Introduction

• “Disability is cross-cultural, gender and generational. People with disabilities also want to see their images reflected in the entertainment they watch.”

• In film there are both positive and negative portrayals of people with disabilities and special needs

• In 1990, the signing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became the first news story on disability issues to become a lead story on cable news broadcaster CNN

• “Disability in the arts” - the ability to include people with disabilities in film and other art subtopics

• Subtle disabilities have been presented in film since silence film, disabled war veterans were the first characters displayed as having a disability in film

• Rain Man 1987 film on Autism was thrown on people in society

• None. Lennie does not grow

• Use of sign language was the first disability displayed in film before any other area such as blindness or physical disability

Miracle Run (G) 2004

Positive-natural process of finding out a family member is special needs: Stephen and Philip, sons of Corinne Morgan-Thomason find out that they have autism. Corinne has a hard time believing this is true and doesn’t believe the doctors. Finally, she comes to terms with it, her husband tells her he doesn’t want to deal with them, so she leaves him. In the end, the boys prove that if they set their heart to anything they can succeed. Although once was a struggle for the mother, the boys show her that they can truly be like any other child.

Nemo (PG) 2003

Deformation of his body (fm)

Finding Nemo (PG) 2004

Deformation of his body (fm)

Secret Garden (G) 1993. British drama/fantasy

Positives: He learns to overcome obstacles, being persistent, and working with mentors. He finds a Soapbox racer in his neighbor’s shed and wants to participate in soapbox racing. He finds a true love and a talent for the sport.

I Am Sam (PG13) 2001

Positive- Nemo has the mental capacity of a 7 year old child and cannot take care of Lucy. Her family and friends are so invested in keeping her happy that they actually cause more confusion in her life. The family and friends pretend that every day was the same day. Whenever Lucy finds out what her family and friends are doing for her, she is confused and terrified that she has been held back from her life. Then she meets a man named Henry who falls in love with her and tries to help her remember so she can move on with her life.

Accommodations: Henry made videos that Lucy could watch every day when she woke up in the morning. The videos started from the car accident to the present day she was living with Henry.

Forrest Gump (PG-13) 1994

Positive- Forrest's IQ is 75 and has a learning disability. The movie spans over several decades of Forrest’s life. Even though Forrest has a disability, he witnesses and influences 20th century events in the United States. As a boy, Forrest faces many struggles including bullies but he is able to overcome them and accomplish many great things.

Accommodations- Forrest was born with strong legs, but he finds a true love and a talent for the sport.

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Positive- Sam Dawson has Autism. Sam is a parent that gets caught up in the legal and social service systems. He is a single parent trying to raise his newborn child Lucy. A social worker gets involved and decides that Sam has the mental capacity of a 7 year old child and cannot take care of Lucy. When Lucy was living with her father she realized he had a disability. She started to hold her intelligence back to avoid looking smarter than her father. Eventually the father hires a lawyer, Rita Harrison, who decides to take the case free of charge. She becomes annoyed with him easily, but comes to learn to love Sam as he shares and teaches love to others.

Accommodations- There are positive supporting roles such as his friends and the lawyer that help him raise Lucy.

References


