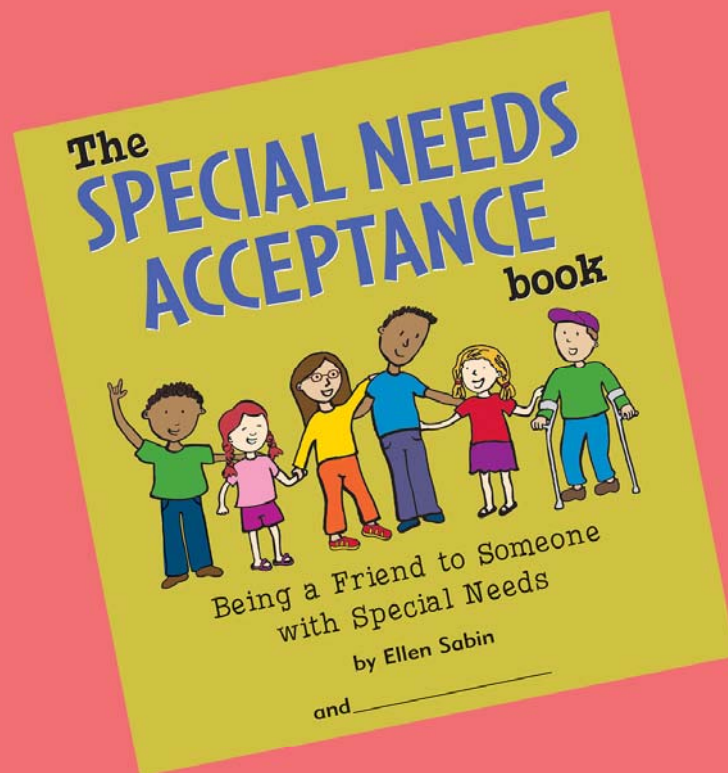


*The Special Needs Acceptance Book:  
Being a Friend to Someone with Special Needs*

**TEACHER'S GUIDE**



**For more information or to order  
copies of *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*  
for your classroom, go to [www.wateringcanpress.com](http://www.wateringcanpress.com).**





# A Guide for Teachers

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone with Special Needs*  
by Ellen Sabin

Lessons written by Tiffany Jackson

## Introduction

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book: Being a Friend to Someone with Special Needs* lends itself to teaching many lessons and fulfilling numerous National and State Content Standards.

Each lesson plan provides creative ideas for using *The Special Needs Acceptance Book* in classrooms and other group settings. Although the book is geared towards children aged 6-13, some of the lessons are more advanced, and others are for a younger population. The lessons can be easily adapted or modified as needed based on student age, ability and goals.

The standards referenced are drawn from the Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning National Standards as well as national Character Education Standards (which can be viewed at [www.character.org](http://www.character.org)).

Several of the lesson plans focus on teaching character development issues. In states with character education requirements, these lessons fulfill many additional standards (which are not all noted in this document as these vary state to state). These lessons guide children to think beyond themselves and to treat others with respect, tolerance, and kindness; and to recognize and practice selflessness, empathy, or inclusion of others.

We hope that the lesson plan ideas encourage and empower educators to invite children to learn more about their peers with special needs or other special challenges, while learning academic lessons in language arts, science, history, and character education.

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SUBJECT: Character Education

TITLE: Plates of Affirmation

Grade Level: 2-5

OBJECTIVE: Students will use affirming words to create "awards" for classmates.

MATERIALS:

A paper plate for each student

Pen or marker for each student

Pieces of (2 inch) Masking tape

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book* pages 46, 47

ACTIVITY:

- Read page 46 of *The Special Needs Acceptance Book* with students.
- Encourage your class to hold a conversation on how the book emphasizes that everyone has positive traits and that if you take time to talk to people or make an effort to understand them, you will learn about some of their good qualities.
- Have a discussion about the feelings that are encouraged by kind compliments, positive feedback, and caring gestures.
- Give each student a paper plate and piece of tape.
- Tell them to write their name in the middle of their plate (somewhat small).
- Now give the following instructions:
  - Tape the plate to your back (or if you are more comfortable put it on a table).
  - Now think about each person in the room
  - Find a genuine compliment to give each person or pick a trait that you feel is their best attribute.
  - You must write something on every person's paper plate.
  - DO NOT sign your name with your comment!
  - Keep your thoughts and comments to yourself. \*\*There should be no talking during this activity.\*\*
- Set a timer for 10 minutes (Vary depending on the number of students involved).
- Make sure that everyone has had a chance to write on everyone's plate before ending this time.
- Now they need to put pens down and go find a quiet place around the room to be BY THEMSELVES to read those affirmations. Give approx. 4-6 min.
- Gather as a group to talk about some of the feelings that students experienced.
  - Were they surprised by what their classmates and friends thought about them?
  - Is there something missing from the students' plate that they, themselves, are proud of?
  - Was it easier or harder to come up with things to say about your close friends?
  - What would a parent or teacher have written on your plate?
  - Does this feel like a badge of honor? A special award given only to you?
- You may send the plates home or create a "Wall of Awards" if the students will part with them.
- You can extend this activity to the entire school, by simply asking the students to think about each individual person they come into contact with, and what they would feel is their gift or special attribute.

