

HI PRO Highlight Resource of the Month



Teaching Young Children About Disabilities

Mankiw, 2021

Summary	<p>This article from a former early childhood teacher/director describes scenarios and strategies to support students in deepening understanding of people with disabilities in ways that are developmentally appropriate. Teaching about different abilities can be done with curiosity and respect.</p>
Carla's (4 yrs) Understandings of Disabilities	<p>Carla has recently been exposed to books and references that discuss a "zoomchair" (or wheelchair). While at the museum with her class and mom, she is excited to see a boy zooming up the wheelchair ramp. Yet, her zest is met with some concern from her mother. Carla, teachers, and parents have the chance to explore disabilities. Some reflection questions could consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What kind of interactions could expand Carla/classmates understanding of disabilities?● How could information be shared in developmentally appropriate ways?● Why is it important to have difficult conversations about disabilities?
Useful Materials for Teaching Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Disability-related signs/symbols<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ use as an entry point into discussions about disability● Placing disability-related toys and materials throughout the classroom<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ photographs, children's literature, toy ramps and wheelchairs, and figurines with disability-related props such as canes and walkers● Persona Dolls<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ make connections, to promote empathy, and to understand the purposes of selected disability equipment
Personal Perspectives	<p>Here are some questions to contemplate to consider how you enhance disability awareness and relationship in your own setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● What is my comfort zone with talking about disabilities?● What are my experiences, attitudes, and possible biases?● How can I learn more about children's prior knowledge and understandings of disabilities?



Mankiw, S. (2021). Teaching Young Children About Disabilities. NAEYC. Young Children: Winter, 2021.
<https://www.naeyc.org/resources/pubs/yc/winter2021/teaching-about-disability>