



## Down Syndrome Awareness

Activities and Resources about acceptance,  
inclusion and Down syndrome

There are lots of ways to acknowledge and celebrate World Down Syndrome Day and support your local Down syndrome affiliate. One fun way is to celebrate by Rocking Your Socks. The chromosome pairs resemble socks and wearing them can signify acceptance of people with Down syndrome.



**DOWN SYNDROME  
OF LOUISVILLE**

SERVING LOCALLY, SHARING GLOBALLY





Down Syndrome of Louisville (DSL) has been working toward our mission to advocate for, educate and support people with Down syndrome, their families, and the community that serves them since we began in 1977 at Jefferson County Public School's, Field Elementary. Significant parts of this support have been through guidance and resources for school-age children and their families. We realize that it is also important to support the educators that have been so dedicated to fostering the development of our students. Because of that, DSL is committed to providing information, training, resources, and support by partnering with area districts and educators who work with students with Down syndrome. Our services are at no cost and are for the benefit of the entire educational team including, general and special educators, administrators, paraeducators, and specialists.

### DSL's Services and Resources

- Call when you have questions about supporting students with Down syndrome
- Access consultants and specialists in these areas: best practices, behavior, co-occurring diagnoses, referrals for communication devices
- Classroom observations
- Assistance adapting curriculum and setting up the educational environment for success.
- Receive our e-newsletter, specific to educating students with Down syndrome
- Take advantage of our lending library of books and materials specific to Down syndrome
- On-site training is available
- Down syndrome Ability Awareness presentation for the school or classroom- educating students and teachers what it means to be a Kindness Warrior.
- IEP Support

# Table of Contents

## Down Syndrome Awareness

DisAbility Awareness  
Celebrate World Down Syndrome Day  
Sample Announcements  
Common Questions About Down Syndrome  
21 Facts about Down Syndrome

## Reading Passages/Resources

Grade Level Instruction Suggestions  
    ↗ Recommended Books  
    ↗ First Person Language  
    ↗ Famous Individuals with Down  
        Syndrome  
    Chromosomes  
Tips for Being a Friend to Someone  
    with Down Syndrome

## Activities

Rock Your Socks Coloring  
About Me/Self  
Portrait/VennDiagram  
Sample About Me of student with DS  
Video Discussion Guide  
Become a Kindness Warrior

## Fun Ways to Raise Support for DSL

- \*Dress Down Day for Dollar
- \*Dollars for Down Syndrome Day
- \*Have your principal Go Over the Edge October 2023
- \*Pie in the Face fundraiser.



## Rock Your Socks DisABILITY AWARENESS

### Why promote disability awareness and acceptance in schools?

- Many people who have not had experience with people having disabilities feel uncomfortable being around them. Understanding more about the diagnosis and the things they have in common with this person helps make the differences less intimidating.
- Open communication about disabilities clears misinformation and stereotypes. Finding commonality increases acceptance and inclusion.
- Helping people understand the challenges another human is facing can increase empathy which leads to the creation of strong connections.
- Many children with and without disabilities have negative social experiences that can follow them for a lifetime. Creating a climate of compassion where all students are valued for their unique abilities can help all students.
- Students that feel accepted are more likely to participate in school programs and extracurricular activities.

# Celebrate World Down Syndrome Day

March 21st



There are lots of ways to acknowledge and celebrate World Down Syndrome Day and support your local Down syndrome affiliate. One fun way is to celebrate by Rocking Your Socks. The pairs of chromosome pairs resemble socks and wearing them can signify acceptance of people with Down syndrome.

