

FACT SHEET



*Differently
Abled*



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION
(S I N G A P O R E)

I BACKGROUND

Early in 1995, a group of parents of children with Down syndrome recognised that a great need existed in Singapore to support and educate families, professionals and the public about Down syndrome. Out of a meeting held on 1 October 1995, the Down syndrome Support Group was formed. In May 1996, the group organised and hosted, with great success, the 2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Down syndrome. The enthusiasm generated amongst parents, professionals and community members spurred the formal registration of the group as Down Syndrome Association (Singapore) [DSA(S)] in September 1996. The Association was awarded official recognition by the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) on 4 July 1997.

DSA(S) is a primarily self-funding, non-profit Social Service Organization (SSO), which works closely and regularly with healthcare and educational professionals, and other SSOs. The Association is affiliated with international bodies such as Down Syndrome International (DSI), the Asia-Pacific Down Syndrome Federation (APDSF), Asian Federation on Intellectual Disabilities (AFID) and the International Association of Scientific Studies for the Intellectual Disabilities (IASSID). In April 2004, DSA(S) was invited to organise and host the 8th World Down Syndrome Congress in Singapore, which attracted participants from more than 34 countries. In June 2009, DSA(S) was the one of the main organizer for the 2nd Asia Pacific - International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual Disabilities (IASSID) Congress in Singapore. In March 2016, DSA(S) organised the World Down Syndrome Day 2016 - National Seminar on support for caregivers for persons with intellectual and learning disability.

II OUR GOALS AND ASPIRATION

We acknowledge and respect the right of all persons with Down syndrome to receive the adequate response to their needs. We are thus committed in our aims to provide support, enable a person with Down syndrome to attain his or her full potential, help a person with Down syndrome to lead a "normal" life and thus be able to contribute to society and educate the public on Down syndrome.

III OUR VISION

To be the Centre of Excellence for individuals with Down syndrome, their families and the community.

IV OUR MISSION

- ❖ **Develop** individuals with Down syndrome through lifelong learning and social integration.
- ❖ **Support** families through specialist services, information and education.
- ❖ **Advocate** for equal opportunities, quality of life and their contribution to society.

V OUR SERVICES

Children's Education Services

Integration Facilitation Support Programme (IFSP)

Integration Facilitation Support Programme (IFSP) offers a continuum of itinerant special education services for preschool and school going children. All IFSP teachers are MOE registered to provide services in the areas of communication, social skills, and cognitive development. It is an inclusive experience for children with Down syndrome resulting in a sense of belonging, positive social relationships, and accelerated development and learning. Our intent is to improve access, participation and support for our students in mainstream educational settings.

Infant Toddler Programme (ITP)

Infant Toddler Programme (ITP) is a registered Early Intervention Programme with Ministry of Social and Family Development. The early intervention teachers mentor parents and coach them to better manage and cope with raising infants and toddlers with Down syndrome. ITP adopts an evidence based play- and routine-based early intervention practice. Centre-based sessions are conducted weekly while home visits every fortnight.

Education Enhancement Programme (EEP)

Children's Education Services' series of workshops for parents and mainstream educators cater to specific age groups and needs, giving participants unique and clear insights.

Adult's Education Services

Adult Enhancement Programme (AEP)

The Adult Enhancement Programme (AEP) is a 21st century contemporary programme targeted at young adults with intellectual disabilities who have graduated from special schools at 18 years old. It is a community integrative learning model which embraces and leverages on the community as a training platform. This learning model develops and nurtures the learners holistically, with a strong emphasis on self-determination and empowerment. It is a full-day program that seeks to nurture the learners to achieve the following programme key areas:

- Activities of Independent Living (AIL)
- Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

Programme Objectives

- To enable learners to be socially integrated and independent adults with sufficient skills for independent living.
- To provide open employment /social enterprise opportunities for learners through the capitalization of their strengths and interests.
- To provide a source of enrichment activities, targeting at value adding towards self-maintenance, leisure and productivity skills of our youths.

- To enhance and facilitate socialisation and interaction development among peers
- It will explore various structured activities to empower the learners with the relevant adult skills, so as to enhance their participation in mainstream activities.

Independent Living and Training Centre (ILT Centre)

The Independent Living and Training Centre (ILT Centre) is a programme designed to enable persons with Down syndrome and intellectual disabilities to live an inclusive life in the community. ILT Centre aims to give rise to opportunities for young adults with Down syndrome to practise and apply life skills so that they can generalise these skills in the daily lives thereby promoting greater independence. This preparation programme will better position our young adults with the necessary life skills to live a more independent lifestyle including employment, especially when their caregivers are no longer able to provide the necessary care. The areas in the facility are specially designed to stimulate a realistic home environment so as to achieve the following:

- Provide facilities for young adults to practice independent living with minimum support in a supported community
- Enhance quality of life of young adults with Down syndrome especially in the area of dignity and independence
- Promote mutual support among persons with Down syndrome
- Work towards social inclusion

In addition, ILT Centre also prepares the individual with employability skills for open employment through the modular market and gives ageing caregivers an option for their adult child to practice communal living.

