

Research Highlights

Topic: Positive Perceptions of Disability

Turnbull, K. & Bronicki, G. J. (1989). Children can teach other children. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, (Spring), 64-65.

BOTTOM LINE

This second-grade science project focuses on two hypotheses: (1) teaching will help children know more about what to do when they are with someone who has significant disabilities, and (2) teaching will help children be more comfortable with someone who has significant disabilities. The first author's friend, Kevin, had significant disabilities. Due to these disabilities, Kevin had few other friendships. The author wanted to help her same-age peers to feel at ease around her friend, thereby increasing the possibility of friendship development. Using pre and posttests, the author determined that teaching her peers about Kevin and his special needs significantly improved how comfortable they felt about her friend.

TIPS

- Involve children in teaching other children about disabilities. Siblings of children with disabilities may be especially adept at teaching other children about disabilities.
- Include children as facilitators of friendships for children with disabilities.
- Provide children opportunities to spend time with individuals with disabilities to encourage the development of friendships.
- Encourage students to conduct social science projects that focus on issues related to disability.

KEY FINDINGS

- The results indicated a significant difference between pre- and posttest scores for both hypotheses.
- The findings suggest that the author's teaching helped her same-age peers know more about what to do when with an individual with significant disabilities.
- The findings suggest that the author's teaching helped her same-age peers be more comfortable with an individual with significant disabilities.

METHOD

- Seven children from the first author's local neighborhood and school volunteered to participate in the study.
- Participants were taught during two 30-minute lessons using:
 - ◆ a videotape of Kevin being cared for by his mother and the author playing with Kevin,
 - ◆ the author talking about playing with Kevin,
 - ◆ question and answer periods conducted by the first author.
- Participants were also provided time to spend with Kevin in his home.
- Participants were pretested and posttested using a test consisting of 12 questions
 - ◆ six questions asked whether people felt they would know what to do if asked to take care of six of Kevin's special needs
 - ◆ six questions asked whether people would feel comfortable taking care of those needs.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Turnbull, A. & Bronicki, G. J. "Buzz" (1986). Changing second graders' attitudes toward people with mental retardation: Using kid power. *Mental Retardation*, 24(1), 44-45.
- Turnbull, A. & Bronicki, G. J. Buzz (1987). Using kid power to teach kids about mental retardation: A long-term follow-up. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 12(3). 216-217.
- Turnbull, A.P., Pereira, L., & Blue-Banning, M. (2000). Successful friendships of Hispanic children and youth with disabilities. *Mental Retardation*, 38(2), 138-152.

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