



you see Down's syndrome,
we see potential

Down's Syndrome

SCOTLAND helping people realise their potential

www.dsscotland.org.uk

about Down's Syndrome Scotland



Down's Syndrome Scotland:

- provide advice, support and information to people with Down's syndrome, parents, carers, professionals and students.
- provide a telephone and email advice service.
- offer support from local branches across Scotland and the national office in Edinburgh.
- produce a range of resources and publications.
- produce a quarterly newsletter and annual report.
- have specialist staff who can provide information, training sessions and workshops.
- are represented by people with Down's syndrome on local branch committees and the national executive committee.
- promote and support people with Down's syndrome as unique individuals with their own strengths and potential.



For many people with Down's syndrome, the biggest obstacle that they face is not their learning disability but the attitudes of people they meet.

FACT: Down's syndrome occurs at random, caused by the presence of an extra copy of chromosome 21 in all of the bodies cells.

It is rarely hereditary and is not caused by anything the parents did or did not do.

early years



The birth of a baby with Down's syndrome provokes a range of different reactions in different people. Feelings of anger, shock or overwhelming protectiveness are all common, along with grief for the child that parents thought that they were expecting.

Most parents soon grow to love their child and enjoy watching individual personality, including family traits develop, just as they would in any child.

Everyone with Down's syndrome will have some degree of learning disability. It is impossible at birth to predict the extent of learning disability.

Babies and children with Down's syndrome respond to cuddles, games and attention just like all children. They thrive in a family environment with the same combination of love and learning as any child.

Parents and children benefit from social activities such as parent and toddler groups and nurseries. A range of professionals from pre school teachers to speech and language therapists can help a child as they develop.



The birth of a baby with Down's syndrome should be celebrated. Gifts and cards should be bought if this had previously been planned.

FACT: Although the chance of having a baby with Down's syndrome does increase with age there are more babies with Down's syndrome born to younger women, as this is when most women have babies.

brothers and sisters



Growing up with a brother or sister with Down's syndrome can be fun, although sometimes may be difficult. It is important to remember that all brothers and sisters feel like this about each other at some point!

Parents may be concerned about how their other children are coping. It is important to spend regular time with siblings on a one to one basis and to encourage them to talk about how they are feeling.

Siblings have a lot to offer their brother or sister with Down's syndrome. They can give the experience of a close relationship with someone of their own age. This is a relationship that can continue throughout life.

It is equally important that siblings are recognised as individuals with needs of their own.



Many children with Down's syndrome will attend the same mainstream school as their brothers and sisters.

FACT: While people with Down's syndrome will share some common physical characteristics, they look more closely like their parents, brothers and sisters, whilst having their own individual personality.

adolescence



Young people with Down's syndrome experience the changes associated with puberty at around the same time, and in the same order, as other boys and girls.

Appropriate information should be provided about the physical and emotional changes in young peoples bodies, and about relationships, to ensure that teenagers with Down's syndrome are equipped for adulthood.

Self-image is important at this time, as young people often realise how having Down's syndrome affects them. Having up to date hairstyles and fashionable clothes boosts self-esteem. Equally important is an active and varied social life, doing the things that teenagers do.

Most young people with Down's syndrome thrive on the opportunity to increase their independence, from spending time away from parents, to learning new skills and starting to make their own choices.

Young people with Down's syndrome aspire to lead a typical, enjoyable life and to have the same choices and opportunities as other people.



People with Down's syndrome are people first who just happen to have a learning disability and should be treated according to their age and experience.

An adult or young person with Down's syndrome should not be spoken to, or treated, like a child.

adult years



On leaving school, there should be several options open to a young person with Down's syndrome. These may include further education, work experience, employment or voluntary work.

People with Down's syndrome are entitled to have their voices heard, especially when it comes to having a say in decisions that affect their lives. This means being fully informed from the start of any planned change or transition, such as a move towards living independently from family.

Adults with Down's syndrome have exactly the same rights as everyone else. This means the right to vote, access education and training and to choose appropriate housing, with support where required. It also means the right to receive appropriate medical treatment and care, with regular health screening to ensure early diagnosis of any medical condition.

Above all a person with Down's syndrome has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.



Many adults with Down's syndrome can live independently, or with appropriate support, and can make a valued contribution to the community in which they live.

FACT: People with Down's syndrome are now expected to live to middle age and beyond.

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You are invited to join Down's Syndrome Scotland.

Please complete both sides and return to the address overleaf.

Name

Address

Postcode

Phone

E-mail

Name of family member with Down's syndrome (if applicable)

Their date of birth

Membership

Annual Fee: Please tick the appropriate box(es) and enclose a cheque for the amount payable to Down's Syndrome Scotland.

- £15 – individual/family
- I would like to pay by standing order/direct debit, please send me a form (this helps to reduce our costs)
- £25 – professional
- No annual fee for families on benefit or other special circumstances
- No annual fee for adult with Down's syndrome (16 or over)
- I am a taxpayer and would like Down's Syndrome Scotland to reclaim the tax on my payment

I enclose a cheque for

Signature

Date

Thank you for joining Down's Syndrome Scotland.

Please send this form, with payment if relevant, to Down's Syndrome Scotland, 158/160 Balgreen Road, Edinburgh EH11 3AU

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