants in the room explained the impact of the lack of ASL interpreters in rural areas. For them, this meant that they were limited in the places they could go and the classes they could take in school. They also explained that the only interpreter they had at their school was not fluent in ASL and could be hard to understand.

Employment was another key issue discussed by youth participants. They were concerned about bias that they had experienced when seeking employment. The youth felt that employers would be less likely to hire a person with a disability because of societal assumptions about disabilities and because they do not want to spend the effort to make any necessary accommodations. As they shared their experiences, the youth participants seemed to agree that all of these things "snowball" into bigger issues. For example, both stigma and lack of interpreters keep some young people from being successful in job interviews. The group also spoke about how positive change can have ripple effects as well. Their recommendation to 'movers' and people in decision-making roles is to be attentive to various needs in designing services and built environments. In particular, they noted that there is not enough braille in public spaces, a need for more interpreters and basic sign language training (especially in teacher's college), and transit should be made fully accessible. They also spoke of a need for more education surrounding disability to combat stigma in the workplace.

"I want to be on the same playing field as everyone else."

"They always make decisions on my behalf and I don't always understand what they want me to agree to."

"Society has a tendency to make one homogenous lump"

Bring young people with disabilities into discussions more often. Right now, youth sometimes have a hard time finding a voice because adults have a thumb on this."



# Day One: Afternoon Large Group Discussion and Activity

The large group gathered after lunch to report back on their conversations in small groups earlier in the day. Later, facilitators led the second group activity. They asked the youth participants to consider the following questions: "If you could have a superpower, what superpower would it be? How would you use it to help youth with disabilities?" The youth participants offered creative responses that demonstrated their incredible compassion for the participants at the workshop. Here's what the participants had to say:

"I would have the power to make drawings come to life so that I could just draw an accessibility device when someone needed one."

"I would have the power to know every language. Including ASL."

"I would have the power to control technology to make better and cheaper devices."

"I would have the power secretly change peoples attitudes towards disability."

"I would have the power to create an alternate reality where difference is accepted."

"I would have one hundred hands so that I could do more research about disability."

"I would be extremely wealthy so that I could buy everyone the devices they need."

"I would be extremely understanding and then I could be there for everyone."

"I would teleport and help everyone avoid inaccessible transportation systems."

"I have a superpower... I have ADHD. I am able to multitask in ways other people can't."

The facilitators used the participants' responses to these questions to produce a word cloud highlighting the most commonly used words.



The large group also discussed accessibility issues. Here are some of the issues they raised in this discussion:

- \* Kids, parents and teachers need to all be actively involved
- \* Bus stop accessibility, braille or transport system- need more accessibility measures
- \* Braille should be low enough that kids can reach it
- \* Make sure the technology you have is actually working
- \* Make accessibility logical-include people with disabilities in the discussion
- \* People need to have basic training on ASL and interaction with people with disabilities- especially in customer service
- \* Reduce ambient noise with tennis balls on the bottom of the chair- less interruptive (especially for those with FM system)
- \* People with wheelchairs should have class at lower levels—What if there is a fire how will they get out?
- \* Create a pathway at the front for movement for people with disabilities and so they can be closer to the teacher to hear
- \* Don't generalize people with disabilities
- \* Should be a quiet/sensory room for children with autism- should be activities in the room and sensory items in room
- \* After-school club for students with disabilities to connect
- \* Reduce embarrassment—teachers should ask about disability accommodations in private, after class in a private room—during lunch meetings, after school, email
- \* Tactile walls- so kids with visual impairments can feel what room they are at
- \* Alarm on the top of stairs so those with disabilities don't fall down the stairs
- \* Separate door in elevation to back out easily
- \* Get people to actually experience life in a wheelchair and see if they are able to navigate buildings



# Planning to Shake the Movers!

A key part of the Shaking the Movers model is to ensure that young people's perspectives on issues that affect them are not only heard but listened to and acted upon by those in decision-making positions. For this reason, 'Movers' –adults who make decisions on behalf of young people with disability or who are deaf – were invited to a special presentation by youth participants during the late afternoon of the first day of the workshop. The youth participants gave a presentation on each of the three themes discussed during the day. Once the presentations were over, participants and facilitators joined different tables to have discussions with the Movers about their presentations. At the end of the time, Movers were asked to note on a card one thing that they had learned from the youth participants at the Shaking the Movers event and one way in which they would try to incorporate what they had learned from youth participants in the work they do. These cards were collected at the end of the event and they became the basis for the conversations and discussions during the morning of Day Two of the workshop.

