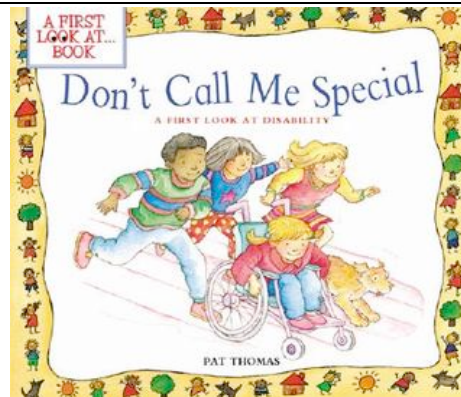


# LESSON PLAN: DON'T CALL ME SPECIAL – A FIRST LOOK AT DISABILITY

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## Objective:

- Students will be able to appreciate why all people are special in their own way.

## New York State ELA Learning Standards:

Pre-Kindergarten: 1-4, 7, 9, 10, 11

Kindergarten: 1-4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11

First Grade: 1-7, 9, 11

Second Grade: 1-3, 5-7, 11

## Materials:

*Don't Call Me Special: A First Look at Disability*, paper, scissors, glue, magazines.

## Vocabulary:

unique	assume	helper	equipment
wheelchair	acceptance	inclusive	confident

## Before Reading:

- Review page 28 for some helpful directions on how to use the book.
- Discuss the title and pictures in the book with students and ask them to make predictions about what they think the book is about.
- Have students describe what they see the children doing in the pictures and how they think the children are feeling. Discuss the vocabulary words as they appear in the context of the story.

## Note to the Teacher:

Be mindful of students in your class who may have a disability so that they do not feel uncomfortable or objectified during the discussion of this book.

### **Discussion Questions:**

Ask students the following questions so they can reflect and think critically about the story.

Pages 6-7:

What are the children doing on the playground? Who do you think finds it hard to join in sports?

Pages 8-9:

Why does the narrator say you may have picked the girl in the wheelchair? Is that true? Who does the narrator say hates sports. Why?

Pages 10-11:

Why is it a problem when we assume things about people who are different from us? What happens when you make a guess or assume something about someone that may not be true?

Pages 12-13:

What does it mean to be unique? Discuss the questions on page 13.

Pages 14-15:

What do the children use to help them do their best? Discuss the questions on the bottom of page 14. What kinds of special equipment help children who have disabilities?

Pages 16-17:

How do people get disabilities? What are some kinds of disabilities?

Pages 18-19:

Why do people with disabilities dislike being called special?

Pages 20-21:

Is it fair to assume or judge someone just because they may look or act different from you? How do you feel when people tease you or make you feel uncomfortable?

Pages 22-23:

How do helpers assist children with disabilities? Why do you think it would be upsetting if a helper did everything for you instead of letting you try to do it yourself?

Pages 24-25:

Do all of us learn things the same way at the same time? What can you learn from the information on these pages?

Pages 26-27:

Why is it important to appreciate everyone's unique personality and learn to work and play together? Why is it important to understand ways in which we are alike and different from one another?

### **Guided Practice:**

- Ask students to think of one thing they are good at and one thing they may have difficulty doing. Have them fold a piece of paper in half, draw a picture of each and write a sentence about it. Allow time for students to share these with each other.
- Discuss with the whole group the activities that students shared and list these on a chart labeled *Things I'm Good At* and *Things I'm Not Good At*.
- Discuss how these traits are similar and different from each other and how this relates to the story.

### **Bonus Activity:**

- Guide students with drawing or finding magazine pictures that show different people of all sizes and shapes (as diverse as possible). Provide some precut pictures for younger children to choose from. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups to create collages showing many different kinds of people.
- Have students share their collages with the class.
- Discuss how this activity relates to the book.

### **Closure:**

- Ask students to think of one way to be kind to another child in the classroom. Write it on a piece of paper. Put all of these in a jar. Have each student choose one and carry it out. This activity can take place over a day, a week, or an ongoing basis.

### **Bibliography:**

Thomas, Pat. *Don't Call Me Special: A First Look At Disability*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 2000.