



Friendship and Social Inclusion

Down
Syndrome
VICTORIA 

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The 4 R's

- Reading
- Writing
- (A)rithmetic

- **RELATIONSHIPS**
 - i.e. social skills instruction.



Considerations



“Children 20% of their time in school & 80% in the community, on the playground and at home with siblings and other family members”

“What would life be like if in spite of your efforts you couldn't find ways to connect with others? If you craved friendship, companionship, trust and rapport but felt rejected, lonely and an outsider?”

Considerations

“Research shows that the adult success of a person with learning difficulties is largely dependant on his social-emotional relationships – not his academic skills”



For some children with Down syndrome some social skills such as empathy can be a strength

The 4 key social skills

- The ability to join or enter a group
- The ability to establish and maintain relationships
- The ability to resolve conflicts
- The ability to 'tune in' to social skills



We all want / need

- At least one good friend!
- Birthday party invites, sleepovers
- Someone to play with and to visit
- Success at something



Face-to-face communication

- 55% of messages are non-verbal - Gesture, posture, facial expression
- 40% is conveyed through tone of voice
- 5% is communicated by words



The Issues

For a child with a learning difficulty social acceptance is inhibited by:

- Cognitive skills – these differ greatly
- Language – content , tone
- Speech – intelligibility
- Body language
- Understanding of peers – laughing at / not with e.g. Kieran P changing in the gym
- Environment
- Expectations
- Subtlety

Responsibilities

School

Staff, CT, TA

- Inclusion, attitude, positive behaviour support e.g. Esther & greetings

Peers

- play equipment, games, conversation, loneliness

e.g. Emily R in the playground



Responsibilities

Parents

- Birthday invites, sleepovers
- Just when you think it all should start to get easier
- Leisure activities
- Issue of DS specific activities versus mainstream
- Appearances are very important – clothes, haircut, music
- Plan (& limit) play sessions, parties, excursions
- Teenage years - dating, parties, wanting to be the 'same'



Strategies

- Inclusion
- Attitude, expectations. Emphasise similarities
- Games – rules and pace? e.g footy vice capt; volley ball (newcomb); Duck,Duck,Goose; Ship,Shark,Shore; poison ball, tabloid sports
- Joining outside school groups, activities, clubs
- Tasks, roles, responsibilities
- Circle of friends
- Buddies

Best strategies

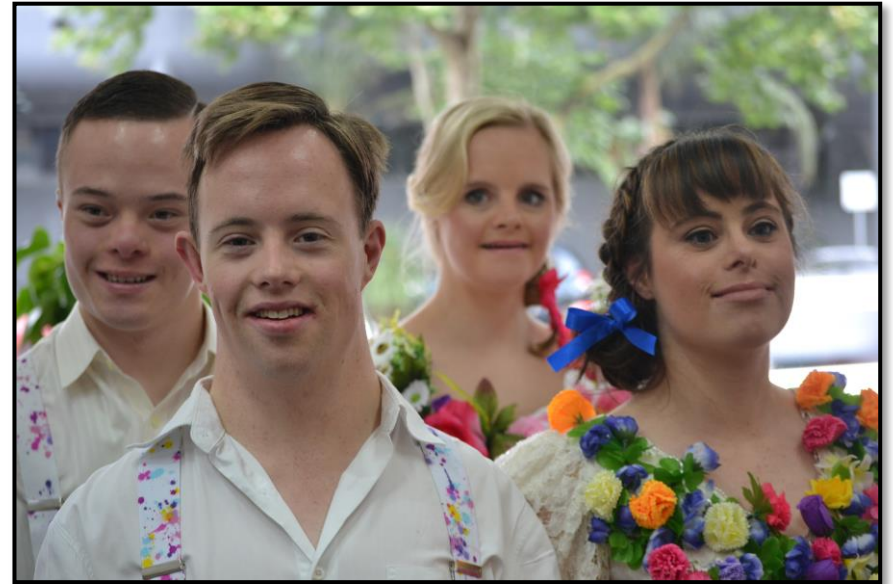
- Explicit teaching of the social skill
 - Can list deficit skills, but if possible:
 - Teach in context
 - Teach immediately – as they occur
 - Practise in a similar situation
 - Use positive reinforcement – lots of labelled praise
 - Use scenarios
 - School, community, home
 - Social skill games
 - Involve, inform the triangle – student, school, parents

Top 20 manners that adults appreciate

- Using please & thankyou
- Thank you notes
- Eye contact
- Cleaning up
- Showing respect
- Not interrupting
- Treating people as you wish to be treated
- Appropriate table manners
- Firm handshake
- Compassion and sympathy for others

Today's Big Picture

- Independent living
- Open employment
- Adult relationships



References

- ***It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend*** (book & video)
 - Richard Lavoie
 - (even if you just read and practise the introduction & the tips in the appendix)
- ***Skill-Streaming for the Elementary School Child***
 - Arnold P. Goldstein
 - (good checklists)
- ***Social skills board game*** *n.b. my version* – Social Scenarios
- ***Special at School but lonely at home***
 - Down Syndrome Research & Practice Vol. 12. Issue 2. Oct 2008
- ***Group game references***
 - Books – Silly Sports & Goofy Games – S. Kagan. Playing Games 7-11 year olds – L. Evans
 - Fundamental Motor Skills – An Activities Resource for Classroom Teachers - Department of Education
 - My resources - Feelings activity, Thermometer for feelings, anger, acceptance of Down syndrome, Lifetime timeline, St. Lukes.

References

Resources presented at Teaching Students with Down Syndrome workshop can be found on our website

– see link:

http://www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au/DSAV/Information/Professional_Training_Day_Resources_2015.aspx



