

# Building Bridges for Kids

**August 24, 2022 @ 6-7 p.m.**

**White River Branch, Topic: Diversity and Disability**

## How to Talk To Your Child About Disabilities

**Address your child's curiosity.** If you notice your child staring, take the lead. You might say, "I noticed you saw that little girl has a harder time walking than you do. She has cerebral palsy, which makes her muscles work a little differently."

Ask if your child has questions. If you know the person with the disability, ask her yourself or let your child ask. Laura Pope of San Francisco, whose 7-year-old son, Jake, has Down syndrome, says, "Kids and parents can totally ask anything they want – it's preferable to blank stares."

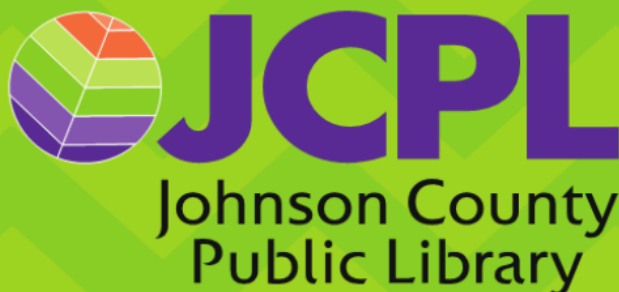
**Be matter-of-fact.** Susan Linn, a psychologist at the Judge Baker Children's Center at Harvard Medical School, suggests that you avoid emotion or going into detail. She offers this response to a question about a person in a wheelchair: "I imagine he may be having problems with his legs. He can't walk."

**Emphasize what's the same.** A kid may be disabled, but he's still a kid. Talk to your child about what a classmate or neighbor with a disability has in common with others – the same age, school, or favorite sport.

**Teach awareness and sensitivity.** If your child starts asking detailed questions, offer to help him find answers at home. Go online together to learn more about a particular disability. Be sure to not only point out what people with disabilities can't do but what they can.

**Don't allow jokes or bullying.** Kids with special needs are more likely to be bullied and abused in every way – they're just easier targets. If you hear your child or her friends referring to another kid or adult as "dumb" or "retarded," explain just how much those words hurt. Teach her to apologize when she has hurt another child's feelings.

Source: [https://www.babycenter.com/child/parenting-strategies/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-disabilities-ages-5-to-8\\_3657045](https://www.babycenter.com/child/parenting-strategies/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-disabilities-ages-5-to-8_3657045)



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## Additional Resources

How to Talk to Kids About Disabilities <https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-disabilities-4142349>

IN Source: Special Education Parent Support <https://insource.org/>

Center for Parent Information & Resources: You Are Not Alone, For Parents When They Learn That Their Child Has a Disability <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/notalone/>

Family Education: 6 Tips to Talk to Your Kids About Disabilities <https://www.familyeducation.com/life/empathy/6-tips-talk-your-kids-about-disabilities>

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## Books

- What Happened to You? By James Catchpole. J Picture CAT
- Just Roll With It. By Lee Durfey-Lavoie. J GN Just Roll With It
- El Deafo. By Cece Bell. J GN El Deafo.
- All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything. By Annette Bay Pimentel. J 323.37PIM
- Thinking Differently: An Inspiring Guide for Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities. By David Fink. 371.9 FIN
- Demystifying Disability: What to Know, What to Say, and How to Be an Ally. By Emily

## Discover upcoming events:

<https://www.pageafterpage.org/building-bridges>

