



Contact Information:
Megan Pedigo- Director of Marketing
309-686-7755 x 2286
Cell: 309-265-4422
MPedigo@ci.easterseals.com

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Easterseals' Disability Awareness Program Goes Virtual During The Stay At Home Order

Providing Lessons in Kindness and Inclusion to students wherever they are.

Peoria, IL, April 16th 2020- A long-time program teaching children the importance of disability awareness and kindness is going digital. Easterseals Central Illinois Disability Awareness Program (DAP), underwritten by CEFCU, has been taught in Central Illinois schools for over a decade. Now the organization is encouraging caregivers and teachers to participate in the program virtually.

"These lessons are important, especially during this time of isolation," says Molly Hogeboom, Outreach Coordinator for Easterseals Central Illinois. "Now, when students aren't around others every day, is the perfect time to help them understand having a disability doesn't change who a person is. Learning this from parents and caregivers will be very powerful."

A live disability awareness assembly will be hosted Friday, April 17 at 1 pm on Easterseals Central Illinois' Facebook Page. Resources for the Disability Awareness Program will be emailed to registered families on Sunday, April 19 with the daily videos and activities set to start Monday, April 20 and run through Friday, April 24.

This program is designed to help kids ages 5-12 learn kids with disabilities are just like them. Each lesson contains an activity to help students understand what it might be like to have a disability. The program is hosted by Hogeboom, who is also a former Easterseals Ambassador. Hogeboom has Cerebral Palsy and offers a unique perspective on inclusion for those with disabilities. Hogeboom received services from Easterseals as a child and explains the importance of those services in an easy-to-understand way.

A highlight of the program is 'The 6 Bs of Being a Good Friend', which challenges students to be inclusive, be smart, be kind, be patient, be brave and be yourself. A video of the 6 Bs can be found here at [ESCI.link/VirtualDAP](https://www.eastersealsci.com/ESCI.link/VirtualDAP)

This annual program is taught in 15-20 schools every year and is typically hosted in conjunction with Coins4Kids, a first lesson in philanthropy for students.

"Miss Molly teaches us about different disabilities and how Easterseals helps students. The money we raise helps other students just like me get the help they need at Easterseals," said Lola Skolaski, a 3rd grade student at Kellar Elementary School in Peoria. "She also teaches us to celebrate our friend's abilities and not focus on their disabilities."

To register visit [ESCI.link/VirtualDAP](https://www.eastersealsci.com/ESCI.link/VirtualDAP). For more information contact Molly Hogeboom at Mhogeboom@eastersealsci.com or call (309)686-1177.