- Raise funds for Down Syndrome of Louisville as they support, educate and advocate for individuals with DS.
- Make an announcement to the student body with information about Down syndrome. \*See example announcement included
- Host guest speaker from Down Syndrome of Louisville to talk about Down syndrome awareness.
- Show the “Just Like You” video. This is a wonderful 13-minute video that can be found by searching “Just Like You and Down Syndrome” on YouTube. <https://youtu.be/5M--xOyGUX4>
- Following the "Just Like You" video you can have your class become a DSL Kindness Warrior by taking the quiz at: [BeAKindnessWarrior.com](http://BeAKindnessWarrior.com)
- Put up a display or table about Down syndrome at your school, DSL would be happy to provide some materials and information.
- Read and discuss a book with your class about Down syndrome - \*\*some recommended books are included.
- We hope you celebrate on 3/21 and share your photos  
**#RockYourSocks**      **Follow DSL @DSofLou**

# Common Questions about Down Syndrome

## What is Down syndrome?

Most people are born with 46 chromosomes in each cell. Down syndrome occurs when a baby is born with 47 chromosomes in each cell.

## What causes DS?

Doctors don't know what causes it, but they know it can happen to people of all races and cultures around the world.

## Is Down syndrome contagious?

No, It develops before a baby is born and will be part of them for their whole life. There is not a cure, but scientists, therapists and teachers are working hard to find new ways for people with DS learn better.

## Why is it called Down syndrome?

It was named after Dr. John Down the first person to notice and describe similarities of people with DS.

## Why do people with Down syndrome look different?

The extra chromosome makes people with DS smaller. They have smaller ears, noses hands and have similar almond shaped eyes.

## Why do people with Down syndrome talk differently?

Many people with DS have speech delays. It may be hard to understand them. They may need extra time to answer questions. They may use sign language or pictures to communicate. Most people with DS can hear and understand much more than they can say.

## Can someone with DS do everything I can do?

Children with DS will learn to do most things other people do walk, read, ride bikes, play sports, etc. Sometimes it just takes them longer to do these things and sometimes they may do them a little differently.

## How can I be a friend to someone with Down syndrome?

People with Down syndrome make great friends. They love to be included in everything just like you do. They may need some extra patience though.



# Grade Level Instruction

The following are just suggestions, please use any of the resources appropriate to your students.