To prepare for the Movers forum, youth participants rejoined their small groups to begin planning their short presentations. Facilitators introduced different formats they might use including spoken word, music, role-playing and skits to communicate what they had to say about the issues. Each of the three groups decided to write a skit to illustrate their perspectives on the themes.



## Engaging with the ‘Movers’

The ‘Movers’ forum began with a territorial acknowledgement by Elder Annie St. Georges and welcoming remarks from Landon Pearson and Carleton President Bacon. Three participants, who are members of the Deaf Crows Collective from Regina, Saskatchewan engaged the audience with a presentation called “Apple Time.” The three theme groups followed with skits that they had created for the Movers. The Education group presented three skits to demonstrate three negative situations that youth with disabilities face in schools. One skit portrayed how these situations could be transformed by people with decision-making powers. The setting for the first skit was a board meeting where the school board assigned generalized accommodations without getting to know the individual students or asking them about their needs. The point of the skit was to show the mismatch between what accommodations students know they need and what the school officials think they need. The second education skit focused on a student being left behind on a field trip without explanation. This skit mimicked a situation that some of the youth said that they had experienced themselves. The third skit focused on bullying and how people in decision-making roles could make a difference by standing up to it and providing more opportunities for other youth to learn about disabilities.

The ‘Participation and Involvement in Their Community’ group wrote a short play that outlined the struggles youth with disabilities might face in trying to navigate a trip to a baseball game. Their message was to remove barriers rather than blame the person. They suggested improving braille signage, increasing accessible transportation and offering basic ASL training for service workers.



The 'Advocacy and Identity' group made the final presentation to the Movers. The main message they communicated to the audience was "Nothing about us, without us." They presented a poster they created focusing on this theme while one of the group members explained what they meant by using the slogan and reminded the Movers of two main messages: the importance of seeing each person as an individual and including youth with disabilities and who are deaf in all discussions and decisions that affect their lives.



After the presentations, the youth participants joined Movers at their tables to discuss the themes and presentations. The youth participants were able to ask Movers questions about the recommendations they made in their presentations. Although there is a tendency for adults to talk rather than listen to youth, some of the youth participants said that they were able to talk about things they had heard throughout the day and sometimes how their recommendations related to their experiences.



The next day, the youth participants had an opportunity to discuss the comments that Movers had written on cards about their presentations.



# Day Two

## Did The Movers Hear Us?

The morning of Day Two was spent reviewing and discussing the cards left by Movers at the event the previous day. The youth participants agreed that they felt that the Movers had understood their messages. One participant who had been asked to participate on youth 'consultations' in the past, felt that they were too formal and not welcoming while the Movers event made them feel that they could communicate with decision-makers in a productive way and they felt that they had been heard: 'they put a microphone on me at the last consultation and wanted me to say something. It was scary. This is way better because I can talk to people.'

In small groups, youth participants and facilitators read the cards and discussed what Movers had to say about how they would try to incorporate what they heard from youth into the work they do. Here are some of the comments that stood out for the participants:

"Don't assume you know what they need."

"Thank you. Your words have power: Different but not less."

"Deaf issues are connected to language."

"Create regular opportunities to hear people about how we can improve."

"Generalization as a disability community can lead to missed opportunities for individual success"

"As a parent I am going to question at my school why children aren't involved in decisions made about them (IEP, IPRC, etc.)"

"Create opportunities for dialogue with youth"



“Stop talking at them. Don’t assume.”

“I learned that parents and teachers should dialogue with children concerning things that affect them.”

“If we take a rights perspective and embrace “nothing about us without us,” then we need to change our language and change our behaviour to ask questions and listen to children, all children.”

