

BUILDING A MORE INCLUSIVE WORLD

Talking to Children About Disabilities



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Welcome!

Goals of this presentation

1. To provide a framework for parents to speak with children about their own diagnosis and disabilities.
2. To provide a framework for having respectful and responsible discussions about the different disabilities we see around us.
3. To be a valuable resource as we work together to build an accessible school community.

Why should parents have
these conversations?

A child's disability is just one part of who they are as a person

A child is a child first.

Their disability does not define them.



**Having an understanding of their disability
can reduce a child's fears.**

When questions go unanswered, a child
may draw their own conclusions.

A child's own fears about a situation
Are often far worse than the reality.



By speaking to children, parents can ensure they have a positive perspective

A parent telling their child about their disability is always better than someone else telling them.

Parents can ensure information is shared accurately, positively, and in a developmentally appropriate way.



Knowing about their disability increases a
child's participation in therapy and
acceptance of strategies to help them



Having conversations about your child's disability, as well as their strengths, promotes self-awareness and advocacy skills.



When should parents have these conversations?

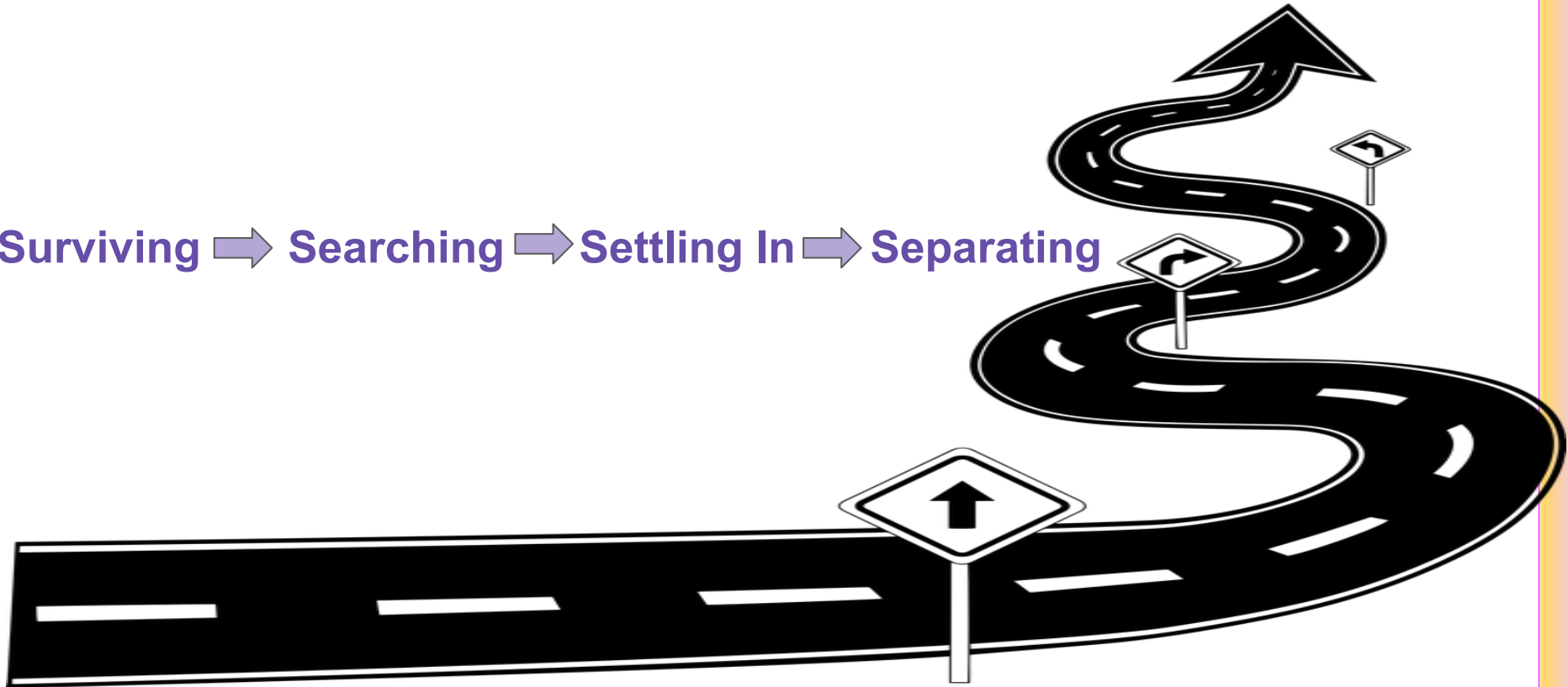
There is no one “right time.”

