DOWN'S SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
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LIFELONG LEARNING

Extract from the DSi International Guidelines for the Inclusive Education of Learners with Down Syndrome

The DSi International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome discuss the importance of lifelong learning for adults who have Down's syndrome.

Some key recommendations include:

- **Learning is lifelong for all people, including those who have Down's syndrome. Opportunities to continue learning in both formal and informal settings may require explicit planning beyond the school years.**
- **Information should be provided by career counsellors on post-secondary career and study options.**
- **Post-secondary education should be made available to students who have Down's syndrome, should they wish to pursue further study. Required adjustments and supports should be provided as for other levels of education.**
- **People who have Down's syndrome, without other complicating conditions, continue to develop intellectually throughout adulthood and should have access to lifelong learning opportunities.**
- **Work experience in community settings develops non-academic attributes essential for employment such as emotional and behavioural skills. Work experience in sheltered workshops or other segregated settings during the school years does not provide the necessary opportunities for learning about open employment.**

- **A benefit of employment is the continuing opportunity, and indeed requirement, to learn.**

- **Ongoing workplace training should be delivered by supervisors who are staff members of the organisation, rather than by external job coaches. External job coaches can be helpful in supporting staff in workplaces to train an employee with Down syndrome and to monitor performance. Approaches to training in the workplace may require explicit teaching techniques, however, these need not be costly and need not require extensive specialist staff to implement. Visual supports, such as photographs printed on a card, allow workers to become autonomous after initial training.**

- **Part-time rotas and casual employment can lead to exclusion from staff meetings and other workplace training, so steps should be taken to ensure all employees are included in training sessions.**

- **Adults who have Down's syndrome may continue to need assistance to use literacy strategies they may only partially have mastered at school. Ongoing literacy learning in adulthood is effective in life contexts, as the need arises. It is important to find opportunities for socially appropriate literacy activities to continue literacy learning, including popular cultural texts. Visual texts, such as photographs beside written words, are particularly helpful in supporting the development of meaning in context.**

- **Numeracy skills change with technological advances and adults who have Down's syndrome should be assisted to learn to use devices such as smart phones and computer applications, where they are in use by the general community. Old curriculum elements such as counting coins and calculating change are not important in countries with electronic banking and digital finance.**

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