Deaf Culture in Children’s Literature

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Quick Overview

- Deaf culture books contain a child or family that is deaf in the storyline.
- They make being deaf seem as something that needs to be fixed although deaf culture does not view it this way.
- These books are a great way to introduce a new culture into the classroom, one that may not have been considered previously.
- They give children a view into the deaf world and what it may feel like to not be able to hear.
- Learning about deaf culture in the classroom, children can learn sign language which can help with speech in younger children.
- The authors may not be well known to us but they are notable in the Deaf community.
Deaf Culture

- In children’s books that show deaf culture they put into perspective what a child may be going through.

- They stress that just because someone is deaf that you shouldn’t treat them any different than your other friends.

- However these books make being deaf seen as a disability that needs to be fixed which is not how the deaf community views it.

- The defining characteristics in these books is having a deaf child or a deaf family in the story line.
Why should you read them?

- Some of these books help children understand what it is like to be deaf.
- They remind children how to be accepting of those who may be different from us.
- Basic sign language communication can be taught through these books.
In your classroom

- Sign language is great for language acquisition in young children.
- If children are having trouble with speech, sign language is a great stepping stone.
- You are able to teach children that some people are different but we should still treat them with respect.
- Can help teach kids to be kind and that you should be aware of other’s feelings.
Authors to know

- Stevie Platt – Deaf Author
  - Go to the Hill

- Ginny Rorby
  - Hurt Go Happy

- Sarah Miller
  - Miss Spitfire

- Anthony John
  - Five Flavors of Dumb

- Marlee Matlin
  - Deaf Child Crossing
Things to keep in mind

- Although you may see being deaf as a disability, those who are deaf do not see it that way. It is the way they were born and have known nothing other than that. They are happy to be deaf.

- It is important to stress to children that being deaf is not a bad thing and is not something that needs to be “fixed.”
References


- [http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ971511](http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ971511)