These are not “one and done” conversations

Conversations will change over time as your child grows and develops

Where is your family on this journey?

Surviving ➡ Searching ➡ Settling In ➡ Separating



Taking your cue from your child

Is your child asking questions?

Are they noticing differences between themselves and others?



Talk about your child's disability from day one

Making the word for your child's diagnosis part of your everyday vocabulary can help your child accept that it is just part of who they are and part of your life together.

Talk about each family member's unique qualities.



Have a positive, neutral attitude around similarities and differences

Involving your child in the diagnostic process



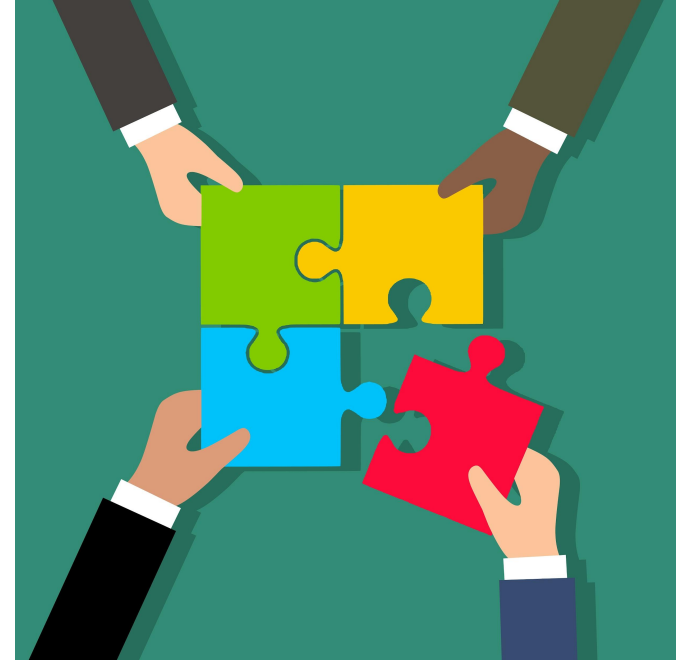
How to talk to children about
their diagnosis

What to share? How to share

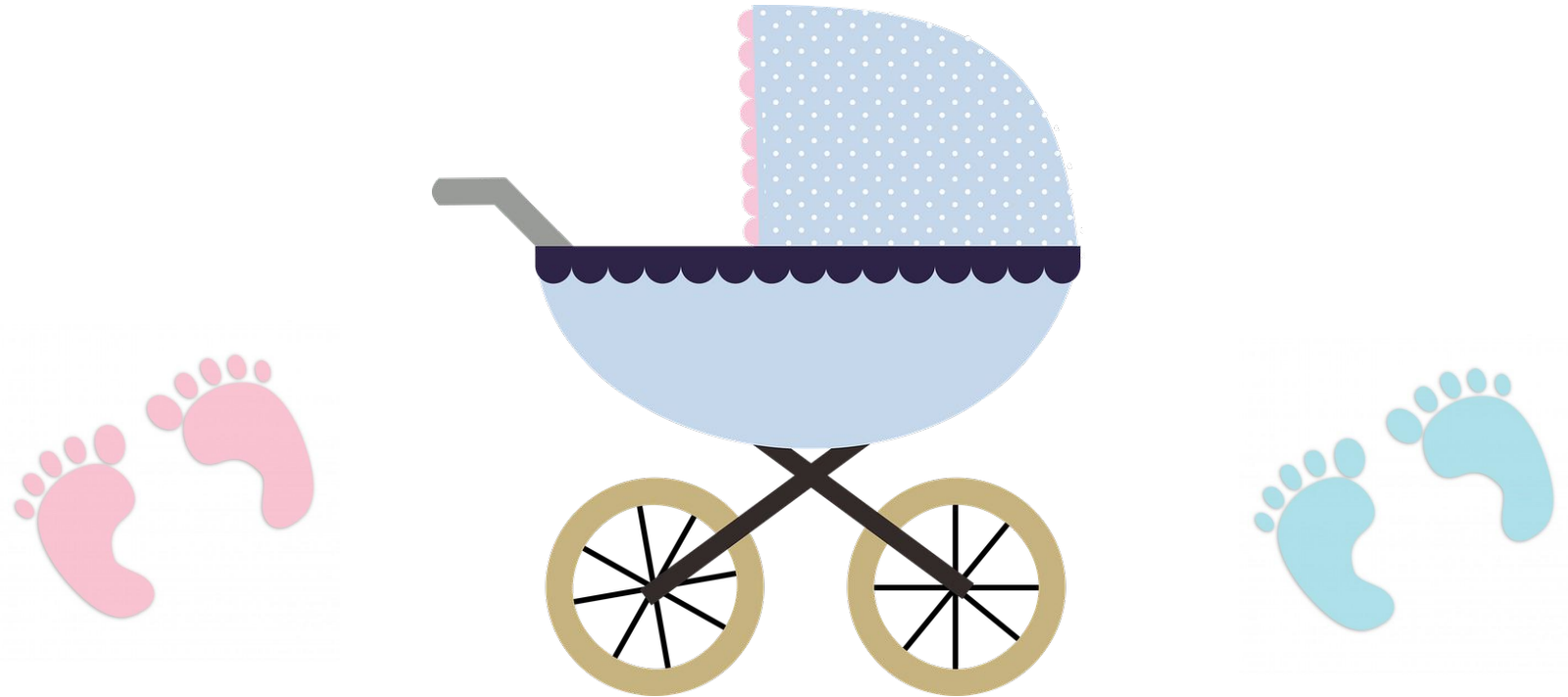
Target the information to your child's developmental level



