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# A GUIDE FOR BUILDING SAFE & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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# A GUIDE FOR BUILDING SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

School safety continues to be a top concern across the country. Building a proactive culture that celebrates being kind, supportive, and inclusive of others is a necessary step to creating safe learning environments. Throughout the country, the month of October is recognized as Anti-Bullying Prevention Month—National Stop Bullying Day is October 12, Unity Day is October 19, and Safe Schools Week is October 16-22.

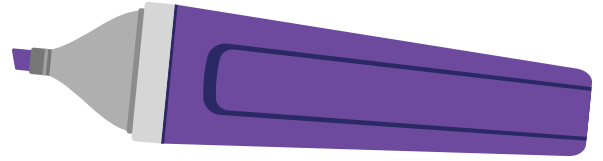
The Inclusive Schools Network, in collaboration with Finding My Way Books and Changing Perspectives, is pleased to share our “Guide for Building Safe and Supportive Learning Environments.” This activity guide uses the themes of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging to share information, activities, and resources for families, schools, and community groups as we work together to create safe and inclusive schools globally.

[Inclusive Schools Network](#)

[Changing Perspectives](#)

[Finding My Way Books](#)

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## WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

What do thumbprints, snowflakes, and children have in common? Differences! Differences! Differences! Everyone is different. The Cambridge Dictionary defines diversity as “the condition or fact of being different or varied.” Parents and educators teach diversity by helping children understand that diversity is a fact. Diversity is our theme for the first week of October.

Although everyone is different, we are alike in the fundamental need to be treated with mutual respect—our action word for this week. Respect creates a safe climate and supportive culture that not only accepts but also celebrates diversity. Promoting diversity with knowledge and practice results in building relationships and lasting friendships.

Friendships are important for a child’s sense of belonging and self-esteem. Friendships help students to accept differences and learn conflict resolution skills that protect youth from bullying. It is within that safety net of a supportive learning environment that student success happens!

There is no substitute for respect when it comes to children developing a positive understanding of themselves and others. All children learn in different ways; they also learn from each other. Respect and understanding grow when children of differing abilities and cultures have the opportunity to play and learn together.

**Diversity is about the unique differences of every child—their names, needs, and services for student success and safe schools.**



**Like the words of Aretha Franklin’s famous song, “Respect—find out what it means to me,” respect means a lot! It means safer schools and student success. It means that:**

- Every child and family is valued.
- Children are accepted by their peers and have friends.
- Inclusive education is viewed as every child’s right, not a privilege.
- Decisions are made on the basis of a child’s needs and not on the basis of labels and places.

**Respectful and healthy learning environments flourish when we model and teach respect for differences:**

- Encourage children to participate in activities with other children of the same age with different abilities.
- Provide opportunities for all children to contribute and celebrate their effort!
- Teach how to make and keep friends with and without disabilities and welcome our children’s friends into our homes.
- Know what your children are watching on television, social media, in the movies, or reading in books. Check out the book list for each week’s theme of this guide.

**Simply stated, respect for diversity and effective inclusion in schools is about ALL students belonging!**

- The general education classroom at the student’s enrolled grade level is the reference point for student-specific planning.
- Expectations are high.
- Instruction is based on the curriculum standards adopted by the school or state.
- There is not a separate curriculum.
- Individualized supports are available when needed.

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R-E-S-P-E-C-T

**Find out what it means to me!**

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**NAMES**

**Not Numbers**

**NEEDS**

**Not Labels**

**SERVICES**

**Not Places**



# ELEMENTARY ACTIVITY: Understanding Diversity

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Describe how you would feel if everyone was exactly like you?

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Describe what you like about meeting people who are different from you.

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Describe a friend who is different from you. Why do you like them?

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# SECONDARY ACTIVITY: 10 Ways to Stand up for Diversity

The following is a list of suggestions to support educators in encouraging and inspiring their students to stand up and sit tall for diversity. Being aware of, and valuing diversity are mindsets that are not developed overnight but rather take time.

