DOWN SYNDROME Awareness

Activities and lessons to teach about acceptance, friendship and DOWN SYNDROME
This specific product is near and dear to my heart. My son (Anthony) was born with Down syndrome. I hope by using this you are able to help me spread awareness and acceptance!
# Down Syndrome

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I Know</td>
<td>What I want to know</td>
<td>What I learned</td>
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Chromosomes are tiny thread-like structures inside your body. Within each chromosome there are hundreds of genes. Genes determine everything about you! They hold the instructions to make you who you are. Genes decide things like gender, hair color, eye color, skin color, height, etc. While you grow, and throughout your life, your chromosomes will continue to make you a unique individual. Most people are born with 46 chromosomes (23 pairs).
Individuals with Down syndrome are born with an extra copy of their 21st chromosome. So, they have 47 chromosomes, instead of 46.
In 1866, an English physician named John Langdon Down published work describing the characteristics of Down syndrome. The syndrome was then named after the physician.
You cannot “catch” Down syndrome. Everyone who has Down syndrome was born with it and will always have it. People from all around the world are born with Down syndrome regardless of gender, race, or economic status.

One in every 691 babies in the US is born with Down syndrome. There are over 400,000 people living in the US with Down syndrome today.
People with Down syndrome are more alike than different! They can accomplish many of the same things you can, it just may take them a little more time.

Having Down syndrome does not limit what an individual can do. They can attend school, work, participate in decisions that affect them, and contribute to society in many wonderful ways.
Different Is Beautiful

A mini-book about Down syndrome, friendship, and acceptance

We are all the same in some ways, and different in some ways too.

Our differences make us special.
Meet Anthony. Look at the pictures, what do you both have in common? What is different?

We all have a lot of things in **common**, for example we have two eyes, skin, and hair. But, even though these things are the same, they might be **different** colors.
Every person can learn, but we all learn in different ways. Something that might be easy for you to do could be hard for another person. It’s okay to need a little extra help or practice sometimes!

All About Anthony

Age: 2
Eye Color: Brown
Hair Color: Brown

What is he really good at?: Using sign language to talk. He knows over 60 signs.
What does he need more practice with?: Jumping
Imagine you were born with instructions. Your body followed those instructions to make you exactly who you are today. Those little instructions inside you are called your **genes**. You have 46 of them. They told your body what color to make your hair, eyes, and skin. Your genes also decided how tall you would be.

**All About You**

Age: ______________

Eye Color: ______________

Hair Color: ______________

What are you really good at?:

What do you need more practice with?:

**What makes me ME?**

Imagine you were born with instructions. Your body followed those instructions to make you exactly who you are today. Those little instructions inside you are called your **genes**. You have 46 of them. They told your body what color to make your hair, eyes, and skin. Your genes also decided how tall you would be.
Anthony was born with 47 genes, or instructions. That’s one more than you! When you have 47 genes, you have something called **DOWN SYNDROME**. Anthony was born with Down syndrome, and he will have it forever. Just like you were born with your certain eye and skin color that you will have forever.

Sometimes having one more set of instructions makes it a little confusing for a person’s body to understand. People with Down syndrome might have a hard time talking, or using their muscles the way you do. It may even take a little longer for them to learn something that seems easy to you.
Anthony gets the extra help he needs from teachers called therapists. He works with a **Physical Therapist** to get his big muscles strong. The **Occupational Therapist** helps with the little muscles, and his **Speech Therapist** teaches him how to use the muscles in his mouth to talk.

Even though Anthony has Down syndrome, he is still **just like any other kid!** He is smart, silly, caring, and loves to play.
All of our differences make the world beautiful.

Anthony has many friends, with and without Down syndrome. They love playing together.

Remember that we all have things in common. Next time you see someone playing alone, ask them to play!
Discussion Cards

Use these cards to start discussions about Down syndrome and acceptance either as a whole class, or in small groups.

**Did you know anything about Down syndrome before today? Do you know anyone that has Ds?**

**After learning about DS, what will you do differently now in school, or in your community?**

**What is something new you learned about Down syndrome today?**

**Why is it important to make sure everyone is included?**
Discussion Cards

Use these cards to start discussions about Down syndrome and acceptance either as a whole class, or in small groups.

Do you think the world would be better if everyone was the exact same, or if everyone was unique? Why?

How can you teach others about Down syndrome?

How did you feel when you watched the video, or read the book, about DS?

Did any of the information about Down syndrome surprise you?
Wonderful Resources to use
VIDEOS AND BOOKS

1. **Video “Just Like You Down Syndrome”**

   This video is narrated by a few teenagers, some with Down syndrome and some without. These pairs of friends talk about what they have in common, and what makes them different. The video has a great lasting impact on students, and is also informational.