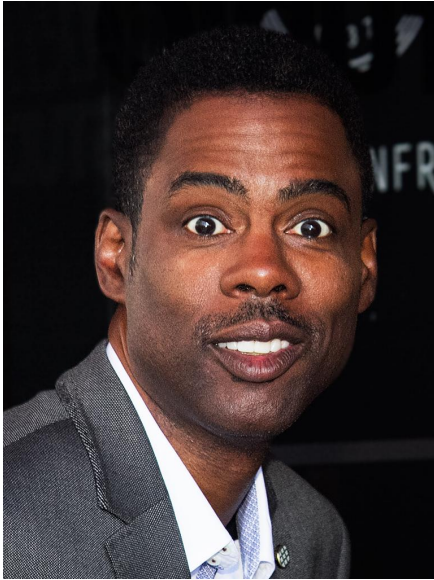
Be positive by highlighting strengths and abilities



Your child was born with their disability



Your child is not alone



- Talk about who is helping your child
- Invite your child to ask questions



Who can support parents in having these conversations?

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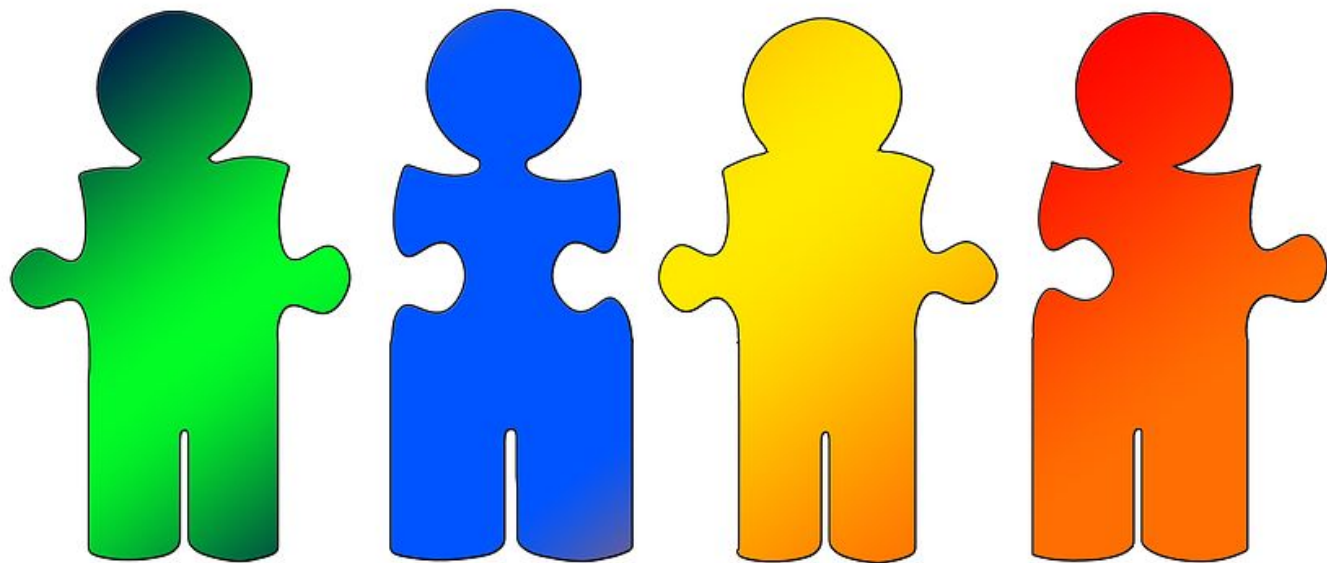