## THINK ABOUT HOW YOU CAN SPRINKLE THESE SUGGESTIONS INTO YOUR DAILY PRACTICES:

- Give a classmate/peer a heartfelt compliment. Students can use their voice, write a note or send an electronic message.
- When given the opportunity, find someone you haven't worked with in class and ask them to partner up. When students are asked to work in pairs, encourage them to select someone that they haven't worked with in the last month.
- Introduce yourself to someone you may not know and make an effort to include the in your day.
- Offer to help someone you notice struggling. Challenge students to help one person a day. Students consider what are their strengths and how they could use those strengths to help someone.
- See someone alone during free time? Ask them to join you and your friends.
- Be a leader! Stand up and set a good example to everyone—even if it is difficult.
- Sit by a new person at lunch at least twice this week or invite someone new to sit at your table.
- Learn at least three new things about someone in a different grade level.
- High five, fist bump, or give a big smile to five new people this week!
- Learn about a new culture and share holiday traditions.



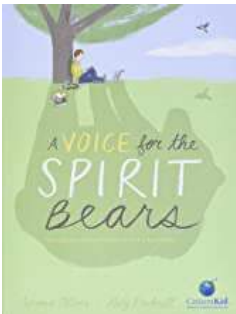
# Books to Facilitate Discussions about Diversity:



**A Sky-Blue Bench**  
by Bahram Rahman

Ages 4-7

An Afghanistan girl with a prosthetic “helper-leg” learns to build a bench for herself so she is comfortable sitting at school.



**A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How one Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animal**

By Carmen Oliver

Ages 6-9

A Canadian boy with an Indigenous background overcomes his stuttering to share his voice as he becomes an advocate.



**Born Just Right**

By Jordan Reeves and Jen Lee Reeves

Ages 9-13

A US girl born with a limb difference invents a very special prosthetic for her arm.



**The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-year-old Boy with Autism**

By Naoki Higashida

Ages 13 and up

A Japanese boy who is autistic shares how he thinks, feels, and perceives his world.



## WHAT IS EQUITY?

Educational equity refers to the principle of fairness. When schools are mindful of diversity and understand the importance of equity, children are not separated because of special needs, race, ability, or any other label. A separate education is not an equal education. Equity is our theme for the second week in October.

Equity addresses and eliminates the biases and barriers that limit a child's hopes for learning, growing, and contributing to society. Equity means providing support and the right resources based on the child's different and specific needs, so that each child is prepared to learn and achieve success.

Equity is about the choices that not only strengthens a student's opportunity for academic success but also their health and social-emotional development resulting in safer learning environments. Many schools in countries across the world address equity and inclusive education with the following core education priorities:

- Committed leadership
- Positive learning environments
- Instructional excellence
- Social opportunities and building relationships

# CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES

## Teacher Self-Assessment

High Expectations			
	Common Practice	Developing	Needs Assistance
All students have an opportunity to lead a classroom activity			
Teacher has mentors to support learners			
Teacher has posters and/or evidence of role models from various cultures posted around the room			
Teacher—at a high rate--recognizes effort and progress in an on-going manner			
Students learn to evaluate their own work using teacher-prepared rubrics			
Supportive Classroom Environment			
	Common Practice	Developing	Needs Assistance
Displays student artifacts, pictures and relevant cultural materials all around the room			
Arranges mentors from school or community to work with struggling students			
Hosts guest lecturers from the community to speak to the class			
In preparing assignments, reflects student origins, family traditions and rituals			
Culturally Relevant Curriculum			
	Common Practice	Developing	Needs Assistance
Assesses students' prior knowledge			
Connects learning to student interests and important events			
Uses visual aids and graphics to make key concepts explicit			
Uses understandable analogies, metaphors and similes to promote additional links to learning			
Teacher as Facilitator			
	Common Practice	Developing	Needs Assistance
Teacher uses a variety of teaching styles (lecture, activity-based, hands-on, individual work, small and large group)			
Students are seated and working in cooperative groups whenever appropriate			
Groups are flexible – students work with new partners for different activities			
Teacher allows students to work using their preferred learning style			
Flexible Grouping			
	Common Practice	Developing	Needs Assistance
Teacher has made the learner objective explicit and students understand learner outcomes from each group			
Students work in a variety of groups with a purpose			
Teacher has clearly taught behavior expectations for group work as well as individual or whole-class			
Teacher is up and around actively monitoring group work			

Source: Stetson & Associates, Inc.

# ELEMENTARY ACTIVITY: Understanding Equity

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Should the same opportunities be given to everyone? Why or why not?**

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**Describe when you didn't get an opportunity you thought you deserved.**

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# SECONDARY ACTIVITY:

## Field Day Activities to Experience Disability Awareness

An approach for building awareness of differences is to set up activities that simulate various types of disabilities. People who have disabilities will tell you that the best way to learn about disabilities is to meet and talk with people who have them. These activities are designed for students to gain empathy for others who must adapt their daily lives because of their different abilities. As serious as the overall objective may be, students have an opportunity to learn from each other.

