TRANSITION PLANNING

The text below is adapted from the Down Syndrome International International Guidelines for the Education of Learners with Down Syndrome.

The full guidelines can be downloaded here.

Transitioning to school (pages 30-31)

- **It is important to build on early intervention programmes as you ease the learner who has Down's syndrome into an inclusive education setting.**
- **The setting should be ready to welcome and support all learners.**
- **It is important that parents are supported to make the choice about the most suitable school for their child, with access to initial school visits and advice from people who know their child.**
- **It is important that assessments, diagnostic information and information about the child's learning preferences is available and shared to ensure that there is not a duplication in assessments or a delay in support being provided.**
- **Attention to building partnerships with all involved is an important consideration for smooth transitions into formal education.**
- **Schools should not impose arbitrary transition requirements for students with disabilities such as half day attendance, only permitting attendance when a teacher aide is funded, or attendance on only some days of the week. These practices are a form of exclusion.**
- **Adjustments to the year level curriculum should be made to allow the learner to make progress.**

Transitioning from school (pages 34-40)

- **Inclusion in mainstream primary and secondary schools affords academic benefits, increased likelihood of entering post-secondary education, employment and independence. When they leave school, students with disabilities who have been included in regular school education are more likely to be enrolled in post-secondary education and to be employed or to live independently.**

- **Post-secondary education should be available to students with Down's syndrome, should they wish to pursue further study. Required adjustments and supports should be provided as for other levels of education.**

- **During secondary school, students who have Down's syndrome need to be provided with information and expectations that tertiary/Post16 education exists and what options are available for them.**

- **Employment and independent living are stated goals for many people with intellectual disabilities, however, the value of learning for its own sake about topics of interest is respected by the general community and should not be discounted for people who have Down's syndrome.**

- **Transition programs increase the likelihood of post-secondary employment. A benefit of employment is the continuing opportunity, and indeed requirement, to learn. Learning can happen vicariously as employees develop approaches to tasks, or explicitly, such as when a new piece of equipment is installed, and staff receive training. For employees with intellectual disabilities, explicit on the job training and support has been shown to have a positive impact on employment outcomes.**

- **In a discussion of transition, it is critical to consider the position into which the student is being transitioned. Workplaces need to be ready. Workplaces also need to be flexible and ready to change.**

- **Work experience in community settings is important, to provide opportunities to develop non-academic attributes essential for employment (eg emotional and behavioural skills)**

- **It should be noted that work experience in sheltered workshops or other segregated settings during the school years does not provide the necessary opportunities for learning about open employment, in the same way that work in segregated settings does not lead to open employment.**

- **Learning is lifelong for all people, including those with Down's syndrome. People with Down's syndrome, without other complicating conditions, continue to develop intellectually throughout adulthood and should have access to lifelong learning opportunities.**

- **Opportunities to continue learning in both formal and informal settings may be rarer for adults with Down's syndrome, so explicitly planned ongoing education may be necessary.**

- **Lifelong learning opportunities provide enrichment and can help counteract loneliness and boredom.**

- **Numeracy skills change with technological advances and adults with 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.**

- **Ongoing literacy learning in adulthood is effective in life contexts, as the need arises, and can be taught by companions in those contexts.**

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