



Down syndrome - Info for kids

Look around your classroom. Unless you have twins in your class, you will see that all of your classmates look different. Here are some things that you might notice:

- We all have differently coloured hair
- We have differently coloured eyes
- We have different shapes to our faces and bodies
- Some of us learn quickly, while some of us take longer to learn
- Some of us like to run, while some of us would prefer to read a book
- Some of us are very friendly, while some of us feel shy

Children with Down syndrome can look different too. They may not speak quite the same as you yet and they may do things a little differently. They may take longer to learn some things, but in most ways they are very much the same! For example:

- We all laugh at funny things and we cry when we are sad
- We all get cross sometimes and we might make mistakes
- We all like to have fun with our friends and to play games
- We all like to learn new things and to feel good about ourselves

What causes Down syndrome?

People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes in each of the cells in their body. Most other people have 46. Babies have these even before they are born. Did you know that your body is made up of cells? Even in children there are trillions of cells! They're very tiny. They are so tiny that you need a microscope to see them. Inside these cells there are even tinier things called chromosomes. These carry the plan which tells our bodies how to grow. People with Down syndrome have an extra copy of chromosome number 21. Having the extra chromosome 21 makes the growing plan work differently to other people.



We are all unique. We don't have to be exactly the same to like being together, to be friends or just to be classmates.

Some interesting facts

- Down syndrome is not a disease. You can't catch it
- People with Down syndrome have had Down syndrome since before they were born
- They will ALWAYS have Down syndrome
- People with Down syndrome have an extra chromosome in each of the cells in their body. These chromosomes are very tiny, but carry important information that affects how we grow
- No-one knows why some people have this extra chromosome
- Most children with Down syndrome will be able to do the things that other children do. They just take longer to learn how.
- Children with Down syndrome like to play and to have friends.
- Children with Down syndrome like to help out, to learn and to be good at what they do.
- Children with Down syndrome like to have a turn, even if they aren't as quick or as good at things!



Have you ever wondered...

Why can't Suzie speak/run/draw properly?

Because she has Down syndrome, it will take longer for Suzie to learn how to speak/run/draw. Remember when you found it hard to learn.....? It helped you to have extra time, lots of practice and some help when you needed it. Maybe we could do that for Suzie too.

Why is Tommy naughty?

It will take Tommy a bit longer to understand the rules. We can show him what to do by doing it ourselves. Or we can remind him what he has to do. Everybody forgets sometimes to do the right thing!

