

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD IN NEURODIVERGENT PRIDE

## Getting Started

Parents, caregivers, and family members of autistic and neurodivergent children, the following information sheet is for you to use to develop a stronger understanding of what it means to support your child in finding pride in their neurodivergence. Use this sheet and the suggested articles to support your learning.

In this packet, there are also coloring sheets of the Insight Sprites. Share these with your child and [introduce them to each of the Sprites](#) using our blog at [www.bridgeslearningsystem.com](http://www.bridgeslearningsystem.com).

Stay tuned for more ways to access the SEA Bridge for you and your child.

## Supporting Your Autistic or Neurodivergent Child

In a world steeped in ableism, finding pride in one's neurodivergence is an uphill battle. And, doing so is a crucial part of developing a healthy, compassionate self-image as a neurodivergent person.

Supporting your child in finding pride in their neurodivergence includes:

- Treating them with the same dignity, curiosity, and presumption of competence that you treat all people with. This may be best achieved examining your own ableism and biases.
- Reframing “problem behaviors” as unmet needs.
- Discussing neurodivergence openly as a family.
- Supporting your child in recognizing their many strengths.
- Supporting your child in exploring the joys of neurodivergence.
- Exposing your child to positive neurodivergent representation, both in real life and through media (e.g. books, shows, games, movies, etc.).

### Dignity, curiosity, and presumption of competence

Ableism teaches us to treat disabled people as incapable for their entire lives, even as they grow into teens and adults. When we infantilize disabled people, it denies them the dignity and presumption of competence that we automatically provide to non-disabled people.

Treating neurodivergent youth as younger than they are sends the message “your neurodivergence makes you less capable,” which can take a detrimental toll on self-esteem. Helping your child develop pride in their neurodivergence must involve treating them with dignity, curiosity, and presumption of competence. Keep in mind that you can presume competence while also acknowledging support needs. High support needs is not a synonym for incompetent.

### Reframing “problem behaviors”

Kids will do well if they can. This simple but powerful reminder can help reframe what needs to change when kids are experiencing challenges that are also difficult for you as the caregiver to cope with, such as meltdowns. Reframing your understanding of “problem behaviors” as unmet needs

**Continued** →

removes blame from the child and places the responsibility for change more accurately on an environment causing needs to go unmet. This reframe helps you and, in turn your child, understand that their neurodivergence is not a problem. The problem is the environment or context that prevents their needs from being met either. This shift is crucial to developing positive neurodivergent identity.

### **Discussing neurodivergence openly**

There is unfortunately still a lot of stigma and shame surrounding neurodivergence. Discussing neurodivergence openly helps combat this stigma in your family and community.

### **Recognizing strengths**

Support your child in recognizing their numerous strengths. Affirm the things they are great at, and encourage them to name the things they love about themselves.

### **Exploring the joys of neurodivergence**

There are many joys that come with neurodivergence when there is access and safety to experience them. For example, exploring passions, hyperfocus, stimming, and heightened sensitivity to pleasant stimuli can all be immensely joyful and can contribute positively toward mental health.

Aim to create as many safe opportunities as possible for your child to explore the joys of their neurodivergence. When they have these opportunities, it gives them additional reasons to love their neurodivergent identity.

### **Positive neurodivergent representation**

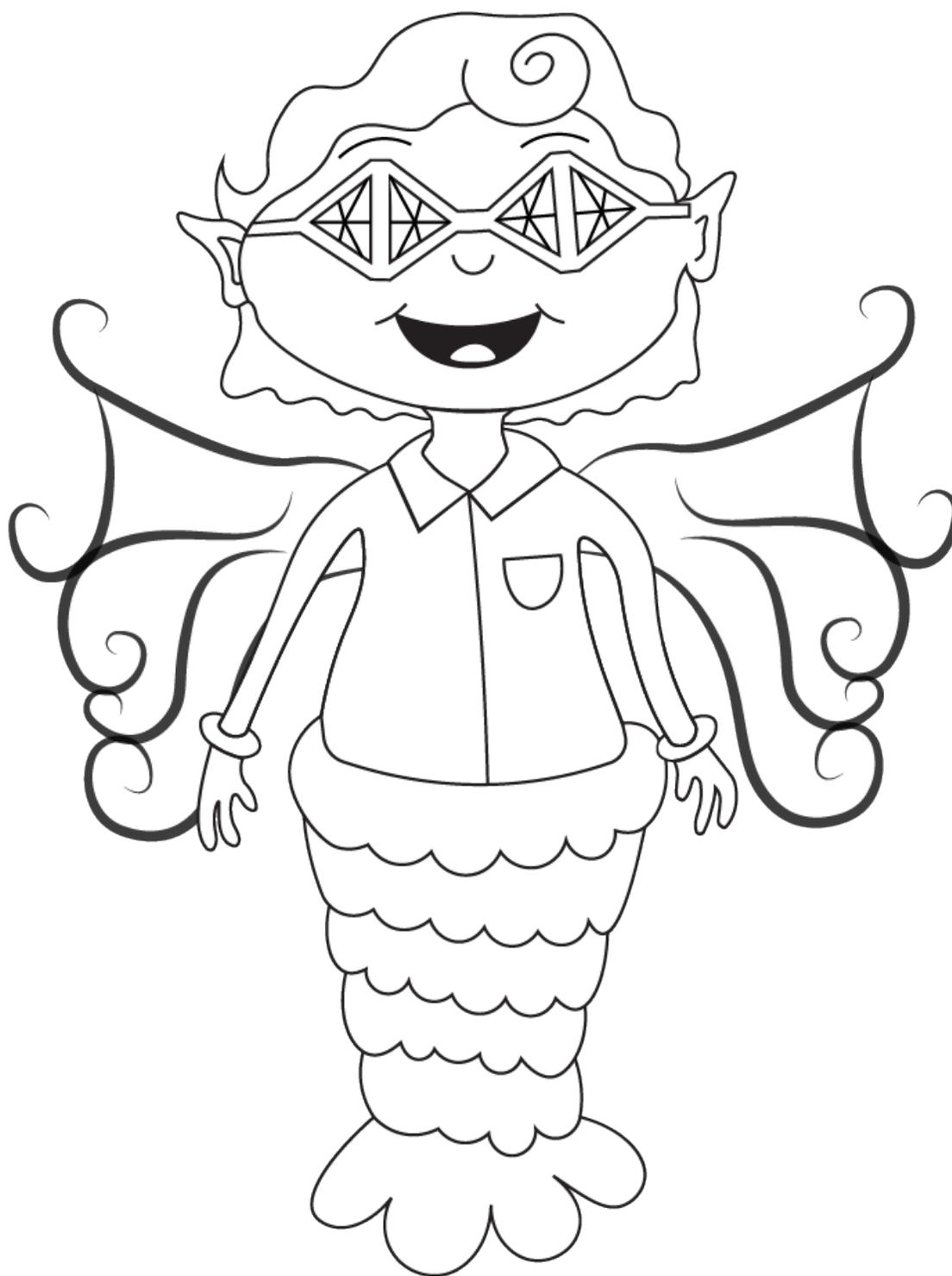
Aim to give your child access to positive neurodivergent representation, either in real-life, such as openly neurodivergent friends, family, and other members of your community, or via media. See some examples of media below.

