

A Note from Levi's Mom and Dad

The message of "I Love You More than Me" is deeper than it may appear at first glance. To anyone reading this story to the students in their classroom or to their own children at home, *thank you* for taking the time to talk about and recognize the importance of acceptance and unconditional love.

Levi was born with both 9p deletion and Trisomy 21 syndrome. Nobody in the medical field knew what to expect for his quality of life, and honestly, the bar was initially set pretty low. But as Levi grew and developed, one thing became apparent; he has a capacity to love others that runs deep. Despite his developmental delays, cognitive impairments, and physical limitations, his ability to love others far exceeds what most of us are capable of on our own.

Levi and Norah's real-life friendship is just one example of the special bond he forms with others. So, when Clayton, Norah's daddy decided to write a children's book about their sweet friendship, we were all for it! Then we read what he wrote and realized it was more than just a cute rhyming story about two kids and a race.

You see, Norah's acceptance of who Levi is, is reflected in her daddy's words. For one, the story is written from Levi's perspective, with typical thoughts, words, and emotions, much like our own. His actual physical limitations are not highlighted in the book because they don't matter. Levi is not defined by what he can or cannot do. To Levi's family and friends who know and love him, he is just Levi; a little boy who shows us how to be more concerned with others' happiness rather than our own, and who displays an amazing amount of empathy for others. A little boy whose very existence seems to emulate God's example of unconditional love as his every hug seems to say, "I love you more than me".