



## HSCI Community Book Group: *My Friend Isabelle* By Eliza Woloson

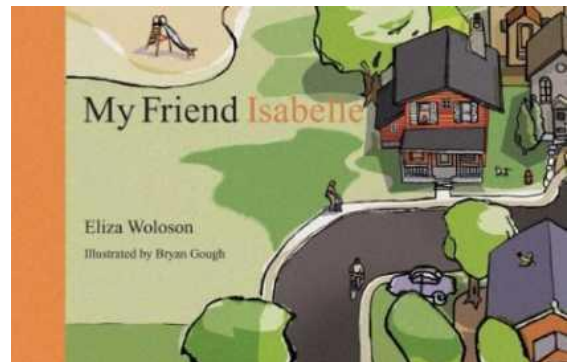
### Using books to teach about Inclusion and differences

#### **My Friend Isabelle**

*Eliza Woloson*

*Woodbine House 2003*

*Isabelle and Charlie are friends. They both like to draw, dance, read, and play at the park. They both like to eat cheerios. They both cry if their feelings are hurt. And like most friends, they are also different from each other. Isabelle has Down syndrome. Charlie doesn't.*



#### Ideas for how to use this story in the classroom:

- While reading, make comments about how the children in the book are good friends. Ask questions to your class about what they like to do with their friends. If the group is older, you can ask them if they think kids can be friends, even if they like to do different things or even if they are good at different things.
- Try a game called "Fishy, Fishy in the Sea". Place three chairs at the top of the circle area facing out to the class (this is your basket). The teacher fishes for three fish (kids) from the pond (circle rug) to put in his/her basket (three chairs). The teacher catches three children who are all different in some way but who all have one common trait (all three are wearing stripes, all three have braids in their hair, all three have slip-on shoes, etc.). Ask the class what they think is the same about the three "fish" and what they see is different about them. Talk to the class about how some kids can be the same in one way and different in another.

#### Ideas for how to use this story at home with your child:

- Take care in how you describe people with differences. Use "people first" language that puts the emphasis on the person, rather than on their difference. Say "the child with special needs" instead of "the disabled child."
- All kids learn in different ways. Kids will see that some kids with special needs appear younger than they really are and that they may have trouble learning new things. You can help them understand kids who learn differently by saying: "Isabelle learns things in different ways." Or "Isabelle is still learning some things that you already know how to do." The best way for your child to help another child is for them to be an inclusive friend.