

Whether you are a parent looking to have an in-depth conversation about disability culture with your child, or a teacher looking to add diversity to your curriculum, the My Dearest Friends Project can help.

The My Dearest Friends Project was founded by artist Oaklee Thiele and non-profit organization DisArt during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, we have collected, shared, and archived hundreds of stories from disabled people across the globe. Throughout history, the voices of disabled people have often been ignored. We want to change that! We hope that by documenting this moment in history, will help people to remember how those with disabilities were affected, for years to come. The project is particularly interested in preserving the voices of disabled children. However, we recognize that beginning those conversations can be somewhat difficult. As such, we have created worksheets to help guide children into creating their submissions and having conversations surrounding disability culture. Here are some ways you can introduce these important topics to your child:

K-3 Draw and Write How You Feel: Submission Sheet

This worksheet can be used to help K-3 students to navigate their thoughts and feelings about disability. Children in this age group tend to process the world through a creative lens, so the majority of the sheet is taken up by a space for them to create a drawing. You may wish to guide your students through the submission process, outlined in our call for youth submissions above, before beginning the worksheet.

Grade 5-8 Write Your Story: Submission Sheet

This worksheet can be used to help 5-8th grade students to navigate their thoughts and feelings about disability. It provides ample space for students to write about their experiences. You may wish to guide your students through the submission process, outlined in our call for youth submissions above, before beginning the worksheet. Although this worksheet does not include a space for art, students are encouraged to include a drawing with their submission.

Service Dog Coloring Page

This coloring sheet worksheet explains that service animals are animals trained to help people with disabilities. Children love learning that the only animals that can be service animals are dogs and miniature horses, for instance. In our experience, they also respond well to learning about the differences between emotional support animals, therapy animals, and service dogs. Playing guessing games about where each animal is allowed is a great way to teach kids the differences (for instance, only service animals are allowed in the grocery store!).

Invisible Disabilities Coloring Page

This worksheet tackles invisible disabilities. A wheelchair is a common symbol for disability. It appears everywhere--the media, books, even on accessible entrances and parking signs. Mobility aids should be celebrated, however, disability looks different for everyone and not every disabled person uses a mobility aid. It is important for children to remember that they cannot always see if someone is disabled-- They should be kind to everyone, and be aware that physical and mental differences cannot always be seen from the outside.