# LANGUAGE CREATES REALITY

![Desmond Tutu Quote](image)

## What is DOWN SYNDROME?

Down Syndrome is a CHROMOSOMAL CONDITION that occurs when the egg and sperm meet. Each cell contains 23 pairs of chromosomes, in Down Syndrome, chromosome number 21 sticks on the very first divide at the very, very beginning, it then divides in threads. It is not a disease or an illness, it is a condition or syndrome.

## Why DOWN SYNDROME?

Down Syndrome was first described by an English physician JOHN LANGDON DOWN in 1862. Hence the name Down Syndrome or Down’s Syndrome. Medically the syndrome is also called TRISOMY 21 (3 copies of chromosome 21).

## "They are all" vs "We are all"

All people with Down Syndrome are INDIVIDUALS, not a ‘they’ or an ‘other’. As humans, with or without Down Syndrome, we are all UNIQUE. It’s about the human, the person, the individual.

## "a Down Syndrome baby" vs "a BABY with Down Syndrome"

Rather than defining people by their disability, people-first language conveys RESPECT by emphasising the fact that people with disabilities are first and foremost that - PEOPLE.
Down Syndrome?

"BUT he's got nice hair, though"
"BUT she's got beautiful eyes, though"

A compliment with 'but' or 'though' is not a compliment.

"Suffers from Down Syndrome" "Has Down Syndrome"

Down Syndrome is NOT AN ILLNESS or an injury that someone suffers from. It is a SYNDROME that approximately 1 in 1000 of us are born with.

"A Down's baby" "A Down's Syndrome"
"A Down'sie" "A baby with Down's Syndrome"

Down Syndrome is a medical condition named after the physician who first defined it, John Langdon Down.

"with a TYPICAL baby..."

When referring to the majority, it is more appropriate to use the word TYPICAL than the word NORMAL. Differentiating a child who is typical with a child who has Down Syndrome by using the word 'normal' can cause offence.

"Breaking BAD news" "Sharing UNEXPECTED news"

When unexpected news is shared, the choice of language will influence how a person hears, understands, and processes it. The first moment Down Syndrome is mentioned will often stay with a parent for the rest of their lives, so it needs to be non-judgmental, accurate, and fairly balanced.

"There is a high RISK your baby has Down Syndrome" "There is a high CHANCE your baby has Down Syndrome"

"The language used during scans can have a powerful emotional impact on the parents. It can influence how they respond to the news, and any decisions they make regarding how to move forward."
Dr Judith Johnson.