

Grades 3–5

March

Sport of the Month

Special Olympics



Basketball is one of the top sports at Special Olympics. Young players learn to handle the ball and dribble, and older players learn the strategies to play a challenging game. Basketball is also a favorite sport for Special Olympics Unified Sports in which players with and without intellectual disabilities form teams to play other Unified teams. It's a learning experience that's also a lot of fun.

Dear Family,

This month we are discussing one of the most serious aspects of discrimination in our communities—our words and the tremendous impact they have on people. In particular, we'll focus on the words *retard* and *retarded* and how those terms affect people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and friends.

Our lessons this month will be greatly affected by the word choices students hear at home, from parents, siblings, friends, and others. We urge you to join our quest to use words that help, not harm, others in your daily interactions.

teacher signature

This month's theme: **power of words**

To begin our discussion this month, we'll brainstorm positive and negative words. Some examples of negative words include *bad, boring, dumb, lazy, sad, slow, weak, and weird*. Some examples of positive words include *active, adorable, agreeable, artistic, beautiful, brave, bright, clever, confident, cute, eager, friendly, funny, good, great, happy, honest, natural, smart, true, trustworthy, and upbeat*. We'll watch an inspiring video to help us brainstorm even more powerful words.



What you can do:



Later in the month, we'll be asking students to create inspirational cards and posters using positive words from our word lists. We'll be cutting pictures from magazines, so please send to class with your child any that might be helpful. To help your child get a head start on this activity, look through magazines and talk about the pictures you see. Ask your child what positive words he or she might associate with the images you're looking at.

Most importantly, as mentioned above, the best way to emphasize the importance of the power of words is to set an example yourself. Think about your own speech and the words you typically use. Many of us are guilty of using the words *retard* and *retarded* in our daily speech, along with other hurtful terms. Discuss this with your child and with your entire family and focus on eliminating this hurtful word and others from your vocabulary.