

# ROCK YOUR SOCKS

for World Down Syndrome Day



## Why do we rock our socks on 3/21?

While most people are only born with 2, people with Down syndrome are born with 3 copies of their 21st chromosome--a piece of your genetic makeup that kind of looks like a sock!

While Down syndrome may affect how a person looks, speaks, or learns, they are actually more alike everyone else than they are different. People with Down syndrome go to college, have jobs, and marry. Some become actors or actresses, work on Capitol Hill in Washington DC, and even compete in the Olympics!

So help us raise awareness and show your support on World Down Syndrome Day by pulling on a unique pair of socks and saying hello to someone with Down syndrome!

World Down Syndrome Day is March 21st!  
Rock your most colorful, mismatched socks in celebration!

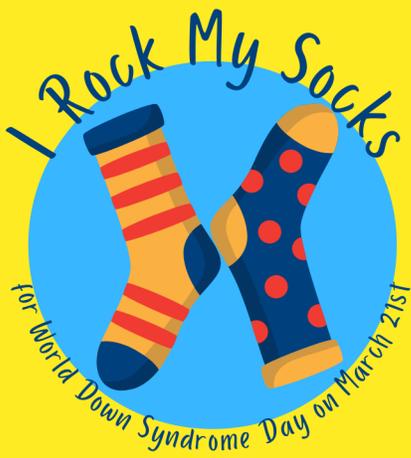


#RockYourSocks  
#WSDSwithDSAWM

[www.dsawm.org](http://www.dsawm.org)

  @dsawm

 @dsawestmi



World Down Syndrome Day is celebrated every year on 3/21 because people with Down syndrome are born with 3 copies of their 21st chromosome—a piece of your genetic makeup that kind of looks like a sock! Most people only have 2 21st chromosomes, so our friends with Down syndrome are rocking a little extra!

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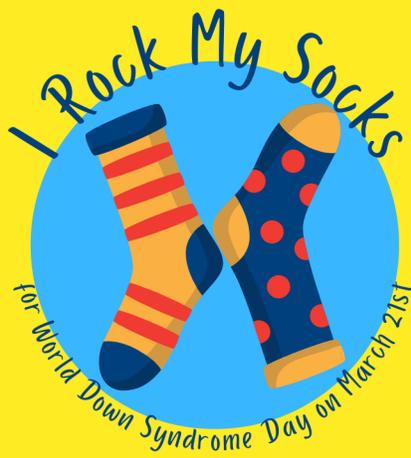
By rocking your colorful, mismatched socks on 3/21, you are helping to raise awareness and support the rights, inclusion, and well-being of people with Down syndrome.

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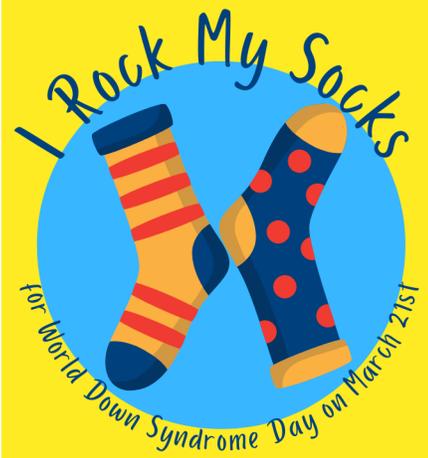
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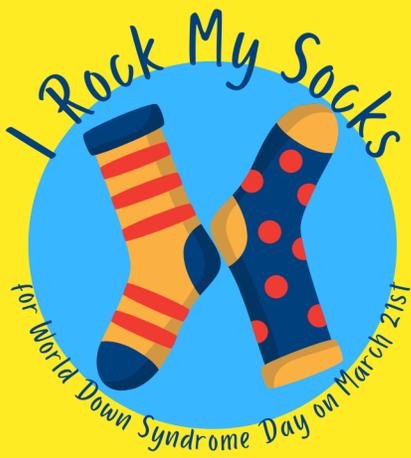
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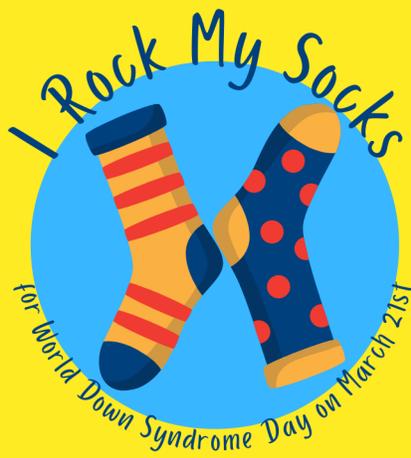
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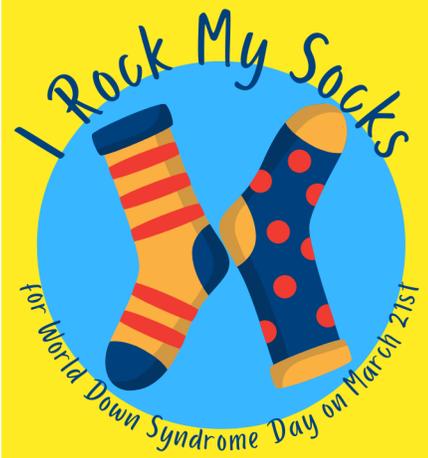
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# DOWN SYNDROME RESOURCES FOR THE CLASSROOM

## Books for Kids

- I Am Me by Katelyn Herrygers  
*also available in Spanish (Yo Soy Yo)*
- A Friend Like Anian by Meeka Caldwell
- We'll Paint the Octopus Red by Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen
- Taking Down Syndrome to School by Jenna Glatzer



