



# Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!

Summer 2008 Edition


Back To School

Upcoming DSG Trainings

*Practical Solutions For Challenging Behaviors*  
September 18th  
8:30 AM-11:30 AM

*Practical Solutions For Educating Students With Down Syndrome*  
October 9th  
8:30 AM-11:30 AM

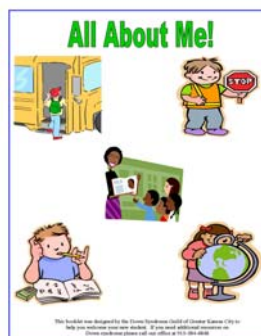
RSVP for these FREE trainings by calling 913-384-4848. Seating is limited, call today!



## Back to School Checklist for Educators

Review this back to school checklist to insure you are prepared to meet the needs of your students with Down syndrome.

- Students with special needs are seated close to the teacher or assistant.
- I have a special carrel or private location for test-taking and or seatwork for those requiring 'free of distractions' to enable success.
- I have eliminated as much clutter as I can and keep distractions to a minimum.
- I never present instructions/directions orally alone. I always provide graphic organizers, written or graphical instructions also.
- Clarifications and reminders are given regularly as needed.
- Students have schedules which are referred to regularly. Home/school communication is in place for those students requiring it.
- My classroom expectations are clearly understood as are my consequences for inappropriate behaviors.
- Extra assistance is provided when needed through a peer or myself.
- Praise for 'catching them doing it right' occurs regularly.
- Students are aware of my cueing and prompting system to help them stay on task.
- I allow additional 'wait' time for my students with special needs.
- I provide my students with special needs with regular, ongoing feedback and always promote their self-esteem.
- Educational activities are multi-sensory and responsive to learning styles.
- I modify assignments to reduce frustration and increase the likelihood of success.
- I have methods in place to enable the student to have text written to him/her and for them to dictate their answers.
- I provide opportunities for cooperative learning as working together in groups often helps to clarify misconceptions for learning delayed students.



## Get to Know Your Student!

DSG created the All About Me Booklet to help parents introduce their student to their teacher(s). This 12 page booklet provides educators with health information, communication strategies, insights into what motivates the student, background information on strengths and areas of concern and a full picture of what the student does outside of school. Visit our For Educator section of our website at [www.kcdsg.org](http://www.kcdsg.org) to download a copy of this great resource. Parents will be so impressed when you send a copy home for them to complete it and send it back!

# Helping Your Student Learn to Attend to Task

Students with Down syndrome may have difficulty attending to task due to short attention spans, easy distractibility and requiring longer processing time to respond to directions. The following strategies are designed to help you help your student attend to task, exhibit age appropriate behavior and be a contributing member of the classroom.



Write daily schedules where the student can see them. Check tasks off as they are completed so students have a sense of time and progress.



Be succinct in giving directions and always model or demonstrate what you want students to do by showing them a completed example



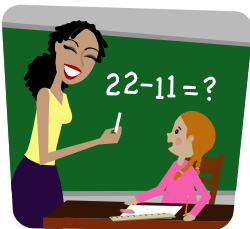
Use a prearranged signal with your student to indicate inappropriate behavior. Be sure to role play the behavior you are seeking so the student can comply



Establish good eye contact before speaking to your student. Wait 10 seconds for the student to process information and respond to you.



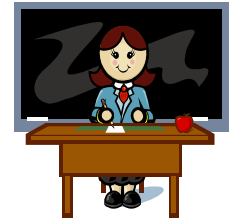
Too many words on a worksheet or in a book can overwhelm a student with processing issues. Uses single sided worksheets and book marks to track reading.



Challenge your students regularly. Never do for them, what they can do for themselves. Promote independence and compliance whenever possible.



Seat your student near you and surround him/her with peers who model good study habits and appropriate behaviors



# Avoiding Learned Helplessness

Students with Down syndrome are often presumed to need help in areas where they can actually be quite self-sufficient. It is best to presume competence and provide supports when the student requests assistance or proves it is needed. Avoid the pitfalls of OVER HELPING your student by examining the following practices.

## Promotes Learned Helplessness

Protecting student from taking any risks

Rescuing the student from anticipated outcomes

Overlooking errors

Constant reminders of what should be taking place

Speaking for your student

Simplifying assignments

Giving inflated grades on work done

Accepting or making excuses for the student

Inconsistency in discipline or expectations

Permitting inattentiveness to task at hand

## Promotes Independence

Setting clear limits on what is safe

Enforcing agreed upon consequences in unemotional manner

Discussing issues and creating solutions

Giving clear directions and expecting follow through

Student is encouraged to speak for him/herself

Teaching at a challenging level using learning strengths

Using rubric scoring honestly

Using clear expectations and coaching the student on errors

Consistency in discipline or expectations in all settings

Holding the student accountable for attending to task

An educators ultimate responsibility is to train a student to be a productive member of the community. Students with Down syndrome benefit from teaching interactions that will challenge them to be as independent as possible. Over helping your student actual sets them up to fail when they leave your classroom. Make sure the students peers also understand that they should not do anything for the student with Down syndrome until they have asked for help with a task.