\*If you have a student who may be sensitive to the feeling of the plate on his/her back, place the plate at a table where he/she can still receive comments. (Or, if you feel this will single out a student in an uncomfortable way, put all students' plates on tables throughout the room.)

STANDARDS:

Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions

Character Education Pillars: Trustworthiness, Respect, Caring, Fairness

Creates a caring school

Provides students with opportunities for moral action



SUBJECT: History

TITLE: Famous People Have Special Needs Too!

Grade Level: 3-7

OBJECTIVE: Students will research and report on two people from history who had special needs and who contributed to society.

MATERIALS:

Internet access

Biography materials from libraries

The following websites may be useful:

[www.learningdisabilityforum.com](http://www.learningdisabilityforum.com)

[www.iidc.indiana.edu](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu)

[www.independanceinc.org](http://www.independanceinc.org)

[www.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/match-2.htm](http://www.metrokc.gov/dias/ocre/match-2.htm) \*this site has a matching game-- from famous person to their disability.

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book*

ACTIVITY:

- Turn to pages 54 in *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*.
- Discuss as a class the significance of the three individuals on that page.
  - What were their special needs?
  - What are some things that might have been challenging for them to do?
  - What was something noteworthy that each accomplished?
  - Who were the significant people who assisted them?
  - Invite other comments as they arise.
- Now have students turn to the bottom of page 55 (or a similar handout that you feel is age appropriate). Instruct students to pick two individuals from history who happened to have a disability.
- Assign as homework or allow class time for students to research these individuals.
- Tell students to prepare a speech to present to the class or to submit a written response about the individuals they chose.

EXTENSION:

The class could create visuals to go with their person. Examples: brochure format, magazine article, poem, poster, etc.

STANDARDS:

Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

\*Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

\*Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

(\*Depending on the project that is chosen)

Understands that specific individuals and the value those individuals held had an impact on history.

Understand how certain character traits enhance citizens' ability to fulfill personal and civic responsibilities.





SUBJECT: Language Arts

TITLE: I Want To Be Your Friend!

Grade Level: 2-7

OBJECTIVE: Students will use forms of poetry to define qualities of good friends and/or friendship.

MATERIALS:

Different forms of poetry for display

Paper and pencils or Writing Journal

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book*

ACTIVITY:

- Direct student attention to the "Be a Good Friend" sections on pages 35-45 and read pages 46-49 in *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*.
- Through conversation, highlight and discuss the qualities of good friends and note comments and key words on the blackboard.
- Define Acrostic Poetry (or other form of poetry) and have students write their FIRST NAME down the left hand side of the paper, or use the word FRIENDSHIP.
- Tell students that it's their turn to write an acrostic poem that defines their thoughts about the qualities of a good friend or good friendship.
- Allow time for students to gather their thoughts and begin their form of poetry.
- Hold a classroom "Poetry Slam" to hear how good friends are defined.
- Invite students to discuss feelings after listening to the groups' poetry.

EXAMPLE of Acrostic Poem:

T -time spent with a friend is always too short

I -if you can be with a friend for just 10 minutes, take advantage of every second

F -friends make you laugh and wipe away a tear when you're hurt

F -friends help you in tough situations

A -anyone can be my friend when I get to know them

N -never allow your friend to be hurt by others

Y -YES!! I want to be your friend too!

STANDARDS:

Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process

Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspect of writing

Character Education Pillars: respect and caring

\*\*If working on poems in a group, the following standards could also apply:

Contributes to the overall effort of a group

Displays effective interpersonal communication skills



SUBJECT: Visual Art

TITLE: Who's Behind That Mask?

Grade Level: K-7

OBJECTIVE: Students will create a visual display of their talents, gifts, and qualities on the inside and out, in mask form and present to class.

