



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Nora Project's mission is to teach empathy and spark friendships between students and their peers with disabilities. Our unique programs normalize differences and demystify disability while providing kids with the tools they need to develop strong, lasting friendships. Our programs encourage self-reflection, perspective taking, mindfulness, and an Ability Inclusive Mindset. For information about the success of The Nora Project in creating a more inclusive future for students of all abilities, check out our Impact Reports [here](#).

### WHAT PROGRAMS ARE AVAILABLE?

The Nora Project offers 3 year-long programs in our Lifecycle Suite for students in grades pre-k thru 12. Our Primer Pack serves students in preschool - 3rd grade, our Storyteller Project serves students in 4th - 8th grade and High School, and our STEMpathy Club serves students in Middle and High School. Additionally, The Nora Project offers 3 Jump Start units - shorter units that allow schools to introduce the concepts of disability awareness, history, and justice, empathy and friendship skills, and emotional literacy and regulation. For The Nora Project program details click [here](#).

### HOW MUCH INSTRUCTIONAL TIME TO THE PROGRAMS REQUIRE?

For the programs in our Lifecycle Suite, we ask that teachers allow 45-60 minutes per week for our Storyteller Program, and 15-30 minutes per week for our Primer Pack. The STEMpathy club would meet weekly for 45-60 minutes. Jump Start units can be delivered once per week over 8-10 weeks, or can be paced more quickly or slowly to meet your needs.

### WHAT IS THE COST OF PARTICIPATION?

Programs are available for a reasonable fee based on the percentage of students in your building eligible for free/reduced lunch or who are designated as "low income." More information about program fees can be found [here](#).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## **CAN I RUN MULTIPLE PROGRAMS CONCURRENTLY?**

Yes! We encourage schools to adopt our Lifecycle Suite of programs so that students are consistently learning about disability and difference, friendship and empathy throughout their school careers. If you are new to The Nora Project, you can start with any of our programs, whether Jump Start Units or Lifecycle Suite programs, in as many or as few classrooms as suits your needs. The Program Team can help you determine what's best for your school.

## **DOES AN ENTIRE GRADE LEVEL NEED TO ADOPT TNP PROGRAMS TO PARTICIPATE?**

Ideally, we prefer to have all sections of a grade level commit to teaching TNP programs. From an equity standpoint, we believe it is critical for all students to receive similar learning experiences. If this is not possible for your school, we will work with you to find a good solution.

## **IF OUR SCHOOL WANTS TO IMPLEMENT MULTIPLE PROGRAMS, WHICH GRADE LEVELS SHOULD WE CHOOSE?**

The Nora Project believes that empathy is something best learned over multiple years and cumulative experiences. As such, we have designed a life cycle of programs so that students can have multiple experiences throughout their academic careers. When selecting grade levels in which to implement our programs, we first recommend identifying educators in your school that are passionate about increasing students' understanding of empathy, inclusion, and disability. We want participating teachers to believe in our mission and commit to implementing our materials with fidelity. Each of our programs is designed to be implemented over the course of one school year. Our programs can stand alone as your SEL instruction in participating grade levels or can serve as supplemental SEL instruction to existing programs you have in your school.

Visit our Lifecycle Suite of Programs by clicking [here](#) to see how students can drop in and out of Nora Project programs over their academic careers with other SEL instruction in between.

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## WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING AND PROGRAM SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

The Nora Project prides itself on providing high-quality, comprehensive professional development and ongoing support for all staff members in participating schools. All staff members are invited to attend our summer Training Camp which provides workshops in creating inclusive classroom environments, teaching to an inclusive student population, specific program implementation strategies, and more. This training is mandatory for those representatives nominated as Program Leaders for their school. It is expected that Program Leaders will take the information back to their schools and train their colleagues before implementing the programs. Non-attendance at Training Camp disqualifies a school from participating in a given program. The Nora Project's program team, staffed by former teachers, is available on-demand to support teachers via phone, email, and video conference throughout the school year. With a dedicated Program Director for each of our programs, participants can count on receiving prompt, reliable, and ongoing support.

