Building Success for Students with Down Syndrome and other Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities
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Objectives:
1. Understand the importance and implications of a learning profile
2. Recognizing the role that health issues can play in academics and behavior
3. Inclusion promotes the philosophy that all people have a right to fully participate in society.
A child is not defined by DS

People First Language
Putting the person before the disability.....
A child with Down syndrome
NOT
a Downs child.

The difference between the right word and the almost right word
is the difference between lightening and the lightening bug.
Mark Twain

It was not until 1970 – 1980 that researchers began to
develop reading programs because they believed that
children with Down syndrome could read!! Before that
they were not taught. There were no EXPECTATIONS!

Typical profile associated with Down syndrome (see,
Hodapp, Fidler, Buckley in DSRP 9 (3) on website

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<th>Social understanding empathy &amp; social skill</th>
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www.discriminately.com
**Learning Profile**

**VISUAL Learners!**

**Receptive Understanding >> Expressive Understanding**

**Strengths**
- Visual learners
- Good Social understanding
  - Use peers to model academics and behavior.
  - Great at imitation
- Strong readers
  - Easier to remember than the spoken word
- Strong in Sign language
  - Reduces frustration
  - Provides a visual map of language.
- Good Attention in short bursts

**Challenges**
- Visual and hearing deficits
- Uneven speech and language profile
  - Communications skills are good
  - Vocabulary is delayed
  - Grammar is more difficult
  - Clear speech is more difficult
- Short working memory
  - Repetition is ESSENTIAL
  - LONG processing time

**Medical Implications of Eligibility**

There is a medical component to many of the eligibilities for special education such as:

1. **Hearing loss** for students with Down syndrome, auditory impairment, orthopedic impairment.

   So what does that feel like?

   ![Image of a person with a hand to their ear]

   **Remember:**

   He may not be ignoring you. He just can’t understand what you are saying, or only hears a part of what is said.

   Repeat yourself. Slow down and say it again. Use sign language, pictures or symbols so he can visualize what you are saying.

   Give him extra time to process.
2. **Vision Loss** may be a contributing factor for students with Down syndrome, deaf-blind or visual impairment, orthopedic impairment (degenerative diseases), other health impaired (diabetes), and traumatic brain injury.

**Predictability and routines** will help in the environment.

**Speech or Language Delays** have many roots in medical history:

Students with Down syndrome have physical differences such as small and narrow upper jaw, low muscle tone, and weak oral facial muscles.

**Strategies to help with speech and language skills**

1. Ask the student to repeat what he said.
2. Ask him to show you what he wants.
3. Make visuals available to support communication.
4. If he uses sign language, teach others a few common words.
5. Model speaking slowly and clearly in complete sentences.
6. Do an Assistive Technology assessment to see if an augmented communication device or method would be beneficial.
7. Provide social stories and other visuals to teach social skills.
8. Role play and model social skills.
9. Provide graphic organizers, word banks, and other visual tools to support written language skills.
Communication

Hindering factors
• Receptive language vs. Expressive language
• Speech articulation
• Hearing
• Short term memory
• Attention span
• Processing time
• Recalling information
• Echolalia

• Demands and Interruptions
  – Necessary vs. unnecessary demands
  – Talking to fast and too much information
  – 10 seconds can change a life
  – Visual interruptions (overload)

Set everyone up for success

Communicate!!!
• Set clear boundaries / rules
• Routine and consistency
  – Visual representation of the schedule
  – Social Stories
  – Preferred activities happen AFTER non-preferred activities
  – Prepare for transitions
    – Use a timer
    – Verbal/visual prompt before event
    – Have a place in line (2 or 3)
    – Have a job
    – Count the kids
  – Carry the clipboard
• Ensure the child is part of the routine
• Use peers to model behavior
  – Great at imitation (good and bad)
  – Do not give opportunity to be "last"

• Give choices
  – Only two that you agree with
    – Do you want to do this BY YOURSELF or do you want me to help you?
    – Do NOT ask a question where the answer could be NO
• Reinforce positive behavior
  – Keep praise appropriate Don't overdue it.
  – Peer recognition system
• Reward systems are good
  – Keep them simple
  – Avoid tiered systems

Ask parents what works well at home or in other settings

Modifications

KEY QUESTION - What is the Goal of THIS particular activity?