### PRIOR TO FIELD DAY:

Begin in the classroom by introducing the idea of what it means to have a disability. There are good, current books—written for various ages—that have central characters who live with disabilities and differences. These books are great springboards for discussion prior to the field day activities.

Locate the following equipment to adapt games; some materials are very inexpensive and easily purchased and some will be available from those who provide support in the areas of Adapted Physical Education, Vision or Hearing Specialists, School Nurses, and Occupational or Physical Therapists.

### EQUIPMENT:

- Package of bandanas to blindfold participants (simulate blindness)
- Package of disposable safety earplugs (simulate hearing impairment)
- Goggles (available for simulating various types of visual impairments)
- Wheelchairs (simulate physical disability)
- Music source (Example: boom box for Musical Chairs)
- Mirror that can set on a table top (for simulation of learning disability)

#### **Adapted PE equipment:**

- Bouncing ball with bell inside
- Softball that beeps

## FIELD DAY ACTIVITIES:

Remind students these activities are not simply games or competitions, but the activities are designed to experience the differences in ways to play.

### Be safe! Learn about others!

**Signing Name in a Mirror:** Students are asked to sign-in for the day, but can look only at a mirror image—rather than the actual sign-in sheet—while they are writing.

**Four Square:** A common playground game for 4 players.

Rules available online: <https://edumarkingplaygrounddesigns.com/four-square-game-rules>

Some players are designated to play blindfolded, with and without a bell ball.

**Musical Chairs:** Simple game unless you are hearing impaired. Use earplugs with some of the students in the game.

**Softball Pitch:** Some of the hitters in line are blindfolded; some have regular ball pitches while others have the beeping ball. An adult pitcher is recommended.

**Play Catch:** Some students are blindfolded and some have one hand behind their back. Use a softer beeping ball.

**Basketball Shoot:** Some students are assigned to use a wheelchair so they must stay seated while shooting.

**Bowling:** Student sits in a wheelchair or is blindfolded. Use a ball ramp or attach beepers to the pins.

**Ring Toss:** Blindfold participants-with and without a beeper on the stake.

**Getting a Drink at the Fountain:** Some of the students in line are asked to use a wheelchair; they cannot lift themselves to get to the fountain.

## FOLLOW-UP AND REFLECTION:

Always debrief with students, preferably in small groups, about their experiences during these activities.

- Ask how they felt when they were involved in certain activities but couldn't participate the way they were used to.
- Ask students what it would be like to have that different ability throughout their lives and what sort of adaptations might they make?

# Books to Facilitate Discussions about Equity:

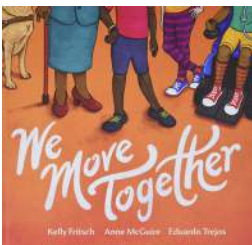


## **Onika Wants to Help**

by Jo Meserve Mach and Vera Lynne Stroup-Rentier

Ages 4-8

Onika has intellectual disabilities and, as a young girl, she was hidden in her village in Tanzania. She shares her excitement about being allowed to go to school.



## **We Move Together**

by Kelly Fritsch and Anne McGuire

Ages 6-9

This story shares how accessibility and social justice create a more equitable community.

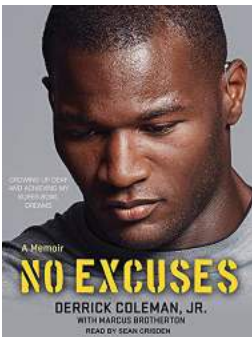


## **Planet Earth is Blue**

by Nicole Panteleakos

Ages 10-12

A story about a girl who is non-verbal and autistic. She shares her hopes and dreams. There needs to be equity so that everyone with hope can work to achieve their dreams.



## **No Excuses: Growing Up Deaf and Achieving My Super Bowl Dreams**

by Derrick Coleman, Jr. and Marcus Brotherton

Ages 14 and up

Derrick is the first NFL offensive player who is Deaf. He shares his journey in achieving equity professionally.

## WHAT IS INCLUSION?

Inclusion is a philosophy of acceptance; it is much more than being in the same room. It's not special treatment but effective planning and different activities in order to meet individual needs and provide equal opportunities. Effective inclusion creates a space where all students are able to participate. Inclusion is our theme for the third week of October.

