

Teachers Guide to Juvenile Arthritis The Movie:

Video URL: <https://cassieandfriends.ca/schoolvideo/>

Video Length: 17:41

Background + Purpose

Cassie + Friends at School is a short, educational movie for kids aged 6-11 years old all about *Juvenile Arthritis* - a painful autoimmune disease affecting 24,000 children (or every 3 in 1000 kids) in Canada. The video can be shown in the classroom or with teammates/friends to help spread awareness about arthritis in children and support peers and educators to understand more about challenges affected children might face, including:

- The sign and symptoms of arthritis
- Reasons why an affected child might be late for school or have to sit out during gym class
- How to be a good friend to someone who has arthritis

By raising JA awareness, we believe we can all help affected kids gain more confidence at school through better communications with peers and teachers, increased self-advocacy skills and the chance to do all the things a child loves to do— even when a bit of help is required!

About the Movie

The movie is 17.5 minutes long and, depending on the age of the children watching, can be paused between “scenes” for group discussion and/or review about what was seen and learned.

Before you begin:

Step 1. Decide how you will introduce the movie

If you have an affected child in your classroom, discuss with the parent and child on how they would like to be involved in the video presentation. Some children with JA might be interested in introducing the video themselves, prefer the teacher to introduce the video, or they may wish to remain completely anonymous.

Step 2. Share this suggested introduction with your class

Did you know that 3 in every 1000 kids in Canada live with juvenile arthritis? Juvenile Arthritis is a painful condition that causes swelling, stiffness and pain in the joints (like your wrists, elbows, fingers, toes, etc.). Arthritis can make movements like writing, opening a lunch snack, drawing and gym class very painful, and it can even affect your eyes.

Just like you and me, kids with arthritis have good days and bad days. Some days kids with arthritis may have no pain, and other times during an arthritis flare, they may have a lot of pain when walking or even just holding a pencil. Pain and stiffness can differ from day to day and from morning to afternoon.

There is no cure for arthritis but there are many treatments and medications that can help reduce pain and swelling. Sometimes this means kids have to visit the doctor during school, take medication at lunch time, or do certain exercises to prevent their body from feeling stiff. This video will help you learn more about juvenile arthritis and how you can be there for your classmate/teammate with this invisible disease.

3. Show video

4. Conclude the video

Thank you for watching Cassie + Friends: Juvenile Arthritis at School! Do you have any questions?

Frequently Asked Questions (from a child's perspective)

Can you still play sports if you have arthritis? Yes! Kids with arthritis can participate in all sports when they have very little or no pain. Many kids with arthritis dance, play hockey, soccer, waterski and more!

Does it mean that you have other challenges, like learning? Sometimes the pain of arthritis can make it very difficult to write, draw and run around in gym class. Kids with arthritis work closely with teachers/coaches to make sure they can complete their assignments. Some medications may make kids feel sick or tired, so they are encouraged to talk to their teacher to learn everything everyone else learns.

Is there a cure? No, but treatments and medications can help reduce arthritis pain or even cause a child to go into remission. Remission means that you still have arthritis, you just don't have any of the symptoms.

What does JIA stand for? JIA stands for Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis. Juvenile means under 17 years of age and 'Idiopathic' means the cause is unknown.

What is a flare? A flare is when you feel more pain than usual from your arthritis.

Is JIA contagious? No, JIA is not contagious.



What is an occupational therapist? Their job is to help people do their everyday activities and to make sure you stay healthy.

How can I help my friend if they have arthritis? Most kids with arthritis want to be able to do everything everyone else does, so you can ask, “How can I help you?” If they say they don’t need any help, know that that’s okay. They will ask you for help when they need it.

What does arthritis feel like?

Arthritis causes increased warmth, stiffness, swelling and pain in the affected joint (Source: [Arthritis Society](#))

What do kids do when they are at home with a flare?

Rest their joints, take medicine, ice, heat, exercises, and sometimes trips to see their doctor.

Why do kids with arthritis have to wear a splint?

A splint can be used to provide rest, support, and pain relief to a sore joint. Sometimes, splints may be helpful to stretch a joint to improve the range of motion. (Source: [About Kids Health](#))