

Nurturing Accessible Children's Ministry

Mosaic Conference
Anabaptist Disabilities Network
Bonnie and Lyle Miller
January 27, 2024

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Bonnie Miller is a retired special education teacher, having spent more than two decades in education from the preschool to the elementary school level. Additionally, she served as Minister to Children at Waterford Mennonite Church as is currently serving as a special education teacher for non-public schools in the Goshen (Ind.) Community Schools district.

Lyle Miller is a stewardship consultant with Everence after having served as Pastor of Family Life & Financial Stewardship at Waterford Mennonite Church.

They are the parents of two adult children, one with cerebral palsy. Bonnie is a past board member and Lyle a current board member of Anabaptist Disabilities Network.

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Erik Carter, PH.D., FAIDD (Finnish Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)

- <https://soefaculty.baylor.edu/erik-carter/>
- Previously a Special Education Professor at Vanderbilt University for approximately 13 years.
- Special Education Teacher and Transition Specialist

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Much of the content from this presentation is from a presentation by Dr. Erik Carter given at Wheaton College in March 2018. The full presentation is available at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsiUgI9oPws&t=3356s>

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION FACULTY | ERIK W. CARTER, PH.D., FAIDD



Bio

Dr. Erik Carter, Ph.D., is *Luther Sweet Endowed Chair in Disabilities*. His research and writing focus on principle-driven and research-based strategies for promoting full participation, relationships, and valued roles for children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). He serves as Executive Director of the *Baylor Center for Developmental Disabilities*, which aims to promote the thriving of people with disabilities and their families. He joined the Baylor faculty in 2023.

One strand of his research addresses the intersections of faith and disability. Dr. Carter's work in this area addresses the spiritual lives and flourishing of people with IDD and their families, the practices and postures of inclusive churches, and faith-based partnerships with disability service systems. A second strand explores the pathways to inclusion and belonging for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). He is particularly interested in capturing the reciprocal and lasting benefits that come through friendships and life lived together in community.

He is committed to ensuring that the best of what we know works is what permeates everyday practices. Dr. Carter has co-authored seven books and more than 300 journal articles, chapters, and other publications. His scholarship and advocacy have also been recognized with awards from *All Belong*, the *American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, the *Association of University Centers on Disability*, the *Council for Exceptional Children*, and *Key Ministry*.

At Baylor, he is collaborating to launch a new initiative aimed at advancing empirical and theological scholarship focused on disability, faith, and flourishing. In addition to rigorous research, it will focus on leadership training, resource development, and strategic partnerships that serve to change the current landscape within and beyond the church. He encourages interested scholars and partners to reach out to him about this new endeavor.

Read more about Dr. Carter in these news stories:

- [A Wider Welcome: Endowed Chair in School of Education Promises Expansion of Disability Research and Community Impact](#)
- [Baylor Announces \\$1.5 Million Gift Establishing New Chair in School of Education](#)

Curriculum Vitae

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Dr. Carter's full bio and curriculum vitae are available at: <https://soefaculty.baylor.edu/erik-carter/>

History of legislation regarding disabilities:

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY EDUCATION ACT (IDEA)

1973—Rehabilitation Act

1975—Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)—Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) PL 94-142

1986 EHA reauthorized to include early intervention

1990 reauthorized to become IDEA, added TBI & autism

1997 reauthorized, emphasized access to the general curriculum, Developmental Delay allowed up to age 9

2004 reauthorized, greater identification and accountability to improve educational outcomes

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

1990—ADA became law

2008—ADA law amended, more clearly defined "disability" as those impairments that impact tasks of daily living.

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13 disability categories under IDEA:

1. Specific learning disability
2. Other health impairment
3. Autism spectrum disorder
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Speech or language impairment
6. Visual impairment, including blindness
7. Deafness
8. Hearing impairment
9. Deaf-blindness
10. Orthopedic impairment
11. Intellectual disability
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Multiple disabilities

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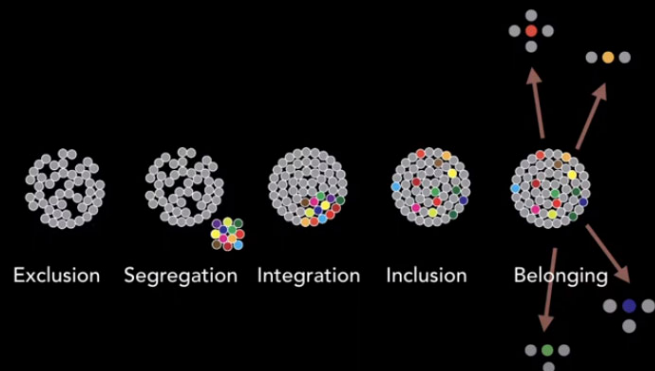
SOME DISABILITIES LOOK LIKE THIS