In an inclusive setting, every student is respected and valued and there is a commitment to active relationships among all members of the school that creates a sense of belonging. Effective inclusion results in healthier students, safer and supportive learning environments, student success, and lasting friendships.

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**The difference between the right word and the almost right word  
is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug.**

*Mark Twain*

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# PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE

The words we use to describe people send a powerful message to our children and students about how we think. Our language shapes perceptions and attitudes and eventually actions. Every individual, regardless of differences, deserves to be treated fairly and with respect.

When we look through the lens of inclusion, we see the person first—a student, friend, brother, cousin, musician, athlete, artist, writer, leader—human beings with feelings, talents, interests, needs—just like all of us!

Using person-first language—putting the person before the disability or difference—by eliminating stereotypical labels can move us in a new direction toward true inclusivity instead of exclusivity. The disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual, but one of several aspects of the whole person.

Encourage the use of “person-first” language at home and in school when talking about people who are different. That way, children learn to see the person first rather than the disability or difference. It allows every child the chance to dream, grow, and contribute because person-first language emphasizes each person’s value, individuality, and capabilities.

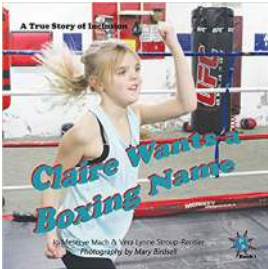
## TIPS REGARDING PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE:

- Do not equate a person with a disability. People-first language tells what a person has—not what a person is. Examples: The child who has a learning disability instead of saying the child is learning disabled or the learning-disabled child.
- Avoid negative words that imply deficits. Examples: afflicted, handicapped, bound, unfortunate, etc. Emphasize abilities, not limitations.
- Refrain from using “special” to indicate separate or segregated.
- Encourage respect, understanding, and positive language.

# ELEMENTARY ACTIVITY: Understanding Inclusion

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Claire Wants a Boxing Name** is a true story about a girl who has a facial difference who is learning to box. Her boxing coach is a woman who is blind. Their story takes place in a community boxing club.

Before Clair started going to the boxing club, do you think she was worried that others would make her not feel welcomed because of how she looked? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever felt excluded because of how you looked? Describe how you felt.

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How do you think Claire's coach felt before she went to the boxing club?

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If you were blind, do you think it would be hard to feel included? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you help others feel included?

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# SECONDARY ACTIVITY: Inclusion Reflection Questions and Prompts

Helping students create an inclusive mindset takes time. A great starting point to this process is simply engaging in conversations. Conversations that provide opportunities for students to reflect on themselves and their communities allow them to consider what changes they can make to their behavior to be the inclusive leaders of tomorrow.

**What does inclusion mean to you?**

**What does inclusion look like, sound like, feel like at your school?**

**How do you feel when someone includes you in an activity?**

**Share a time that you included someone in an activity you were doing?**

**Why do you think being inclusive is important both in and outside of school?**

**What is the hardest part about being inclusive?**

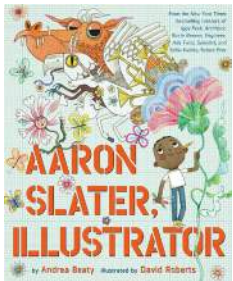
**Do you think the world would be a better place if more people were inclusive?  
Why or why not?**

# Books to Facilitate Discussions about Inclusion:



## **The Big Umbrella** *by Amy June Bates*

Ages 3-7  
A story of inclusion



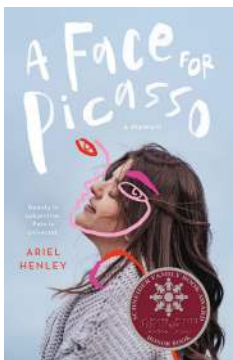
## **Aaron Slater, Illustrator** *by Andrea Beaty*

Ages 4-7  
Aaron has a learning disability. He discovers a way to become included in the art world he loves.



## **This Kid Can Fly: It's About Ability (NOT Disability)** *by Aaron Philip with Tonya Bolden*

Ages 8-12  
Aaron has cerebral palsy. He shares his story of how he found his way to inclusion.



## **A Face For Picasso: Coming of Age with Crouzon Syndrome** *by Ariel Henley*

Ages 12-18  
Ariel shares her story of growing up with a facial difference and not feeling included.

