

# family matters | news & views

## The Right Way to Relate to a Disabled Child

Today it's much more common for kids with and without disabilities to learn together, says Robert Dinerstein, an advocate for people with disabilities and a professor of law at American University Law School. How do you make sure you're teaching proper interactions? Help your child understand differences by talking about these issues:

■ Although a physical disability might make it harder for someone to open a door, he may

not want your help. Ask: "Can I get the door for you?"

■ A deaf child may have an interpreter with her. When talking, always look at the child.

■ When approaching a child who is blind, say hi and identify yourself. Don't tap her on the shoulder.

■ A kid with a speech difficulty needs your patience. Can't comprehend him? It's better to say, "Could you please repeat that?" than to pretend you understand.—*Jacqueline L. Ross*



Don't assume he needs your help

### THIS DAD'S LIFE By Bob Sloan



### When Fathers Try to Be Funny

I suffer from a curious malady common to dads—the compulsion to try to be funny. "N.F.D." is a saying currently in vogue around our house. It stands for "Not Funny, Dad," and it's uttered by my sons when one of my clever observations is not so clever. When my older son studied the Civil War, for instance, I said: "Know where General Grant kept his armies? In his sleeves." Witticisms that once rolled off my tongue now come out droopy. The result? N.F.D.

After a recent dinner that earned me seven N.F.D.'s, I am ready to admit the error of my ways. I will no longer torture my family by trying to be witty. In exchange, I ask that there be a moratorium on N.F.D.'s on Father's Day and my birthday. My sons must laugh at my jokes on those days, and the one thing I want to hear at night is appreciation for my humor—"Hey Dad, you were funny today"—whether they mean it or not.

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