With whom do you want to
share your child's diagnosis?

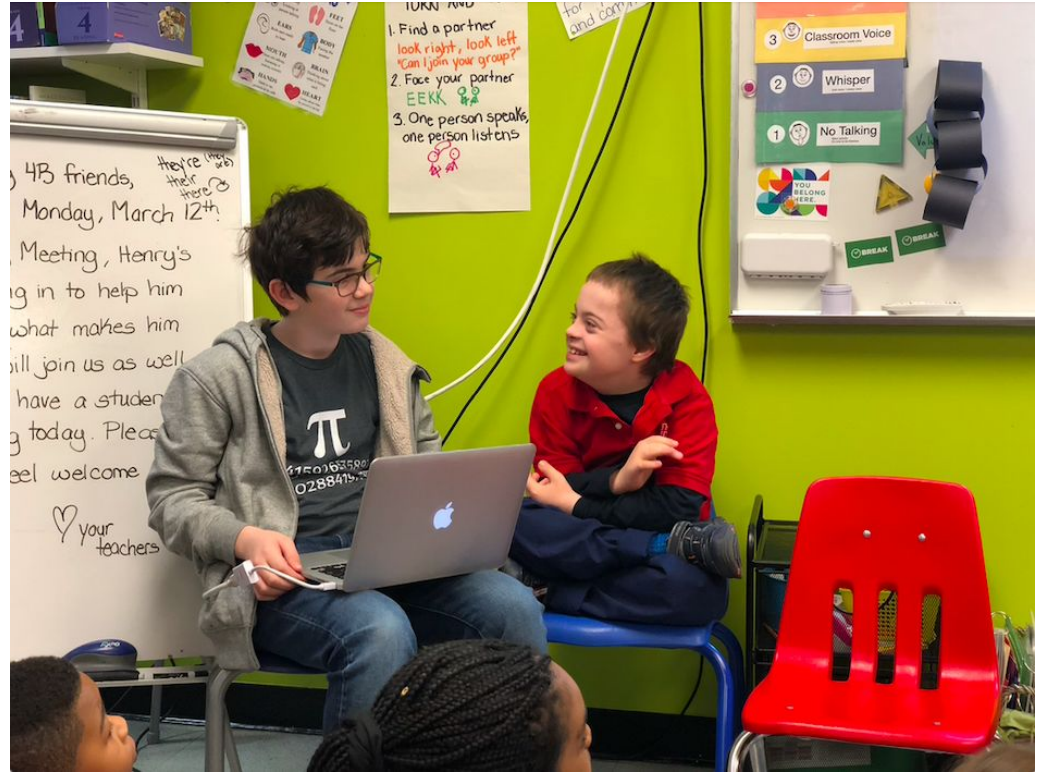
Extended Family



Friends



Classmates



I am EXTRA special!

By Henry Connolly

4B



I am special in many ways.



I can sing all the songs from Beauty and the Beast.



I have seen *Addy and Uno* SEVEN times, and all the actors know who I am!



I am really good at Street Fighter IV.



I know all the guests from *The Muppet Show*, seasons 1-3



I love the Minions!



I am an excellent brother.



