

### Explaining Tourette's to Infant Classmates

Working on the belief that children are afraid of what they do NOT know and accept what the DO know I was invited into my son's classroom to speak to the children. The week before I visited my son's classroom, the Social Worker for school read the class a book about differences. In this book, a little boy had to wear glasses. When I went in to speak, the class sat in a circle. I asked them about the book that was read to introduce "differences." I then told them that my son was different than any one else in the room. He has me for a mum, (and then I asked them if any of them had me for a mum....remember.....they are only 6 years old!), he has a sister named Samantha (again I asked them if any of them had a sister named Samantha), and then I told them he has Tourette Syndrome. I told them it was a big word and that we also called it TS. It means that Brad's body sometimes moves even if he doesn't want it to. I asked if anyone ever had the hiccups and of course this prompted conversation and unity. I then read Simon's Sneeze Test ....a book about a boy who is told by a girl in his class that he can stop ticcing. He then brings in pepper to school, grinds it up in front of her, and makes her sniff it, but tells her she is not to sneeze. Of course she sneezes...I went to 3 different supermarkets and none of the pepper I bought made me sneeze. Instead, I handed out "sour patch kids" candy to each child. It was funny because at first some of the kids say no thank you, but when their friends take a piece they WANT to take part also. At the count of three, we all put the candy in our mouth. You should see the faces the children make. I asked them to stop making such funny faces....and of course with such sour candy you can't stop. This is how I explained TS.