10 Tips for Communicating with an Individual with a Disability

From the National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability series, The Awesome Mary Show

1. Always treat them with the same respect you would give to anyone else.

2. Speak to them directly rather than to their parent, aid or guardian.

3. Establish an open communication about their abilities and limitations. It’s OK to ask someone what they can and can’t do.

4. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Someone with a disability would rather be asked than ignored.

5. Don’t assume someone has additional disabilities just because you see they have one.

6. Offer a choice whenever it’s appropriate, but don’t over adapt something because you assume they need it.

7. Don’t mistake someone’s disability for a serious illness or disease.

8. Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Let’s be honest, you may need it!

9. Be patient. It might take someone with a disability a little longer to do something but they will get it done.

10. Never assume you know everything about a disability — every person is unique and different.