## Tools for the Classroom

- DSAWM's "Simple Answers to Kids Not So Simple Questions" brochure helps educators explain Down syndrome to students and build a foundation for inclusion, friendship, and advocacy
- PA's Montgomery County Down Syndrome Interest Group has a thorough "Explaining Down Syndrome To Your Child's Class" toolkit on their website at [mcdsig.org/education](http://mcdsig.org/education)



#WSDwithDSAWM



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Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan  
*Empowering individuals. Supporting communities.*

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## Resources

Jenna Glatzer, *Taking Down Syndrome to School* (2002)

Jennifer Moore-Mallinos, *My Friend Has Down Syndrome* (2008)

Meeka Caldwell, *A Friend Like Anian* (2020)

Melanie Apel Gordon, *Let's Talk About Down Syndrome* (2003)

Nicole Juarez, *Hi! My Name Is Avery: The Beauty of Down Syndrome in the Classroom (Demystifying Special Needs)* (2017)

Stephanie Stuve-Bodeen, *We'll Paint the Octopus Red* (1998)

National Down Syndrome Society (ndss.org), *Q&A For Kids*



### Who is DSAWM?

The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan, or DSAWM, promotes public awareness and supports lifelong opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and their families across West Michigan. Learn more at [www.dsawm.org](http://www.dsawm.org).



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## Simple Answers to Kids' (not so simple) Questions About Down Syndrome

### Information to Encourage Friendships



"Thinking with your heart is how a friendship starts."  
- Winnie the Pooh, A.A. Milne



## Why Do I Need this Information?

This is an exciting time! Society is beginning to realize that most children with Down syndrome learn better when taught alongside typically developing kids.

Including children with disabilities in regular education classes, with appropriate classroom supports, enriches the learning experience for ALL children.

**But kids have questions.  
Parents have questions.**

For parents, “those” kids weren’t in our classes when we were in school, so we don’t have much information about their unique gifts and challenges.



### What is Down syndrome?

Down syndrome is something that causes differences in the way a person looks and learns. No two people with Down syndrome are quite the same, but they are often extra flexible

in their joints, have eyes that slant, have small ears and a small nose and grow more slowly than other kids. People with Down syndrome also tend to learn more slowly than others.

### Why is it called Down syndrome?

A doctor named John Landon Down was the first person to write about this condition. It’s not called Down syndrome because we should be “down” or depressed about it.

### Why do people have Down syndrome?

People with Down syndrome are born with one extra chromosome in some or all of their cells.

Chromosomes contain the directions that tell your body how to grow. These directions tell your body what color your eyes and hair will be, how big your nose will be, whether you will be a good singer, and many other things. When a person has an extra chromosome, it mixes up their body’s directions a little. That is why people with Down syndrome look a little different and have to try harder to learn. Nobody knows why some babies are born with Down syndrome, but we do know that it is nobody’s fault.

### Will Down syndrome go away?

No. Down syndrome is not a sickness. Most people with Down syndrome are very healthy, although nearly fifty percent are born with heart defects, most of which are corrected by surgery.

You cannot “catch” Down syndrome. The only way to get Down syndrome is to be born with it.

### Why can’t my friend with Down syndrome talk very well?

Many people with Down syndrome have trouble learning to talk. Many little kids first learn to communicate by using their hands in sign language. Kids with Down syndrome also benefit from having a teacher help them learn to talk (a speech and language pathologist), but the best teachers are often other kids.

If you know a person with Down syndrome and you don’t understand them, ask them to repeat themselves or show you what they mean. Just because a person with Down syndrome doesn’t talk to you doesn’t mean they don’t want to be your friend. They may just need extra time and extra help.

### Can people with Down syndrome learn?

Yes! People with Down syndrome can and do learn, but have to work much harder than others, and may need more time and extra help. Kids with

Down syndrome can participate in all school activities even though they may not learn everything.

### Do people with Down syndrome grow up?

Yes. In adulthood, many people with Down syndrome have jobs, go to college, live independently, and support their communities. People with Down syndrome bring to their jobs enthusiasm, reliability, and dedication.

### Do people who have Down syndrome have feelings?

Yes. Just like everyone, people with Down syndrome have feelings. They can feel happy, silly, sad, sorry, or upset, just like you. People with Down syndrome enjoy friends and family and can be hurt when someone teases or makes fun of them – just like you.

### Why does my friend with Down syndrome act differently than other kids?

People with Down syndrome have difficulty with language and talking. Many kids want to interact and play with their friends, but don’t know how, are afraid they won’t be understood, or afraid that they will be told, “No, you can’t play.” Some kids with Down syndrome get overwhelmed when too many things are going on at the same time.

### Can I help my friend?

Yes! Play and talk with people with Down syndrome. If they’re having trouble playing a game, give them time and extra help, or ask what game they want to play. Find out what your friend likes to do. Hang out together. You are much more alike than different!



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*Empowering individuals. Supporting communities.*

# 21 ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY

1.

Join the Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan from March 1-21 as we perform random acts of kindness in celebration of the spirit of World Down Syndrome Day

2.

Download and share the You Rock My Socks digital sticker and tag us using the hashtags #21for321 and #WSDSwithDSAWM when you complete an act of kindness

3.

Spread smiles and joy to friends and strangers as together we advocate for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of the Down syndrome community



Get the sticker!





#21for321  
#WDSDownwithDSAWM



**WORLD DOWN  
SYNDROME DAY  
3  21**



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SYNDROME DAY  
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**MORE ALIKE THAN DIFFERENT**  
DRAW YOUR SELF PORTRAIT IN THE MIRROR



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