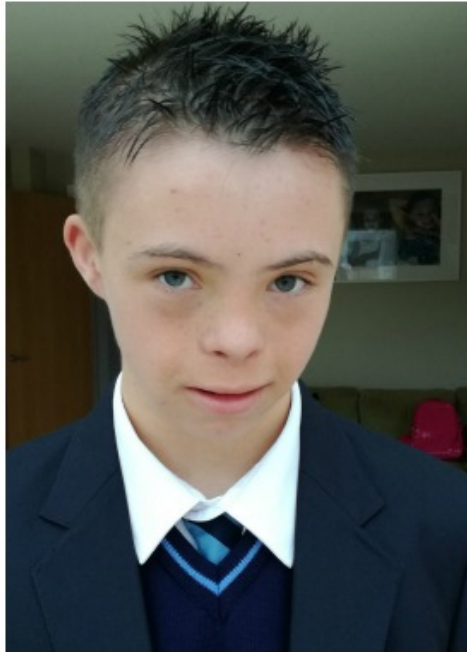




**Down's Syndrome  
Association**

A Registered Charity No. 1061474

**A resource for young people**



# **What is Down's syndrome**

*Guidance notes*

**A Down's Syndrome Association publication**

## This resource is to be used with young people.

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

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 young person who has Down's syndrome could also be consulted.
- The young person 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 if they felt this topic was all about them could be upsetting.

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

- Left to right: row 1 - nerve cell; skin cell; muscle cell row 2 - blood cell; brain cell; bone cell.
- The human body is made up of cells. Each cell is like a tiny factory, which makes the materials needed for growth and maintenance of the body. All cells contain a nucleus in which genes are stored. Genes are grouped along rod-like structures called chromosomes.
- Ask the students what other types of cells there are in the body. Do they know how many chromosomes each person has?

## Slide 3 & 4

- Usually, the nucleus of each cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, 46 chromosomes in total.  
We inherit 23 from our mother and inherit 23 from our father.

## Slide 5

- Ask the students other things that chromosomes can determine.
- Ask the students 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 walk the same way; fold their arms the same way; do they sound the same as their mum or dad?
- Ask the students if there are any two students in the class exactly the same?

## Slide 6

- In people who have Down's syndrome the cells contain 47 chromosomes, with an extra copy of chromosome 21.  
This additional genetic material results in Down's syndrome.  
It usually occurs because of a chance happening at the time of conception.

## Slide 7

- Refer to the photo collage.  
There will be images showing things everyone can/can't do; does/doesn't do.
- Discuss how people learn to do things at different times.  
They may have parents/grandparents who don't understand modern technology; adults who can't swim or who are learning to play a musical instrument.  
When they leave school and start a new job they will have to learn new skills.  
**We all continue to learn through our lives.**

## Slide 8

- At school and college, a person who has Down's syndrome might need some extra support with: communicating with other students; their schoolwork; with being included.
- Ask the students to think about whether they are equally good at all subjects.
- **Remember that everyone needs support at some time.**

## Slide 9

- Have a discussion about emotions: how people show them in different ways; what some of them feel like inside etc.
- **People with Down's syndrome have the same feelings and emotions as everyone else.**

## Slide 10

- All people are unique. This means people are different!
- Can the students give a definition of unique? Oxford English Dictionary definition is "Being the only one of its kind; unlike anything else".
- Do they have anything unique to them?
- Even friends that have similar interests in some areas don't share every interest.

## Slide 11

People who have Down's syndrome want and need all the same things as other people, such as: friends; hobbies; respect; independence; relationships.

These are ways you can include your friends who have Down's syndrome, so they are not left out.

**Some people who have Down's syndrome use pictures or sign language to help them say what they want.**

- You could learn some signs that they use. (Makaton/Signalong/BSL)
- You could ask them to show you their pictures or photos.
- Does each student in the class have a sign for their name? Do they know how to say please and thank you; hello; yes, and no?

**It might take your friend longer to say a word or sentence.**

- Give them time and don't say the words for them.

**You might not always understand what they say**

- You will have to listen well.

**Find out what you have in common, what things you both like or dislike.**

- Take photographs of the things you like to do and show them to your friend when you talk with each other.
- What things do you and your friend s like or dislike?

### **Include your friend in your conversations and activities**

- You can share in activities that your friend enjoys.
- You can show your friend what to do so they can join in with your activities.

### **If you're not sure how to do this, you can ask a member of staff for advice.**

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.

