



FAST FRIENDS

by Heather M. O'Connor

illustrated by Claudia Dávila

Wheelchair Etiquette

What to do when you meet someone who uses a wheelchair.

Be friendly:

- Don't stare, whisper or look away.
- Smile and say hello.
- Talk to the person in the chair, not to the person who is pushing the chair.
- Use your regular voice. Don't shout, speak slowly or use baby talk.

Don't assume the person. . . :

- can't walk or stand. They may just find the chair more efficient.
- can't hear you or understand you.
- needs your help.

Always ask before you. . . :

- push someone in their chair.
- move someone's chair.
- help someone open a door, eat or drink, or reach for something.

Dos and don'ts

- Don't touch or lean on a person's wheelchair — it's part of their personal space.
- Don't ask if you can go for a ride. Wheelchairs are not toys.
- Don't sling your backpack or purse on someone's wheelchair.
- Do look at the person, not the disability.
- Do include the person in conversations, games and other activities.
- Do use people-first language (e.g., someone who uses a wheelchair, not a wheelchair-user).
- Do grab a chair. It's more comfortable to chat face to face.

Be sure to read *Fast Friends* by Heather M. O'Connor, illustrated by Claudia Dávila to see how Tyson and Suze get along!