

Another Way of Doing Things

A mother's thoughts

I was shocked the first time my daughter said she felt like some kind of alien and hated cp. She doesn't walk independently, uses a walker or scooter for longer distances. The hardest is the realization. But I must say it seems to come in waves of awareness - the pain and hurt and frustration. Most of the time I listen and hold her while she cries.

I really want her to know her value as a little girl first, above all else. I may love her dearly just the way she is and her heart is breaking because of the child's simple wish to stand up or kick a ball by herself. Or draw a house. I don't think she's always a happy camper at school either. I think it's a big experience of gee, look what everyone else can do and so easily. I think she shuts down emotionally when there and falls apart when she gets home. She takes pride in what she can do by herself but not what she is helped with. And I am glad it's summer.

I remember thinking that cp should be considered another way of doing things, rather than that pressure to be *regular*, my daughter's word. But that pressure is there because the world does exist, all around her. I find when my daughter asks me, I never feel prepared, am always caught off guard and only pray that I am saying the right thing. Above all - that I am here for her and always will be.

My heart breaks because I just don't see any way around it. I think she cries sometimes over some little thing because of all the big things in her heart. It's like a rite of passage I wish I could go through for her.

Best wishes,

Shawn

PS - So we saw the movie, Mulan. And she leans over and tells me because the father is limping and falls down that he has cp. I get this wild flash of a great cartoon for kids and all of the heros have disabilities.