

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

Children Invited To Learn About Disabilities By Creating A Unique Friend For Arthur

by Eileen Howard Dunn

(NAPSA)—Helping a child understand and appreciate the differences in others can be easier than many parents realize.

Parents may consider these tips to help children learn that we all have different levels of abilities as well as unique talents and similar interests:

1. Have your child look around his classroom, family or group of friends and notice that everyone has something that is unique and special. Point out what a boring place this world would be if we were all just the same.

2. Explain disabilities in terms of adaptation. Just as people adapt to cold weather by wearing coats and mittens, some people with mobility issues may adapt by using a wheelchair. This positive approach helps show how we all adapt in our lives and that we're more alike than different.

3. Talk to your child about what a classmate or neighbor with a disability has in common with others—the same age, school, a favorite movie, hobby or sport.

To help parents and kids talk about these issues, "ARTHUR," the award-winning PBS KIDS GO!™ television series, and CVS Caremark All Kids Can, a program dedicated to making life easier for kids with disabilities, have introduced the "ARTHUR/All Kids Can Character Search"! Children ages 6 to 12 are invited to send in their ideas for a new friend for Arthur.

Kids are asked to draw their character and describe what makes the character special. The child with the selected idea, along with his or her character, will be featured in a live-action segment on the show. Not only that, the



With a chance to create a new friend for ARTHUR, kids can learn to understand differences.

winner gets a visit from "ARTHUR" creator and author Marc Brown at his or her local school, library or a PBS station.

The search is designed to educate children about the importance of inclusion and how children of all abilities can play together.

The contest also encourages parents and children to think about what life is like for someone they know who has a disability. The contest is made possible by CVS Caremark and its All Kids Can program, which supports services that help children with disabilities learn, play and succeed in life. Visit pbskidsgo.org/arthur/allkidscan to download the entry form as of February 1, 2009. Entries must be postmarked by March 31, 2009.

You can find tips and resources at pbskidsgo.org/arthur/allkidscan and on the PBS Parents Web site, pbsparents.org.

• Ms Dunn is Senior Vice President of Corporate Communications and Community Relations at CVS Caremark.