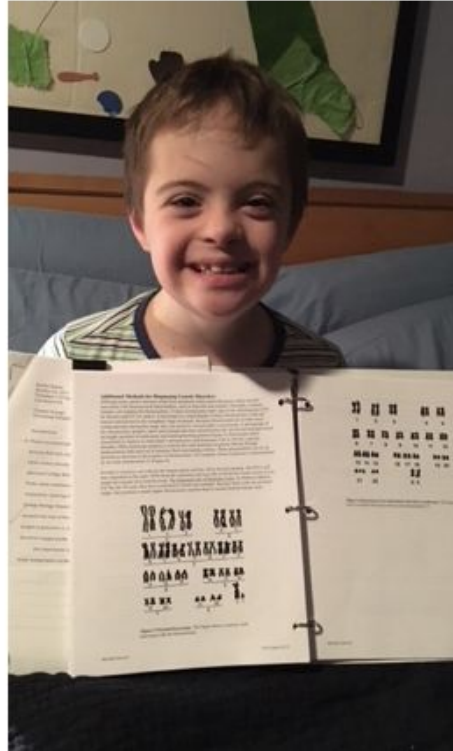
I like to swim...



...and I like to cook.

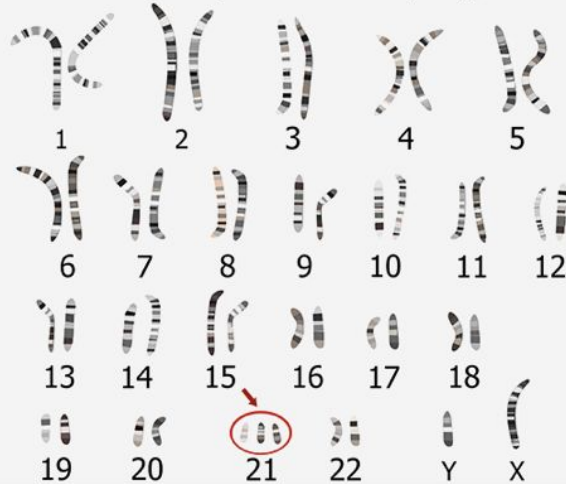


Another way I am special is that I have
Down syndrome.

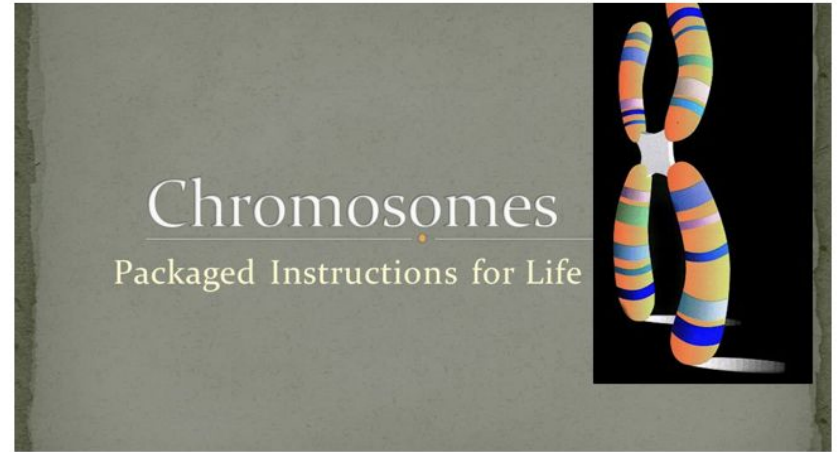


Down syndrome means that I have an extra chromosome.

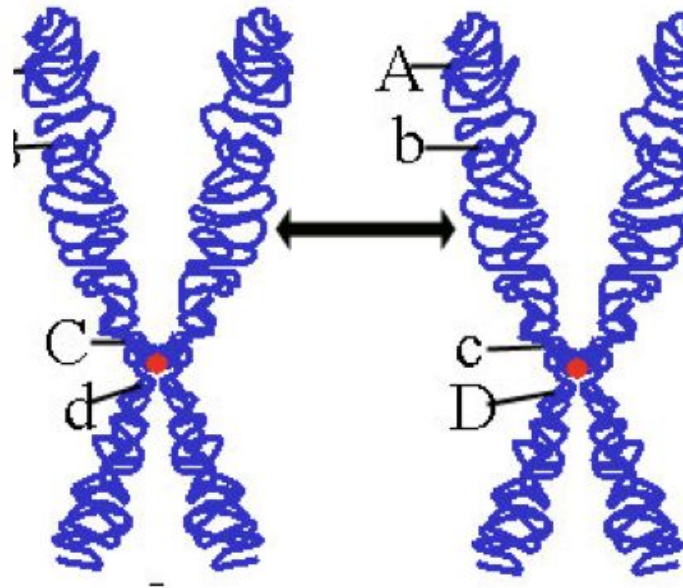
Down syndrome karyotype



Chromosomes are instructions that tell your body how to grow and develop.