Enrichment Programmes

The enrichment programmes are specially tailored to benefit persons with Down syndrome and engage members to develop their talents and passion. A repertoire of classes spanning from performing arts, visual arts, fitness, and literacy and numeracy are available.

Performing Arts

- Dance
 - Happy Feet (aged 9 years old and above)*
 - Creative Dance (aged 12-18 years old)*
 - Fusion Dance (aged 18 years and above)*

Dancers learn the art of communication through body language, dance techniques and moves from both traditional and modern dance styles. With their dedication and passion towards the art form, our dancers have been invited to various events for performances, giving them an opportunity to showcase their talents and boost their confidence.

- **Drums and Percussion**
Through fun and engaging learning, our drummers are taught different drumming styles and rhythmic patterns. Drumming fosters creative expressions, memory enhancement, focal attention, discipline, motor planning and teamwork.
- **Speech and Drama**
Body; Voice & Speech; Acting; providing an outlet for persons with Down syndrome to cultivate self-esteem, friendship and teamwork whilst improving their verbal and motor skills in an enjoyable and comfortable setting.
- **Visual Arts**
Visual Arts consists of: Contemporary practices, literature and developmental needs and abilities of the individuals. The sessions cover drawing, sketching, painting and water-colouring. Members explore self-expression, develop creativity, understanding of visual patterns and improve fine motor skills.

Fitness

- **Aikido**
Aikido focuses not just on punching or kicking opponents but on the use of one's energy to gain control of their motions and movements. Our senior members attended their very first grading and achieved yellow belt level after being tested on the following techniques, Rocking exercise (backward break falls) and Knee walks). Their hard work is evident as they learn new techniques to progress to a higher belt level.
- **Bowling**
Every Saturday and Sunday, members of DSA(S) can be found at the Singapore Recreation Club and Orchid Bowl at Our Tampines Hub sharpening their bowling skills and competing against each other in friendly games. Bowlers aged 8 years and above work on their bowling techniques whilst their coach analyses and corrects their shots, offering advice on spare combinations.
- **Swimming**
Swimmers aged 6 years and above learn the fundamental aspects of water safety and water confidence through water activities before progressing to learn basic swimming strokes.
- **Zumba**
Learners do not need to be a great dancer to feel welcome in the Zumba class. With tailored steps to suit our members the classes emphasise moving to upbeat music and having a good time. The sessions provide a full body workout by allowing our members to perform cardiovascular exercise, practice muscle conditioning, balance and flexibility.

Literacy & Numeracy

- **Computer Maths**
Computer skills are a necessity in the 21st century and the interactive options that technology brings make learning easier and more engaging. Members explore various concepts of mathematics in fun and interactive manner using mathematical computer software.

- KidsREAD

In partnership with National Library Board, the KidsREAD Programme encompasses dynamic reading activities, which aims to improve the visuoauditory, pronunciation and verbalisation aspects of persons with Down Syndrome. The sessions explore different genres of books, cultivate and encourage the child towards progressive reading habits and reinforce the child through imaginary reading skills.

Family Support Services

The Family Support Services (FSS) provides legal and medical support, offers mentorship, and share relevant information, literature and resources. Its main objective is to build and strengthen family bonds by working with professionals with relevant expertise to educate our parents through the various workshops conducted regularly.

Parent Mentoring

Parent mentors share their personal experiences on raising a child with Down syndrome and to provide guidance and support in areas that new parents may need. Their roles as friends and guides provide a support system that is unparalleled. Sharing their joys and sorrows, new parents will know that they are not alone in their journey. The group regularly connects and learns from each other's experiences.

Deputyship

DSA(S) deputyship, a collaboration with NUS Law students under the guidance of Professor Lee and Dr Bhavani, helps with our parents' deputyship applications and provides pro-bono legal services to families with special needs.

Outreach programme with external organisations

By sharing support and services with external organisations it helps the team to build a close-knitted working relationship. This allows us to work closely together on members' case management.

Resource and Information Library

DSA(S) has a collection of books and journals for parents/caregivers to borrow and learn more about Down syndrome. Parents can also borrow toys specifically selected for children with Down syndrome, especially to facilitate early intervention.

Publications:

My Baby booklet, first Singapore publication on Down syndrome, is available in four languages. It contains a personal vignette and experiences of raising a child with Down syndrome with medical and factual information.

DSA Medical Passport

DSA Medical Passport, launched on 20 October 2018, was formulated with the help of our medical advisor, Dr Bhavani for all parents to organise the medical records for their child with Down syndrome. Its intention is to help the doctors and healthcare staffs to better access the health status and needs of the child during consultation.

CONTACT US

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Official Facebook page: @downsyndromesinagpore

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