## WHAT IS BELONGING?

Based on the human need for affiliation, Maslow describes a sense of belonging as one of the necessary requirements to feel good about ourselves. A sense of belonging at school helps students to feel acceptance, support, and connected to others. Belonging is our theme for the fourth week of October.

Research confirms that a sense of belonging at school is linked to higher levels of emotional and physical wellbeing, improved attendance, better academic performance and achievement, and safe learning environments. Students are more likely to be motivated, engaged, resilient, and successful if they feel like they belong in school. Belonging is the ultimate outcome of an understanding and practice of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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## 10 STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE STUDENT-TO-STUDENT INTERACTION\*

- Ensure that the student is in rich social environments.
- Highlight similarities between the student and peers.
- Re-direct student conversation to the student with a disability.
- Directly teach and practice interaction skills in natural settings.
- Use instructional strategies that promote interaction.
- Teach others how to interact with a student with a disability.
- Make rewards for behavior social in nature.
- Give the student responsibilities that allow for interactions with peers.
- Systematically fade direct support.
- Make interdependence a goal for every student.

\*Causton-Theoharis, J. and Malmgren, K., Teaching Exceptional Children

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# STUDENTS SUPPORTING OTHER STUDENTS:

Peers supporting peers is the most natural kind of personal support available for students who need assistance in the classroom. In addition, peer support programs provide opportunities to build relationships and a sense of belonging as friendships develop for students with and without special needs.

## 6 STEPS TO PEER SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Step	Planning Decisions	Your Notes
<b>Step 1: Planning Team</b>	Who will serve on the planning team? What will be the program goals?	
<b>Step 2: Program Procedures</b>	Who will coordinate the program? Name of the program?	
<b>Step 3: Recruit and Select Peers</b>	Who requires peer assistance? Identify the job descriptors.	
<b>Step 4: Train Peer Tutors</b>	What content should be contained in the peer tutor training? Plan the logistics of the training.	
<b>Step 5: Implement the Program</b>	What will be the time frame? Who will schedule peers? Monitor implementation?	
<b>Step 6: Evaluate the Program</b>	When will the surveys be distributed? When will the results be published?	

Source: Stetson & Associates, Inc.

Download peer support resources at [t.ly/JJGM](https://t.ly/JJGM)

# ELEMENTARY ACTIVITY: Understanding Belonging

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This is a map of your classroom.**

**Write the name of each student and something about that student in each square.**

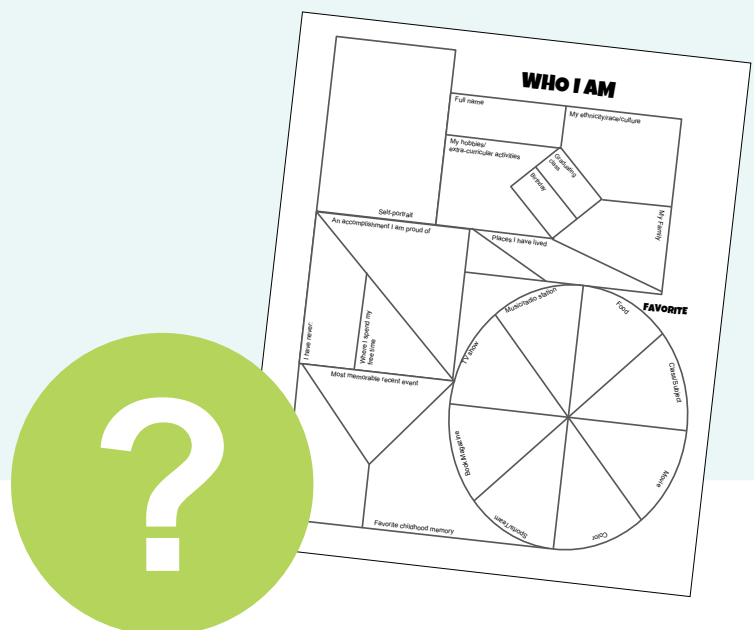

# SECONDARY ACTIVITY: Building a Class Culture

## WHO AM I?

Developing a strong class culture requires that teachers learn about more than their students' academic abilities and learning preferences. Knowing about their interests, abilities outside school, their families and ethnic identities paints a full picture of students. This “picture” is certainly shared with the teacher, but students should be encouraged to share—in structured ways—with other students in the class. Building understanding of how we are all alike—as well as different—is a foundation for a strong classroom culture.

