

# How to interact with special needs children

РЕПОЗИТОРИУМ БЕТГУ



It's known that children with special needs live in a kind of off-world. They seldom go outside and almost don't appear in public places. Due to that, we may sometimes not know how to behave and even get scared, when dealing with such people. How to not offend them? Do not notice their disability or, on the contrary, feel pity for them? We get lost, when dealing with a child with special needs, feel uncomfortable and can even offend him with a careless saying.



# GENERAL RULES OF DECORUM WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

## ○ Recognize him equal

Usually, fear and confusion is the first thing, displayed on the faces of healthy people, when an invalid child appears in the room. Especially, for example, when we have a child suffering from cerebral palsy, who can't even own his facial muscles, say hello or nod his head. In such moments we often shyly drop our eyes. But we shouldn't act like that! The worst thing we can do for a disabled person is to remind him once again that he is somehow "different". It is best to pretend that everything is okay. And to do this you need not be afraid to look at a child with disabilities and actively come into contact with him. When you talk with a disabled person, contact him directly, not the accompanying or sign language interpreter who are present during the conversation.



## ○ Use his abilities

With all this, when contacting such a child, it is important not to allow an oversight of neglect and not to put him and yourself in an awkward position. If you have to contact a disabled child, please ask his relatives beforehand, what his real possibilities are. For example, many children, suffering from infantile cerebral palsy, perfectly understand, what they are told about. But they can not move their arms or legs. And if you talk to them loudly and articulate excessively, like with very small ones, you can offend them. If a disabled child has something to do himself, then one should not offer him help.



# ○ Try not to show pity

- The fact is that the life of a child chained to a wheelchair will never improve if the loved ones do not reconcile with this fact and do not take it calmly. The lamentations and tears in this case only upset the child. He, on the contrary, needs the courage to fight the disease. And the best tactics of those who are close to him will not be pity, but faith in his strength and tranquility. It is impossible to fight the disease if the person is in an inflated condition. Tranquility is the platform on which all achievements will be built. Therefore, while in a disabled society, remove the compassionate look. Better raise his spirits with a kind smile.



## ○ The Words. How do we call them

A person is arranged so that whatever disadvantages he has, he always wants to feel equal with other people. In particular, this applies to disabled people. Therefore, while communicating with a child with disabilities, any of your careless words can offend him and permanently repel him of the desire to communicate with you. What kind of word can this be? When a disabled person is called "inferior", this person feels sympathy and pity from others who are more likely to oppress him than to support him. And when a person who can not walk independently, hears about himself the words "chained to a wheelchair", he feels doomed. The way we speak is closely related to what we think and how we behave towards other people. Alas, too often in our society such unacceptable words and comparisons as "sick-healthy", "normal-abnormal", "mentally retarded", "ordinary-inferior", "numbnuts", "cripple", etc. do sound.



## ○ Communication with children with ambulatory difficulties

If you communicate with a child in a wheelchair, try to make sure that your eyes are at the same level with his eyes. For example, try to sit down at the beginning of the conversation, if possible, and right in front of him. Remember that a wheelchair is a person's inviolable space. Do not lean on it, do not push it. To start a wheelchair without the child's consent is the same as grabbing and carrying the things of a person without his permission. Always ask if you need help before you render it. If your offer of assistance is accepted, ask what you need to do, and follow the instructions clearly. If you were allowed to move the stroller, roll it slowly. Always be personally convinced of the availability of places where events are planned. In advance, ask what problems can arise and how they can be eliminated. Remember that, as a rule, children with ambulatory difficulties have no problems with vision, hearing and understanding.



- **When communicating with blind children and children with the poor eyesight**
- Here are the basic rules of interaction with these children:
- • When offering your help, direct the child, do not squeeze his hand, go as you normally walk. You do not need to grab a child and drag him along.
- • Describe briefly where you are. Warn about obstacles: steps, low lintels, etc. Moving, do not jerk, sudden movements.
- • Always contact the child directly, even if he does not see you, and not to his sighted companion.
- • Always call yourself and introduce other interlocutors, as well as others present.
- • When you offer a blind child to sit down, do not sit him down, but point your hand at the back of the chair or armrest.
- • Avoid vague definitions and instructions that are usually accompanied by gestures, expressions like "The glass is somewhere on the table". Try to be exact: "The glass is on the right side of the table."  
инструкций, которые обычно сопровождаются жестами, выражений вроде «Стакан находится где-то на столе».  
Старайтесь быть точными: «Стакан находится справа на столе».



## ○ Interaction with children with hearing impairment

- Before talking to a child whose hearing is depressed, give a sign that you are going to tell him something.
- When talking to a child who has a bad hearing, look directly at him. Do not darken your face and do not block it with your hands, hair or any objects. Your interlocutor should be able to follow the expression of your face.
- Some children may hear, but they do not perceive the individual sounds correctly. In this case, speak more loudly and clearly, selecting the appropriate level. In another case, it will only be necessary to reduce the height of the voice, since the child has lost the ability to perceive high frequencies.
- To attract the attention of a child who does not hear well, name it by name. If there is no answer, you can touch it lightly or wave it with your hand.
- Speak clearly and smoothly. Do not over emphasize something. Screaming, especially in the ear, is also not necessary. It is necessary to face the interlocutor and speak clearly and slowly, use simple phrases and avoid inessential words.
- Make sure you were understood. Do not hesitate to ask if the interviewee understands you.
- Very often deaf people use sign language. If you communicate through a sign language interpreter, do not forget that you should address directly to the interlocutor, and not to an interpreter.
- Not all people who do not hear well can read on the lips. You should ask about this at the first meeting. If your interlocutor has this skill, remember that only three out of ten words are well read.



## ○ Interaction with children with development delay and communication problem

Use the simple language, express yourself correctly. Do not think that they will not understand you. Be ready to repeat several times. Do not give up if you are not understood from the first time.

Concerning tasks or giving instructions, tell everything "by steps". Give your interlocutor the opportunity to beat every step after you explained to him.



## ○ Interaction with children with psychiatric problems

Mental disorders are not the same as problems in development. Children with mental problems may experience emotional distress or confusion complicating their lives. It is not true that children with mental disorders have problems in understanding or lower in intelligence than most children. They have their own special and changeable view of the world.



## ○ Interaction with children with difficulty in speaking

- Do not interrupt or correct a child who has difficulty in speaking. Begin to speak only when you make sure that he has finished his thought.
- Do not try to speed up the conversation. Be prepared for the fact that talking with a child with a difficult speech will take you more time. If you are in a hurry, it is better, if you apologize, to agree on communication at another time.
- Look in the face of the interlocutor, maintain visual contact. Give this conversation all your attention.
- Do not think that difficulty in speaking is an indicator of a person's low level of intelligence.
- Try to ask questions that require short answers or nods.
- Do not pretend if you do not understand what they told you. Do not hesitate to ask again. If you are not able to understand again, ask to speak at a slower pace, perhaps spelled.
- Do not forget that a child with a broken speech should also speak. Do not interrupt it and do not put it down. Do not rush the speaker.



One of the main problems of children with special needs is loneliness, inability to fully communicate. However, in each case the difficulties are various and almost always they do not have the best effect on the nature of the child. It is very difficult to be lonely. There are, of course, specific psychological characteristics peculiar to a particular disease. For example, patients with diabetes are characterized by increased irritability, cores - anxiety and fears, people with Down's syndrome are usually kind and trustful.

**The main thing in communication  
is to be open and benevolent and  
you will succeed!**

