

Dear Adult,

Does your child want to know everything about every disabled person they see, all at once, and at TOP VOLUME?

Here are my suggestions . . .

1. Don't panic. You don't want to make your kids awkward.  
A calm, matter-of-fact tone works best.
2. Answer simply and generally: yes, some people have one leg, or use a wheelchair, or move and speak differently, and that's OK. Disability is normal.
3. Educate generally: some people use wheelchairs if their legs don't work so well, some people are born without a leg, some people lose one in an accident etc.
4. It's good to be curious BUT . . . be clear you don't know this person specifically and it has to be OK not to know. It's not polite to ask people you don't know personal questions. WHY? asks your child . . .
5. Manners, for one thing. But also: empathy! Just imagine how BORING it would be having to answer the same question all the time!

If it's too late and your child has already popped the question directly, then you can be fairly sure the disabled person has dealt with this scenario a hundred times before, and has their way of handling it, probably with good humour . . . but it's still worth your child knowing that disabled people are just like anyone else, getting on with their busy day, not looking to be a teachable moment.

