

**URBAN
SAINTS**

RESOURCE

Down's Syndrome

Effective support for
young people with
additional needs



Down's Syndrome

Approximately two children with Down's Syndrome are born in the UK every day. Around one in 1000 babies will have Down's Syndrome, which is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome in the young person's cells.

All young people with Down's Syndrome will have a varying degree of learning disability. Both 'Down Syndrome' and Down's Syndrome' are commonly used.

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Key issues

- Difficulties understanding, learning and remembering new things.
- Problems generalizing any learning in new situations.
- Possible difficulties with a number of social functions e.g. *communication, caring for themselves, or health and safety.*
- The words 'mild', 'moderate', 'severe' and 'profound' are also used with learning disability and it is advised that specific guidance is sought from parents regarding their young person.



Support strategies for your group

Refer to the strategies provided in the related information leaflet 'Learning Difficulties/Disabilities', available at:

urbansaints.org/resources

In addition:

- **Be patient;** give young people with Down's Syndrome's plenty of time.
- **Remember that a young person with learning disability might use other forms of communication** such as Makaton or Sign-a-long.
- **Never make the assumption** that the young person cannot understand you.
- **Keep things simple,** consistent and use repetition where necessary.
- **Don't get agitated or impatient,** or make disparaging remarks to another leader or young person about the young person with Down's Syndrome.
- **Use easily understood examples** to help explain things and try to avoid abstract discussions.
- If possible in your group setting, and if leader numbers allow, **try to provide one-to-one support** for the young person, or use another young person as a 'buddy'.



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Further Information: Down's Syndrome Association downs-syndrome.org.uk

Research shows that young people with additional needs are more likely to be abused than their peers (NSPCC) This increased vulnerability is due to a number of factors including communication differences, increased dependence on caregivers, social isolation and a higher likelihood that warning signs would be missed or misinterpreted. As a youth leader it's therefore important to be especially alert to changes in behaviour and wellbeing and discuss any concerns with a safeguarding lead at the earliest opportunity.



**This resource is just one
of the many ways we're
here to walk with you!**

Discover more free tools, training
and resources to equip you in
discipling young people.

urbansaints.org

This resource has been adapted from our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit.



If you're interested in helping your team become more aware and welcoming of young people with additional needs, you can explore our Invited to Belong Team Training Kit at urbansaints.org/resources

The original content of this resource was created in partnership with **Youthscape** as part of the Invited to Belong resource.