## K-2nd

Rock Your Socks Coloring/Key Page

My Friend Isabelle video/book. <https://youtu.be/IEB2bk29AMQ>

More Alike than Different Self Portrait Venn Diagram Activity

Tips for Being A Friend Passage

## 3-5th grade

Chromosome reading passage

First Person Language Passage

Tips for Being A Friend Passage

Common questions about Down Syndrome

Just Like You video <https://youtu.be/5M--xOyGUX4>

Kindness Warrior Quiz Online

## Middle/High

Chromosome reading passage

First Person Language Passage

Tips for Being A Friend Passage

Common questions about Down Syndrome

Just Like You video <https://youtu.be/5M--xOyGUX4>

Video Guide/Discussion Cards

Kindness Warrior Quiz Online

## Sample Announcements

### **Elementary Schools Announcement:**

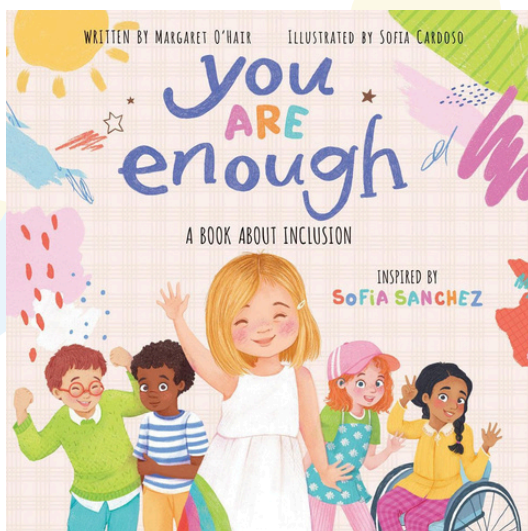
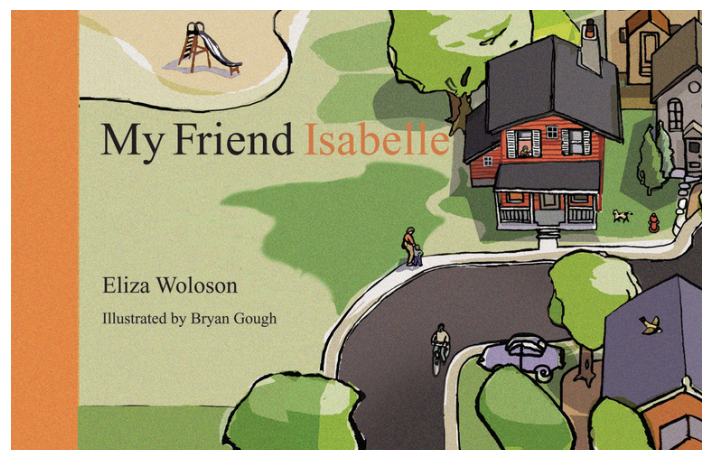
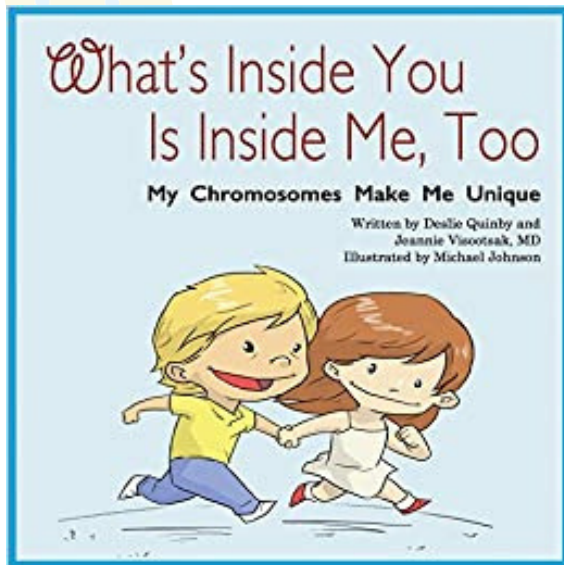
"Today is World Down Syndrome Day. Down syndrome is a disability that some people are born with. People with Down syndrome are just like you and me, but it might take more time and work for them to learn certain things. Today is a day that people all across the world are celebrating the inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome. We hope you'll join us in celebrating differences and include and support your schoolmates with Down syndrome or any disability. Invite a classmate to eat with you at lunch, play with you at recess, join you at your birthday party or read a book together. Your class can discuss more ways to be respectful and include all students. Happy World Down Syndrome Day!"

### **Middle High School Announcement:**

"Today is World Down Syndrome Day. Down syndrome is a chromosomal disability that about one in 700 babies are born with. There are about 400,000 people with Down syndrome living in the United States today. People with Down syndrome may take a bit longer to learn how to do some things, but mostly they're just like all of us: they enjoy friends, hobbies, having fun, learning, and being included. Take a moment today to think about how you can include and support someone with Down syndrome (or any disability). Invite them to join you for lunch or to join in a sport or extracurricular activity with you. If you have a classmate with Down syndrome, invite them to do a class project together. Most importantly, be respectful. Before you act or speak...think twice and just be kind. Happy World Down Syndrome Day!"



# Recommended Books





# Person-first Language



Person-first language is keeping the person before their disability. It builds respect and recognizes that a disability is only one part of their identity. They are also friends, coworkers, classmates who have strengths and abilities just like you. So when talking about a person with any disability it is important to reference them by name, and only add their disability if needed.

The correct term is "Down syndrome." However you may hear people say "Downs," but that is incorrect. A person does not have "Downs."



**For example:**



**YES!**

**"My friend Joe Smith"**

**or**

**"My friend Joe Smith who has Down syndrome."**

**NO**

**"My Down syndrome friend, Joe Smith"**

**"My Downs friend, Joe Smith."**

# Famous Individuals with Down syndrome

## Actor: Zack Gottsagen

- Zack Gottsagen starred in the 2019 movie Peanut Butter Falcon and presented at the 2020 Oscars with his costar Shia LeBeouf.



## Actor: David De Sanctis

- Louisville native David DeSanctis grew up with an interest in drama, choir, and broadcast journalism and participated in all three during high school. In 2014 David was cast as the main character in the feature film, Where Hope Grows.

