



# Down Syndrome Awareness



# Agenda

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- About Down syndrome
- What do we need to do?
- More information
- Final thoughts



Down  
Syndrome  
Ireland



Down  
Syndrome  
Ireland



**The Best Resource a School has to Support Inclusion is the Students**

~ they are brilliant at inclusion if allowed to be!!



# About Down Syndrome



# Students with Down syndrome

When you know one person with Down syndrome, you know one person with Down syndrome.

Students with Down syndrome are just as diverse as any students.



# Students with Down syndrome

Like any group of students, lots of different

- Hopes
- Dreams
- Abilities
- Challenges
- Hobbies
- Interests



# Profile

- Down syndrome is a genetic condition caused by the presence of an extra chromosome 21.
- A baby is born with three copies of chromosome 21 instead of the usual two.



# Learning Profile

- Everyone is different but research has found a profile of developmental strengths and weaknesses, specific to people with Down syndrome
- This profile makes their learning needs different from most other children and teenagers.
- The pace of learning can be slower.



# Social Understanding & Social Interactive Skills

- Many teenagers with Down syndrome understand non-verbal cues to emotions e.g. facial expression, tone of voice, body posture etc.
- Many show good empathy and understanding of social behaviours but may not have the language ability to explain how they feel or to negotiate social situations.
- This can make them vulnerable.



# Motor Skills

- By post-primary school age, gross and fine motor skills may still be delayed.
- This delay will affect participation in games and P.E.
- It will also affect handwriting.

Look up: What are gross and fine motor skills?



# Speech & Language

- Speech and language skills are delayed

How can you help?

- Give the person time to process when you speak

\*Tip Think of yourself learning a foreign language. You need more time to understand what the other person says. You also need more time to find the words to answer.



# Visual Learners

- Many people with Down syndrome are visual learners

How can this help communication?

Show a picture or image when possible.



# Health

- People with Down syndrome are getting healthier.
- Most teenagers with Down syndrome, like teenagers, may be affected by *any* type of illness
- There are some medical issues that are more common for people with Down syndrome such as:
  - Hearing
  - Vision
  - Sleep Apnea
  - Heart Disorders



# What do we need to do?



# What do we need to do?

- Use person-first language

Use "a boy with Down syndrome" or "the girl has Down syndrome".

This is people with Down syndrome tell us they prefer.

- Use a small 's' for syndrome.



# What do we need to do?

- Accept the student with Down syndrome for who they are
- Try to do fun things together
- Talk to the student about the things that you do. It might be hard to understand what they are saying sometimes, but be patient when they are trying to tell you something



# What do we need to do?



- We can share fun activities
- We can help each other to share and cooperate
- We can help each other to cope with disappointment or worries
- We can share our positive thoughts



# More information



# More information

- You might want to find out more about Down syndrome
- There are many ways to find this information
- Ask your teacher to help you
- Check out our website [www.downsyndrome.ie](http://www.downsyndrome.ie)



# Final thoughts



# Final thoughts

• A student with Down syndrome is a person first just like you

• You're not expected to know everything.

Reach out for information and support.

