


Special Needs Inclusion Project (SNIP)

TIPSHEET #10: Inclusion Is All Around Us

An Inclusion Resource Sponsored by: 

Literature that reflects the natural diversity of our world, along with honest and thoughtful conversation, helps children deepen their understanding of differences in themselves and in others.

This list is a small sample of books for a range of ages and interests. In each section, books are ordered from easiest to more advanced. Enjoy!



Books that represent inclusion:

Characters with differences and disabilities are part of a story, but the story is not focused on their disability.

- ❑ **Cave, K. (2004). *That's what friends do*. New York: Hyperion Books for Children.**
This charming early childhood picture book about friendship sets the stage for discussion or reading about inclusion. Pair it with *My Friend Isabelle*. (see below)
- ❑ **Parr, T. (2001) *It's Okay to be Different*. New York: Little, Brown and Company**
This lighthearted early childhood picture book has bold, colorful line drawings of many differences, including various disabilities (and also having a pet worm).
- ❑ **Slate, J. (1998). *Miss Bindergarten celebrates the 100th day of kindergarten*. New York: Dutton Children's Books. (series)**
Lenny the Lion uses a wheelchair and is fully included in all of the class's adventures, with no mention of his mobility by Miss Bindergarten or Lenny's classmates.
- ❑ **Lionni, L. (1963). *Swimmy*. New York: Pantheon.**
Swimmy the fish discovers how to be himself while also being part of a community. Artful illustrations (plus big words and small print) make this book

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better as a read-aloud than independent reading for young children. Interesting metaphors stretch it into mid-elementary.

- **McCloud, C. (2006). *Have you Filled a Bucket Today? A guide to daily happiness for kids*. Northville, MI: Ferne Press.**
This whimsical picture book is recommended as a family, class, or even school-wide read. Illustrations are diverse in age, ethnicity, and physical ability and the message of kindness is universal.

Books that teach about differences and disabilities:

- **Woloson, E. (2003). *My friend Isabelle*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.**
Thrasher, A. (2004). *A teacher's guide to My Friend Isabelle: classroom activities that foster acceptance of differences*. Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.
Charlie and Isabelle are dear friends who like to do many of the same things, but are also quite different from each other. Charlie and his mom talk about these differences, and agree that "life is more fun with friends like Isabelle," who has Down Syndrome.
- **Lyon, G.E. (2010) *The Pirate of Kindergarten*. New York: Simon & Schuster.** (Schneider Family Book Award Winner) In this high-energy book, a feisty kindergartener discovers that most people don't see double. After a vision screening, she gets glasses and an eye patch, becoming the pirate of kindergarten!
- ❖ **Polacco, P. (1998). *Thank you, Mr. Falker*. New York: Penguin.**
This autobiographical story captures the loneliness and self-doubt of a child who has difficulty learning to read. It highlights the positive impact of a strengths-based approach.
- **Asare, M. (1997). *Sosu's Call*. Ghana: Sub-Saharan.**
(Winner: UNESCO Children's and Youth's literature in the service of tolerance, IBBY Outstanding book for young people with disabilities) Sosu is excluded from his village because his legs "don't work", until he saves many lives during a great storm. This picture book vividly contrasts the experiences of exclusion and inclusion.
- **Uhlberg, M. (2010). *Dad, Jackie, and Me*. Atlanta: Peachtree.**
Beautiful watercolors illustrate this enjoyable story of a boy and his father who closely follow Jackie Robinson's first season. With a gentle touch, the story

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shows the parallel discrimination faced by Jackie, the first black major league baseball player, and Dad, who is Deaf.

- **Binkow, H. (2008). *Howard B. Wigglebottom Listens to His Heart*. Lerner.** (series) This book features a child with ADHD, but the central message of this captivating book is “be yourself.” Whoever you are, Howard will help you celebrate your unique qualities.
- ❖ **Petrillo, G. (2007). *Keep your Ear on the Ball*. Gardener, ME: Tilbury.** In this true story of teamwork, Davey’s friendly classmates learn how to include him without doing everything for him. Davey is a polite, capable boy with a visual impairment whose story offers a wonderful introduction to disability etiquette and creative examples of auditory cues.
- ❖ **Palacios, R.J. (2012) *Wonder*. New York: Knopf.** Multiple characters narrate this New York Times bestseller, including a boy whose first day of middle school is also his first day of school ever, due to a medical condition. Strangers are afraid of his unusual face, but the kind and loving Auggie becomes part of his new community.
- ❖ **Brenna, Beverly. (2012) *The White Bicycle*. Ontario, Canada: Red Deer Press.** (series) Typical teenage highs and lows are magnified by Taylor Jane’s unique perspective as a woman with Asperger’s Syndrome. Her first job, supporting a boy who uses a wheelchair and an alternative communication device, is key to this insightful and often funny coming-of-age story.
- ❖ ***Books especially recommended for adults to read for their own understanding and enjoyment.***

Additional Resources to Build your Library

Look for characters with disabilities are shown in positive, realistic roles, fully contributing to the story and a range of settings (urban, rural), cultures (languages, religions, traditions), perspectives (age, social class) and all of the other ways that humans are diverse.

http://www.inclusive-education.ca/resources/documents/inclusive_booklist.pdf

<http://pages.towson.edu/cholmes/similarities/child.htm>

www.woodbinehouse.com/my_friend_isabelle_teachers_guide.pdf

www.bucketfillers101.com/have-you-filled-a-bucket-today.php

www.mainstreamconnections.org

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