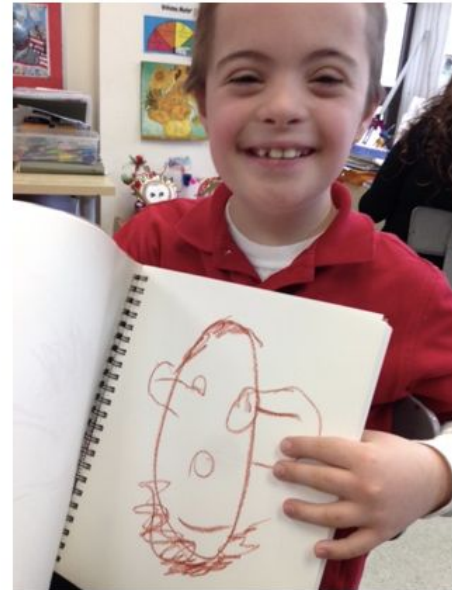
Chromosomes come in pairs.



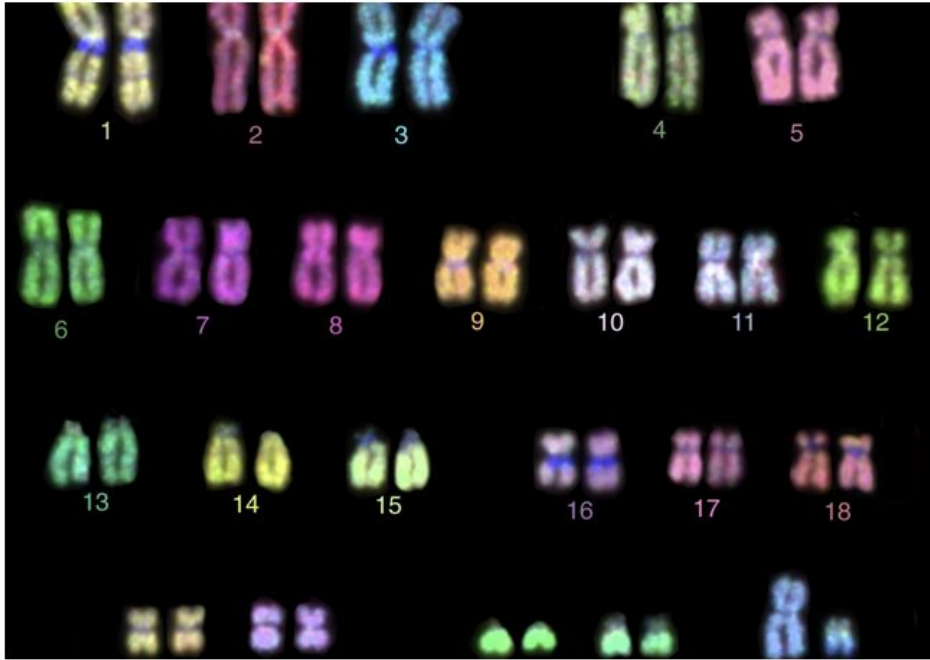
One of each pair comes from my mom...



