

# Learning about disabilities



**We often avoid having difficult and confusing conversations about disabilities with children, but discussing disabilities and differences helps children to understand and be accepting**

Some disabilities are long term, others are short term but there are also injuries such as a broken leg which would inhibit a person's movement for a period of time. You could use an example like this to start discussions with the children at your setting. For example, how would someone with a broken leg, using crutches or a wheelchair, manage to move around in your setting?

## **Resources**

- A bag/sack/basket for your resources
- Your chosen book(s), props and resources such as photos, dolls and small world figures featuring disability
- Old pairs of glasses (you may want to pop the lenses out), hearing aids
- You may have some crutches that the children could explore (under supervision)
- An asthma inhaler (for a adult to show the children).

Depending on which types of disabilities or injuries you'd like to discuss, there are lots of books available such as 'Why Do Some People Use Wheelchairs?' or books covering a range of conditions including asthma and wearing glasses. Other books are story based such as 'Topsie and Tim Make a New Friend'.

## Activity Outline



Start the conversation with an introduction, such as this one from the [Child Without Limits](#) website:

***"Most children are born with everything they need, but sometimes children are born without everything they need. Sometimes they need crutches or wheelchairs or braces to help them do what you do naturally."***

- Ask the children about whether they know anyone who wears glasses or uses crutches / a wheelchair
- Use real life objects, dolls, props or photos to match:
  - "Ana can't walk so what could Ana use to help her move around? A wheelchair"
  - "Tamil can't hear so what could help Tamil to hear? A hearing aid"
- Look at photos of guide dogs and talk about how the dog helps a person who cannot see
- If you have access to the internet in your setting you could look for photos with the children, having researched appropriate information beforehand
- Read/look at your chosen book(s) and share the collected resources with the children.

## Extension ideas

- Try making an access ramp for small world figures
- Ask the children if they would like to be blind folded and try to move around the setting or do a tasting activity
- Ask the children if they would like to wear noise cancelling headphones and explore what this is like
- Introduce an empathy doll with a disability

- Make a role play opticians
- Teach the children some sign language or Makaton signs.