Rating Scale for Quality Characterizations of Individuals with Disabilities in Children's Literature

Book Title: **Author/Illustrator:**

Rater's Name: **Date:**

A. Overall Reaction

1. Rate your overall reaction to the book:

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Highly Negative	Negative	Neutral	Positive	Highly Positive

2. Would you recommend this book to be read to or by children/adolescents?

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Not Recommend		Recommend		Highly Recommend

3. Describe what you liked *most* about this book:

4. Describe what you liked *least* about this book:

B. Personal Portrayal

Name of Character with a Disability:

Age: **Sex:** **Race/Ethnicity:**

Disability:

Schooling: ☐General Ed. ☐General & Special Classroom ☐Special Classroom
☐Special School ☐Home ☐Schooling not depicted

Residence: ☐Family Home ☐ Supported Living ☐ Group Home ☐ Institution ☐Not Depicted

Level of Characterization: ☐ Main Character ☐Supporting (presence is integral to plot)

1. **Portrays characteristics of disability accurately** (e.g., abilities and disabilities are consistent with descriptions from Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, and/or International Classification of Diseases; abilities/disabilities are consistent throughout the story; if label is used, it is accurate and current).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. **Describes the character(s) with disability as realistic** (e.g., not superhuman or subhuman; avoids miraculous cures).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. **Character(s) with disability are fully developed** (e.g., credible, multidimensional, shows appropriate change or development throughout the story).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. **Portrays more than the disabilities of the character(s), such as the abilities, interests, and strengths of the character(s)** (e.g., avoids undue emphasis on the disability; characters have unique personalities, interests, and struggles that may not be related to the disability; characters experience success as well as failure).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. **Emphasizes similarities, rather than differences, between characters with and without disability** (e.g., similar physical and personality characteristics are described with equal emphasis).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. **Uses nondiscriminatory language that avoids stereotypic portrayals** (e.g., does not use language such as *suffers from, afflicted with, stricken with, confined to a wheelchair*). **This criterion includes the use of person-first language** (e.g., uses language such as *person with intellectual disabilities* rather than *retarded).*

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

C. Social Interactions

1. **Depicts character(s) with disability engaging in socially and emotionally reciprocal relationships** (e.g., not always being cared for, but allowed to care for others; teaches and assists others) **with a wide variety of persons** (e.g., family, nondisabled peers, friends with disabilities, support personnel).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. **Depicts acceptance of the character(s) with disability** (e.g., character isn't helpless against ridicule, teasing, bullying, abuse; character is not just tolerated, but a valued member of a group; is part of the "in" group rather than on the fringe or on the outside).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. **Promotes empathy, not pity for the character(s) with disability** (e.g., other characters act on their feelings to help in appropriate ways rather than just feeling sorry for the character with DD).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. **Portrays positive social contributions of person(s) with disability** (e.g., contributes to more than emotional growth of other characters).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. **Promotes respect for the character(s) with disability** (e.g., treated similar to others of same age, as appropriate; not "babied;" avoids condescending language and actions).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. **Depicts various relationships between the character with disability and others.** (Check all that apply.)

    a. Character with a disability has primary relationship with:

        ☐Friend w/o Disability   ☐Friend w/ Disability   ☐Sibling   ☐Parent

        ☐ Paid Personnel   ☐ Other:

    b. Character with a disability is primarily a:

        ☐Victim   ☐Perpetrator   ☐Protector   ☐None

    c. Character with a disability is primarily:

        ☐Dependent   ☐Caregiver

    d. Character with a disability is primarily a:

        ☐Learner   ☐Teacher

    e. Do other characters fear associating with the character with a disability?

        ☐Yes   ☐No

    f. Do other characters experience feelings of guilt related to the character with a disability?

        ☐Yes   ☐No

    g. What changes take place in characters without disabilities as a result of their interaction with the character with a disability?

        ☐Positive   ☐Neutral   ☐Negative

D. Exemplary Practices

1. **Depicts character(s) with disability having full citizenship opportunities in integrated settings and/or activities** (e.g., school, church, neighborhood, work, recreation/leisure).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. **Depicts character(s) with disability receiving services appropriate for their age, skill level, and interests** (e.g., teaching strategies depicted meet the needs of the character; therapies needed are provided).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. **Depicts valued occupations for character(s) with disability (if appropriate)** (e.g., vocations of their own choice according to their abilities and interests; wages paid are comparable to those without disabilities in similar vocations).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. **Promotes self-determination** (e.g., character(s) are allowed to make decisions that impact their lives, solve their own problems, choose their own friends and activities as appropriate to their age and developmental level), **where choices are similar to the types of choices given to nondisabled peers**.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. **The attitudes and practices portrayed are congruent with attitudes and practices for those with disabilities during that era** (e.g., services available, treatment by others, terminology used).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

E. Sibling Relationships (if applicable)

1. **Sibling(s) of the character(s) with disability experience a wide range of emotions, not just all positive or all negative emotions** (e.g., pride, joy, respect, love, embarrassment, frustration, over identification, guilt, isolation, resentment, anxiety regarding achievement, fear of the future).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. **Sibling(s) of the character(s) with disability have opportunities for growth that are not typical for siblings of children without disability** (e.g., maturity, self-concept, insight, tolerance, pride, vocational choices, advocacy, loyalty).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. **The sibling relationship is reciprocal, given the age and developmental differences between the siblings**.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. **The sibling(s) are not given unusually burdensome household and family duties, but engage in family work that is typical for children of the same age and gender that do not have a sibling with disability.**

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. The sibling(s) appear aware of the nature of the disability and its effects on the character with disability.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

F. Point of View

1. From whose point of view is the story written?

1. The point of view, if told by the character *with* disability, is realistic (e.g., thought processes and language of a character with cognitive disabilities are realistic).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. The point of view, if told from a character *without* disability, is realistic (e.g., a brother/sister's attitudes/ perceptions about the sibling with disabilities).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

G. Literary Quality of Text

1. Engaging theme or concept is woven into the story.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Plot is thoroughly developed, with a reasonable storyline (including probable events that lead to resolution of a problem).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Typically developing characters are fully developed (e.g., credible, multidimensional, show change or development throughout the story).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Description of settings enhances the story.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Style is appropriate for the story and age-level (including use of language and dialogue).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. A main focus of the book appears to be to:

☐ teach about a disability,

☐ include a character with a disability whose presence does not or minimally impacts the story,

☐ include a character with a disability whose presence and disability impacts the story,

☐ include a character with a disability whose presence impacts the story, but the disability is irrelevant.

7. **Additional information is provided to help readers learn about the disability** (e.g., author's notes, internet addresses, professional organizations).   ☐Yes   ☐No

H. Illustrations (if applicable)

1. Portrays characteristics of disability accurately in illustrations.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. Portrays assistive/adaptive technology accurately, realistically, and contemporarily in the illustrations.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Illustrations interpret the story well.

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Style of illustrations is appropriate to the story and age-level (e.g., representational, expressionistic, surrealism, impressionistic, folk art, naive art, cartoon art, photography).

☐1	☐2	☐3	☐4	☐5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Plot, theme, characters, setting, mood, and information are enhanced through the illustrations.

□1	□2	□3	□4	□5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Illustrations represent quality art (rhythm, balance, variety, emphasis, spatial order, unity).

□1	□2	□3	□4	□5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

7. Illustrations use color, line, shape, and texture artistically.

□1	□2	□3	□4	□5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

8. Layout and design of illustrations and text are visually appealing.

□1	□2	□3	□4	□5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

Citation:

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