MATERIALS:

Cardstock or Paper Mache' to create a mask form

Magazines to clip

Markers/paint/crayons

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book*

ACTIVITY:

- After reading *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*, students will be aware of their own challenges and that it is OK to acknowledge that everyone has challenges in their own ways. They will also enjoy sharing what they are most proud of as an individual and what they can point out to others as their personal strengths. Hold a discussion focusing on their talents and things that make them proud. Lead them into a discussion on their unique qualities and how everyone in the world has something that makes them proud!
- Focus on pages 12-13 in *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*.
- Cut cardstock in the theatre mask form found on page 42 in *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*. (If you are using Paper Mache' allow work time for the creation of the mask and time to dry before taking the next steps.)
- Have students find pictures or words to cut out, draw and display on their mask. They should depict things that make them unique. Examples: A hobby, talents, favorite things, struggles, moments of joy or sadness, etc. Give them some directions on looking inside as well as outward appearances. They should cover their entire mask with details; simple or extravagant, detailed or broad, colorful or plain.
- If appropriate, you can offer class time for students to give a short explanation on, "Who's behind that mask?" to the class.
- Display masks all around the room or hallway as good descriptors of the students in your classroom.

STANDARDS:

Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others

Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes



SUBJECT: Service Learning  
TITLE: We Can Help!  
Grade Level: 3-7

OBJECTIVE: Students will explore possible accommodations for students or teachers with special needs and consider ways they can do thoughtful things for others.

MATERIALS:  
Depending on the activity chosen, see below.

ACTIVITY:

- When you have finished *The Special Needs Acceptance Book*, students will be able to incorporate the lessons learned to make a difference within themselves, their classroom, their communities, and at home.
- Looking at these specific pages 28-29, 31, 34-35, 36, 38, 40, in *The Special Needs Acceptance Book* will give students more ideas for being helpful and making necessary accommodations for people around them.
- Discuss with students the importance of including everyone in the school during all parts of the day.
- Have students talk about what is around the school that might be a challenge for some people (adults included).
- Create a list of some things that could be changed or improved to make everyone comfortable. Possibilities might include:
  - pictures or Braille by bathrooms
  - swings that are easily useable for all sizes
  - squeeze balls for someone to squeeze when they are easily frustrated
  - closing the windows during a story so that everyone can hear clearly without distractions
  - If children are asked to sit on the floor for activities, some children require seats with backs on them. In some cases children may be uncomfortable if singled out and you should plan for everyone to be sitting up in circle time.
  - rice bags that are used to soothe people when they are uncomfortable or need to relax

Note to teachers about rice bags: For some students who have a sensory sensitivity or ADD/ADHD, rice bags are sometimes placed at the back of the child's neck/shoulder area for them to feel a slight weight and be comforted. Recipe for Rice Bags: [www.j3iss.com/jerry/joan\\_recipes/rice\\_bags.html](http://www.j3iss.com/jerry/joan_recipes/rice_bags.html). Materials: bags of rice, men's tube socks, funnel, hot glue gun/glue sticks. Fill the tube socks  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way to the top and glue end together with the hot glue. (You may sew them if time allows.)

- Allow time for students to suggest other ideas beyond the ones noted above.
- Invite students to brainstorm about how to get these items or make their own inventions.

EXTENSION:

Depending on age of students and project type you can contact local charities with grants available for assistance as well.

STANDARDS:

Volunteering and Service Philanthropy Standards [www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org)

Identify a community need in the school or neighborhood

Select a project based on interests, abilities and research



SUBJECT: Character Education

TITLE: **Walk This Way!**

Grade Level: K-7

OBJECTIVE: Students will demonstrate their trust in, or empathy and understanding of, their classmates and will rely on others to assist them while trying to accomplish tasks.

MATERIALS:

\*Challenge items\*

Glasses with Vaseline on the lenses

Crutches

Wheelchair

Arm sling

Blindfolds

Cotton balls or ear plugs

The students' shoes placed on the opposite feet

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book*

ACTIVITY:

- Read *The Special Needs Acceptance Book* pages 19-29. Have students discuss some challenges that they or others face during their daily routine.
- You should have one item or activity for every student or, if choosing to work in groups, have the same number of challenge items as the number of participants. Above is a partial list of challenge items that can be easily accessible.
- Explain that today each student will be given a challenge item in order to complete a task.
- Set up an obstacle course in the room or another designated area with a starting point and finish line. In the obstacle course, make sure that there is something that they must step over and an item to pick up along the way. Make those two items clear in your verbal instructions. You may choose to make the course more difficult for older students. Keep dangerous pieces of furniture out of the middle area.
- Give each student their challenge item. They must be at the starting line with their challenge item in place when you go to the next instructions!
- Give directions verbally on how to get from point A to point B.
- After the task is completed by all participants, have a discussion on what could have been done to make this activity more successful for more individuals.
  - Should there have been picture directions?
  - Should the people with blindfolds have a partner?
  - Was there room for a wheel chair to maneuver around the course?
  - What accommodations could have been made for each challenge item presented?
  - Could you give support to someone who was struggling?
  - Did you have empathy for one or more or all of the challenges?
  - How could we all have been more patient during this activity?
  - Should we have adjusted the game rules in any way?
- Allow time for students to ask questions regarding other challenges and the difficulty that faced their classmates. Be sure to stress the importance of trust, empathy and understanding.





