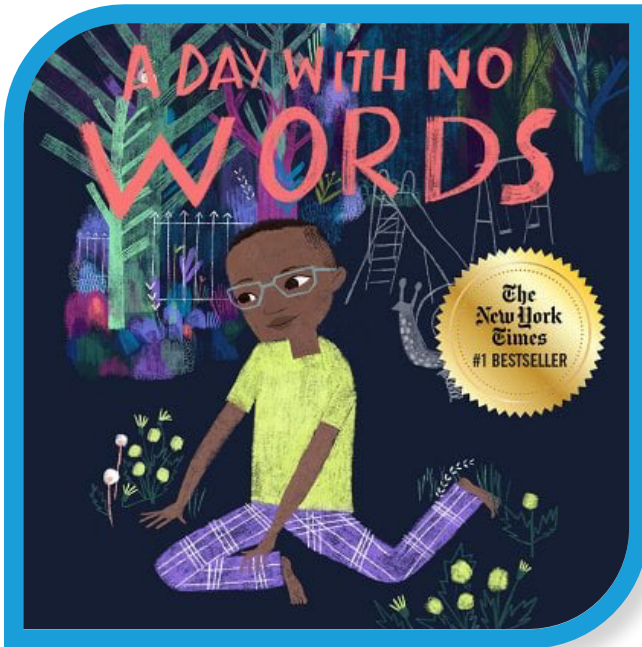




Monthly Featured Book

Presented by ADL's Education Department

About the Monthly Featured Book: This collection of featured books is from Books Matter™: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in ADL Education's programs. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



A Day with No Words

Tiffany Hammond (Author) and
Kate Cosgrove (Illustrator)

Age Range: 5-8 (Note: Picture books can be read and used with children of all ages.)

Year Published: 2023

Book Themes

People with Disabilities, Accommodations, Metaphors and Language, Nonverbal/ Nonspeaking Communication

About the Book

This colorful and engaging picture book shares what life can look like for families who use nonverbal communication, using tools to embrace their unique method of speaking. The story is written from the boy's first-person perspective and highlights the bond between mother and child and follows them on a day where they use a tablet to communicate with others. The book normalizes communication outside of verbal speech and provides an affirming representation of neurodiversity and autism.

Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book aloud with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, you can use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remembering not to judge their responses, listen thoughtfully and engage in a give-and-take that will help them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the story?

- What does the boy say about the voices around him? What is your favorite or most memorable way he describes different people's voices?
- When the boy shares that "I do not speak," what did you notice? What did you wonder?
- What do you learn about why the boy does not speak?
- How does the boy let others know his thoughts and feelings? How does he communicate?
- What kinds of things does the boy like to do in the park? Do you like to do any of those things?
- What happens with the boy goes to the playground with his mom? How do the other children and moms react?
- What happens when one of the moms says about the boy, "that boy is handicapped." (Explain that that woman assumes that the boy can't hear what she's saying and elicit/explain that the word "handicapped" is considered to be a rude, mean, hurtful and harmful term for people with disabilities, which your child might not know. Use "people with disabilities" or "has a disability" instead.)
- How does the boy's mom feel when the other mom says this? How do you know?
- Why do you think the author wrote this book? What is the message in the story?

Talking Points

Below are some important considerations to highlight in order to make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

1. People with Disabilities and the Tools they Need

Talk with your child about what they learned about the boy as they read the book. Explain/ elicit that the boy does not use his voice to communicate. Share that the boy has a disability called autism and that is why he does not use his voice and uses a tablet to communicate with others. You can share that autism is a disability and explain/ elicit that the term disability means "a mental or physical condition that restricts an individual's ability to engage in one or more major life activities (e.g., seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, communicating, sensing, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, working or caring for oneself)."

Explain that people with autism, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), may have challenges with social skills (being and communicating with others), repetitive behaviors (doing or saying the same thing several times), speech and nonverbal/nonspeaking communication. People with autism/ASD may also have different ways of learning, moving, or paying attention. Emphasize that not everyone with autism is the same. Talk with your child about how the boy uses a tablet to share his thoughts with others and discuss how he uses the tablet because he does not use his voice to communicate. Explain that people with disabilities often need different tools so they can easily and comfortably participate in all of life's experiences, including at school, home, clubs, games, work, activities, etc. Explain that people with disabilities (in this case, the boy who has autism) needs a tool like the tablet so he can communicate and share his thoughts with others. Talk with your child about other kinds of disabilities and the tools that people with disabilities need, which can include braille, a wheelchair, forearm crutches, ramp, hearing aid, captioning, American Sign Language (ASL), fidget tool, etc.

