

Quick Ways to Analyze Books that Help Libraries Support Disability Awareness

- 1) Promotes empathy not pity.** Look to see if the book creates an overall feeling of understanding for the child and his/her disability. The book should not make the reader feel sorry for the child with a disability.
- 2) Depicts acceptance not ridicule.** The book should in no way “make fun” of a child with a disability. The student with the disability should be depicted as more similar than different from the other children.
- 3) Emphasizes success rather than, or in addition to, failure.** The book should point out several of the individual’s talents and strengths.
- 4) Promotes positive images of persons with disabilities.** The person with a disability should be represented as a strong, independent person, whom any other child could look up to or admire.
- 5) Addresses abilities and disabilities.** Make sure that the book not only talks about the child’s disability, but also talks about the child as a person with many talents.
- 6) Assists children in gaining accurate understanding of the disability.** Make sure that the book provides accurate information written appropriately for young children.
- 7) Demonstrates respect for persons with disabilities.** The book should not offend anyone who has or knows anyone with this type of disability.
- 8) Promotes attitude of “one of us” not “one of them.”** The book should discuss how the child with the disability is just like any other child, with his/her own unique strengths and weaknesses.
- 9) Depicts valued occupations for persons with disabilities.** When appropriate, the book shows people with disabilities in jobs that are important.
- 10) Uses language which stresses person first, disability second philosophy** (e.g. Jody who is blind). Any book written about a child with a disability should use people first language.
- 11) Describes the disability or persons with disabilities as realistic** (i.e. not subhuman or not superhuman). The book should accurately represent the child with a disability. The child should not have to “fit in” because of any superhero type skill or talent. He/she should be considered special for his/her own abilities, just like any other child.
- 12) Depicts persons with disabilities in integrated settings and/ or activities.** The book should not show people with disabilities working or in school only with other people with disabilities. It should depict persons with disabilities out in the community working or playing with typical friends.

13) Illustrates characters in a realistic manner. If the book uses illustration rather than pictures, make sure that all of the children with disabilities are not drawn exactly the same. Avoid books that depict all children with a certain type of disability represented the same (i.e. all children with cerebral palsy in wheelchairs).

14) Uses similar art styles for persons with and without disabilities. The children with disabilities should be drawn to look more alike than different than their typical peers.

15) Illustrates accuracy in technical detail of equipment. If the book uses illustrations rather than pictures, make sure that any adaptive equipment is drawn accurately.
