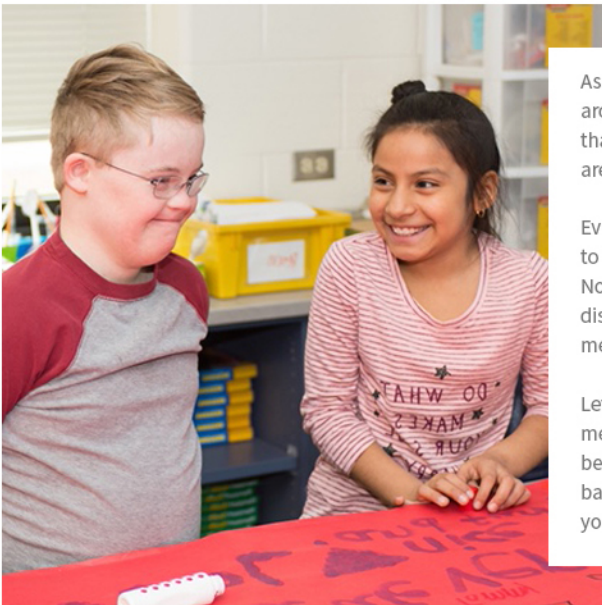




THE NORA PROJECT

...because everyone has a story.

Teaching empathy. **Sparking friendships.**



As Program Director for The Nora Project (TNP), I'm particularly energized by educators from around the country who express interest in bringing TNP to their schools. It's thrilling to report that we are at capacity for the 2018-2019 school year, and applications to become TNP schools are still coming in each and every day.

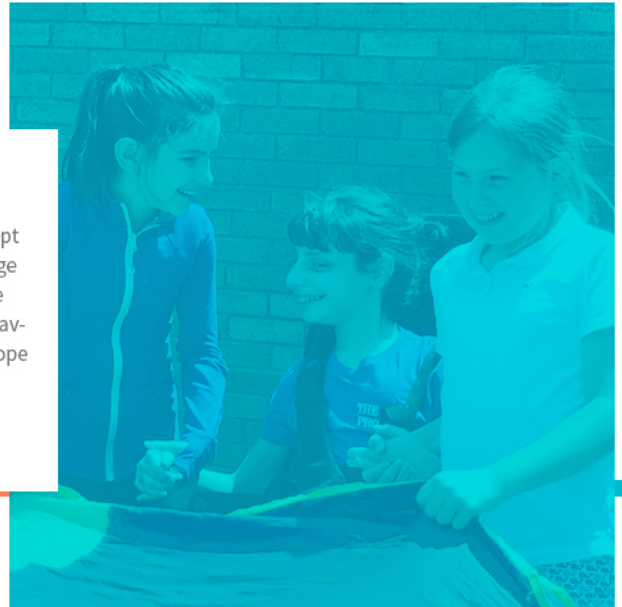
Even though we can't accommodate any more official classroom participants this year, we want to share some of our favorite resources with anyone who is interested in the mission of The Nora Project: teaching empathy by sparking friendships between students and their peers with disabilities. On our newly redesigned website, interested educators, parents, and community members will find free, Shared Resources on the [Use Our Resources](#) page.

Let's take a tour of these Shared Resources! There, you'll find three lessons and three supplemental resources that will help you to introduce the concept of Empathy, teach students about best practices for inclusion of people with disabilities, the importance of storytelling, and a bank of resources for spreading kindness and tolerance in schools and beyond. We encourage you to test out these resources in your classrooms or with your children at home.



LESSON: Defining Empathy

In this lesson, students are encouraged to share what they already know about the concept of empathy. They explore a variety of resources to expand their understanding and engage in discussion with their peers. Students work together to co-construct a definition for the term that is posted in their classroom the entire year. Research shows that children's behavior conforms to what they tell themselves about who they are and what they value. We hope that by setting a class mission to be kind, inclusive, and helpful to one another, your students will treat each other with respect in the spirit of friendship.



LESSON: Engaging in Empathy Activities

Once students have defined empathy, they take their learning a step further by engaging in interactive empathy activities with their peers. A central component of empathy is perspective-taking--using your moral imagination to stand in another's shoes. Research shows that role playing activities that allow children to experience the world differently help them flex their perspective-taking muscles.

Our bank of empathy activities provides students with challenges that will require them to think creatively and work as a team to accomplish everyday tasks. In doing so, they'll consider what it might be like to face the world with a disability, and they'll also see the importance of working together to overcome challenges. After participating, students will debrief and reflect as a group about how it feels to give and accept help. Later, they will reflect in writing on their own about how this experience impacts what they know about what it means to be a good friend.

LESSON: Why is Storytelling Important?

In this lesson, students consider the Essential Question: Why do we share our stories with others? They learn that everyone has a story to tell, and that we share our stories because it helps us understand and relate to how others experience the world. Students reflect on what they would hope to see if a documentary were made about them, telling their own personal story. Recognizing that we all have challenges and strengths, likes and dislikes, and interesting backgrounds and goals for the future is a central component of empathy--identifying and connecting with others based on what we have in common





RESOURCE: Kindness Library

Curated by TNP teachers and our volunteer Librarian, the Kindness Library offers a bank of recommended resources that educators and parents can use to spark dialogue about kindness, empathy, tolerance, inclusion and disability awareness.

We recommend that in addition to discussion, you encourage your students to reflect on themes about finding common ground and what it means to be good friend, so that students have an opportunity to reinforce their learning and extend it to their relationships within and outside the classroom.

RESOURCE: Disability Resource Guide

At The Nora Project, one of our goals is to share information in kid-friendly language so that students can learn about their peers with disabilities. We believe that talking about disabilities helps students understand them, which in turn makes them feel more comfortable when they encounter a child with a disability.

We're all just people after all! The Disability Resource Guide includes student-friendly resources that provide information about a range of disabilities and diagnoses. Also included is a guide to Adaptive Equipment that students might encounter when they interact with their peers with disabilities. We want students to know there's nothing to be afraid of, and that they should feel as comfortable approaching a child with disabilities as they would any friend.



RESOURCE: Best Practices for Inclusion

A major facet of The Nora Project curriculum involves hosting students with disabilities in the general education classroom so that students can develop authentic, lasting relationships. The Best Practices for Inclusion document can be used to prepare students to be caring, respectful hosts to their peers with disabilities and to all people.

It includes a chapter on how to talk about disabilities in a respectful fashion, how to adapt your classroom and activities to be welcoming and inclusive, and even provides examples of activities students and their peers with disabilities can do together. It also includes a [lesson plan](#) which provides a suggested structure for introducing your students to person first language.



We

hope you find these lessons and resources helpful! If you have any questions, send them to me, Katy, at katy@thenoraproject.ngo. And let us know how it goes with this [feedback form](#)—whether the resources work great or you have ideas for how we can improve them, we want to hear from you!

Katy



The Nora Project is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization,
EIN 81-3216328.