How to Teach Kids Accept and Help Their Special Needs Peers

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There will be instances when a special needs child will be included in a regular classroom despite the fact that there are now some SPED classes in the country. This fact cannot be denied as there are still areas in the country where a SPED class does not exist yet but children with special needs are in that community. In this instance, it is not only the teachers and parents who can take the responsibility of helping out these kids. Their classmates and schoolmates can help as well. As teachers, you can help these students do their part to help.

First, it is important to emphasize to your students that you child would want to feel different. Open their mind to this truth by helping them realize that they would not want to be treated any other way than how they should be treated as a normal and regular student. Lack of understanding may lead to over attention, careless remarks, exclusion, and hurtful words and actions.

When the students understand this, you can encourage them to find common ground. Encourage them to look for things that can relate to others, yes, including that thing which interests the special needs child. Finding their common thing can build character and improve interaction.

Teach them to ask questions. Students may be curious about the special needs child and would ask lots of questions. What you can do as a teacher is to help them ask the right question which will not offend the child. Being considerate and respectful when asking is crucial. Proper communication and understanding should be emphasized.

Encourage your students to lend a hand and walk an extra mile for the special needs child. Ask them to assist the special needs child when necessary. Tell them to share their notes to him/her when he/she missed classes due to sickness, for example. Actually, this can be done and encouraged among all students.
Refrain discussing weaknesses, instead point out strengths of your students. It is helpful for them to appreciate that each person has his unique strengths and weaknesses. Even a special needs child may have something where he/she excels. For instance, the boy who leaves for special education class may be the top chess player in the class. The girl who limps may be the best singer. Encourage your students to seek strengths in one another and to respect each person for who he is.

Finally, led by example. Your actions and words will tell your child how to respond to his classmates so lead the way!

References:

