



In the United States, approximately 400,000 families have a child with Down syndrome, and about 6,000 babies with Down syndrome are born each year. More and more Americans will interact with individuals with this genetic condition, increasing the need for widespread public education and acceptance.

- Down syndrome occurs when an individual has a full or partial extra copy of chromosome 21. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome. It is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition. One in every 691 babies in the United States is born with Down syndrome. There are more than 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States, among all races and economic levels.
- A few of common physical traits indicate an individual has Down syndrome, however every person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees or not at all.
- People with Down syndrome attend school, work, participate in decisions that affect them, and contribute to society in many wonderful ways.
- 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. Children with Down syndrome fully participate in public and private educational programs. Educators and researchers are still discovering the full educational potential of people with Down syndrome.
- The current trend in education is for full inclusion in the social and educational life of the community. Children with Down syndrome have been included in regular academic classrooms in schools across the country. In some instances they are integrated into specific courses, while in other situations students are fully included in the regular classroom for all subjects. Increasingly, individuals with Down syndrome graduate from high school with diplomas, participate in post-secondary academic and college experiences and receive college degrees.
- Quality educational programs, a stimulating home environment, good health care, and positive support from family, friends and the community enable people with Down syndrome to develop their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.
- Life expectancy for individuals with Down syndrome has increased dramatically in recent years, with the average life expectancy approaching that of peers without Down syndrome.
- Businesses are seeking adults with Down syndrome for a variety of positions. They are being employed in small- and medium-sized offices: by banks, corporations, nursing homes, hotels and restaurants. They work in the music and entertainment industry, in clerical positions, childcare, the sports field and in the computer industry to name a few.
- People with Down syndrome have feelings just like everyone else in the population. They experience the full range of emotions, not just “happy.” They respond to positive expressions of friendship and they are hurt and upset by inconsiderate behavior.
- People with Down syndrome have meaningful friendships, date, socialize, form ongoing relationships and marry.