SOME LOOK LIKE THIS



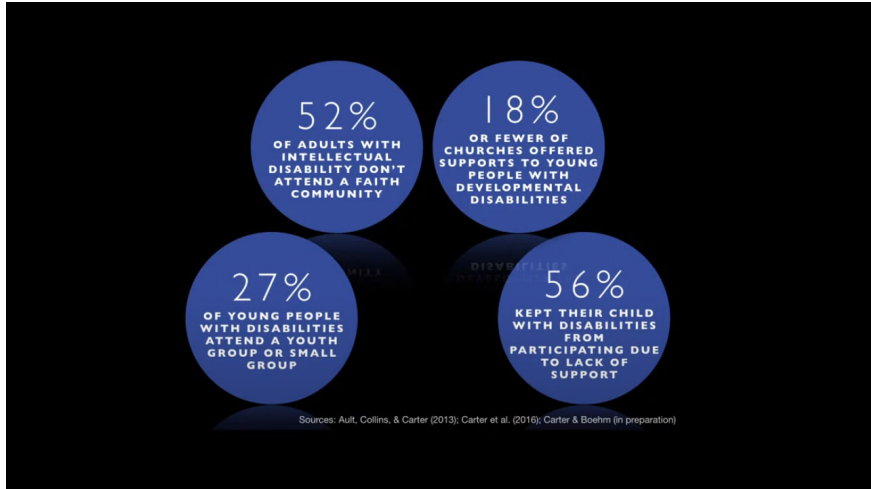
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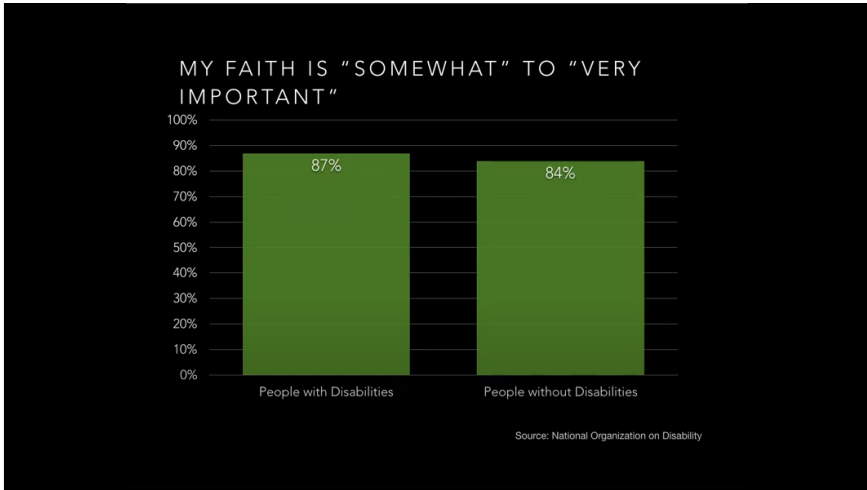
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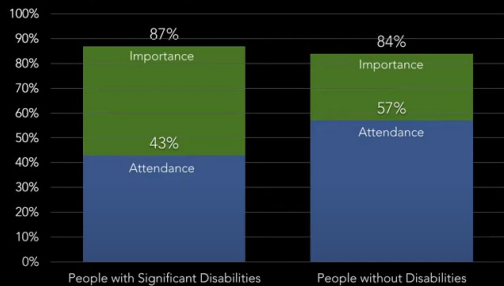


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ATTENDS WORSHIP SERVICES AT LEAST ONCE PER MONTH



Source: National Organization on Disability

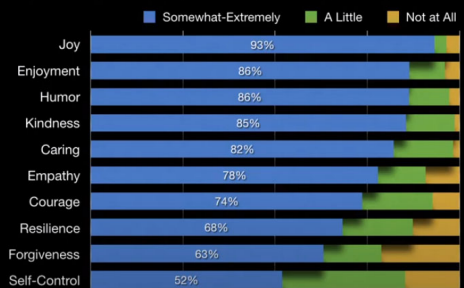
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UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

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HOW MUCH IS EACH TRAIT CHARACTERISTIC OF YOUR CHILD?



