

Creating Awareness Among Children About 'Disability'

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Children are curious by nature and ask many questions about what they observe. By asking questions, they try to develop an understanding of the world around them. Your child may come across an individual with differential ability, physical or behavioural. As a parent, we often face this inquisitiveness of the child wherein he/she can point out with wonder, "Look at that child, his leg seems different!". Or the pointed questions like "Why is this person walking different from others?" or "why that person is sitting in that chair with wheels?". Our response to these queries may vary based on our understanding, situation awareness and perspectives.

Some parents may instruct the child not to stare and try to deflect his attention to other things, while some may try to ignore or avoid the situation. Sometimes, parents yell at their child, asking them to stay away from the differently abled person or maintain a distance. By doing this, we unknowingly create an impression that something is wrong with asking or knowing about these questions. This may impact the child's learning process, and instead of empathy, a biased response gets normalized early in the child's life.

As a parent, our goal should be to prepare responsible adults that could do well for the country and humanity in general. We can accomplish these goals only by sensitizing the child and making them aware of the diversity and type of disabilities, visible or non-visible, with appropriate terminology. As per World Health Organization (WHO), ~15% of the world's population (about 1 billion people) live with various kinds of disabilities. WHO expects this number to increase even further through population growth, medical advances and the ageing process¹. As per UN Development Programme, about 80% of persons with disabilities live in developing countries¹. According to UNESCO, 90% of children with disabilities cannot attend school². The annual incidence rates of violence

against children with disabilities are at least 1.7 times greater than for their peers without disabilities³. There is a need to make this world more equitable and just, which is impossible without the participation of children as they are the citizens of tomorrow.



The child's education starts with the family, the basic unit of society. We should educate, sensitize and create awareness among our children to respect diversity and differences as we all are different people. Some of the things that we can do to help the child develop a positive view and acceptance of disabilities can be:

- ✓ Answering the questions of the child with honesty and age-appropriate terminology. This should be used as an opportunity to introduce the child to the idea of disability.

Watch a movie, motivational video, or read a book together that positively portrays disability. This can make a huge difference in their understanding.

Teach your child to be kind to everyone and ask before helping the person with disabilities.

- ✓ Websites with age-appropriate explanations and activities should be encouraged.

Sensitizing the children about disabilities and channelizing their curiosities will improve their understanding of people with disabilities. The chances are they will not find it wrong or unusual to be different from others. Your child will grow and benefit in multiple ways. For example:

- ✓ It will help in building emotional intelligence

and also a sense of empathy in the child.

- ✔ It will help in their social development, and the thoughtful conversation will build an understanding of the world around them.
- ✔ It will help a child to respect the differences because everyone is different.
- ✔ This can also help in reducing the chances of bullying and violence.

It will encourage a sense of acceptance and inclusiveness. The life of a person with a disability is not only impacted by physical limitations, but they also face discrimination, bullying, violence, and difficulty in financial inclusion throughout their lives. Creating awareness and educating children will help

build an inclusive society because today's children are our future society.

Learning about disabilities in their formative years will help a child develop emotional and social skills that they will carry throughout their lives, leading to a better and more inclusive world.

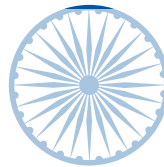
References:

- ➔ <https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/disability-and-health>
- ➔ <https://www.unesco.org/en/education>
- ➔ <https://campaignforeducation.org/en/resources>

Tricolour

By Mrs. Christy Joel

Our tricolour flag is our pride. When I look at our national flag, one important thing comes to mind: all three colours are in equal proportion. Though each colour represents different aspects, all are in equal proportion, reminding us that all are equal in this country. It is not just a flag used for few days but a symbol of equality. Let us think once and judge ourselves by asking a very simple question. Are we practising equality in our



day-to-day life? If 'YES', there is nothing better than that. If 'NO', look at our flag and realize what those three colours in equal proportion tell us. Make up your mind, learn equality from the Indian flag, and strive to change our country and our people for a better for a better present and future.

Jai Hind! Vande Matharam !

Riddles To Solve

1. What can you break, even if you never pick it up or touch it?
2. What gets wet while drying?
3. The more of this there is, the less you see. What is it?

Compiled by Ayushi Pandey (AIF Intern)

