Disabilities Represented in American Children’s Books Today: Case Studies and Lessons to Promote Library Outreach Services for Children with Special Needs

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Hello!

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This Presentation Will Focus on Three Themes

**Intersectionality**

In the context of marginalized identities: children of color, LGBTQ+, disabled, socioeconomic disadvantaged
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**Self-Development**
and inclusivity: children’s books on these issues can bring new perspective on how they reflect and perceive themselves, others and the world
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**Applied Services**
Lynn T. Nguyen shares her experiences as a reading machine outreach librarian from County of LAPL
“During the Victorian era mental disability was rarely shown in children’s literature, while physical disability was frequently portrayed as a form of necessary suffering, or as a way of proving a character’s essential goodness.”

“Sometimes a temporary period of disability was used as a way of developing a child’s character; in 19th-century novels the child usually became a better person as a result of his/her suffering…”

“Towards the end of the 20th century there is an increasing tendency to portray disability less simplistically and with more thought for the reactions of a disabled reader, often showing how well children can cope with disability without denying the difficulty they face.”

1. **Intersectionality**

Why this matters?
“Our experiences of the social world are shaped by our ethnicity, race, social class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and numerous other facets of social stratification. Some social locations afford privilege (e.g., being white) while others are oppressive (e.g., being poor). These various aspects of social inequality do not operate independently of each other; they interact to create interrelated systems of oppression and domination.”

Featherless, Story by Juan Felipe Herrera and Illustrations by Ernesto Cuevas, Jr.
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I race Papi home. Pop-pop-azz!
I bump the door open with my wheely
and push over to Desplamado's cage.

"Desplamado! I made a gooooooal!
The Fresno Flyers won!"
I open Desplamado's little wire gate
and he jumps onto my hand.
Ring! Ring! Ring! Ring!
He shakes his bell out loud.

"You can be a flyer too, Desplamado.
There's more than one way to fly!"
He rings his bell and I laugh,
my heart beating fast—so fast,
it feels like it's soaring.

Volando a casa, ¡plac-plac-azz!
Empujo la puerta de la casita-trailer con mi silla
para abrirla. Me acerco a la jaula.

—¡Desplumado! ¡Mete un goooooooool!
¡Los Voladores de Fresno ganaron el juego!
Abro la puertita de alambre de la jaula y
Desplumado me salta sobre la mano.
¡Tilín! ¡Tilín! ¡Tilín! ¡Tilín!
Agrega su campanita con mucho ánimo.

—Tú también puedes ser un volador, Desplumado.
¡Hay muchas maneras de volar!
—Desplumado hace sonar su campanita y me río,
con el corazón latiéndome muy fuerte,
tan fuerte que me parece que está volando.
Granny Torrelli Makes Soup by Sharon Creech
“Everybody is smart in different ways but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its life believing it is stupid…”
Think about book displays, exhibits, programs and awarenesses in cultures and languages

Different and various experiences of disabilities: learning, physical, visual, and developmental: how can we portray that in our work along with the other marginalized identities?
2. Self-development and Inclusivity
Think about the services including elevators, ramps and other services to support patrons with physical challenges.
Occasionally, and it hurts my feelings because if they knew me a little better, they would see that I'm not so different!

I believe it’s very important not to judge a book by its cover, so when you meet someone who looks different from you, it’s always best to treat them with kindness and respect. After all, that person may end up becoming one of your best friends.
"I love El Deafo! It's everything you could want in a book: funny and touching and oh so smart."

— R. J. Palacio, author of Wonder
So B. It by Sarah Weeks and Shark Girl by Kelly Bingham

Challenging Stigma: dialogues, talks through poems and conversations
Self-Awareness, Development and Inclusiveness

Design programs, outreach services and partnerships to increase awareness, dialogue, conversations for inclusivity

Build on community/patron trust, relations, and empathy in supporting those children and parents of children with disabilities
3. Applied Services
Featuring Lynn T. Nguyen
Image Source: https://pbs.twimg.com/media/DK1joN9VwAAj5dz.jpg:large
Lynn’s Favorite Books

Bill Martin Jr / Eric Carle

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?

I Love You, Nose!
Linda Davick

My Heart Is Like a Zoo
Michael Hall
There’s lots of advice on the library shelf, like, “You’re an original, just be yourself.”

Really, that isn’t so easy to do!
You have to learn what it means to be you.
Thank You!

any questions?

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Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
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