   - http://www.justlikeyou-downsyndrome.org
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4p9GyWXWcw

2. **Video “Cyndi Lauper - True Colors (MattyBRaps Cover ft Olivia Kay)”**

   This is a music video cover preformed by MattyB, a young rapper. MattyB’s sister has Down syndrome, and is the star (and inspiration) of this video. It touches upon relevant issues such as bullying and acceptance.

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXmaE0041Y0&index=3&list=PL7D474167C2B4070D

3. **Book or Video “My Friend Isabelle” – Eliza Woloson**

   This story focuses on the friendship between two kids. Throughout the story the characters talk about what they like to do that is the same, and different. The little girl in the story has Down syndrome, but it is not mentioned. I found a video on YouTube of the story being read and animated. At the end of the video the actual mother (and author) from the story talks about her daughter with Down syndrome.

   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEB2bk29AMQ

4. **More Books About Down syndrome:**

   - *The Prince Who Was Just Himself* by Silke Schnee
   - *We’ll Paint the Octopus Red* by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen
   - *47 Strings: Tessa’s Special Code* by Becky Carey
1. List three things you learned about Down syndrome from watching this video:
   *
   *
   *

2. How many chromosomes does a person with Down syndrome have?

3. How did this video make you feel?

4. Did this video change how you view individuals with Down syndrome?

Did you like this video? ❌ NO ✔️ YES
1. What do you think the message of this video is?

2. How do you think the girl felt when no one wanted to play with her?

3. After watching this video, what did you learn?

4. What will you do now to make sure no one feels left out?

Did you like this video?  

Did you like this video?  

Did you like this video?  

Did you like this video?  

Did you like this video?
My Friend Isabelle
By: Eliza Woloson

BOOK REVIEW

How did this story make you feel?

_________________

_________________

Draw the main characters

Isabelle

Charlie

Isabelle and Charlie are best friends. In some ways they are the same, and in some ways they are different.

How were they the SAME?

1. 

2. 

How were they DIFFERENT?

1. 

2. 

Do you think it is okay for friends to have differences?

NO

YES
Draw your favorite part of the story.

How did this story make you feel?

What do you think the message of this story was?

Were there any characters with Down syndrome in the story? If so, what were they like?

Did you like this story?

Why, or why not?
How to Introduce and Use the Random Act of Kindness Worksheets and Cards

A popular way to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day is to spread awareness through random acts of kindness. I wanted to involve students in this movement too. Students will receive one (or more) “Random Act of Kindness Card”. They will use the “My Super Ideas” brainstorming page to think of a great way to hand their card out. When the student performs the act of kindness, they hand the card out to the individual receiving the act. A great pay-it-forward activity!

Here are a few examples of how you can get your students involved in this wonderful activity:

- Have students create get well cards for local hospitals.
- Create handmade thank you gifts for custodians, receptionists or cafeteria workers at school.
- Hand out flowers/happy notes to people who pass by your classroom.
- Hold the door open in a busy section of school.
- Give someone a nice compliment.
- Send a thank you note to service members.
- Give a birthday note to someone in school.
- Leave a kind note or small gift on another student or teacher’s desk.
MY SUPER Ideas

A random act of kindness
Congratulations!

I chose YOU to receive this random act of kindness in honor of spreading Down syndrome awareness!

Have a wonderful day, and remember that we are all more alike than different!

Congratulations!

I chose YOU to receive this random act of kindness in honor of spreading Down syndrome awareness!

Have a wonderful day, and remember that we are all more alike than different!

Congratulations!

I chose YOU to receive this random act of kindness in honor of spreading Down syndrome awareness!

Have a wonderful day, and remember that we are all more alike than different!
MY RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS

Write about how you used your kindness card. How did it make you feel?
The following five worksheets are all differentiated for different grades/levels of understanding. Each worksheet’s main idea is to get the students talking to one another. They will hopefully start a conversation with someone they have not talked to a lot before. These worksheets are also a great way to demonstrate that even though we are all different, we share similarities too.

