

PARENT STORY

Bree, mum to Dax



On the eve of my son's first day at school, the school called me and asked if I would like to come into the classroom and give a little talk about Dax. My immediate reaction was defensive; what other child's parents came in and gave a PowerPoint presentation. Dax was already visibly disabled; he is a wheelchair user; I didn't want to single him out anymore.

I needed to sleep on it. I came to understand the intention behind the request was not to single Dax out; he is non-speaking, it was simply a strategy that the school thought would help his classmates get to know him. We had already implemented measures to mitigate the questions; we had drafted a letter to his classmates' parents, we had created an all about me page introducing Dax, but was this enough?

“Children are curious, and for us, their curiosity was a pathway to creating a conversation about diversity and acceptance and at the same time allowed them to get to know Dax in their own time.”

We collaborated with this teacher and decided we would feed the natural curiosity of his peers. If a question arose that his teacher wasn't sure of the answer, her response was, 'that's a great question, let's ask Dax's Mum and Dad when they come to collect him.'

Mitch and I made sure we were available at pick up and drop off, and the questions came. The openness flowed onto other grades too. Soon, we were being stopped by children in years 5 & 6 asking questions about his AFO's and his wheelchair. It hasn't stopped now that he is in Year 2.

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