Selected Data From the Assessment Guide for Positive Character Traits Developmental Disabilities (Wichard, 2009)
Carter, Boehm, Biggs, Annandale, Taylor, Logeman, & Liu (2015)

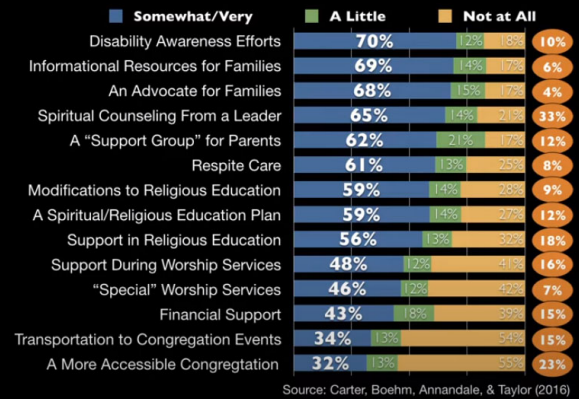
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- "If Abel can't read, how will he get anything out of the class?"
- "She has autism? None of us are trained to work with those children."
- "Some members of the congregation are finding your group to be distracting. Perhaps you and your clients would be more comfortable sitting in the balcony."
- "Our church just isn't big enough to have a disability ministry."
- "Sandy really doesn't understand the meaning of communion. I'm not sure we can really allow her to participate."
- "I'm so sorry to hear about your child. You must be devastated."
- "I know he is a little old, but he would probably still best be cared for in the nursery."

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- “It seems like a lot of energy and effort when we can’t really be sure that Louise will actually get anything out of being in Sunday school with the other children.”
- “We have a special class for children just like your son.”
- “These renovations seem a bit much. After all, we don’t have any people with disabilities in our congregation.”
- “I’d love to invite my neighbor to attend our church, but we just don’t have a program for people with disabilities.”
- “Maybe your family would feel more comfortable at Temple Beth-El—I believe they do disability ministry.”

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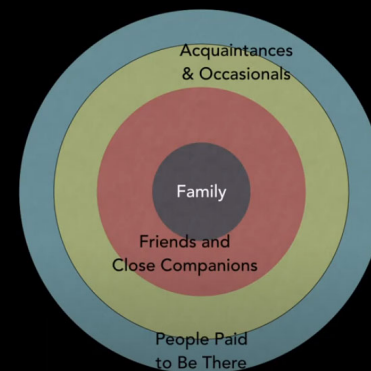
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Welcoming People with Developmental Disabilities and Their Families: A Practical Guide for Congregations

<https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/CongregationPracticeGuide.pdf>

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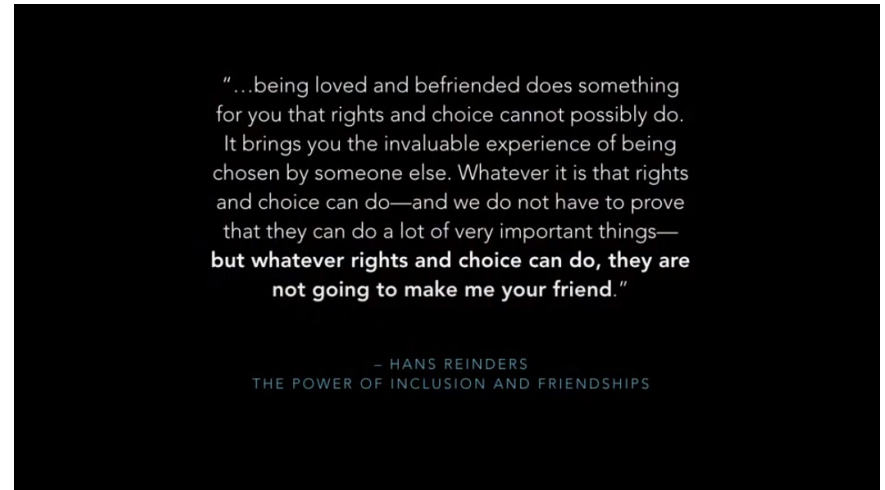
A helpful 18-page guide for helping make congregations accessible to those with disabilities is available at:
<https://vkc.vumc.org/assets/files/resources/CongregationPracticeGuide.pdf>