## Musician: Sujeet Desai

- Sujeet Desai, an accomplished musician from Buffalo, New York has mastered the instruments: clarinet, saxophone, violin, piano, trumpet, and drums. He has performed in 13 countries and is the recipient of numerous national and international awards for his music and self-advocacy.



## Model: Grace Strobel

- Grace Strobel, Down Syndrome advocate, role model, model and speaker, is Obagi's newest SKINclusion Ambassador and the face of the new Obagi. skin care line.

## Athlete: Chris Nikic

- Chris Nikic became the first person with Down syndrome to complete an Ironman triathlon. He finished in 16 hours, 46 minutes and 9 seconds.





# Chromosomes



Photo credit: Hannah's Down Syndrome Superpowers  
by Lori Leigh Yarborough

Chromosomes are microscopic long "sock" shaped pairs inside cells. They work like ingredients in a recipe that makes you unique! They decide things like your skin, and eye color, how your body and brain develop, and every other thing that makes you different from your friends.

Typical humans have 23 pairs of chromosomes for a total of 46 chromosomes in each cell. People with Down syndrome have a third copy of the 21st chromosome. So, they have 47 chromosomes in each cell. That extra chromosome changes the way their body and brain grow.

This is why a person with Down syndrome may be born smaller or with heart, vision, hearing, and learning challenges. If you get the chance to get to know someone with Down syndrome you will see that even with their differences you will have a lot in common.



