months they walked behind him, prompting him when necessary to stay on the sidewalk or to stop at the sign or keep walking. Progress was slow but they continually came closer to their goal. Another child was learning to use his wheelchair, and yet another to manoeuvre her way to various parts of the school although she is totally blind.

Other students are dedicated helpers in this fight for independence. Young children do not see disabilities in the same light that adults do. We tend to be overwhelmed by the disability and the obstacles it creates. Children just see the moment and they do whatever has to be done to fix things for that moment. Watch them interacting: directing, encouraging, helping or just plain nagging, "will you hurry up!" Another interesting reason for including other children in efforts to reach goals is that children will do things for other children that they will do less willingly for an adult.

Teacher as Supporter

Each child with special needs who I have worked with has inadvertently defined a special role for me: the role of supporter. As classroom teachers, we need to be the supporter of our children, to be there for them, to listen to their concerns and to understand them. No one needs this more than children with disabilities. Their teachers must be available to explain to other educators their strengths, learning styles, and goals, to tell who their friends are and to suggest strategies.

The teacher does not need to be an expert or have all the answers for the child. But it should be clear that the teacher supports this child and will do whatever he or she can do to help; it should also be clear that the teacher appreciates the support of others. Interestingly enough, when we actually ask for help, we often get it.

Teachers who have integrated classrooms design lessons which include all students according to their learning styles. They include activities which will build on the strengths of their students. They strive to give their students the tools for