## Walk This Way! -- CONTINUED

### STANDARDS:

- Effectively uses mental processes that are based on identifying similarities and differences
- Applies decision-making techniques
- Contributes to the overall effort of a group
- Works well with diverse individuals and in diverse situation

### ADDED COMMENTS:

Possibly one of your students has had a cast, or knows someone that had to have a cast, due to an injury this school year and accommodations had to be made for that person. Were they singled out or could everyone benefit in some way to their particular accommodations? Remind students that special needs can be short term or life-long. They are all entitled to empathy, understanding and trust.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[www.theablecrew.org](http://www.theablecrew.org)

[www.jasonandnordic.com](http://www.jasonandnordic.com)



SUBJECT: Character Education  
TITLE: **Paper Bag Trade**  
Grades 2–7

OBJECTIVE: Students will analyze the impact of making decisions based on limited information.

MATERIALS:

5 plain brown paper lunch bags numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5  
Items to put in each bag, such as pencils, paperclips, cookies, a dollar bill, markers, pack of tissues (each bag should have a different item) – but put a dollar bill (or the best item) in bag #1  
*The Special Needs Acceptance Book*

ACTIVITY:

- Choose five people in the class to each take a paper bag.
- Let the students choose which bag they take.
- Allow one minute for students to try to figure out –without opening it– what is in the bag.
- Tell students they can shake the bags, they can smell the bags, they can do anything they want but they cannot open the bags.
- Then, allow students a minute or so to take bags from each other (using the rules in the next few bullet points).
- Explain that the student with bag number 5 can take any bag he or she wants.
- Number 4 can take a bag from anyone except from the person with bag 5.
- Number 3 can take a bag from anyone except from the person with bag 4 or the person with bag 5.
- Number 2 can only take a bag from the person with bag 1.
- Allow students who do not have bags to coach and encourage the students with bags.
- Tell students that everyone can offer trades.
- After about 30 seconds stop all trading and bag taking.
- Ask if everyone is happy with the bag that he or she has.
- Ask students to explain their answers.
- Ask students to open the bags and reveal what is inside.
- Allow the class a chance to settle down.
- Ask students to explain why they initially chose the bags that they did.
- Ask students who watched the trade to explain what they thought about the trades and which bag they would have wanted.
- Ask if anyone has ever heard the idiomatic expression, “You can’t judge a book by its cover.”
- Have students explain how this demonstrates that saying.
- Write the following on the board: You never know what you will find when you look inside...
- Ask students how this might relate to choosing friends.

STANDARDS:

Demonstrates appropriate behaviors for relating well with others (e.g., empathy, caring, respect, helping, friendliness, politeness)

Exhibits positive character traits towards others, including honesty, fairness, dependability, and integrity



SUBJECT: Science

TITLE: Where Did You Get Those Eyes?

Grade 6

OBJECTIVE: Students will learn about Punnett Square and how it is used to predict what traits are passed down to offspring.

MATERIALS:

*The Special Needs Acceptance Book* page 12

Paper

Pens

ACTIVITY:

- Ask students to think about their families.
- Tell students to make a mental picture of their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, cousins and all the people to whom they are related.
- Tell students to write down the names of all the people in their mental picture.
- Next to each person's name, have students write each person's hair color.
- Ask how many people have some family with blond hair.
- Follow-up to that question by asking how many have some family with brown hair. Some with red hair. Some with black hair.
- Ask students why they think their family members might have similar hair colors.
- Write the word heredity on the board.
- Ask if anyone has heard the word heredity before?
- Ask if anyone has heard the word inherited.
- Guide students to understand that we inherit traits like hair color from our parents and our grandparents. Explain that heredity is the scientific word for how you get traits (what you look like and what you can do) from your parents.
- Explain that scientists can predict what color eyes a baby will have by looking at the baby's parents' eyes and the baby's grandparents' eyes.
- The way they make the prediction is by using the Punnett Square.
- Tell students that you are all going to predict the color eyes that a baby will have.
- Draw a square on the board.
- Divide the square into four equal quadrants.
- Point to the top of the square and say; "Here I will write the color of the mother's eyes."
- Point to the left side of the square and say; "Here is where I will write the color of the father's eyes."
- Tell students that scientists use special codes for writing things like eye color and that you are going to teach them how scientists write these things. Explain that in order to really be able to predict the color of the baby's eyes and to use the code, we need to find out the colors of the grandparents' eyes.
- Say the baby's mother has brown eyes. Write MOTHER'S EYES off to the side of the square. Write "Brown" (capitalize the B) under MOTHER'S EYES—as you write this say "The mother's mom has brown eyes." Then write "blue" (lowercase the b) under MOTHER'S EYES—as you write this say "The mother's dad has blue eyes."
- Say the baby's father has blue eyes. Write FATHER'S EYES off to the side of the square as well. Write "blue" (lowercase the b) under FATHER'S EYES—as you write this say "The father's mom has blue eyes." Then write "blue" (lowercase the b) under FATHER'S EYES—as you write this say "The father's dad has blue eyes."



### Where Did You Get Those Eyes? -- CONTINUED

- Say the baby's father has blue eyes. Write FATHER'S EYES off to the side of the square as well. Write "blue" (lowercase the b) under FATHER'S EYES—as you write this say "The father's mom has blue eyes." Then write "blue" (lowercase the b) under FATHER'S EYES—as you write this say "The father's dad has blue eyes."
- Go back to the Punnett's square. Ask students to remind you where to write the code for the mother's eye color. (On top)
- Write "B" over the first column and "b" over the second column.
- Then write "b" to the left of the first row and "b" to the left of the second row.
- Your square should look like the one below:

	B	b
b		
b		

- Explain to students that this is when the real predicting starts.
- Fill in the empty squares together. A square with a "B" at top and a "b" to the left gets a "Bb" in the square. A square with a "b" at top and a "b" to the left gets a "bb" in the square,
- Make sure that students understand that the letter from the top and the letter from the left both go into the square.
- Your completed Punnett Square should look like the one below:

	B	b
b	Bb	bb
b	Bb	bb

- Tell students they are almost ready to make a prediction. There are four chances for eye color, but first we must be sure everyone can read the code.
- Remind students that the Bb at top represents the mother's eye color. Ask students to recall what color that was. (brown)
- Remind students that the bb to the left represents the father's eye color. Ask students to recall what color that was. (blue)
- Point to the mother's eye color across the top and say; if Bb means brown eyes. Then point to the left side of the square and say; if bb means blue eyes how many chances (out of 4) does the baby have of getting brown eyes? Of getting blue eyes?
- Explain to students to turn to page 12 of *The Special Needs Acceptance Book* and read the part about different skills and talents. Explain that we get some skills and talents from our parents the same way we get eye color and hair color. We inherit special traits and talents. Tell students we can predict if babies will get the special traits and talents too.



### Where Did You Get Those Eyes? -- CONTINUED

- Ask if anyone can wiggle their ears or curl their tongues. Say that these traits are inherited like hair color and eye color.
- Scientists might write being able to wiggle your ears as "ww." Scientists might write not being able to wiggle your ears as "Ww" or "WW."
- Have students do a Punnett Square to predict if a baby will be able to wiggle its ears.
- Help students start by drawing the empty square and saying; "The baby's mom can not wiggle her ears. The mom's mother can wiggle her ears and the mom's father can not. So I will write "Ww" on the top. The baby's dad can not wiggle his ears, but the dad's mother can. The dad's father can not. So I write "Ww" to the left of the square." Your square should look like the one below.

	W	w
W		
w		

- Tell students that if there is a capital W in the pair the baby can not wiggle its ears.
- Ask students to tell you how many chances (of 4) the baby has of being able to wiggle its ears. (1 in 4)

#### STANDARDS:

Understands the principles of heredity and related concepts.





## Resources

### LITERATURE

*Birdwing* by Rafe Martin

*Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco

*I Got a "D" in Salami (Hank Zipzer)* by Henry Winkler. Lin Oliver

*We'll Paint the Octopus Red* by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen

*The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss

### WEB SITES

[www.character.org](http://www.character.org)

[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

[www.education-world.com](http://www.education-world.com)

[www.wrightslaw.com](http://www.wrightslaw.com)

[www.specialneeds.com](http://www.specialneeds.com)

### ORGANIZATIONS

See *The Special Needs Acceptance Book* page 62