# Strategies for Improving Speech and Language

Students with Down syndrome typically have a speech and language impairment. A speech therapist can suggest individualized activities to promote their speech and language development. The language delay is caused by a combination of factors, some of which are physical and some due more to perceptual and cognitive problems. The level of knowledge and understanding, and thus the ability to access the curriculum, will inevitably be affected. Receptive skills are typically greater than expressive skills. This means that students with Down syndrome understand language better than they are able to speak it. As a result, their cognitive skills are often underestimated.

## Common Features of Delay in Language Acquisition:

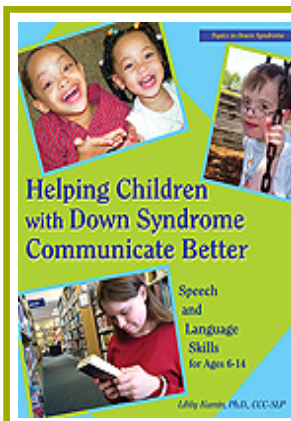
- Smaller vocabulary leading to less general knowledge
- Difficulty learning the rules of grammar resulting in a telegraphic style of speech
- Ability to learn new vocabulary more easily than the rules of grammar
- Greater problems in learning and managing social language
- Greater problems in understanding specific language of the curriculum
- Difficulty in understanding instructions



In addition, the combination of having a smaller mouth cavity and weaker mouth and tongue muscles makes it harder to physically form words; and the longer the sentence, the greater the articulation problems become. Speech and language problems for these students often mean that they actually receive fewer opportunities to engage in language and conversation. It is more difficult for them to ask for information or help. Adults tend to ask closed questions or finish a sentence off for the student without giving them much needed time or help to do it themselves. This results in the pupil getting less language experience to enable them to learn new words and sentence structures. It also provides less practice to improve their clarity of speech.

## Strategies To Try In Your Classroom and At Home:

- Give time to process language and respond– WAIT 10 SECONDS for a response before speaking again
- Listen carefully and ask the student to repeat what was said if needed for comprehension
- Ensure face to face and direct eye contact
- Use simple and familiar language and short concise sentences
- Check understanding - ask the student to repeat back instructions
- Avoid ambiguous vocabulary. Reinforce speech with facial expression, gesture and sign
- Reinforce spoken instructions with print, pictures, diagrams, symbols, and concrete materials.
- Emphasize key words, reinforcing with visual aids if needed
- Teach vocabulary through print- flash cards, games, pictures of prepositions, symbols, etc
- Avoid closed questions and encourage the student to speak in more than one-word utterances.
- Encourage student to speak aloud in class by providing visual prompts. Allowing the student to read information may be easier for them than speaking spontaneously.
- Use a Home-School Communication Log to help relay information between educators and parents
- Develop language through drama and role-play



Written by Dr. Libby Kumin, an expert in Down syndrome and communication, this is the only book about speech and language issues for children with Down syndrome ages 6-14. Encouraging and parent-friendly, it covers the scope of speech and language issues important for this age group, from understanding language pragmatics to building conversation skills and from using augmentative and alternative communication systems to improving speech intelligibility. Chapters include case studies, research, home and school activities for practice, and present:

- Distinctions between language and speech
- Factors that make speech and language difficult
- The evaluation process of language and speech
- Speech treatment (articulation, fluency, apraxia)
- Communication skills at school
- Communication skills in home/community
- Conversational skills
- Assessment of language/speech skills

Order this great resource today by visiting [www.woodbinehouse.com](http://www.woodbinehouse.com)



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We're on the web!  
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**13th Annual  
Buddy Walk  
October 18th  
Arrowhead Stadium  
9:00 AM-2:00 PM**

There are over 250 Buddy Walks held worldwide to promote greater awareness of Down syndrome and raise much needed funds to help individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the professionals who serve and support them. Kansas City is proud to host one of the largest Buddy Walks in the world! 6,000 people joined us at Arrowhead last year to celebrate Down syndrome. Will you be there this year to help us cross the finish line?

A majority of DSG programs and services are funded through Buddy Walk proceeds. If you enjoy reading this newsletter, attending our social and educational events, visiting our website, participating in a community group, attending the holiday party or connecting with other families it is all made possible through the Buddy Walk.

**Register online at [www.kcbuddywalk.org](http://www.kcbuddywalk.org)**

## **Kids on the Block Puppet Shows**

Kids on the Block Inc. (KOTB) originated in 1977 as a direct response to US Public Law 94-142 which required that children with disabilities be educated in the least restrictive environment possible with their typical peers.

Viewing a KOTB performance is an unforgettable educational experience. The "kids" vividly and effectively model relationships between people, both with and without disabilities, by using frank and often humorous communication of facts and feeling between the puppet characters and the audience. KOTB now offers puppet shows featuring characters with various disabilities.

The Kids on the Block program on Down Syndrome (Mental Retardation) features 17 year old Ellen Jane Peterson, who has Down syndrome. Ellen Jane attends her neighborhood high school and participates in a program which allows her to work at different jobs in the afternoons. This short skit informs students what living with Down syndrome is like and opens the door to promoting greater inclusive opportunities for students with Down syndrome.

For more information on booking a KOTB puppet show, contact Susan Gates at 913-681-2455. You can also visit [www.kotb.com](http://www.kotb.com) to learn more.