## **Activities to Support Your Child's Learning**

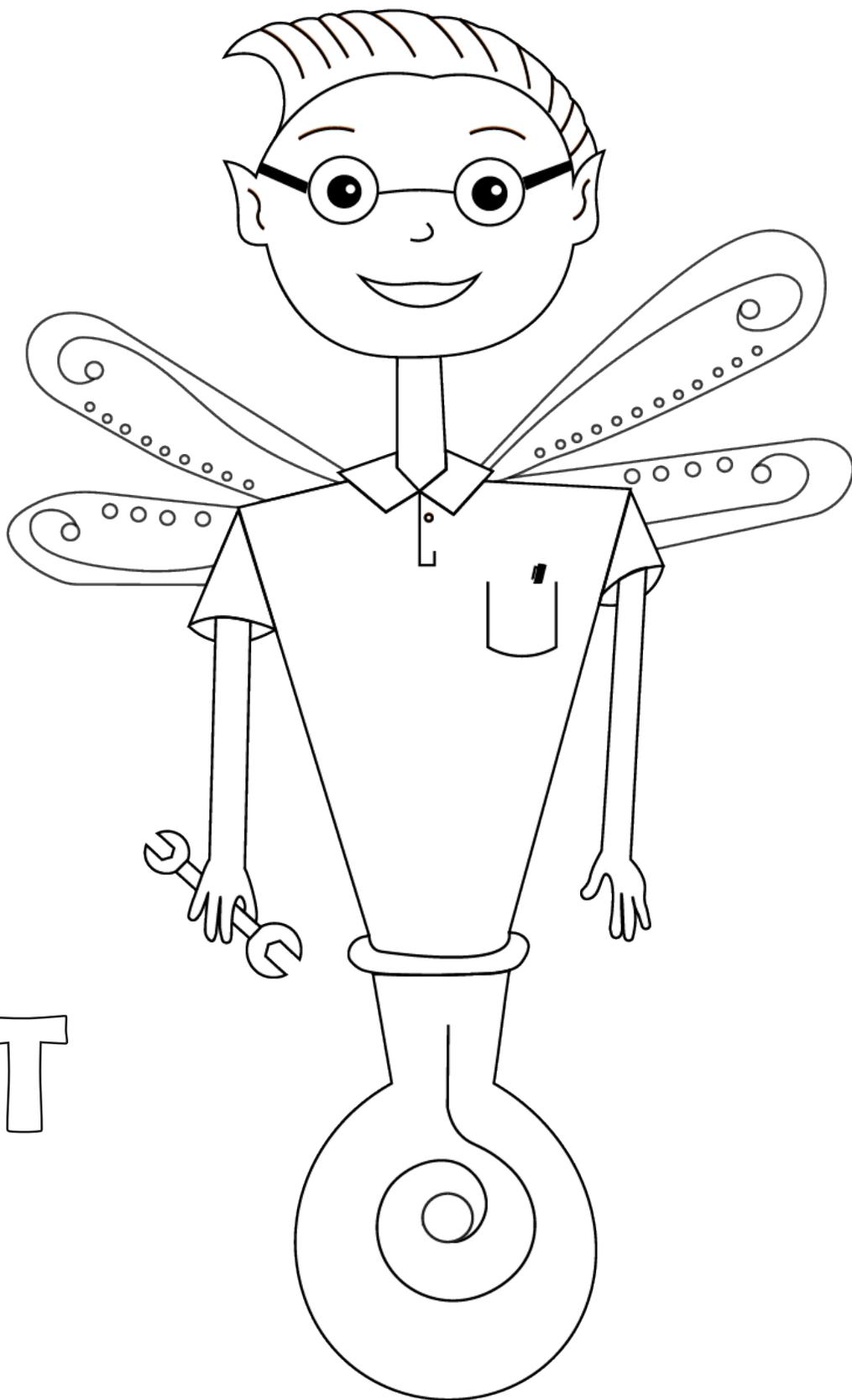
- Spend time exploring media that features positive neurodivergent representation:
  - [\*Chatting and Infodumping\* by NeuroClastic \(FREE\)](#)
  - [\*Room for Us All\* by NeuroClastic \(FREE\)](#)
  - [\*Weavers and Concluders\* by NeuroClastic \(FREE\)](#)
  - [\*I am Autistic!\* by NeuroClastic \(FREE\)](#)
  - [\*Stimming is Fun\* by NeuroClastic \(FREE\)](#)
  - [\*Ellie McNicoll's book series\*](#)
  - [\*Can You See Me?\* by Libby Scott](#)
  - [\*Wiggles, Stomps and Squeezes Calm my Jitters Down\* by Lindsey Rowe Parker](#)
  - [\*My Rainbow\* by Trinity and DeShanna Neal](#)
  - [\*Aaron Slater, Illustrator\* by Andrea Beaty](#)
  - [\*Just Right For You\* by Melanie Heyworth](#)
  - [\*Some Brains: A Book Celebrating Neurodiversity\* by Nelly Thomas](#)
  - [\*Our House is On Fire: Greta Thunberg's Call to Save the Planet\* by Jeanette Winter](#)
  - [\*Pablo\*, BBC TV series](#)
- Collaborate with your child to create a book, piece of art, movie script, or any other format that speaks to them, about neurodivergent pride. What makes being neurodivergent great from their perspective?



