



Down Syndrome Network of Onslow & Carteret Counties (DSNOCC), Inc.

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What Teachers Should Know

Down syndrome, also called trisomy 21, is a chromosomal condition in which extra genetic material causes delays in the way a child develops, both mentally and physically.

Kids and teens with Down syndrome tend to share certain physical features such as a flat facial profile, an upward slant to the eyes, small ears, and a protruding tongue. They tend to grow at a slower rate and remain shorter than their peers.

Down syndrome can affect learning abilities in different ways, but it usually causes mild to moderate intellectual impairment. Children with Down syndrome have delays in speech and motor skills, and may need help with self-care, such as dressing and grooming.

Medical problems associated with Down syndrome can vary widely from child to child. While some kids and teens need a lot of medical attention, others lead healthy lives. People born with Down syndrome are at risk for:

- congenital heart disease
- vision and hearing problems
- thyroid problems
- obesity
- seizures
- neck problems

Students with Down syndrome may:

- need to go to school nurse for medications when necessary
- miss class time due to frequent doctor visits
- have behavior issues
- need visual and auditory accommodations for classroom instruction
- require physical, occupational, and speech therapies
- need extra time and assistance with class work
- require therapeutic staff support in the classroom

What Teachers Can Do

Students with Down syndrome can have a range of abilities. They can learn and develop new skills throughout their lives, but reach goals at a different pace.

Remember to focus on the individual and learn firsthand about his or her capabilities and special needs.

Be aware of any medical concerns associated with Down syndrome that are specific to your student.

Students with Down syndrome are often enrolled in mainstream education systems and enjoy participating with peers in all kinds of classroom activities. Encourage physical fitness and involvement in all school activities, as well as extracurricular programs.

Realize that you can make a big difference in your student's life. Learn the student's interests so you can create opportunities for success in school.

The mission of The DSNOCC is to connect families and to provide emotional, social, and educational support to individuals with Down syndrome of all ages, their families, and the professionals who serve them.