Celebrating Differences:
Teaching Children about Special Needs and Disabilities

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Agenda:

- Explain special needs and disabilities to children in order to better address their questions.
- Model respectful behavior and disability etiquette.
- Recognize the difference between teasing, bullying and harassment.

Penfield Children's Center

1. Birth to Three Agency
2. Special Care Nursery
3. Early Education & Care
4. Behavior Clinic
5. Outpatient Therapy
6. Family Services
7. Kohl's Building Blocks Program
8. Katie Beckett Program
9. Penfield Montessori Academy

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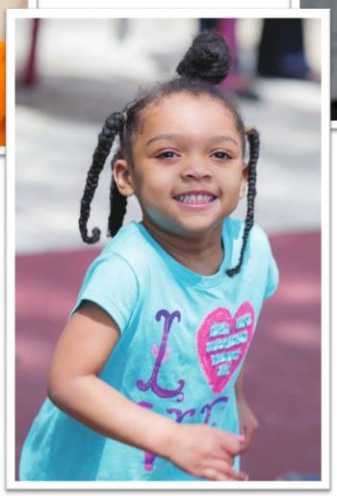

Talking with your child

- Provide education
- Point out similarities
- Read books that depict people who have different abilities with your child.
- Encourage friendships with children of all abilities.
- Learn together.

Addressing a child's questions about a person with a disability when in public

- Don't get mad when they get curious.
- A short stare is okay.
- Being different isn't bad.
- Always ask before helping.
- Understand that equipment is empowering.
- Watch your own reactions.

Person First Language

Respectful Terms	Disrespectful Language
Psychiatric Disability	Crazy/insane/deranged
Person with a disability	Cripple/crippled person
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Deaf and dumb/deaf-mute
Has a disability	Differently-abled / Handi-capable
People with disabilities/people who are blind/people who are deaf	The disabled/the blind/the deaf
Disability	Handicap

Person First Language

Respectful Terms	Disrespectful Language
Accessible parking/restrooms/seating	Handicapped parking/restrooms/seating
Intellectual disability/person with an intellectual disability (Cognitive disability)	Mental retardation/mentally retarded
Person with an intellectual disability	Retard
Had or has (a particular disability)	Stricken with/victim of/suffering from (a particular disability)
Uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair-bound/confined to a wheelchair

Disability Etiquette

1. When you see a person with a disability don't point, laugh, ignore and stare.

2. Even if the person has trouble hearing don't shout. Don't talk to the person as though he is younger or not as smart as you.

Disability Etiquette

3. If a person is with a Personal Care Assistant, sign language interpreter or other companion, speak to the person not the companion.

4. Some people have service dogs or animals to help them. Those dogs and animals are working and should not be distracted.

Disability Etiquette

5. If you are talking with a person who is in a wheel chair, kneel or sit so you are at eye-level.

Disability Etiquette

6. Some people who have disabilities use computers and other equipment called assistive technology. Even though these devices look very cool they are often fragile and expensive.

7. Some people have a speech disability. Their speech may be slow and hard to understand, or they may have trouble getting the words out smoothly. Be patient and listen.

Disability Etiquette

10. People who have disabilities can do many things, just like you! They just may do them differently.

Bullying

- About 21% or 1 in 5 students report being bullied during the school year.
- Students with a disability are 2 to 3 times more likely to be bullied than their non-disabled peers
- Bullying behaviors have been known to start as young as 3 and 4 years old.
- Most common reasons student's reported being bullied were looks, body shape and race.

What is Bullying?

- Any **unwanted aggressive behavior** among youth, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves a **real or perceived power imbalance**.
- The behavior **is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.**
- Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm.
- The damaging effects of bullying do not stop at the individual, and in fact, negatively impacts peers, families, schools, and even neighborhoods.

Teasing vs. Conflict vs. Bullying

Friendly Teasing	Hurtful Teasing	Peer Conflict	Actual Bullying
•Equal power •Neutral •Purpose is to be playful •Funny to both parties	•Unequal power •Sensitive topic •Purpose is to upset •Exclude •Sarcastic	•Equal power •Occurs occasionally •Accidental •Relationship is valued •Remorse •Effort to solve the problem •Equal emotional reaction	•Imbalance of power •Usually occurs repeatedly •Purposeful and serious •Seeks to gain power •No remorse •No effort to resolve •Imbalance of emotional reaction

Telling vs. Tattling

Telling is done to protect yourself or someone else from getting hurt

Tattling is done to get someone in trouble.

Talking with your child about bullying

1. Help your child to remember that they are not alone.
2. It is not up to them to stop the bullying
3. While bullying happens to a lot of kids, it never okay and nobody deserves to be treated that way.
4. We all need to work together to put an end to bullying.

What to tell your child if they witness bullying?

- Let your child know how powerful they are and that they can make a difference.
- Tell them not to join in on the bullying behavior
- Encourage them to show support for the bullied student
- Encourage them to tell an adult.
- If they are comfortable, tell them that they can ask the person who is bullying to stop.

Websites about Disabilities

- Kids' Quest on Disability and Health www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/kids/index.html
- Pacer.org
- Braille Bug – braillebuge.afb.org
- Arthur – "You've got Braille" - pbskids.org/arthur/print/braille
- Arthur – "When Carl Met George" - youtu.be/nsmjwHW40ps
- Arthur – "Sign Design" - pbskids.org/arthur/print/signdesign

Children's Books about Disabilities & Differences

- *47 Strings Tessa's Special Code* by Becky Carey
- *Don't Call Me Names – Learning to Understand Kids with Disabilities* by C.W. Graham
- *Don't Call Me Special* by Pat Thomas
- *How Katie Got a Voice (And a Cool New Nickname)* by Patricia L. Mervine, M.A., CCC-SLP
- *It's Okay To Be Different* by Todd Parr
- *Just Because* by Rebecca Elliot
- *My Brother Charlie* by Holly Robinson Peete & Ryan Elizabeth Peete
- *My Friend Suhana* by Shaila Abdullah & Aanyah Abdullah
- *Some Kids are…* series by Lola M. Schaefer
- *Special People, Special Ways* by Arlene Maguire
- *Special Shoes* by Molly Taylor
- *Susan Laughs* by Jeanne Willis & Tony Ross
- *The Alphabet War – A Story about Dyslexia* by Diane Burton Robb

Things to Remember

Sources

- Teaching Children about Special Needs & Disabilities: https://penfieldbuildingblocks.org/how-to/teaching-children-about-special-needs-and-disabilities/
- Forging Friendships Between Children of all Abilities: https://penfieldbuildingblocks.org/play/forging-friendships-between-kids-of-all-abilities/
- How Parents can Teach Sensitivity at Home: https://penfieldbuildingblocks.org/down-syndrome/parents-can-teach-peer-sensitivity-home/
- How to Talk to Kids about Disabilities: https://www.verywellfamily.com/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-disabilities-4142349

For more information, please visit our websites:

penfieldchildren.org | penfieldbuildingblocks.org

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