

Educational Implications

- **Short attention spans** are also prevalent among students with Down's. Direct instruction in short periods of time along with smaller chunks of activities will help to support learning. Introducing new material slowly, sequentially and in a step by step fashion will help to ensure maximum learning occurs.
- **Distractibility:** Students with Down's are often easily distracted. You'll need to employ strategies that work to minimize distractions such as keeping the student away from the window, using a slightly more structured environment, keeping the noise level down and having an orderly classroom where students are free from surprises and know what your expectations, routines and rules are.
- **Speech and Language:** Students with Down's all suffer from serious problems such as hearing difficulties and articulation problems. Sometimes they will require speech/language intervention and a great deal of direct instruction. In some cases, augmentative or facilitated communication will be a good alternative for communication. Use patience and model appropriate interactions at all times.
- **Behavior management techniques** used for other students should not differ for the student with Down's Syndrome. Again, positive reinforcement is a much better method than anything punitive. Reinforcers need to be meaningful.

Resources

Website of the Down Syndrome Aim High Resource Center (DSAHRC)

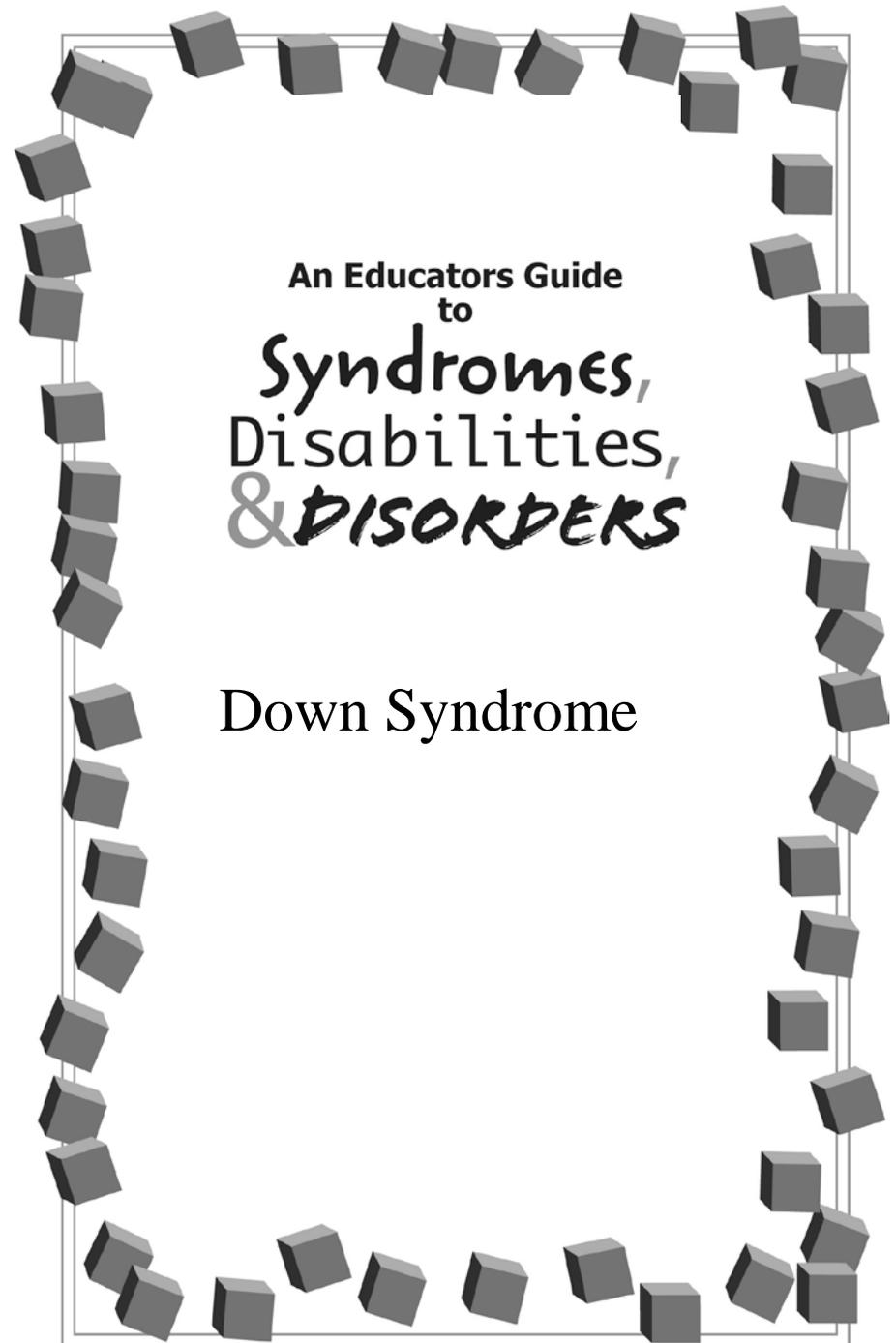
The Down Syndrome Aim High Resource Center provides parent-to-parent and professional services and support to individuals with Down syndrome and their families. <http://www.downsyndromeresourcecenter.org/data/>