Does the person know the sign for help

## **Slide 12**

You will find fundraising ideas on our website:

[www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/challenge21](http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/challenge21)

## **Slide 13**

The Down's Syndrome Association has a helpline where we are happy to answer any questions you have.

The helpline is open Monday to Friday 10am until 4pm.

Call us on **0333 1212 300**

You can find more information on our website:

[www.downs-syndrome.org](http://www.downs-syndrome.org)

You can also email us at:

**info@downs-syndrome.org.uk**

Our Facebook page is:

[www.facebook.com/DownsSyndromeAssociation/](http://www.facebook.com/DownsSyndromeAssociation/)

## Follow up activities

### Communication

#### No Words

Write a simple sentence on a piece of paper. For example:  
*"The cat sat on a hot tin roof".*

Show this sentence to one child. That child must communicate the meaning of the sentence to the rest of the group without writing, speaking or using any letters of the alphabet.

#### Follow up discussion

- Was it difficult to communicate using this method? What would have helped?
- How can we communicate with someone who can't talk back?
- How can we help them communicate?

### Difficulty understanding

Have two students sit back to back.

Give one student a paper with an abstract shape on it.

Without looking at each other, he/she must explain to the other student how to draw the shape.

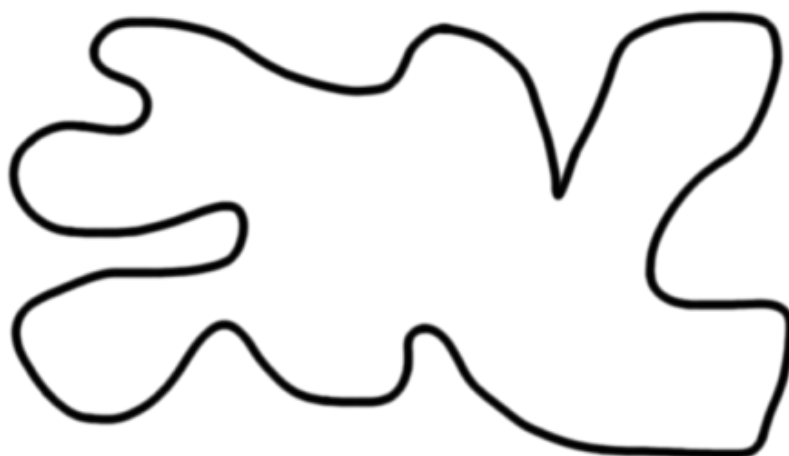
Give the second student a pencil and a piece of paper.

He/she must draw the shape following only the first student's directions.

#### Follow up discussion

- What were the problems?
- What would have helped?

**Example of a random shape to use in this exercise:**



### Test you awareness

First read the sentence in the box below:

**FINISHED FILES ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF MANY YEARS.**

Now ask the students to count the F's in the sentence.

Count them only once. Do not go back and count them again.

When they are finished ask the students to raise their hands if they found 3 Fs. How many found 4 Fs? 5 Fs? etc

Did anyone find more?

The correct answer is 6. Most people miss the Fs in the word "OF". This is because we pronounce this as "ov" so our brain skips right over this when we are looking for "f."

### Follow up discussion

- How did it feel to realize they didn't count all the Fs?
- How did it feel to have your brain "trick" you on this test?
- How would it feel if this happened to you all the time, every day?

### Colour/word game

The child must read the COLOUR the word is written in, not the word itself. Afterwards, discuss how you want to read the actual word. Even when you can make yourself do it correctly, you have to read much slower than normal. This is called the 'Stroop effect'.

This is an example to help you understand how difficult it might be for students with learning disabilities to understand complex information throughout the day.

**ORANGE**

**VIOLET**

**BLACK**

**BLUE**

**RED**

**GREEN**

**VIOLET**

**YELLOW**

**BLACK**

**ORANGE**

**RED**

**PURPLE**

**PINK**

**BLACK**

**YELLOW**

**BLUE**

**YELLOW**

**RED**

**VIOLET**

**GREEN**

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.

## Contact us

### Down's Syndrome Association

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[www.dsactive.org](http://www.dsactive.org)



[www.dsworkfit.org.uk](http://www.dsworkfit.org.uk)



[www.langdondownmuseum.org.uk](http://www.langdondownmuseum.org.uk)



[www.langdondowncentre.org.uk](http://www.langdondowncentre.org.uk)



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