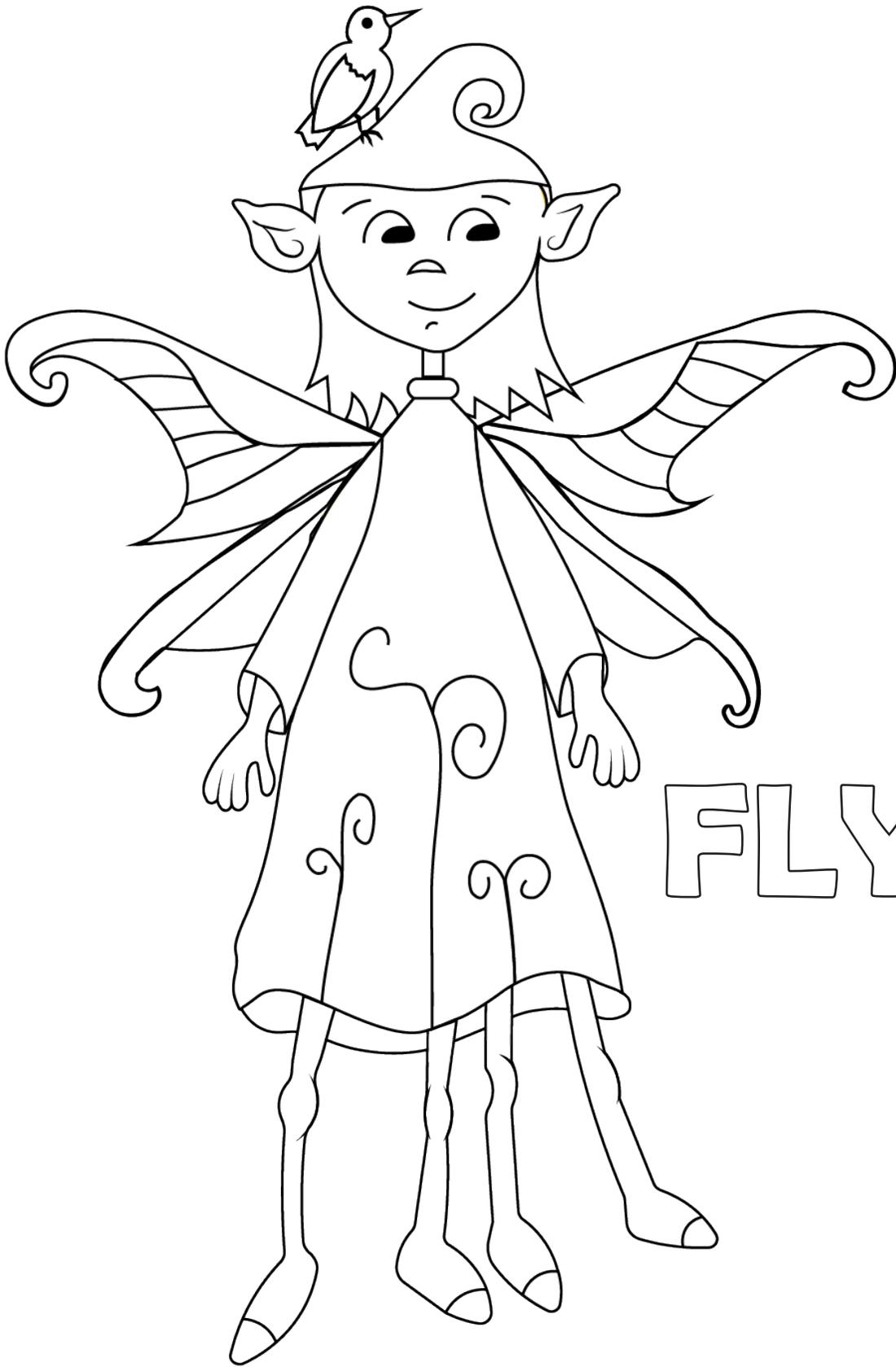
BOHDI



BRIDGET