Down Syndrome Resources for Children

http://pediatrics.about.com/od/downsyndrome/Down_Syndrome_Resources_for_Children.htm

National Down Syndrome Congress. <http://www.ndscenter.org>

National Down Syndrome Society <http://www.ndss.org/>



Symptoms or Behaviors

Down syndrome, a chromosomal abnormality and probably the most common genetic condition, occurs in approximately one in every eight hundred to one thousand live births or accounts for approximately 5-6 per cent of intellectual retardation. Although, most students with Down Syndrome are between the mild to moderate range of mental retardation.

Initially, Down Syndrome was given the label of 'Mongolism' due to the physical characteristics of the disorder. A student with Down Syndrome is usually quite recognizable due to characteristics like a smaller overall stature, flat facial profile, thick folds in the corners of their eyes, protruding tongues which is due to their smaller oral cavity and low muscle tone.

Instructional Strategies and Classroom Accommodations

- Adapt cardiovascular activities.
- Adapt activities involving movement on uneven surfaces.
- Adapt activities involving agility and changing directions.
- An alternative method of communication may be necessary.
- Avoid activities that place the neck in extreme flexion, such as tumbling, in individuals who test positive for AAI.
- Check medical records and follow written guidelines established by the physician.
- Coordinate with medical community to prevent contraindications.
- Discourage hyperflexible postures.
- Determine cause of problem with other health professionals.
- Encourage muscular strengthening especially around joints.
- Incorporate family into solution.
- Proper nutrition and weight control should be stressed.
- Provide calorie burning activity.
- Stress personal care (i.e., wearing weather appropriate clothing, getting enough to drink) and hygiene (washing hands and face frequently).
- Stress activities like sitting, crawling, walking, and moving through various positions to increase muscle strength.
- Teach them to move or touch particular body part.
- Utilize visual demonstrations.
- Utilize tactile demonstrations.
- Use visual cues or stimulate visual tracking and acuity.
- Use auditory cues or require listening to complete.

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- **Inclusion:** Students with special needs should be full members of age appropriate mainstream classes to the extent they can be. Effective inclusion means that the teacher must be fully supportive of the model. The strategies you use to reach and teach the Down student will often be beneficial to many learners in the classroom. Inclusion is a good practice for students with Down Syndrome. The inclusion environment is less likely to stigmatize and provide a much more natural environment for the students. There are more opportunities for peer relationships to occur and much of the research states that full integration works better.
- **Self-Esteem:** The physical characteristics of a student with Down will often result in a lowered self-esteem which means you will need to take every opportunity to boost self confidence and instill pride through a [variety of strategies](#).
- **Intellectual:** Students with Down usually face many intellectual challenges. Strategies that work for [mildly retarded students](#) and or students with significant learning disabilities will also work with Students with Down's. Much literature have stated that most individuals with Down syndrome do not progress beyond the intellectual capabilities of a normal developing six to eight year old. However, always strive to move the child progressively along the learning continuum, never assume the child isn't capable. Solid intervention and high quality instruction have been proven to lead to improved academic achievement for students with Down's. Use a multi-modal approach which works best for all students. Use as many concrete materials and real world authentic situations as is possible. Use language appropriate for student understanding and speak slowly when necessary. Always break tasks into smaller steps and provide instruction for each step. Remember, a student with Down syndrome will usually have a good short term memory.