

Building Bridges for Kids Special Needs & Abilities

Conversation Tips

Use positive wording: “If you feel like it’s a tragedy, your child will sense that.”

- Use “typical” instead of “normal”

For example, you can say “A typical child might _____, but they learned how to do things a different way. Isn’t that cool?”

- Use “has an intellectual disability” instead of “differently abled” or “mentally handicapped”

- Say “a person with” or “they live with” instead of “they suffer from”

Different communities may have different language preferences. Notice or ask before assuming.

Focus on the person and what they can do, not their disability

- Instead of “They *can’t* walk, see, hear, etc.” focus on what helps them: “He uses a wheelchair to **help** move around.” “She uses hearing aids to **help** her hear.” “They use a machine to **help** them speak.”

When your child says something about “normal” things like having 10 fingers and 10 toes, etc. it’s okay to gently remind them that isn’t always the case.

“The best way to teach a child something is to model it for them. If you see a child with special needs, smile and say “hi” and talk to their parents. If you approach the parents in a comfortable and friendly way, it is much easier for your child to do the same with their son or daughter. In the end, we all want the same thing: to be seen and valued. Isn’t that a lesson worth teaching every child?” Katy Epling

Sources

<https://www.scarymommy.com/disability-awareness-for-kids/>

<https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/community-building/youth-and-school/unified-champion-schools/Mini-Lesson-Understanding-Disability.pdf>

<http://www.nlcdd.org/resources-books-movies-disability.html>

Online Resources

- Teaching tolerance: Understanding Disabilities www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/tolerance-lessons/understanding-disabilities
- What Can You Do? www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4Nq-bLkvP8
- Talk to me www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL8GMxRW_5Y
- Be Fearless, Be Kind <https://befearlessbekind.hasbro.com/en-us>
- Talking with your kids www.familyeducation.com/life/empathy/6-tips-talk-your-kids-about-disabilities www.care.com/c/stories/6618/teaching-your-child-about-peers-with-special/
- A day in our shoes <https://adayinourshoes.com/resources-to-teach-kids-about-disabilities-awareness-and-inclusion/>

Books

Picture books and I Can Read (ICR)

- Rescue & Jessica: a life-changing friendship -Jessica Kensky and Patrick Downes
- Out into the big wide lake -Paul Harbridge
- What if everybody thought that? -Ellen Javernick
- You are Enough: a book about inclusion - Margaret O'Hair
- All the way to the top -Annette Bay Pimentel
- Emma Every Day by C. L. Reid (ICR series)

J Fiction and J Elementary

- Built for speed J ELEMENTARY Fang
- Swimming with dolphins J PBK Paddock
- The chance to fly J FIC Stroker
- A Blind Guide to Normal; A Blind Guide to Stinkville J Fic Vrabell (also e-books on Hoopla)

Non-Fiction

- Celebrating all abilities J 153.9 COL
- My friend has Down syndrome J 616.85884 DUL
- Why Johnny Doesn't Flap -Clay & Gail Morton J 618.9285 MOR
- Not So Different -Shane Burcaw J 921 BUR
- Unbound: the life and art of Judith Scott J 921 SCO

Join us July 28, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

via Zoom, Topic: Anxiety