2. Nonverbal/Nonspeaking Communication

Talk with your child about how the boy in the book communicates with his family and others. Share that communicate means "to share thoughts, feelings or information to another person or group." Elicit and explain

that the boy does not communicate by speaking (using his voice) and he does communicate using his tablet. In the book, the boy says, "I was born like this. No voice from my lips. I am Autistic." Explain that the boy uses his tablet to communicate because he has autism and does not speak. For different reasons, many people who can and do speak also use other ways to communicate besides speaking (verbal communication). Talk with your child about the ways people communicate without using their voice. Examples may include: Using ASL, texting, using a tablet, drawing, using their face (facial expressions), using their body (body language), pointing, using their hands etc. Ask them if they have communicated today (or yesterday, or this week) not using their voice and share your own examples. To learn more, read together some or all of "A Note from the Author" at the back of the book on page 40. It is also important to share with your child that while people use nonverbal/nonspeaking communication every day, it is a different situation from the boy in the story and others *who* must use nonverbal/nonspeaking communication due to their disability, in this case autism.

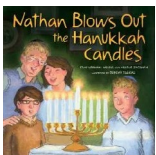
3. Acting as an Ally

Talk to your child about what happens when the boy and his mom go to the park and playground. Ask what they notice and wonder, and discuss how the other children do not play with the boy and one of the other moms says, "That boy is handicapped." If your child doesn't know, explain that calling someone "handicapped" is considered to be mean, rude, prejudiced and hurtful. Engage your child in a conversation about this by asking: *How do you think boy feels when this happens? How does the boy's mom feel? How do you know? If you were on the playground, how could you support him or help?* Talk to your child about whether they have ever seen or experienced name-calling or prejudice/bias because someone has a disability, as the boy in the book has (he has autism and for some children with autism, they don't verbalize/speak--see #1 above). Point out that in the book the boy's mom said, "My son does not speak, but his ears work just fine. The words that you say go straight to his mind." By saying this, she is acting as an ally. Explain that an ally is someone who helps or stands up for someone who is being bullied or the target of bias. Share ideas for ways they can act as an ally when they see bias, bullying or teasing and share your own thoughts and experiences about what you have done to intervene as an ally when you see bias or bullying take place. Make sure to emphasize there are many ways to act as an ally, including saying or doing something (as his mom did), reaching out to the target, not judging people, not participating in the bullying or bias, etc.

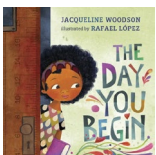
Other Books You Might Like



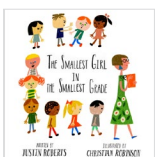
I Talk Like a River <https://www.adl.org/i-talk-river>



Nathan Blows Out the Hanukkah Candles <https://www.adl.org/nathan-blows-out-hanukkah-candles>



The Day You Begin <https://www.adl.org/day-you-begin>



The Smallest Girl in the Smallest Grade <https://www.adl.org/smallest-girl-smallest-grade>

ADL Additional Resources

The following are other resources on people with disabilities, accommodations, ableism and identity.

- 6 Ways to be an Ally <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-be-ally-en-espanol>
- Ability, Disability and Ableism Educational Resources <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/ability-disability-and-ableism-educational-resources>
- Children's Books About Ability, Disability and Ableism <https://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?f%5B0%5D=topic%3A1576>
- Early Childhood Frequently Asked Questions <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner>
- How Can I Help Children Appreciate Diversity? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/how-can-i-help-children-appreciate-diversity>
- How Should I Respond when Children Notice Differences in Others? <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/how-should-i-respond-when-children-notice-differences-others>
- People with Disabilities and the Accommodations they Need <https://www.adl.org/resources/tools-and-strategies/people-disabilities-and-accommodations-they-need-en-espanol>
- Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events <https://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk>
- The Tools I Need: Disability and Accommodations <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/tools-i-need-disability-and-accommodations>
- Who Am I? Identity Poems <https://www.adl.org/resources/lesson-plan/who-am-i-identity-poems>