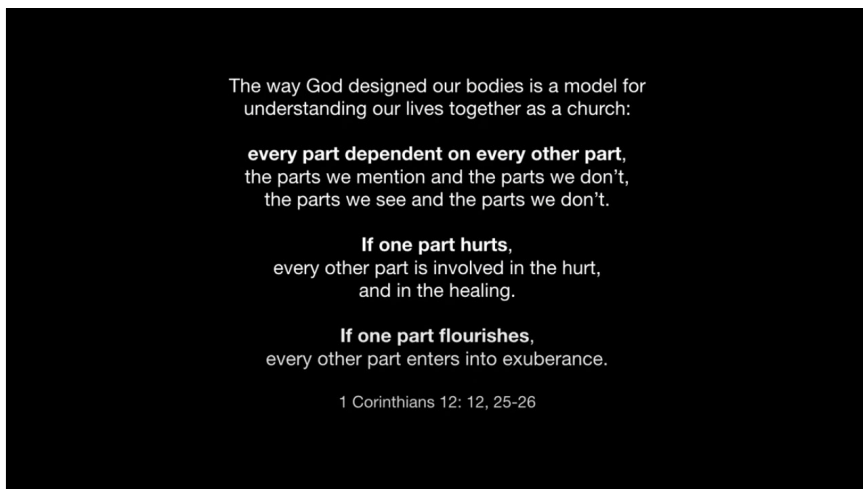
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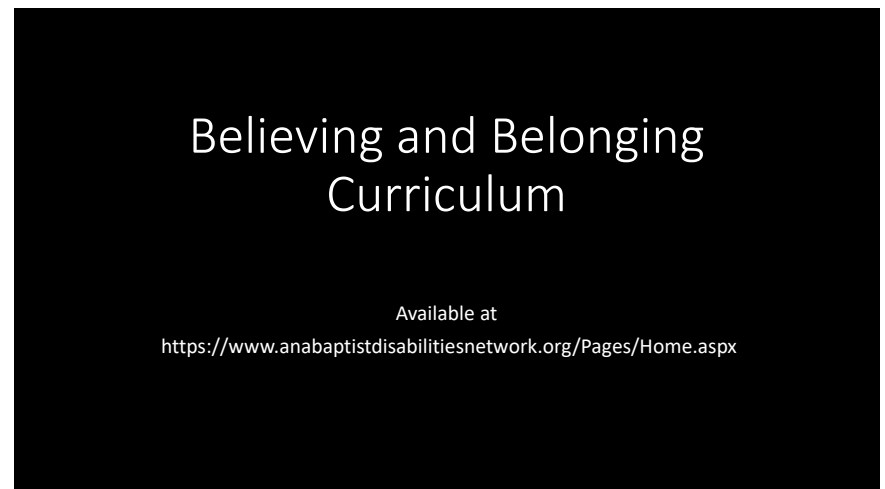
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Information about the new "Believing and Belonging" accessible Anabaptist curriculum for youth and adults with intellectual disabilities is available at <https://www.anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork.org/Resources/Faith-Formation/Pages/Believing-and-Belonging-Baptism-Curriculum.aspx>. To order, go to: <https://www.brethrenpress.com/ProductDetails.asp?>



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ADHD simulations

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLVObdII0m0>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IVYIVEBHoJ&t=1s>

Dyslexia simulation

<http://geon.github.io/programming/2016/03/03/dsxyliea>

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Click on any of the links above to be directed to one of many simulators on the Web that give a brief experience of what it is like to experience a disability.

NEURODIVERSITY RESOURCES:

- Neurodiversity by Design* booklet from Princeton Seminary
- Neurodiversity in the Church* from Modern Reformation
- Neuro Clastic—neuroclastic.com. All contributors, etc. are on the autism spectrum.
- ADDitude Magazine online—lots of practical ideas and FREE downloads
- Professional Development for Educators at Heinemann Blog on Neurodiversity
<https://blog.heinemann.com/topic/neurodiversity>

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Full urls for the two sites listed above are:
<https://neuroclastic.com/>
<https://blog.heinemann.com/topic/neurodiversity>



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ANABAPTIST DISABILITIES NETWORK

Nonprofit—get involved to further this good work!

Advocates and Partners
Accessibility Audits
Barrier-free Grants
Donations

<https://www.anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork.org/AdvocatesPartners/Pages/AdvocatesPartners.aspx>

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To learn more about Anabaptist Disabilities Network and its significant work, visit: <https://www.anabaptistdisabilitiesnetwork.org/Pages/Home.aspx>



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Jason Benetti is an award-winning broadcaster for Fox Sports and serves as the play-by-play voice of the Detroit Tigers. He has cerebral palsy and has recorded four public service announcements on behalf of the Cerebral Palsy Foundation.

Dan Habib documentary films:

Thasya

<https://whocaresaboutkelsey.com/Thasya>

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To watch an inspiring video about an 8-year-old with autism who thrives at school thanks to the support of her augmentative communication device, visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zWp2KkOr68>



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The PSAs linked at right are 1:30-2:00 long and would be suitable for showing in a disability awareness context.

1. [The Disability Blurt Out](#)
2. [The Disability Lookaway](#)
3. [The Disability Talk Down](#)
4. [Disbelieve-Ability](#)