

Teacher's Column

Each child, with or without disability, is unique; they only need love and encouragement to flourish

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Childhood memories play an important role in shaping the overall persona and the thought processes of all individuals. Irrespective of gender and disabilities a child experiences several emotional upheavals and unforgettable as well as impactful incidents during childhood. World Health Survey conducted by the World Health Organization in 2002-2004 indicates that disability affects vulnerable populations. Higher disability rates are prevalent in lower-income countries and persons belonging to the poorest wealth quintile are more prone to disabilities because of different variables. Nevertheless, a child born with disabilities in these circumstances cannot change the fact that they are unique and have great strengths as well as weaknesses and must be accepted as they are. The problems of these children are no longer confined to the medical and educational aspects but are the community's concern as a whole. To begin with, the parents and family must accept that their child is unique with different needs and should be given the same amount of love, care and attention as any other child. If the parents and family have a positive attitude



and unconditional acceptance for the child, the society or neighborhood will slowly fall in line with it and respect the child. Usually, the terminology used to address persons with disabilities, especially children, leaves a huge scar on their soft, vulnerable psyche, making

them introverted and wanting to stay isolated.

Some kinds of disabilities are visible and can be recognized easily, but some kinds of disabilities cannot be understood. More sensitivity and care are needed in



communicating or handling children with disabilities in the second category, especially when they start going to school or out on their own. This is their first rendezvous in the outer world, away from the comforting envelope of their home and family and it is a difficult journey for them like any other child. It's essential and imperative for us to realize that it's our responsibility as adults to welcome them and drive away their fears and apprehensions. As adults, it's equally vital to teach other children that those without disabilities that children with disabilities are at par with them on all fronts but need extra care because of their condition, which they are not responsible for.

Children are simple, uncomplicated beings who accept and embrace reality with ease. If one can explain the situation at hand properly, children will make considerable efforts to make their disabled peers happy and comfortable with them. Quoting the experience of Tanvi, a 7-year-old wheelchair user, "I did not want to go to school at first. But after some time, I got new friends, who started pushing my wheelchair, helping me with my notes, eating time with me in the classroom and calling me for their birthday parties. I'm not too fond of Sundays now, because there is no school. I love going to school every day".

You do not need rocket science to bring about

a change but simple and loving gestures to create empathy among the children to accept a child with disabilities wholeheartedly is the need of the hour. These thoughtful and much needed actions will promote inclusion in our society and may help in nurturing sensible and emphatic future generations. This may not be an easy path to tread because, at present, individuals are becoming more and more materialistic with every passing day, and one's status in society is determined by their assets and bank balance, not by one's behavior. Unfortunately a top scorer is pampered more, even if he/she/they is insolent or rude, and on the other hand, an average student is ignored or laughed at, despite being a good child with the right values and loving nature. It's time that we introspect about our times and educate our children in the

truest sense by teaching them to respect others based on some valid parameters and not on artificial values. After all, materialistic possessions may be lost but one's nature and attitude stay for life. Therefore, it is necessary to wholeheartedly encourage our children to create a happy place for all, especially for children with disabilities. Remember, if a child has a good and happy childhood then they will surely grow up to become strong individuals who will be able to face and handle challenges effectively that they may face in future as adults. More importantly, happy and thoughtful children grow up into responsible and empathetic citizens who lead our country to become the number one nation of our world..

Child Rights: The Introspection

By Priyanka (Winner of Content Writing Competition)

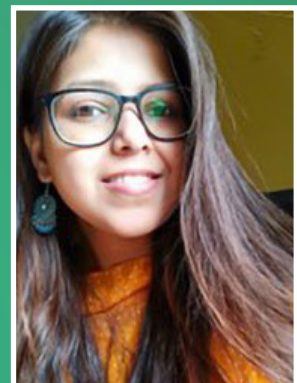
The date was 12/08/2007. The girl was ten years of age. That day, being very determined, she picked up her pencil and her small notebook and wrote "A Child in Mine" and continued –

"Wherever I see, there is smoke,
I am someone with no hope
Burden on my shoulder is tied with rope
Darkness is the thing which I must cope.
Rays of light shining through that hole
Dares to wake up my dead soul
Strength is the thing which I must keep
Keeping my mind sane, this deep.
Brightness of life can be seen outside
But I am stuck, this deep inside
Nothing I do will let me leave
Lots of temptations that I do resist
I am someone surrounded by coal.

Hope its darkness
never reaches my soul

Because I have heard,
life is a drama, and I
must play a role

Then, no longer would
I be a dead soul."



She did not know at that very moment she was writing the first poem of her life; in her mind, her words were rhyming, and what she felt was being reflected in those words.

On the way to school that morning, her bus had stopped near a coal mine. The girl saw a boy through the window of her bus, with black dirt smeared on his clothes. And then he saw her. Now she was used to other children smiling at her or making a face. But she had never seen a child looking at her with a blank face. She saw him watching the bus, and as he came closer to the bus to pick up