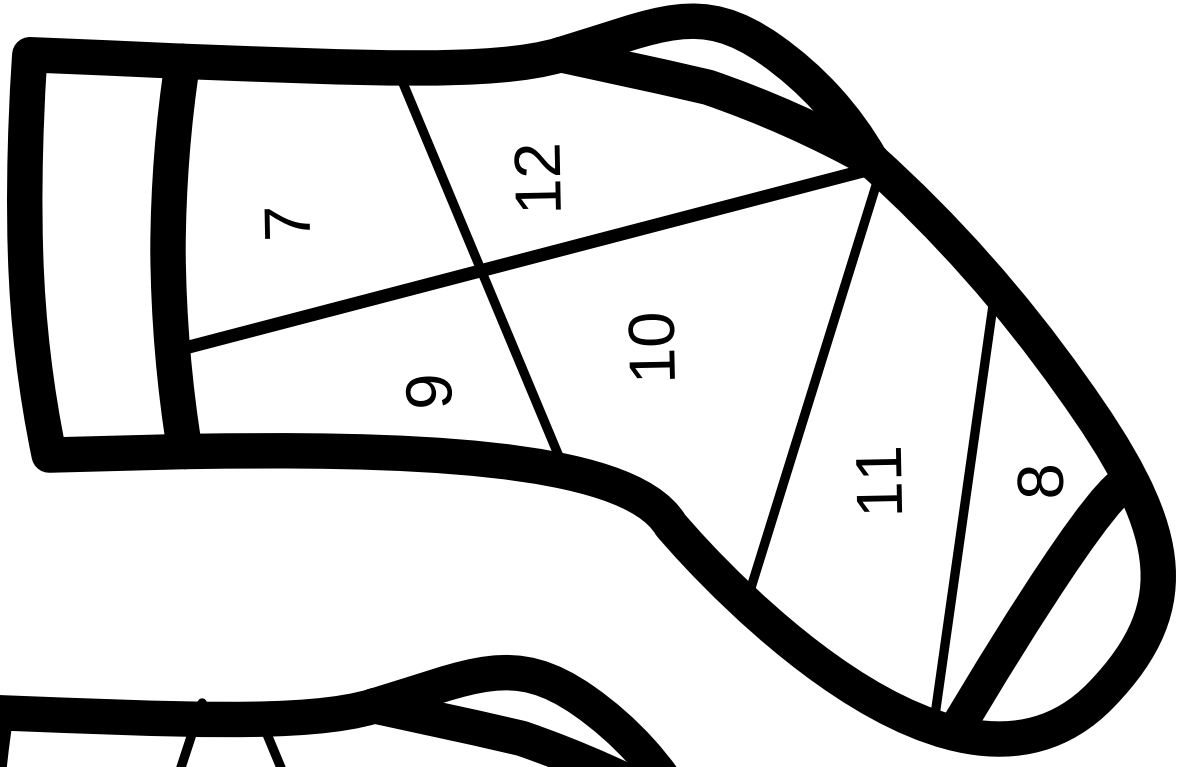
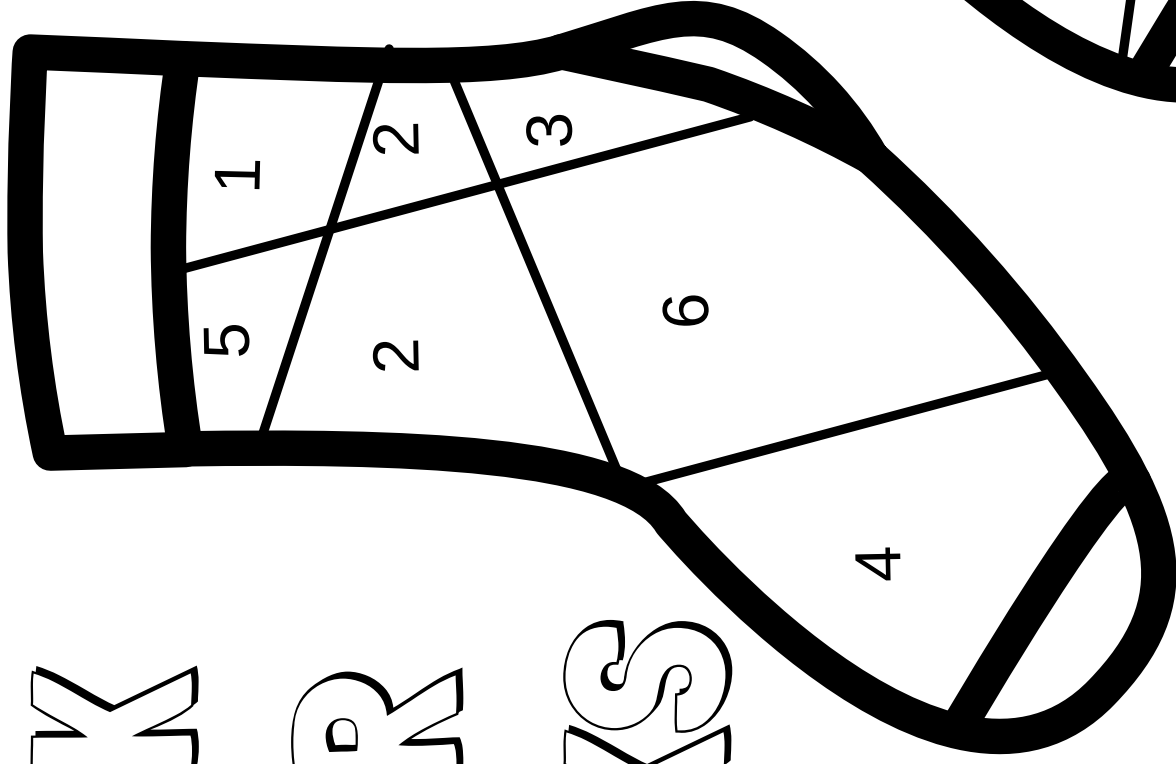
# 21 facts about Down syndrome:

1. Down syndrome is the most common chromosomal disorder.
2. Down syndrome affects about 1 in every 700 babies.
3. There are about 400,000 people with Down syndrome living in the United States.
4. Down syndrome is named after John Langdon Down, who discovered it in 1828.
5. People with Down syndrome have an extra copy of the 21st chromosome.
6. People with Down syndrome have 47 instead of 46 chromosomes.
7. People with Down syndrome are great friends.
8. People with Down syndrome love to be included.
9. Even if someone with Down syndrome can't talk much, they can understand a lot.
10. People with Down syndrome have "low muscle tone" - it's harder for their muscles to work.
11. People with Down syndrome hate hearing the words "retard/ed" even if it's not said to them or even about a person.
12. If you were born with Down syndrome, you will always have it, and that's ok!
13. There is no cure, but doctors, scientists, therapists, and teachers work to help people with Down syndrome to reach their full potential.
14. Down syndrome is not a disease and it's not contagious.
15. Many people with Down syndrome have health complications.
16. People with Down syndrome need more time to process what someone is saying. Be patient!
17. Some people with DS use pictures or sign language to communicate.
18. Students with Down syndrome can succeed in regular education classes with support.
19. People with Down syndrome have all the same emotions that you have.
20. People with DS can go to college, work, and have a full life.
21. You do not need to feel sorry for someone with Down syndrome - it's not a bad thing!



**DOWN SYNDROME  
OF LOUISVILLE**  
SERVING LOCALLY, SHARING GLOBALLY

# ROCK YOUR SOCKS





# Rock Your Socks Key

Answer each question. Then, match the number of the question to the number on your sock.  
Fill in that area with the color of the answer you picked

**1** What is your favorite type of Pet ?

Dog- Red    Fish- Yellow  
Cat- Blue    Other- Orange

**2** What is your hair color ?

Black- Green    Brown- Red  
Blonde-Pink    Other- Blue

**3** What is your eye color ?

Blue- Black    Green- Yellow  
Brown- Red    Other- Purple

**4** How many siblings do you have ?

0- Brown                  2- blue  
1- Yellow                3+- Gray

**5** How old are you?

5- Pink                  7- Orange  
6- Green                Other- Red

**6** Which subject in school do you like best?

Math- Green    Reading- Red  
Science- Yellow    Other- Pink

**7** What is your favorite Season?

Winter- Blue    Summer- Red  
Spring- Purple    Fall- Yellow

**8** Are you left handed, or right handed?

Left -Green  
Right- Blue

**9** I would rather Play Inside or Outside ?

Inside- Red  
Outside- Orange

**10** What is your favorite dessert ?

Cake-Pink    Ice Cream- Red  
Cookie- Blue    Other- Orange

**11** What is your favorite sport?

Football- Red    Soccer- Yellow  
Tennis- Blue    Other- Orange

**12** What is your favorite type of Pet ?

Dog- Red    Fish- Yellow  
Cat- Blue    Other- Orange

**All About**

\_\_\_\_\_ **'s Rockin' Socks**

**Movie:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Music:**\_\_\_\_\_

**T.V. Show**\_\_\_\_\_ **Place:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Sport:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Food:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Book:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Color:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Other:**\_\_\_\_\_



**All About**

\_\_\_\_\_ **'s Rockin' Socks**

**Movie:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Music:**\_\_\_\_\_

**T.V. Show**\_\_\_\_\_ **Place:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Sport:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Food:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Book:**\_\_\_\_\_ **Color:**\_\_\_\_\_

**Other:**\_\_\_\_\_



Draw self-portrait and answer the About Me questions. With a partner or using the included student with Down syndrome example compare and contrast using Venn diagram.