“Don’t just create special classes in a few schools. Create inclusion in all schools.”



“Children have to know their rights. Many children don’t know these rights.”



“Exclusion is never ok.”

“Barriers – physical and cultural – need to be addressed. Learn basic sign language.”

“Advocacy is a teachable skill.”

“Don’t let liability lead the way – inclusivity.”

“Ask children what they need when deciding on accommodations. I will bring it up in all conversations I may have.”

“How to better support the shift from parents to self-advocacy.”

“Seeing/hearing what is positive about disability, joyous “disability experiences”, jokes, sharing.”

“Change the definition of ‘normal.’ This starts at a young age; young children have no bias so bringing in those with disabilities opens their eyes.”

“Importance of disabled people to gather and talk amongst ourselves. In my work, I will support more of this type of dialogue.”



## Closing Thoughts

The youth facilitators and participants felt that it was important to mark the time that they had spent together by offering a few closing thoughts. They took turns passing the microphone around the room so that whoever wished to express a thought could do so. They said that they had learned from each other and were proud of the work they had accomplished together over the weekend. Many of the facilitators took the opportunity to remind the participants of the importance to have their voices and perspectives heard, to become advocates, to remember the friends that they had made at the workshop, and to know that disability can be positive.



# Youth Participants' Key Messages

## “Change perceptions of disability.”

One key message is that youth participants felt that disability can be a strength. They want Movers to know that sometimes disability enables people to see the world in a different way. They spoke about how their disability or deafness offered them a way to develop different skills such as adaptability. They felt that if society understood disability as strength, then the stigma that prevents youth with disabilities from participating in school, school events and getting jobs might lessen. They also urged Movers to see youth with disabilities as individual people with different personalities and different needs rather than lumped together and seen as one group.

## "Nothing about us, without us."

The youth felt that adults rarely invite them to join conversations, listen to them when they try to speak up or value their opinions when making decisions that affect their lives. They want parents, school officials and others who are in decision-making roles to make sure that they ask youth with disabilities and who are deaf what they need before making assumptions or decisions on their behalf.

## “Increase access to services and assistive devices.”

The youth want to communicate to decision-makers the need for:

- Accessible transportation (braille signage and wider bus doors)
- Changing built environments in schools (Braille signage that is low enough for kids to reach it, sensory room for students with Autism, Tactile walls, fire policy for youth in wheelchairs.)
- Teacher training (in how to use assistive devices and ASL)
- Customer Service training (about disabilities and basic ASL)
- More low-cost sports and recreation (community center or school wheelchair basketball teams, opportunities for youth with disabilities and deaf youth to play on other sport teams, after school clubs for youth with disabilities to connect.)
- More ASL Interpreters
- Increasing access to assistive devices in schools as a right.

# WHO

Approximately 15% of the world's population has at least one type of disability, with 150 million children under the age of five being diagnosed with one(1).

## Well...What About Canada?

Approximately 5% of Canadian children between the ages of 5-14 years old, and roughly 4% of Canadian youth between the ages of 15-24 years old have a disability(2).

# CHALLENGES AND DISCRIMINATION

Persons with disabilities face reoccurring challenges and discrimination on a daily basis.

## INCOME

In some parts of the world, persons with disabilities cannot make a living. Roughly 426 million people with disabilities live below the poverty line, and are typically among the most vulnerable and marginalized in third world countries(3).

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Persons with disabilities often face denial of human rights, exclusion, and discrimination(5). This leads to a lack of respect for their dignity and individuality, along with the denial to a right to life itself(6). How will you help fight for change?

## GENDER

Your gender can influence how you are treated. On top of being treated differently for having a disability, females are at heightened risk of violence, abuse, along with less opportunities in life including participation, play, education, and health care(4).

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women was adopted by UN in 1979 and ratified in Canada in 1981.



## Appendix II: IECSS/Shaking the Movers Evaluation Form

1. What is the ONE THING that you'll remember about this workshop?
2. What was the most important thing that you learned?
3. What is one thing that you would change to make the workshop better for the participants next year?
4. Finally, what topic do you think would be good for another Shaking the Movers workshop?