

Teaching Children About Inclusion

Simple tips and activities for teachers



Inclusion in the classroom - creating awareness and understanding

Studies have shown that children with additional needs are at a higher risk of being bullied as compared to their typically developing peers (Marhsall, Kendall, Banks & Grover, (Eds.) , 2009).

As such, it is imperative that schools educate students about additional needs and inclusion, to encourage empathy and kindness. Educating students on respecting each other's differences is part of creating a more inclusive culture in the school setting.



Teaching Inclusion

It is never too early!

Teaching tips (Pre-schoolers):

- 1) Use visuals that depict representations of children who are similar to them as well as those with differences - discuss how each of us possess unique challenges as well as strengths
- 2) Explain to children that everyone likes having friends, and to feel included and appreciated, despite their differences
- 3) Encourage their curiosity, but also remind them that it is not right to stare or laugh at another child due to their differences





Activity (Pre-schoolers)

Watch the animated short film - 'Ian'
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hz_d-cikWmI

* inspired by the real-life Ian, a boy with a disability determined to get to the playground despite his peers bullying him. This film aims to show that children with additional needs can and should be included.

Teachers can use the following discussion points to further explore the importance of inclusion:

- Accepting other children despite their differences
- Every child likes having friends and a chance to play with others
- Including other children in play and games, despite their differences



Teaching Tips (Primary School)

- 1) Encourage empathy and looking out for each other
- 2) Explore ways on how to include others
- 3) Provide opportunities for connection (e.g. social interaction club)
- 4) Discussion topics on their experiences on being excluded - how does that make them feel?



Activity

(Primary School)

(Physical Challenges)

Have students take turns to use a wheelchair or a mobility aid while moving around the classroom and in the school premises.

Teachers can use the following discussion points to further explore the importance of inclusion:

1) How did they feel when using the wheelchair/mobility aid?



2) What are some of the challenges they faced while moving around?

3) What can they do to ensure that a peer with physical challenges are not excluded in their activities



Teaching Tips (Secondary School)

- 1) Discuss individual differences - respecting these differences and accepting everyone's unique challenges
- 2) Explore the negative effects of being discriminated against and to be socially excluded
- 3) Invite a peer to share their experiences as a person with additional needs





Activity

(Secondary School)

(Speech/Language Challenges)

Write a simple sentence on a piece of paper and show it to 1 student. The student will then have to attempt to describe the sentence to the class without talking or writing.

Teachers can use the following discussion points to further explore the importance of inclusion:

- 1) Did you find communicating without talking/writing difficult? What would have helped?
- 2) What can we do to communicate with someone with speech/language challenges?



References:

Marshall, C. A., Kendall, E., Banks, M. E., & Gover, R. M. S. (Eds.). (2009). *Disabilities: Insights from across fields around the world, Vol. 1. The experience: definitions, causes, and consequences.*

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Meier, R. (2017). *How to encourage your child to include others.* School Mum. Retrieved from <https://www.schoolmum.net/parenting/parenting-tips/how-to-encourage-your-child-to-include-others/>

