

which bring them greater knowledge. This may involve bringing pets to school, cooking, dressing up in costumes, working with utensils or taking nature walks. For older students, it may be visits to businesses and places outside the school.

It is important not to isolate the student from his peers during these experiences. Involve the whole class or small groups, depending on the situation. Because children learn terrific lessons from other children, minimize the teacher's role and maximize the students' during these activities.

Highlight Strengths

Teachers can also create situations which highlight the strengths of the student with a disability. Everyone has strengths; and it is interesting that children view achievement with equal admiration regardless of who is the achiever. I remember watching some young children being tutored in reading by a blind student who was reading braille. These youngsters were genuinely impressed, but not because this student could read — they expected older kids to be able to read. They were impressed because she had a special skill and could decode dots with her fingertips. That was "cool!" A child who had been labelled autistic had an uncanny mathematical memory and was regarded with some degree of awe by his classmates. During math competitions, he was always in demand as a teammate. A student with a mental handicap was a terrific runner and during sports day he was cheered vigorously and genuinely by his classmates.

While we may design activities which will allow the strengths of our students with disabilities to shine, we must be cautious that they are not artificial. We are not trying to spotlight the child, we only want to build in activities that will allow him or her to experience success and receive the admiration of classmates. As teachers, we know the importance of building self-esteem; the link between high self-esteem and success is the same for all students.

More often than not, children will create their own moment