DOT



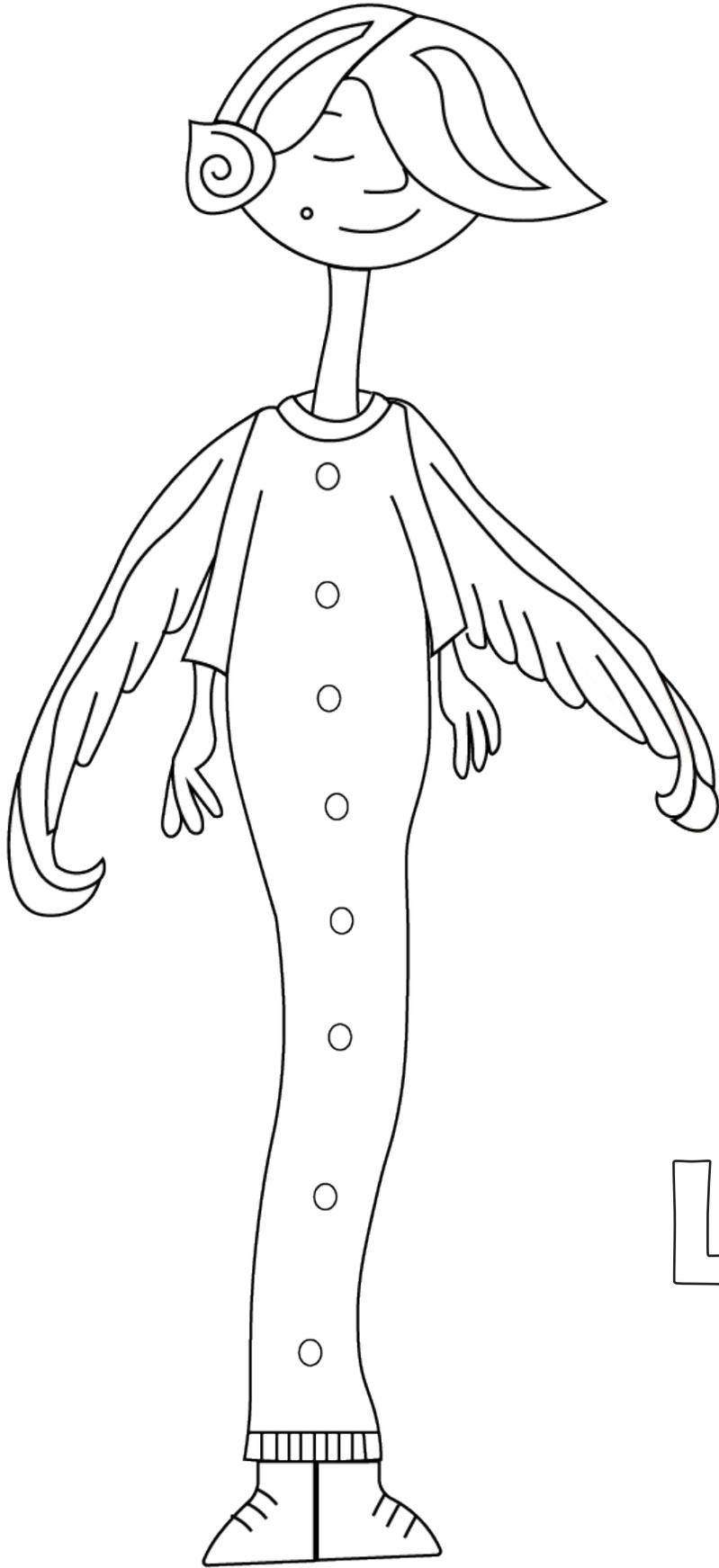
FLYNN



