



UNDERSTANDING DS & HOW TO BE A SUPPORTIVE FRIEND

Grades 6-8



What is Down syndrome?

Down syndrome is a genetic condition caused by an extra copy of the 21st chromosome, known as Trisomy 21.

People with Down syndrome may learn and communicate differently, or at a slower pace, but they share the same emotions, interests, and dreams as their peers. They want to be included, respected, and valued for who they are.

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10 Tips to Be a Supportive Friend

- **Practice patience — give time for answers.**
- **Focus on the message, not how speech sounds.**
- **Offer choices instead of yes/no questions.**
- **Encourage independence, don't over-help.**
- **Use respectful, person-first language.**
- **Include friends with disabilities in group work and listen to their ideas.**
- **Don't assume what they can or cannot do.**
- **Model kindness and acceptance.**
- **Speak up if you hear teasing or disrespect.**
- **Remember: inclusion means every voice matters.**