



Look to the Stars!

In the 2000s, depictions of individuals with disabilities were few and far between. There was Adam Sandler's Barry, Punch Drunk Love, Malcolm in the Middle, Stevie, Radio, and Dr. Heinz Doofenshmirtz of Phineas & Ferb fame. These archetypes were mainstream media's (MSM) best attempt at disability representation.



In 2022, Nielsen's article, Closing the Inclusion Gap for People with Disabilities, laid bare how little progress has been made in media representation in nearly a century. At the turn of the century, there was only one video production with a disability-related theme. By the end of 2022, nearly 6, 900 media titles have disability thematic components, alas, this represents only 4.22 percent of the 163, 230 titles released in the same year.

Back Then



[read more](#)



Why should I care about the number of television shows, movies, or streaming services that feature characters with disabilities? I came to this site to look for information on housing for my 27-year-old with an intellectual disability.

Authentic representation matters and media influence is powerful. Depictions of adults with varying disabilities, living, socializing, and being accurately depicted in communities have reached beyond blue screens. That reach extends to policymakers who make decisions about funding allocations for supported living; homeowner associations who hold sway on rental and alternative living arrangements within a community; and most importantly, you. An accurate media portrayal of what may be possible gives you hope for a future.

Why should I care about the number of television shows, movies, or streaming services that feature characters with disabilities? I came to this site to look for information on housing for my 27-year-old with an intellectual disability.



When Dorian was diagnosed in 2001, we could not envision a life beyond our door. There were no shows that offered anything that inspired me to dream or think, “Hey, it could happen.” Peanut Butter Falcon’s Zak highlighted the plight of far too many young adults relegated to nursing homes. For four seasons, the streaming behemoth Netflix captivated audiences with the evolution of Sam in Atypical, who navigates perilous years of high school and at the risk of spoilers, lands where some families never dreamed was a possibility.

Keep looking to the stars, even if they happen to be the number of stars tagged to reviews for the latest show or film with an authentic characterization of living as an adult with an intellectual, physical, or developmental disability.