

Understanding and teaching learners with Down syndrome through the Latch-On program



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Continuing learning by young people with Down syndrome

- Increased recognition and application of continued education
- Historical misconceptions of educators and community leading to narrow beliefs and options
- High degree of self-interest and independent motivation of adults with an intellectual disability
- Cognitive development continues – learning is lifelong
- Limited post-school options beyond life-skill training

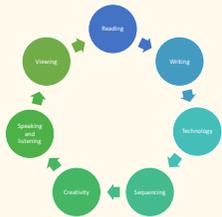
The importance of foundational skills

Language, literacy and numeracy are the essential underpinning skills that enable people to be productive in their work, to continue to learn and develop, and to participate fully in society.

This is an obvious statement, the truth of which has been recognized for decades. But it needs to be made ... as progress has been slow.

No more excuses: an industry response to the language, literacy and numeracy challenge. Canberra: Australian Government.

Understanding literacy



A set of fundamental educational skills that offers an individual a lifetime of opportunities.

What do we know about literacy and Down syndrome?

Data from diverse groups of participants provides evidence of capabilities and progress in literacy across the lifespan. Adults with Down syndrome

- are capable of learning
- already have some literacy skills and these are diverse
- are interested and motivated, this interest appears to grow

We have information about a range of literacy elements to develop a balanced understanding of literacy skills and learning

- Oral language
- Reading comprehension
- Digital literacy

We can identify evidence-based effective learning and teaching strategies in a range of contexts

The Latch-On Program

Latch-On recognises that everyone is a learner with ideas worth communicating and builds on this recognition to frame the development of a literacy and numeracy program specifically designed to meet the needs and interests of learners with an intellectual disability

Latch-On delivers an evidence –based literacy and numeracy program which provides opportunities for adults with an intellectual disability to continue their literacy and numeracy development in an age-appropriate, post-secondary school environment, leading to development of a broad range of literacy and numeracy skills, self-confidence, independence and enhanced employment opportunities.

Why Latch-On

- A two-year program
- Specifically designed for young people with intellectual disabilities
- A responsive and flexible curriculum framework
- Research-based
- Four semesters of fully resourced work in a balanced program
- All strategies and activities have been successfully trialled
- Key teachers are registered and accredited through the Latch-On program
- Tutors are also trained to Latch-On program standards

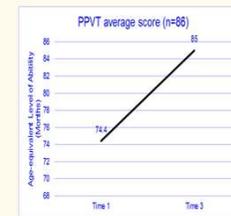
Special Features

- Small group
- Socio-cultural approaches to literacy and numeracy
- Access to technologies including email, internet and word processing
- Professional development and ongoing support
- Evaluation and monitoring of learning
- Monitoring and updating of the program and resources
- Delivered and sequenced through focus on real life experiences

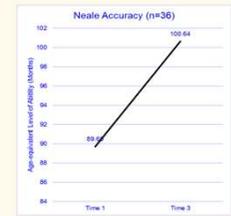
The four core modules

- Starting on a journey of self-discovery
- Beyond the self and into the community
- Reaching out into the world
- Taking on the world

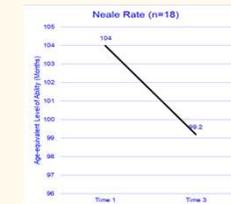
Results from Latch-On in Ireland



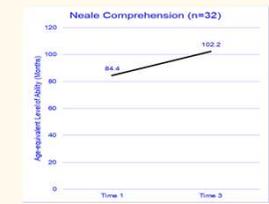
The gain in 10 months is significant – PPVT is very hard to shift and there is some research that suggests this declines after the age of 20 for people with Down syndrome



The gain in 10 months is significant. This provides evidence that students are recognizing more words and a broader range of words



The decrease in rate is small and not unexpected. When readers are paying more attention to understanding rather than just decoding the text, the rate/speed of reading may decrease.



The gain of 17 months in two year is almost an increase in pace with time. BUT this is an average. Some students could not each baseline, and some students stayed the same

Individual student results from site A

