

Top 5 Inclusive Classroom Quick Tips

1. Build Strong Relationships and a Welcoming Culture

Why it matters: Inclusion begins with belonging. Students are more likely to participate, take risks, and thrive when they feel seen, accepted, and valued.

Quick actions:

- Use One-Page Profiles so students can share their interests, strengths, learning preferences, and what helps them feel supported. [Please add lesson link: One-Page Profile, link)
- Include diverse books, images, examples, and classroom materials so students can see themselves reflected in the learning environment.
- Invite students to participate in a diversity themed show and tell and display the results to celebrate the strengths, experiences, and identities represented in the classroom.

Instructions for diverse show n tell Diverse Show and Tell

Introducing the Activity

Diversity means that people are different in many ways. We may look different, speak different languages, have different abilities, learn in different ways, enjoy different things, or use different tools to help us. For Show and Tell, you can bring something that shows or teaches us about diversity.



INCLUSIVE EDUCATION RESOURCES

SEPT 2026

What Can Children Bring?

Culture & Language

- A flag, cultural item, Traditional clothing, musical instrument, book in another language
Something that represents a country or culture, word or greeting in another language

Disability & Accessibility

Children can share items that demonstrate how people with disabilities participate and communicate, such as:

- AAC or communication devices, Communication books or picture cards, Hearing aids, , Adaptive sports equipment, Pencil grips or adaptive scissors, Accessibility tools/equipment



The focus should be on **what the item helps a person do**, rather than on the disability itself.

Neurodiversity & Different Ways of Learning

Students could share:

- Fidgets, Noise-cancelling headphones, Visual schedules, Timers, Calm-down tools
Different types of learning tools, Sensory items, Alternative writing or drawing tools

They could explain: “People sometimes use different tools to help them learn, focus or participate.”

Books & Stories

- A book about disability or inclusion, with diverse characters, A bilingual book, A story about people who are different from one another, A book featuring different ways of communicating or learning

Interests & Individual Differences

- Students could share: Artwork, A hobby, Sports equipment, musical instrument, favourite toy, Something that shows a different talent or interest

Questions to Guide Sharing

Teachers can ask:

- What did you bring?
- How does it show diversity?
- What can we learn from it?
- How might this be helpful to someone?
- How does it show that people can be different?

Teacher Tips

- Participation should be encouraged but not forced.
- Students do not need to share something personal about themselves or their family.
- Avoid asking children to disclose a disability or personal information.
- Encourage respectful questions and language.
- Focus on acceptance, inclusion, strengths and differences.
- Remind students that diversity includes visible and invisible differences.

Key Message for Students

“Diversity means that we are not all the same—and that's a good thing! We can learn from people who have different cultures, abilities, ways of communicating, ways of learning, interests and experiences. Our differences help make our classroom a place where everyone belongs.”

2. Make Expectations and Routines Predictable

Why it matters:

Clear routines reduce anxiety, support independence, and help all students understand what to expect—especially neurodivergent learners.

Quick actions:

- Display a visual daily schedule and refer to it throughout the day.
- Use transition timers or verbal countdowns to prepare students for changes in activity.
- Create an information board for daily announcements so students can revisit important information if they miss, forget, or cannot hear it the first time.



3. Support Self-Regulation and Sensory Needs

Why it matters:

Behaviour is communication. Students cannot learn effectively when they feel dysregulated, overwhelmed, or unsafe.

- Build in regular movement or brain breaks every 30–45 minutes.
- Teach simple emotional check-ins so students can identify and communicate how they are feeling.
- Create a quiet Calm Corner with sensory tools, soft lighting, and calming activities.
- Offer alternative spaces during lunch or unstructured times, such as a quiet lunch space, reading area, colouring club, or softly lit calm room.

4. Embrace Equity Over Equality: Fair Is Not Always Equal

Why it matters:

True inclusion means giving each student the support they need to succeed, rather than giving every student the exact same thing.

Barriers and Strengths

Quick actions:

- Normalize accommodations by explaining that different students may need different tools, spaces, or supports to do their best learning.
- Create a classroom culture where asking for help is viewed as a strength.
- Use a suggestion box with prompts such as, "How can we make our school safer and more inclusive?"
- Regularly review student suggestions and act on ideas where possible to show that student voice matters.

5. Foster Empathy and Connection

Why it matters:

- Inclusion grows through peer relationships, shared responsibility, and a classroom culture where students actively support one another.
- Please add lesson link: Words matter
- Quick actions:
- Use peer buddy systems to help students build supportive connections.
- Teach basic ASL signs to support communication, awareness, and respect for different ways people connect.
- Plan cooperative group challenges that encourage teamwork, communication, and shared problem-solving. Create a Kindness Chain where students recognize inclusive actions and celebrate one another.

A **Kindness Chain** is a simple visual activity that encourages children (or adults) to notice and celebrate acts of kindness. Each act of kindness is represented by a paper strip, and the strips are linked together to create a growing paper chain.

As more kind acts occur, the chain gets longer, providing a visible reminder of the positive impact everyone is making.

KINDNESS CHAIN A simple way to notice, celebrate and grow kindness in



TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

-  **PURPOSE**
A Kindness Chain helps students notice and celebrate acts of kindness. As our chain grows, we see how kindness makes our classroom stronger together!
-  **HOW IT WORKS**
 1. Each time someone shows kindness, write it on a chain strip.
 2. Connect it to our Kindness Chain.
 3. Watch our chain grow!
-  **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**
 - Encourage students to notice kindness in others.
 - Celebrate all acts of kindness, big or small.
 - Read a few examples each week.
 - Work together to build a positive classroom community.
-  **IDEAS TO EXTEND**
 - Set a goal: Let's reach 100 acts!
 - Create a class kindness challenge.
 - Use during special weeks (Kindness Week, Pink Shirt Day, etc.)

Kindness Chain

How It Works

1. Cut strips of coloured paper.
2. Each time someone does or witnesses a kind act, write it on a paper strip. For example:
 - Helped a friend with their work.
 - Invited someone to play.
 - Used kind words when someone was upset.
 - Shared materials without being asked.
 - Held the door open for someone.
3. Connect the strip to the existing chain.
4. Continue adding links throughout the week, month, or school year.

Classroom Uses

- Whole Class Goal: Work together to reach a target number of kindness links (e.g., 100 acts of kindness).
- Individual Recognition: Students can contribute their own acts or recognize others.
- School-Wide Project: Each classroom creates a chain, and all chains are joined together for a display.
- Themed Weeks: Use during Anti-Bullying Week, Pink Shirt Day, Random Acts of Kindness Week, or Valentine's Day.

Tips for Success

- Celebrate all acts of kindness, even small ones.
- Encourage students to recognize kindness in others, not just themselves.
- Read a few examples aloud at the end of each day or week.
- Focus on genuine kindness rather than competition.

Variations

- Paper Hearts: Instead of strips, write kind acts on hearts and create a "Kindness Wall."
- Digital Kindness Chain: Use a shared online document or digital bulletin board.
- Kindness Challenge: Set weekly themes such as "Help Someone," "Include Someone New," or "Show Gratitude."
- Secret Kindness: Students perform anonymous acts of kindness and add them to the chain afterward.

A kindness chain works especially well in elementary classrooms because it is inexpensive, easy to implement, and gives students a tangible way to see how their positive actions contribute to a caring, inclusive classroom community.