This one-page downloadable graphic is a great example of a way for students to define—and share—who they are at school and in their daily lives.

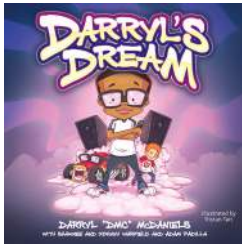
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KONTCdLY9gS\\_YAJuEFQZ3VVxV2-qkg6I/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KONTCdLY9gS_YAJuEFQZ3VVxV2-qkg6I/view)



Thanks to Know Your Students by Chandra Manning, originally curated from [firstday.wikispaces.com](http://firstday.wikispaces.com)



# Books to Facilitate Discussions on Belonging:

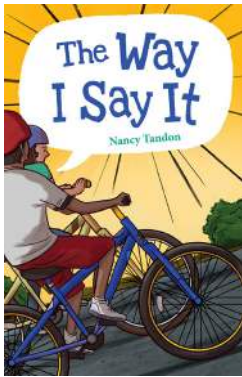


## **Darryl's Dream**

*By Darryl "DMC" McDaniels with Johnny Warfield and Shawnee Warfield*

Ages 4-8

Darry shares his journey from being bullied because he wore glasses to his love of music where he belonged.

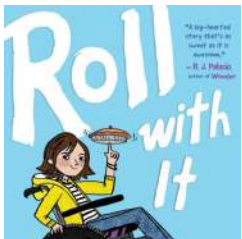


## **Roll with It**

*By Jamie Sumner*

Ages 9-12

Elle tells it like it is and finds new friends as she discovers she's just where she belongs.



## **The Way I Say It**

*by Nancey Tandon*

Ages 10-12

Rory has a speech impediment and struggles to find where feels he belongs.



## **The Disability Experience: Working Toward Belonging**

*by Hannalora Leavitt*

Ages 12-17

This book shares information about a variety of disabilities and provides strategies to facilitate belonging.

## LETTER TO FAMILIES

Dear Families,

The need for safe and supportive learning environments for our children is certainly a top priority for all of us. Throughout the country, the month of October is recognized as Anti-Bullying Prevention Month—National Stop Bullying Day is October 12, Unity Day is October 19, and Safe Schools Week is October 16-22.

Much learning takes place in schools, but parents, families, and caregivers are still the most important teachers in a child's life. How can we give our children the best chance for success in school and in life? Children have so many different needs, talents, interests, abilities, learning styles, and many more differences.

Each week during the month of October, this guide will focus on building a proactive culture that celebrates being kind, supportive, and inclusive of others in spite of our differences. Using the themes of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, we will share resources, books, and activities. You are encouraged to plan time to talk with your child about the theme for the week, what's happening at school, new students met and friendships made.

Thank you for joining us and many others across the globe to create safe schools and communities where all children belong and thrive throughout the year!



## Guide for Building Safe and Supportive Learning Environments Cumulative Book List

### DIVERSITY:

**A Sky-Blue Bench**  
*by Bahram Rahman*  
ISBN: 978-1772782226

**A Voice for the Spirit Bears: How one Boy Inspired Millions to Save a Rare Animal**  
*by Carmen Oliver*  
ISBN: 978-1771389792

**Born Just Right**  
*by Jordan Reeves and Jen Lee Reeves*  
ISBN: 978-1534428393

**The Reason I Jump: The Inner Voice of a Thirteen-year-old Boy with Autism**  
*by Naoki Higashida*  
ISBN: 978-1534428393

### EQUITY:

**Onika Wants to Help**  
*by Jo Meserve Mach and Vera Lynne Stroup-Rentier*  
ISBN: 978-1947541436

**We Move Together**  
*by Kelly Fritsch and Anne McGuire*  
ISBN: 978-1849354042

**Planet Earth is Blue**  
*by Nicole Panteleakos*  
ISBN: 978-0525646570

**No Excuses: Growing Up Deaf and Achieving My Super Bowl Dreams**  
*by Derrick Coleman, Jr. and Marcus Brotherton*  
ISBN: 978-1476796581