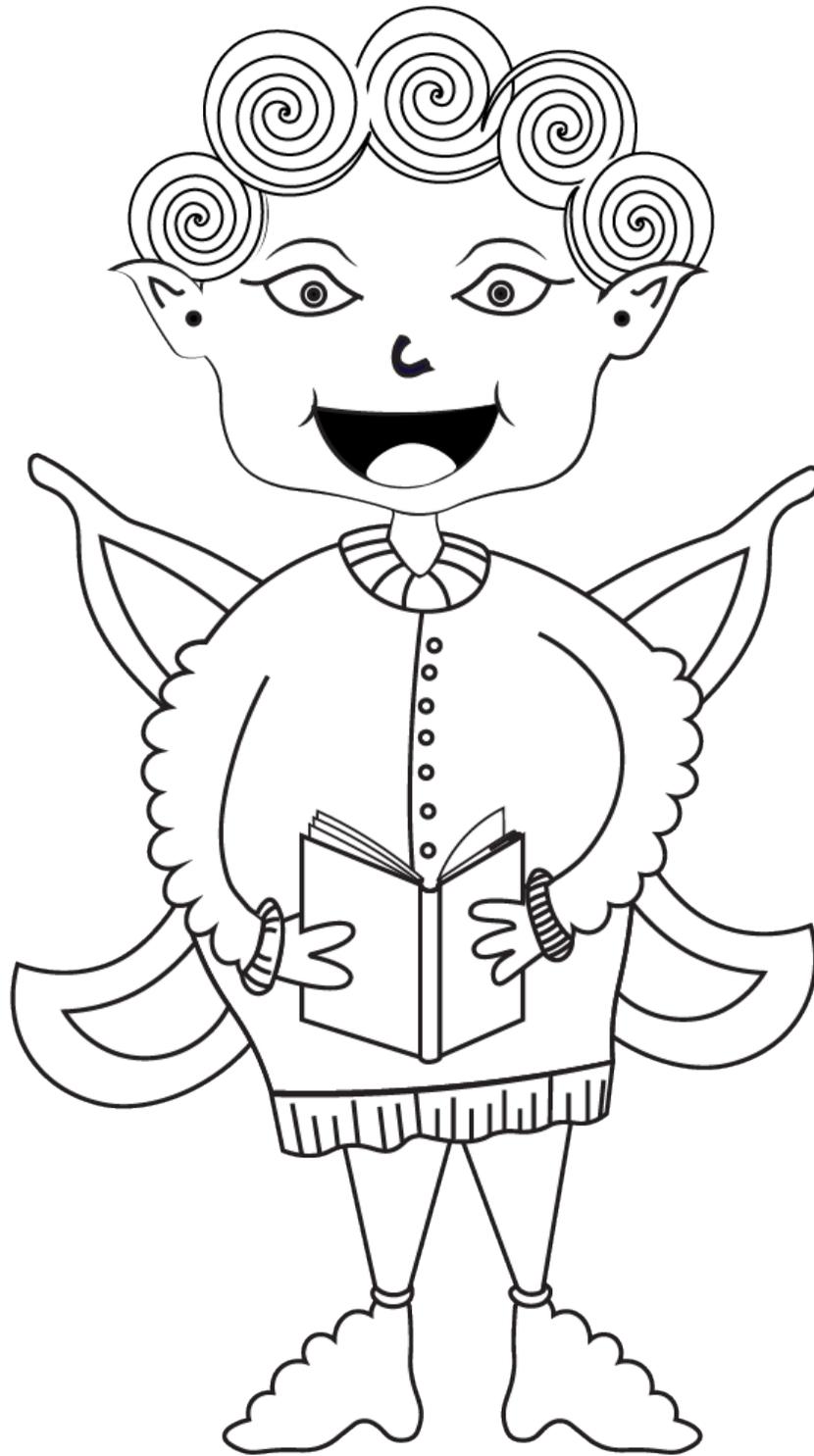
GOLDIE



JADE



LEE



MIKKO