

Written by Gayle Nobel
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I AM THE CHILD

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*You see the longing in my eyes to get out of this chair, to run and play like other children.
There is much you take for granted.
I want the toys on the shelf, I need to go to the bathroom, oh I've dropped my fork again.
I am dependent on you in these ways.
My gift to you is to make you more aware of your great fortune,
your healthy back and legs, your ability to do for yourself.
Sometimes people appear not to notice me; I always notice them.
I feel not so much envy as desire, desire to stand upright,
to put one foot in front of the other, to be independent.
I give you awareness.
I am the child who cannot walk.*

*I am the child who is mentally impaired.
I don't learn easily, if you judge me by the world's measuring stick,
what I do know is infinite joy in simple things.
I am not burdened as you are with the strife's and conflicts of a more complicated life.
My gift to you is to grant you the freedom to enjoy things as a child,
to teach you how much your arms around me mean, to give you love.
I give you the gift of simplicity.
I am the child who is mentally impaired.*

*I am the disabled child.
I am your teacher. If you allow me,
I will teach you what is really important in life.
I will give you and teach you unconditional love.
I gift you with my innocent trust, my dependency upon you.
I teach you about how precious this life is and about not taking things for granted.
I teach you about forgetting your own needs and desires and dreams.
I teach you giving.
Most of all I teach you hope and faith.
I am the disabled child.*