

Down Syndrome

Down Syndrome is the most common chromosomal disorder in the United States.

One of the best ways that the church can serve people who have disabilities, like Down Syndrome, is to have a better understanding of their lives. So we did some research and talked to parents. We found out that there's a lot to learn.

- Down Syndrome is a chromosomal condition that occurs when an extra copy of chromosome 21 is present. There are three types of Down Syndrome, with Trisomy 21 being the most common in 95% of cases. Down Syndrome is not caused by something a mother did while she was pregnant. This error in cell division occurs at random.
- People with Down Syndrome often share some common traits:
 - Low muscle tone
 - Short stature
 - An upward slant to the eyes
 - A single deep crease across the palm
 - Many have mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.
 - All are unique!
- What you say matters. Receptive language develops before expressive language. Some people with Down Syndrome may understand what they hear more than they can express verbally. If a child is nonverbal or minimally verbal, be respectful, engage with them, and look for nonverbal cues to better understand how she may be responding.
- Use Preferred Language. Show respect by learning what terms are preferred. A complete guide is available at the National Down Syndrome Society website - ndss.org.
- People with Down Syndrome are at risk for certain medical issues.
- There is a common misconception that people with Down Syndrome are happy all of the time. This is a myth. People with Down Syndrome have all the same moods and emotions as everyone else.
- Treat children who have Down Syndrome like their peers.
- Create a safe place for families to talk about both the joys and challenges of raising a child who has Down Syndrome. Remember, we are all family!

Citation: ndss.org