self portrait

# About Me

Name

age

eye color

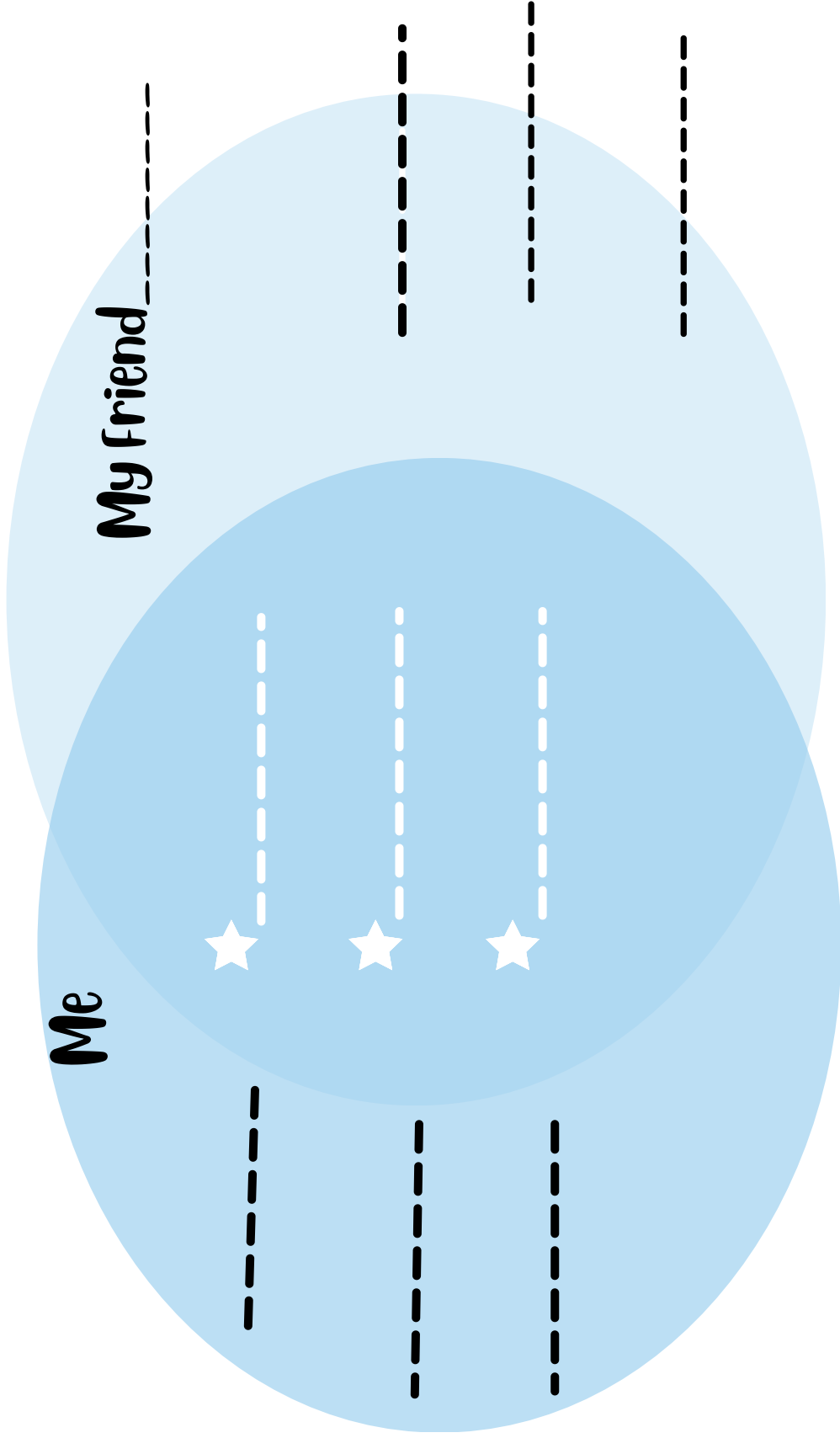
hair color

Favorite Food

Favorite movie

Favorite Sport

# Venn Diagram



## Tips for Being a Friend to Someone with Down syndrome

Everyone needs friends! People with Down syndrome are no different! They want to be included in everything just like you. They might need your help at times like remembering to share, taking turns, or giving space. There will be times they cannot keep up in classwork or on the playground. When that happens just be patient and don't leave them behind.

Here is a list of ways to include someone with Down syndrome

- Invite them to your party
- Hang out with them at recess.
- Go to the movies with them.
- Walk to class with them.
- Show them how to do things.
- Talk to them.
- Wait for them!
- Eat lunch with them.
- Learn some simple sign language
- Stick up for them if someone picks on them.
- Use kind words.
- Learn their name.
- Look for things you have in common.
- Pick them for your team.

# Just Like You Video/open Discussion Guide

Something I learned!

This surprised me!

My views on inclusion.

Questions I have about  
Down syndrome.

Self Connection

How can I ...?





# **WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY**

**MARCH 21ST**



