



Starting Post Primary School: Goals for Teachers and Parents

As your child starts on this next stage of their education journey, it is worth taking a look at the Goals for Teacher and Parents, as suggested by **Professor Sue Buckley OBE**, Down Syndrome Education International, in her *Issues and Information Series*.

Goals for Teachers of 11-16 year olds with Down syndrome

- to involve the teenager in all aspects of school life and school routines.
- to support social independence in school and the development of friendships with peers.
- to support the development of leisure skills and inclusion with peers in break and lunchtimes.
- to encourage, model and expect age-appropriate, socially acceptable behaviour at all times.
- to be familiar with the research findings which demonstrate a specific cognitive profile associated with Down syndrome and to adapt teaching methods appropriately.
- to provide access to all areas of the school curriculum at a level appropriate for the individual teenager.
- to recognise the importance of teaching reading and writing daily.

- to develop speech, language and working memory skills as well as literacy skills.
- to have clear targets for speech and language work for each teenager, and identify how these can be absorbed into all aspects of the curriculum.
- to facilitate independent learning and the ability to work and to learn as part of a group.
- to make full use of computer aided learning, with appropriate software for individual and group work.

Goals for Parents of Post Primary Pupils with Down syndrome

- Ensure the full involvement of the young person with Down syndrome in all aspects of family life including appropriate household tasks or jobs and responsibility for keeping their own room and possessions tidy.
- In partnership with the school, continue to work on and develop literacy and numeracy skills.
- Arrange for the young person's involvement in a range of social activities with both their typically developing and disabled peers.
- Consider involvement in sporting activities to promote fitness and health.
- Provide a stimulating speech and language environment for the young person by ensuring that they are spoken to, listened to and fully involved in family conversations.
- Insist on socially acceptable and age-appropriate behaviour at home and during all social activities.

- Address, with the support of the school and any relevant outside professionals, any difficult behaviours.
- Provide the young person with an appropriate level of choice wherever possible, to ensure they have a sense of control over their lives.
- Provide outlets for self-expression and creativity.
- Encourage and develop independence in personal hygiene and self-care.
- Foster and develop independence in the community and encourage regular use of community facilities and amenities – shops, public transport etc.
- Plan for and address issues relating to puberty and development, relationships and sexuality.
- Communicate openly with the young person and provide them with the requisite information for their needs, appropriately pitched to their level of understanding and ability.