

SPINA BIFIDA



The Kids on the Block Program on **SPINA BIFIDA**

Featuring: Brenda Dubrowski, Jennifer Hauser and Melody James

"Spina bifida is something I was born with, says Valerie. "When I was born, there was a place in my back where the nerves didn't come together quite right, so that's why I use braces and crutches to help me walk."

The Kids on the Block Program on Spina Bifida features puppet character Valerie Perkins, a 14 year old girl who is smart and outgoing. Valerie copes with the same teen issues as her friends and views her disability as just one part of who she is. Script material covers specific issues such as a description of spina bifida, Valerie's use of braces and crutches, "person-first" language and the importance of choosing words sensitively. Self esteem and going after opportunities in life (particularly in social situations), is also discussed. The complete curriculum consists of large hand-crafted puppets, four scripts, props, follow-up activities and resources to teach children about spina bifida.

CALL OR WRITE TODAY
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A TROUPE OF EDUCATIONAL PUPPETS

Script Summaries

New Cheers

Joanne is practicing for cheerleading tryouts, when Valerie appears. Since Valerie has spina bifida and uses braces and crutches, Joanne assumes she must be in the wrong place. Valerie takes the time before tryouts to clear up the confusion by explaining spina bifida to Joanne. **(Valerie, Joanne)**

The Right Words

Joanne has decided to write an article in the school newspaper about Valerie and the cheerleading squad. When Joanne shares her article with Valerie, Val is less than thrilled by some of the words Joanne has chosen. Together Valerie and Joanne discuss stereotypes, words that hurt and how the news media can misrepresent people with disabilities. **(Valerie, Joanne)**

Pretty on the Outside and In

Joanne is at Valerie's house. She is spending the night before going to Valerie's wheelchair basketball game. Joanne is very excited until she learns that Phillip, a boy she has a crush on, will be at the game as well. When Joanne declares that Phillip would notice her if only she looked like the models in fashion magazines, Valerie is surprised. Valerie attempts to confront Joanne's negative body image with some facts about society's narrow definition of "pretty." **(Valerie, Joanne)**

Never Miss a Chance

Joanne is surprised that Valerie has asked a boy to be her date at the school dance instead of waiting to be asked. With Valerie's help, Joanne begins to understand that opportunities don't always present themselves; sometimes one must look for them. **(Valerie, Joanne)**

NOTE: After each script, the children in the audience are given the opportunity to ask their own questions directly to the puppet characters.

The Kids on the Block, created in 1977, features life size puppets who use the magic of live puppet theatre to teach children and adults about disabilities, medical and educational differences, and social concerns. Through the hard work and dedication of many community based groups, **The Kids on the Block** puppets are able to touch the lives of people all over the world.