## HOW DO NORA PROJECT PROGRAMS CONNECT TO SOCIAL JUSTICE EDUCATION?

Our programs teach about disability as a natural and expected part of human diversity. This is a natural lead into discussions about diversity on a broader level. To support teachers and students with these conversations about diversity, identity, and intersectionality, our Lifecycle Suite of programs will include access to a companion guide that will provide suggestions for talking points and connections to other relevant topics to expand the conversation beyond disability to other forms of diversity.

## WHERE IS THE NORA PROJECT BEING IMPLEMENTED?

Currently, The Nora Project is being completed in 50 schools throughout Chicagoland, across the nation, and in Canada. A list of participating schools can be viewed on The Nora Project website [here](#).

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## WHAT IF MY SCHOOL DOES NOT SERVE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES?

Every classroom has ability diversity, and The Nora Project programs teach all students, with and without disabilities, about disability as a natural and expected form of human diversity, empathy, friendship skills, and how to be an includer. Our programs are suitable for all classrooms, regardless of the population you serve. We do ask that our Storyteller Project and STEMpathy Club classrooms be co-taught by a general education teacher and specialist such as a social worker, counselor, school psychologist, or special educator to ensure that all students can access the curriculum and to reduce stigma around adults who only work with a small population of students in your school.

## ARE TNP PROGRAMS ALIGNED TO SEL STANDARDS?

The Nora Project programs will help address many of the Illinois State Social/Emotional Learning Standards. The Alignment Guide can be accessed at <http://bit.ly/tnpalignment>. This guide also provides a connection to the CASEL Core SEL Competencies. You can see how TNP programs stack up against leading SEL programs [here](#).

## WHAT IS THE COMMITMENT FOR PARENTS?

The Nora Project programs are designed to be implemented by teachers in schools either as a part of the curriculum or as an extracurricular activity. Parents are asked to complete a waiver for each participating student. If a student is participating in an extracurricular activity, parents may be asked to assist with the logistics of participation outside of school hours (i.e. transportation). Beyond that, we hope that parents will talk to their children about what they are learning in school to continue the learning at home.

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## DO YOU PROVIDE REMOTE LEARNING MATERIALS?

In 2020, The Nora Project staff introduced remote learning materials for both the Primer Pack and Storyteller Project. The remote learning slides were designed so that students could complete them with as much independence as possible in case assistance is limited when they are learning. Audio, video, and other visual supports are included in all slides to ensure equity of access to the curriculum. Remote materials are accompanied by guidance for teachers for each lesson, including tips for instruction, suggestions for how to use any available live instructional time, and any advanced preparation. Teachers are encouraged to be flexible and creative with their implementation of these materials and to use and adapt them to meet the needs of their students. Nora Project Program Directors are available on-demand to support the implementation of all of our programs, whether virtual, in person, or hybrid. STEMpathy Club Facilitators are encouraged to work directly with the Program Director to conceptualize a version of the program that fits their specific needs. Extracurricular offerings present a unique challenge given the current environment, so unique solutions are called for.

## ARE ANY ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES NEEDED?

Jump Start Units, Primer Pack, and Storyteller Project all require supplies to implement the curriculum. This includes books for read alouds, supplies for classroom activities, etc. The Nora Project provides a complete list of all of the supplies needed for each program so that participants can source them if they wish. Additionally, The Nora Project has complete classroom kits available for purchase.

## I HOMESCHOOL MY CHILD. WHAT IS AVAILABLE FOR US?

New in 2021, The Nora Project will offer the Primer Pack for Homeschool. This version of the Primer Pack has been adapted to be taught in the home setting and focuses on discussion and small scale activities between parent and child. For more information, visit The Nora Project website [here](#).