

Physically Handicapped Students

From Sue Watson, former About.com Guide

For students with physical handicaps, self-image is extremely important. Teachers need to ensure that the child's self image is positive. Physically handicapped students are aware of the fact that they are physically different than most others and that there are certain things they cannot do. Peers can be cruel to other children with physical handicaps and become involved in teasing, casting insulting remarks and excluding physically handicapped children from games and group type activities. Physically handicapped children want to succeed and participate as much as they can and this needs to be encouraged and fostered by the teacher. The focus needs to be on what the child CAN do - not can't do.

Strategies that help:

1. Physically handicapped children long to be normal and be seen as normal as much as possible. Focus on what they can do at all times.
2. Find out what the child's strengths are and capitalize on them. These children need to feel as successful too!
3. Keep your expectations of the physically handicapped child high. This child is capable of achieving.
4. Never accept rude remarks, name calling or teasing from other children. Sometimes other children need to be taught about physical disabilities to develop respect and acceptance.
5. Compliment appearance from time to time. (I had a child with CP who took immense delight when I noticed her new hair barrettes or a new outfit).
6. Make adjustments and accommodations whenever possible to enable this child to participate.
7. Never pity the physically handicapped child, they do not want your pity.
8. Take the opportunity when the child is absent to teach the rest of the class about physical handicaps, this will help foster understanding and acceptance.
9. Take frequent 1 to 1 time with the child to make sure that he/she is aware that you're there to help when needed.

I hope these insights will help you to maximize the learning opportunities for the physically handicapped child.