



## Including lived experiences of different people

Cathy says that the question she would ask herself about the book is how have you managed to cover the spectrum of disability having only one disability yourself? She explains that it was really important to get as much life experience and tips into the book from other disabled people who have completely different disabilities to her own.

Knowing your children, invite them to talk about why they think it was important to Cathy to include life experiences of people with different disabilities in the book. How does that make the book better than if Cathy hadn't asked for other people's experiences? What does it mean for disabled and non-disabled children reading the book?

## Check understanding and vocabulary

Cathy says *How to be Disabled and Proud* is for disabled children, and this includes children who experience any kind of disability, apparent or non-apparent, neurological, physical, or an illness. Use Chapter One to inform you and, knowing your children, talk with them about their understanding of what is a disability.

### Activities for *How to be Disabled and Proud* By **Cathy Reay** Illustrated by **Jaleel Hudson**

## Why Representation Matters

Read page 238 of *How to be Disabled and Proud* with the children, where Cathy writes about *Why Representation Matters*. Take time to talk about any thoughts the children have. Then go to the back of *How to be Disabled and Proud*, where Cathy has included some of her disabled icons. Read this section with the children. Individually or in partners, invite them to investigate someone from Cathy's list. They could collect images, make audio recordings, add subtitles, and put them together to make a slide show/short video.

## You belong in this world exactly as you are

Cathy says this is one of the things she would like children to take away from *How to be Disabled and Proud*. She also says to disabled children *you don't need to be fixed*, and that the focus needs to be on educating the world to make it a more inclusive place. On page 34 Cathy shares two examples of how things can be made more accessible. Read these with the children. What thoughts do they have? Can they think of other examples? Do they have suggestions for how their classroom could be more accessible? Can any of those be implemented simply? There will likely be children in your class who have some lived experience.

## Check your bookshelves with the children

In *How to be Disabled and Proud* Cathy also lists some *pretty awesome* books – fiction and non-fiction – about disability. Together with the children, take a look at the bookshelves in your classrooms or school library. Are there any books about disability or featuring disabled characters? Are there any of the books Cathy mentions? Why do the children think it is important to have books representing disability – for disabled and non-disabled children in their school? What action would the children like to take next? They could ask for some of these books to be purchased for the school – and explain why this is important.