



**Down's Syndrome
Association**

A Registered Charity No. 1061474

A resource for children



What is Down's syndrome

Guidance notes

A Down's Syndrome Association publication

This resource is to be used with children.

The focus should not be on Down's syndrome or on the young person who has Down's syndrome that attends the school.

We encourage the adult using the PowerPoint to focus on all young people having similarities and differences while being unique individuals.

- We recommend that the parent of the young person who has Down's syndrome is consulted before this resource is used.

The aim of this resource is:

- for young people to have a better understanding of the nature of Down's syndrome;
- to learn to be more inclusive and to learn about appropriate language.

It is important to avoid an inaccurate portrayal of people who have Down's syndrome and also important not to talk about the student who has Down's syndrome as needing help or being 'special'.

Powerpoint guidance

Slide 1

- Down's syndrome is a condition that some people are born with.
- About 750 babies will be born with Down's syndrome in the UK each year.

Slide 2

- Ask the children if they know what the word 'unique' means.
- Oxford English Dictionary definition is "*Being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else*".
- Do they have anything unique to them?
A freckle or mole in a particular place; a scar from when they fell over; the shape of their fingers.

Slide 3

- Ask the children if they look like their parents or siblings
Care should be taken if there is a child in the group who is adopted or in foster care.
Do they have the same colour eyes or hair; do they sneeze or laugh like someone else in the family?

Slide 4

- Ask the children to stand in a line from the shortest to the tallest; ask them to group themselves according to hair or eye colour; wearing or not wearing glasses etc. Are there any two people in the class **exactly** the same?

Slide 5

- Ask the children the questions on the slide.
Do they all enjoy the same things; are they all good at the same things?
- Talk about how children learn to do things at different times.
For example, Sophia likes to run; Omar likes to dance; Jacob likes music; Alfie can play table tennis but Fatima can't yet; Sion can swim but Lucy can't yet.
You may know an adult who can't swim or who is just learning to play a musical instrument/knit etc.

Slide 6

- Ask the children to point out which face shows which emotion.
(A follow up activity could be to match faces or words to faces).
- Ask the children what would make them feel each emotion.
What would make you happy; excited etc.
- Can they think of any other emotions? Can they make a face for that emotion?

Slide 7

- Ask the children if they ever like to spend time on their own.
When? What do they like to do on their own?
- Ask the children where they have friends: at home; dance class; cubs; brownies; school; after school care
- Ask the children when they want to play with their friends.
What do they do when they are with their friends?
- What makes a good friend?
Adult to write children's suggestions on white board and add in other suggestions that might not have been made.
What do they like about the friends they have - why is he or she a good friend?

Slide 8

- Ask the children the questions on the slide.
Do they know what 'include' means?

- How can they include others?
Ask them if they want to join in; play the games your friend enjoys; show your friend what to do in new games; ask an adult for ideas.

Slide 9

It is important that you speak to the parents of the child who has Down's syndrome.

They may prefer that you omit this slide as the child who has Down's syndrome may not know they have Down's syndrome. They may not have been told or may not understand the concept and to have the other children say his or her name could be upsetting to them.

Slide 10

- If the child who has Down's syndrome uses sign language, talk about the Makaton/Signalong/BSL signs that they could learn together.
Does each child in the class have a sign for their name?
Do they know how to say please and thank you; hello; I like you; yes, and no?
- We should listen to what everyone says but sometimes you need to concentrate to hear the words.
It might take your friends longer to say a word or sentence.
Give them time and don't say the words for them.
- Ask the children how it feels when someone helps you when you want to do it on your own.
Do they know the sign for help?
- If the child who has Down's syndrome likes to use pictures and photographs in school, the adult can talk about everyone taking photographs of the things they like to do and show them to your friends when you talk to them.
They might find a fun way to share things with them.
- What things do you both like or dislike?
A follow up activity could be for the children to find out what things they have in common with each other.
This could be displayed as a chart or graph.
- It's OK to ask your friend who has Down's syndrome if they want help.
Sometimes they might say no. **Only help if your friend says yes.**
- Treat your friend who has Down's syndrome like all your other friends.

The Down's Syndrome Association provides information and support on all aspects of living with Down's syndrome.

We also work to champion the rights of people with Down's syndrome, by campaigning for change and challenging discrimination.

A wide range of Down's Syndrome Association publications can be downloaded free of charge from our website.

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