

Down Syndrome 101 for Educators



Presented By,



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Down Syndrome 101



- Most commonly occurring genetic condition resulting in 1:792 births
- Down Syndrome is prevalent in all races, socioeconomic classes and shows no gender bias
- There are 250,000 individuals are living with Down syndrome in the United States
- Currently no known cause or cure for Down syndrome-it's a result of an error in cell division when a baby is forming in the womb



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Down Syndrome 101





- 80 percent of babies with Down syndrome are born to women under the age of 35
- Average life span if born with Down syndrome today: 55-60 years of age
- Varied mental abilities, physical development, behavior, and accomplishments
- Types of Trisomy 21



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Possible Medical Issues

- Heart Defects
- Muscle Hypotonia
- Hearing Loss
- Leukemia
- Vision
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Celiac Disease
- Atlanto-Axial Instability

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Possible Medical Issues



- Tactile Sensitivity
- High pain tolerance
- Potty Training Issues
- Stamina
- Sleep apnea
- Dual diagnosis of Autism




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Communication Issues

- Receptive language vs. Expressive language
- Hearing
- Short term memory
- Speech articulation
- Processing time
- Echolalia
- Generalization


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Communication Strategies



- **Demands and Interruptions**
 - Necessary vs. Unnecessary Demands
 - Talking too fast and too much information
 - 10 seconds can change a life
 - Visual interruptions

- **Fallouts of Needless Demands and Interruptions**
 - Shut Down-Drop syndrome drop
 - Aggressive or Uncooperative Behavior



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Communication Strategies



- **Ask the student to repeat instructions back to you**
- **Ensure you are face to face and have good eye contact when giving instructions**
- **Use simple and familiar language and short and concise sentences**
- **Reinforce directions with facial expressions, gestures and signs**

- **Emphasize key words and reinforce with visual aids as needed**
- **Avoid closed questions and encourage the student to speak in more than one word utterances**
- **Develop language through drama and role-play**
- **Use a home-school log to help relay information**



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Communication Strategies



Steps to Successful Communication



GETTING STARTED	FACIAL EXPRESSION	TONE OF VOICE	BODY LANGUAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach from the front • Smile • Identify yourself • Use the person's name • If possible, be at eye level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish & maintain eye contact • Be friendly & relaxed • Always remember humor: smiles & laughter go a long way • Be patient and supportive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak slowly & clearly • Use a gentle & relaxed tone of voice • Convey an easy-going manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid sudden movement. • Be open & relaxed with your stance • Remain calm & confident to provide reassurance • Use gestures such as pointing • Give visual cues



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Social Issues

- The Dreaded "R" Word
- At-risk population for bullying/abuse
- Research indicates 70-80% of people with developmental disabilities will be abused either verbally, physically or sexually in their lifetime
- Issues with self-reporting
- People First Language
- Extra curricular activities

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Why Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education benefits not only the student with Down syndrome, but also leads to greater understanding and less prejudice in the community at large.

Students in inclusive schools learn to become more tolerant and patient and to support each other, rather than competing or being afraid of the unknown. They also learn to value diversity and to appreciate that everyone has special gifts and talents.

Aims of Inclusion

The acquisition of new skills	Development of age appropriate behavior
STUDENT	
The development of independence in learning and behavior	The development of friendships with "typical" peers



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Successful Inclusion Requires

- A belief that all children can learn
- A positive attitude throughout the whole school
- Ownership of the student's learning by the classroom teacher
- Good communication between home and school
- Disability awareness education for students and educators
- Teaching independence not learned helplessness




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Preferred Teaching Methods

- Hands on activities
- Structured, sequenced activities
- 15-20 repetitions to acquire skill
- Visual learning
- The fewer the cues, the better!



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Preferred Teaching Methods

- Avoid learned helplessness
- Allow student to try and fail
- Use consistent vocabulary between home and school
- Avoid multi-tiered rewards programs
- Think like an employer
- Utilize peer role modeling



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The Role of Support Professionals

- Encourage cooperative learning and involvement of peers as good role models
- Act as a bridge between student and the curriculum
- Provide feedback to the classroom teacher on the student's response to the curriculum
- Encourage development of age appropriate behavior
- Set high expectations and refuse to accept inappropriate behavior



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Behavior is a Form of Communication



- Rule out medical issues
- Everyone rushes me
- Confused about directions
- Short term memory issues



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Behavior is a Form of Communication



- Behavior ignored/reinforced historically
- Attention seeking or Avoidance?
- Is your student treated like his/her peers?
- NO! (it's easy to say and I have speech issues)
- Lack of choice and control



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Behavior is a Form of Communication



- Respond don't react
- Determine if it's a will or skill issue
- Examine what part you play in behavior
- Environmental changes
- Wants to be the center of attention and dislike being ignored.
- Resents having an adult by their side
- Resents adult helping other students
- Used to getting special treatment and object if it is withdrawn.



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Will vs. Skill

Teach skills
Provide structure
Visual supports
Pacing

Teach behavior
Coping strategies
Consequences
Wait it out when possible

Successful Supervising Adults



- Confident in their actions
- Feel no guilt over the disability
- Look into the future
- Allow student to try and fail
- Natural consequences
- Avoid power struggles
- Are process oriented vs goal oriented

What is Your Student Telling You?

- Wants to do the same work as everyone else but an adult insists they do something different.
- Tries to do the same as others, but find they can't cope without help.
- Presumes the work they are being given is too difficult or sees it as too easy or uninteresting.
- Confused by adults giving conflicting messages.
- Students may feel under pressure/need a break.
- Students may resent being regularly withdrawn from class and separated from their friends.

Strategies for Disruptive Behaviors



- Give choices in activities.
- Give the child the opportunity to resolve a conflict with another child before intervening.
- When intervening - problem solve with the child, do not just stop the behavior.
- Give an alternate suggestion on what to do with the impulse. Redirect to another more appropriate activity.
- When possible allow the child to experience the natural consequence of his/her behavior.
- Repeat rules and limits frequently; keep to a few basic rules.
- Reinforce behavior you want to continue.
- Be persistent; the child probably has had a lot of practice in testing the limits.

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Strategies for Disruptive Behaviors



- Warn children before transitions are made.
- Arrange the learning environment for positive interaction
- Intervene before "robust" play becomes rough play.
- Encourage and assist children to verbally come up with their own solutions.
- Schedule the student's day for success.
- Try not to let the student become overly tired.
- Some students respond to role-playing, using puppets or social stories to work out solutions to conflict situations.

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Curriculum Adaptations

- Rely heavily on visual aides rather than auditory instructions.
- Modify worksheets
 - Fewer items and/or more visuals
 - More border around edge of page
 - Highlighted text that is important
 - Large print
 - Meaningful context to learner
- Use of manipulatives
- Multiple choice tests vs. spontaneous answers
- Writing utensils
- Books on tape

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What Does the Future Hold for Students With Down Syndrome?

- Post secondary opportunities
- Real jobs for real people
- Relationships and marriages
- Actively participating in their communities
- Supported living
- Amazing medical advances
- Cures for cancer and Alzheimer's??
- Research which will result in therapies or medications which could enhance cognition



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Where Can You Find Help?

- Down Syndrome Alliance
- Student's parents
- Peers at school
- Internet Resources
- Library (books authored prior to 2010 are likely outdated)
- Inclusiveschools.org
- Swift Schools



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THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!



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Questions???



To learn more about supporting students with Down syndrome:

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