

FACTS ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME

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People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes instead of the typical 46. There is an extra copy of the 21st chromosome.

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Down syndrome is not an illness or disease, it is a genetic condition caused by the presence of an extra 21st chromosome. What else is determined by your genetic makeup? The color of your eyes, your hair, or how tall you are.

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It is Down syndrome, not Downs. People have Down syndrome they are not Down syndrome. Don't say, "The boy is Downs" say, "The boy has Down syndrome."

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People don't have "mild" Down syndrome, or "severe" Down syndrome. Ability is not dependent on the condition, but rather the individual. People either have Down syndrome or they don't.

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Contrary to popular belief, people with Down syndrome are not always happy. They experience every emotion you and I do.

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Children with Down syndrome go through the same stages of development as typical children but it takes longer to achieve those milestones.

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While there are certain characteristic physical features that set people with Down syndrome apart, people with Down syndrome resemble their families more than they resemble one another.

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A person's facial features do not determine cognitive ability. Just because someone has many of the characteristic physical feature of Down syndrome does not mean they have a lower IQ.

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You will get what you expect! Just because a child has Down syndrome it does not mean they are unable to be well behaved or follow directions.

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There are three types of Down syndrome. T21 (or non-disjunction) is the most common. All cells have an extra chromosome. Translocation Down syndrome, when part of chromosome 21 becomes attached (translocated) onto another chromosome. Children with translocation Down syndrome have the usual two copies of chromosome 21, but they also have additional material from chromosome 21 attached to the translocated chromosome. Mosaic Down syndrome, where only some cells have an extra chromosome, but other cells in the body are typical.

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All people with Down syndrome experience cognitive delays, but the effect is usually mild to moderate and is not indicative of the many strengths and talents that each individual possesses. (From the National Down Syndrome Society)

12

Not all kids/people with Down syndrome are the same. Knowing one person with Down syndrome, does not mean that all people with Down syndrome are the same. We are all individuals, regardless of how many chromosomes we have.

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While someone with Down syndrome might look different on the outside, people with Down syndrome can be beautiful.

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Most older kids and adults with Down syndrome are aware they have Down syndrome.

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Adults with Down syndrome are not "perpetual children," they are adults, and they happen to have Down syndrome.

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Kids with Down syndrome typically do best in an inclusive learning environment, and typical kids do best when they learn about diversity, kindness, and friendship at an early age. Inclusive classrooms teach and benefit all kids.

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People with Down syndrome contribute to their families, their schools, their coworkers, their employers, and society.

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Siblings of kids with Down syndrome are not affected negatively, on the contrary, most siblings report their relationship with a brother or sister with Down syndrome is one of the greatest gifts in their lives.

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Many adults with Down syndrome attend college, have jobs, or marry.

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People don't "suffer" from Down syndrome. In a study conducted by Dr. Brian Skotko, 99% of adults with Down syndrome reported they were happy with their lives.

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In Brian Skotko study, only 5% of parents reported feeling embarrassed by their child with Down syndrome.

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It is appropriate to say, "Congratulations on the birth of your baby!" when a child is born with Down syndrome. All life is worth celebrating.

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Not all adults with Down syndrome live with their parents forever. Many live independently and thrive.

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Kids and adults with Down syndrome are aware of how people perceive them, and they care. They get their feelings hurt, just like you and I do.

25

People with Down syndrome have hopes and dreams.

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One of the most significant challenges for people with Down syndrome is low muscle tone. Low muscle tone affects speech, gross motor skills, and fine motor skills. Speech, physical, and occupational therapy help.

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The word “retarded” is offensive, it hurts. People with Down syndrome deserve respect.

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Kids and adults with Down syndrome have much to say. They have thoughts, ideas, and enjoy meaningful conversations.

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Fifty years ago, parents were still encouraged to send their babies born with Down syndrome to mental institutions. That was not too long ago. What you see now is the hard work and determination of parents willing to fight the battle for their children, and for the many that have followed.

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Down syndrome is the most common genetic condition. One in every 691 babies is born with Down syndrome in the United States.

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Most families are living and loving life with Down syndrome. If you don't know someone with Down syndrome, you are missing out.

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