### INCLUSION:

**The Big Umbrella**  
*by Amy June Bates*  
ISBN: 978-1534406582

**Aaron Slater, Illustrator**  
*by Andrea Beaty*  
ISBN: 978-1419753961

**This Kid Can Fly: It's Ability (NOT Disability)**  
*by Aaron Philip with Tonya Bolden*  
ISBN: 978-0062403544

**A Face for Picasso: Coming of Age with Crouzon Syndrome**  
*by Ariel Henley*  
ISBN: 978-0374314071

**Claire Wants a Boxing Name**  
*This title is for the primary activity for understanding inclusion.*  
*By Jo Meserve Mach and Vera Lynne Stroup-Rentier*  
ISBN: 987-194754144

### BELONGING:

**Darryl's Dream**  
*by Darryl "DMC" McDaniels, Johnny Warfield, Shawnee Warfield*  
ISBN: 978-0593487747

**Roll with It**  
*by Jamie Sumner*  
ISBN: 978-1534442559

**The Way I Say It**  
*by Nancey Tandon*  
ISBN: 978-1623541330

**The Disability Experience: Working Toward Belonging**  
*by Hannalora Leavitt*  
ISBN: 978-1663629227

## SUPPORTIVE ORGANIZATIONS

### DIVERSITY

#### **Kids Included Together • [kit.org](http://kit.org)**

Has partnered for over 20 years with child and youth serving programs to implement inclusive policies and practices.

#### **Special Books for Special Kids • [sbsk.org](http://sbsk.org)**

Seeks to normalize the diversity of the human condition under the pillars of honesty, respect, mindfulness, positivity and collaboration.

### EQUITY

#### **Pacer’s National Bullying Prevention Center • [pacer.org](http://pacer.org)**

Leads social change to prevent childhood bullying so all youth are safe and supported in their schools, communities, and online.

#### **Beyond Differences • [beyonddifferences.org](http://beyonddifferences.org)**

Works to inspire students nationwide to end social isolation and create cultures of belonging for everyone.

### INCLUSION

#### **Spread the Word: Inclusion • [spreadtheword.global](http://spreadtheword.global)**

Highlights divisions that have led to isolation and exclusion among individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and invites all people to commit to individual acts of inclusion.

#### **Stetson & Associates, Inc. • [stetsonassociates.com](http://stetsonassociates.com)**

Focuses on educational excellence and systems change to enable every student to be engaged, included, high-achieving, and prepared for adulthood.

### BELONGING

#### **Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools • [specialolympics.org](http://specialolympics.org)**

Promotes social inclusion through activities that equip young people with tools and training to create sports, classroom and school climates of acceptance that welcomes everyone.

View “Helping Others Belong”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6gRuO9CjHvM&t=1s>.

#### **Best Buddies International • [bestbuddies.org](http://bestbuddies.org)**

Creates opportunities for one-to-one friendships, integrated employment, leadership development, and inclusive living for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

#### **National Mentoring Resource Center • [nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org](http://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org)**

Is a comprehensive resource for mentoring tools, program and training materials, as well as access to no-cost training and technical assistance.

#### **Center for Supportive Schools • [supportiveschools.org](http://supportiveschools.org)**

Provides schools with solutions that inspire students to become more engaged learners.

# Inclusive Schools Week



From ancient civilizations to the present time, unity and connection have been essential in order for communities to not only survive, but also to thrive. Standing together, communities remain strong even in the face of danger, threats, or peril. The ancient and wise proverb, “Together We Stand, Divided We Fall,” dates back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC when it appears in one Aesop’s fables.

Last year, our theme for Inclusive Schools Week focused on “Rebuilding our Inclusive Community.” It was an energizing year for many across the world. We not only learned what our partners are doing to promote effective inclusion, but we also shared tools and materials to address the ongoing need to rebuild and strengthen our inclusive communities.

At the Inclusive Schools Network, we are excited about the many new partnerships, resources, and progress we have made and want to continue that momentum in 2022 with our theme: “Unity within Community—Inclusion Around the World.” United, we are stronger to focus on our common need—inclusive practices in our schools and in our communities!

Let us stand together as we continue to advocate for all schools to be places where all children can belong, thrive, and be supported by their teachers, peers, family members, and neighbors. Let’s learn more about the work of other organizations and groups in our communities and share ideas, resources, and support. By our own actions, let’s teach our children how to treat others, how to communicate and build relationships, and how to work in harmony to address our common needs.



thank you

FOR YOUR INTEREST IN BUILDING  
SAFE & SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

[Inclusive Schools Network](#)

[Changing Perspectives](#)

[Finding My Way Books](#)