• Make assignments visual
  – Visual prompts
• Pre-wire concepts if possible
  – Send high level information to parents ahead of time.
• Teach first - don't test first
  – Success breeds success
  – Guide to right answer
• One task or concept at a time
  – Focus on target goal
  – What specifically do I need to know that this child understands?
  – Remove all extra "noise"
  – Worksheets should only contain "core" tasks/understanding

• Allow for process of elimination
  – Tinted transparency for matching
• Task start to finish (routine)
  – Flashcards end up in a box/tray
• How does this task align to IEP?
  – Align with accommodations
  – Align with reading/comprehension
  – Align with math levels
  – EX: Money – representational math
Remove Challenges

Learning Profile
- Visual
- Short working Memory
- Simplified presentation
- Small steps
- Receptive understanding > Expressive understanding
  - Ex: Money labeling (sorting)

Speech
- Unclear speech
  - Multiple choice: pick one
  - Sort
  - Show me
  - Watch physical cues (eyes, lean)

OT
- Cutting: pre-cut all but 1-2 pieces
- Coloring as follow up understanding:
  - Use markers
  - Make hashes
  - Bingo dotters
- Writing
  - Flash cards (pictures/words)
    - Choose answer
    - Arrange images/sentences
    - Trace dotted letters
    - Fill in one word
- Math
  - Manipulatives
    - Number lines, abacus, Numicon, hundreds chart, ten frames, calculator

Behavior Matters!

Expect Good behavior
- Behavior is age appropriate
  - Children with DS have
    - Similar to behavior issues of same Mental age
    - More behavioral issues than chronological peers due to cognitive and speech delays
- DS is no excuse to behave badly
- Be consistent in all environments
  - School, home, daycare
  - Home/school Log
  - All About Me book

Breakdowns create Behavior
- Shut down (Down syndrome drop)
- Uncoooperative behavior
  - Refuse to come to the table/walk away
  - Excessive silliness
  - All Done!
  - Intentional wrong answers
  - Wiggling
  - Demanding favorite activity
- Aggressive behavior
  - Throwing
  - Taking things away
  - Hitting

Avoid learning helplessness

- Presume competence
- Provide supports only when the student asks or need it.

Guiding thoughts...
- Are you training your student to be a productive member of society
- Are you setting the student up rescuing him/her now?
Research Results on Inclusion:
1. Acceptance of diversity
2. Social skills/friendships
3. Greater independence
4. Greater academic achievement
5. Higher self-esteem
6. Improved speech, vocabulary and grammar

What does the future hold?
• Post Secondary opportunities
• Real jobs for real people
• Relationships and marriage
• Actively participating in their communities
• Living independently or in semi-supported environments

“The role you take will dictate the very path down which I will travel.”
Additional DS Resources

**DS General Resources**
- Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas
- [https://www.dsiinternational.org/en-us/](https://www.dsiinternational.org/en-us/)
- National Down Syndrome Society
- National Down Syndrome Congress
- [http://d蠡.org/learning-program](http://d蠡.org/learning-program)

**Down Syndrome Research**
- Down Syndrome Research Foundation
- Down Syndrome Research Stanford
- Research Down Syndrome
- Down Syndrome International

**Inclusion**
- [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGptAXTV7m0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGptAXTV7m0)
  - Tedx Talk on the importance of assuming competency
  - Dr. Julie Causton's website promoting inclusion
  - Check out the walk videos for her views
- [http://www.cherylmjorgensen.com/Resources.html](http://www.cherylmjorgensen.com/Resources.html)
  - One of today's leaders for inclusion; a wealth of information
  - Check out inclusive education resources