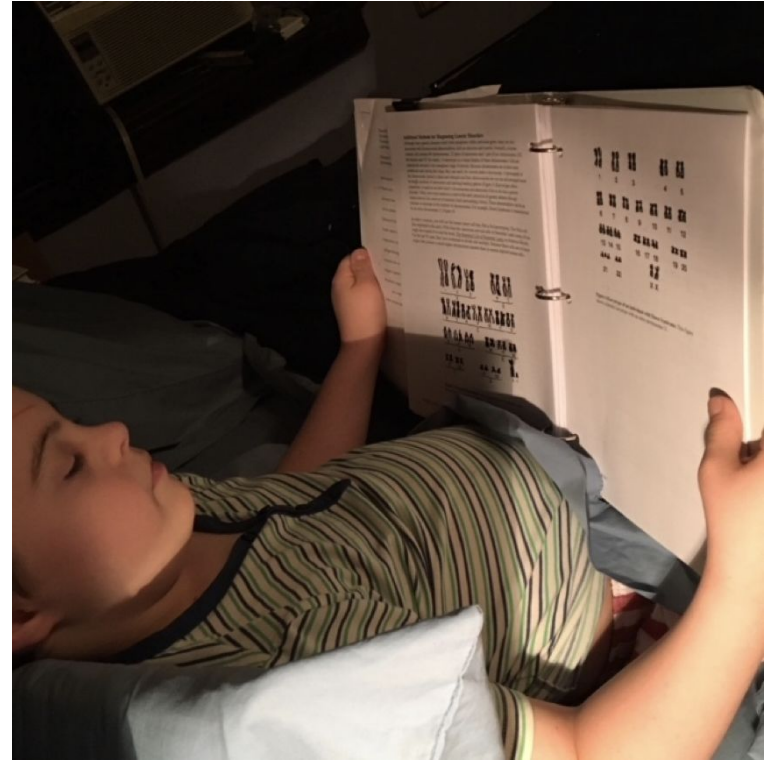
...and one comes from my dad.



Most people have 46 chromosomes.



...but I have 47!



In most ways, I am just like you.



I go to school.



I have friends.



I love dogs, chocolate, and weekends.



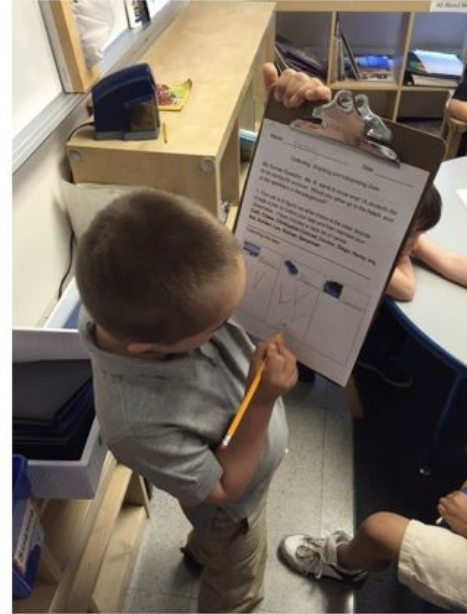
I also love my family.



Having Down syndrome means that I
need extra help with some things.



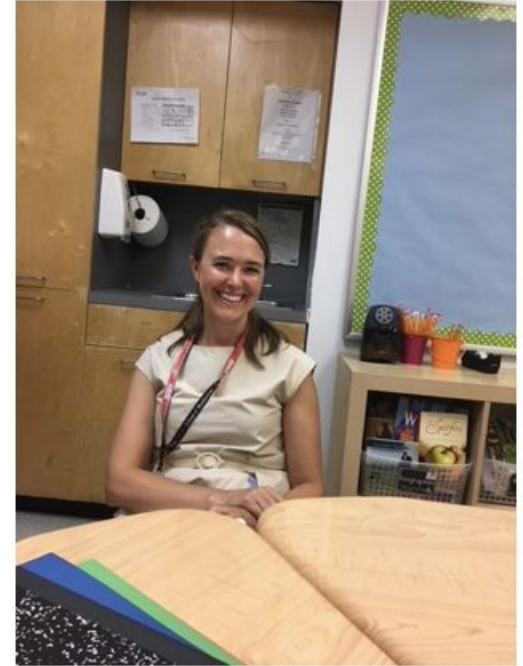
It takes me extra time to learn.



I need extra help with speech.



I need extra help to grow strong.



Sometimes I need extra reminders to help me behave and to be a role model.



I am also extra funny...



...extra happy...



...and extra lovable!



Thank you for listening to my story!



How we support students with disabilities at IDEAL

- Therapists collaborate with teachers and faculty.
- Encourage conversations
- Proactive planning to make school events more accessible
- Proactive planning to make field trips more accessible
- Representation of disabilities in the classroom
- Ongoing collaboration with the Director of Diversity
- Students having access to technology and therapists that support their learning and individualized needs



Questions and comments