The “My Profile” Worksheet

Students fill out this worksheet about themselves first. They also draw a self portrait in the “selfie” box. Then, they will get with a partner to fill out the venn diagram with their answers.
My Profile

My name: __________________________
Age: __________________________
Eye color: __________________________
Hair color: __________________________

Selfie

About Me

MY FAVORITE:
Color: __________________________
Sport: __________________________
Food: __________________________
Animal: __________________________
Subject: __________________________
TV Show: __________________________
Musician: __________________________
Season: __________________________

My dream job: __________________________

3 things I want you to know about me:
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________
Use the Venn-Diagram to compare and contrast the information you found out about you and your partner.
Answer yes or no to the statements below under “you”. Then, interview a partner and fill it out with their answers. What do you have in common?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>You</th>
<th>Partner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can ride a bike</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can swim</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live in an apartment</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a sister</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a dog</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like football</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to read books</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to draw</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play video games</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a brother</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like bugs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like the color yellow</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like to play tag</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Been to the beach</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a collection of something</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Take turns talking with your partner. Tell them about yourself (what you like, don’t like, are scared of, are talented in…etc), and then listen as they do the same. Write or draw things about your partner in the circle below. Pick out something you have in common as your connection.

About My Partner

OUR CONNECTION:

Draw a picture of you and your partner, include your connection.
Ask your partner if they like the things below. If they do, color in the happy face. If they do not like it, color in the sad face. Look at both papers when you’re finished.

What do you have in common?

- dogs
- broccoli
- purple
- drawing
- snakes
- books
- swimming
- playing tag
- math
- snow

Your Name: 
Partner’s Name: 

Draw a picture of you and your partner.
HOW TO INTRODUCE AND USE THE
SPEECH AND FINE MOTOR WORKSHEETS

SPEECH

Imagine how hard it would be if you had something you wanted to say, but you couldn’t get the words out just right. Some individuals with Down syndrome have oral low muscle tone. This means the muscles in the mouth are weak which makes it harder to do things like eat and talk. Sometimes it might be difficult to understand what that person is trying to say. Speech therapy helps strengthen the muscles with a variety of oral exercises.

This worksheet will demonstrate the difficulties that some individuals face when trying to communicate. You will need to have 1 marshmallow per student for this activity. Partner up your students, explain the worksheet, and hand out the marshmallows (check for allergies!). Students will take turns putting the marshmallow in their mouth to talk. The marshmallow acts as the enlarged tongue of an individual with DS, and will show your students why it might be difficult to understand them.

FINE MOTOR

People with Down syndrome may have trouble with fine motor skills. This could include things such as tying their shoes, grabbing a fork to eat, zipping a jacket, or writing with a pencil. They do exercises to help strengthen their fine motor muscles in order to accomplish everyday tasks. The following activity will demonstrate how some individuals have to work hard to do things that may come easy to you. Each student will need a pencil and a sock. They will try to write with a sock on their hand which will show how it feels to write with less control.
1. Put the marshmallow in your mouth. Do not chew.
2. Turn to a partner and talk about your favorite thing to do.
3. When it is your partner’s turn to talk, write down what you heard in the box below.

I THINK MY PARTNER SAID....

4. Was it easy or hard to understand your partner?

5. How did you feel talking with a marshmallow in your mouth?

6. After doing this activity, what will you do differently to better understand someone who has a difficult time speaking?
1. Write the following sentence in the box below.

This is tricky!

2. Put a sock on your hand. Now, write the sentence again.

3. How did it feel to write with a sock on your hand?
A universal way to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day and to spread awareness is an event called “Rock Your Socks”. To participate, you must wear bright, mismatched socks on 3/21 (the date of World Down Syndrome Day). However, this activity can be implemented any day of the year to teach students the importance of diversity and acceptance. The socks are used as a conversation starter. When someone asks why you are wearing crazy socks, you can reply “I am rocking my socks to spread Down syndrome awareness and to advocate for acceptance and inclusion.”

The following pages are activities to do that correlate with the event “Rock Your Socks”. These are my two favorite ways to present the activity:

1. Students will all decorate the blank sock template exactly the same. When students are finished, you can ask them if this is how they would have decorated their socks on their own. Then you could start a discussion—Would it be fun to live in a world where everyone was exactly the same, and did everything in the exact same way? After the discussion you can let the students be creative and decorate new socks to represent their personality.

2. Students will decorate their blank sock template (two differentiated sheets provided). They can color it as they choose, or decorate it with symbols that represent their favorite things (favorite movie, t.v show, sport, book, music, place to go, food, color). Hang the finished socks up, so students can see the similarities and differences of everyone in their class. I also provided a half-page label for the finished sock product to explain their drawing. It can be stapled to the socks if you’re hanging them up.
On ____________ , our class is going to learn about Down syndrome. Please remind your child to wear bright, mismatched socks on this day. The funky socks will serve as a conversation starter to spread awareness and knowledge about Down syndrome.
Rock Your Socks
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: __________________________
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Kelsey Mango
MANGO DESIGNS

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