



Down Syndrome
Australia

Living independently



This document has been produced
by Down Syndrome Australia.

Down Syndrome Australia is the peak body for people with Down syndrome in Australia. Our purpose is to influence social and policy change, and provide a national profile and voice for people living with Down syndrome.

We work collaboratively with the state and territory Down syndrome associations to achieve our mission.

Our vision is an Australia where people living with Down syndrome are valued, reach their potential, and enjoy social and economic inclusion.

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Part 1:

For adults with Down syndrome

As we get older, our lives change. People stop going to school and they begin to do things as an adult, such as going to work. Another thing that might change is where people live and who they live with.

Some people decide to live with family members, friends or support people, and other people decide to live on their own. There is no right decision about where to live, or who to live with. Everyone is different. This information will help you think about where you want to live, who you want to live with and what help you might need. It will also help you with planning to make it happen.





Making a decision about where to live

You have the right to make decisions about where you live. You may like your family, close friends or supporters to help you make decisions. Your friends and family need to listen to what you have to say. This includes what you think about where you live now.

When you are making any decision it is important to think about what you like and what you don't like. This means both the good and bad sides of each decision. You might like to make a list with the good and bad parts written down to help you decide.

You also need good information about the different choices you could make. There is a lot of information in this resource. You can also ask other people to help you get more information from other places.

Making choices about how you want to live can sometimes be hard. You can ask other people to help you make a decision:

- family
- friends
- a support person who knows you well
- advocate.

An advocate is an independent person who helps people sort out problems and make decisions.

**You have the right
to make decisions
about where you live.
You may like your
family, close friends
or supporters to help
you make decisions.**

Things to think about

When you are thinking about making a change to where you live, there are some practical things to think carefully about:

Where do I want to live? Think about things like how close it is to work, to friends and family, to the shops or your doctor, and is there public transport close by? What do I like to do during the day? Where do I need to go and what transport do I need to use?

Who would I like to live with? Would I like to live on my own, or with friends? Or a with a partner?

Do I have enough money to live where I want to live?

What do I need and what would I like to have in my home?

How much help will I need and who do I need to help me?

Will I be able to get the support I need where I want to live?

There are many different places you can live and different choices you can make about who you live with. You and your family should think about:

- What is important to you?
- Where you can get the help you need?
- What you can afford and where you can get funding to help you live more independently?

Here are some different ways to live. This list shows some of the good things and bad things about each. You may like to make your own list to help you look at some different options and think about what is important to you.

Different ways to live

Living in a house with my family

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have people around to keep me company• We share the costs of food• I already know the place• I take part in decisions in the house, such as what's for dinner tonight• My family helps me if I need them to	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I may not have as much time alone as I would like• I may not be able to make all my own decisions• I may not want to live with my family now that I am older• I may not have much privacy

Living in a house with a friend or friends

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can make choices• I feel proud of myself, living away from home• I can share the costs of food and bills• We can share household jobs, like washing up or cooking• I may get the chance to spend more time with my friends• If I need help, my friend is there• I may have more privacy than living with my family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I may not always have as much privacy as I would like• I may not always agree with what my friends want to do in the house. For example, what to eat, what to watch• I might not get along with my friends when we are living together and may have to move again



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Different ways to live continued

Living by myself

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can make my own choices• I feel a sense of achievement in having my own place• It is more private for me• It may give me more chance to do things with friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It costs more to live alone• I might be lonely• I might need more help getting to places I want to go. Depending on where I live this might cost more money.

Living in shared supported accommodation

Positives	Negatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I might get to join in some social activities with house mates and other people• I will have staff to help me when I need it• I should be able to have a say in decisions about my life, and take part in decisions about the house• I may have more independence than living with my family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It may be hard to find a house that's available• It may not be in an area where I want to live• It may be far away from my family• I won't be able to choose my other housemates• I may not be able to have all my things out in the shared living area• I may not always agree with what other people want to do, or eat, or watch• It may be noisy• I may not get as much privacy as I want• I may not get along with my housemates• I might not get to be as independent as I want to be• It may not suit me

Skills and support

When you are thinking about moving out from your family home, it's a good idea to think about the skills you have and any help you might need. Here are some examples to think about. You can make your own list of the things you are good at, and things you might need some help with.

Things you do to take care of yourself:

- shopping for food
- making healthy meals
- showering/bathing
- getting dressed
- doing your washing
- managing your money
- looking after your health – such as exercise, going to the doctor
- what to do if an emergency happens – who can you call for help?

Things you do to take care of your home:

- knowing what to do if something stops working in the home
- regular cleaning
- washing dishes
- gardening.

Things you do to get around:

- catching public transport
- organising transport with support workers or family.



Things you do to stay connected with family and friends

- doing things you enjoy with your friends
- visiting your family
- using a phone or computer to talk to your friends and family
- sending emails, messages or connecting with other people on social media.

Community connections

- going to work, having a job
- taking part in sport, being part of a club, doing activities with other people
- having a social life, getting out and having fun.

Getting ready

It can take time to learn how to do things on your own. Here are some ideas for you and your family, to help you to learn and practise your skills:

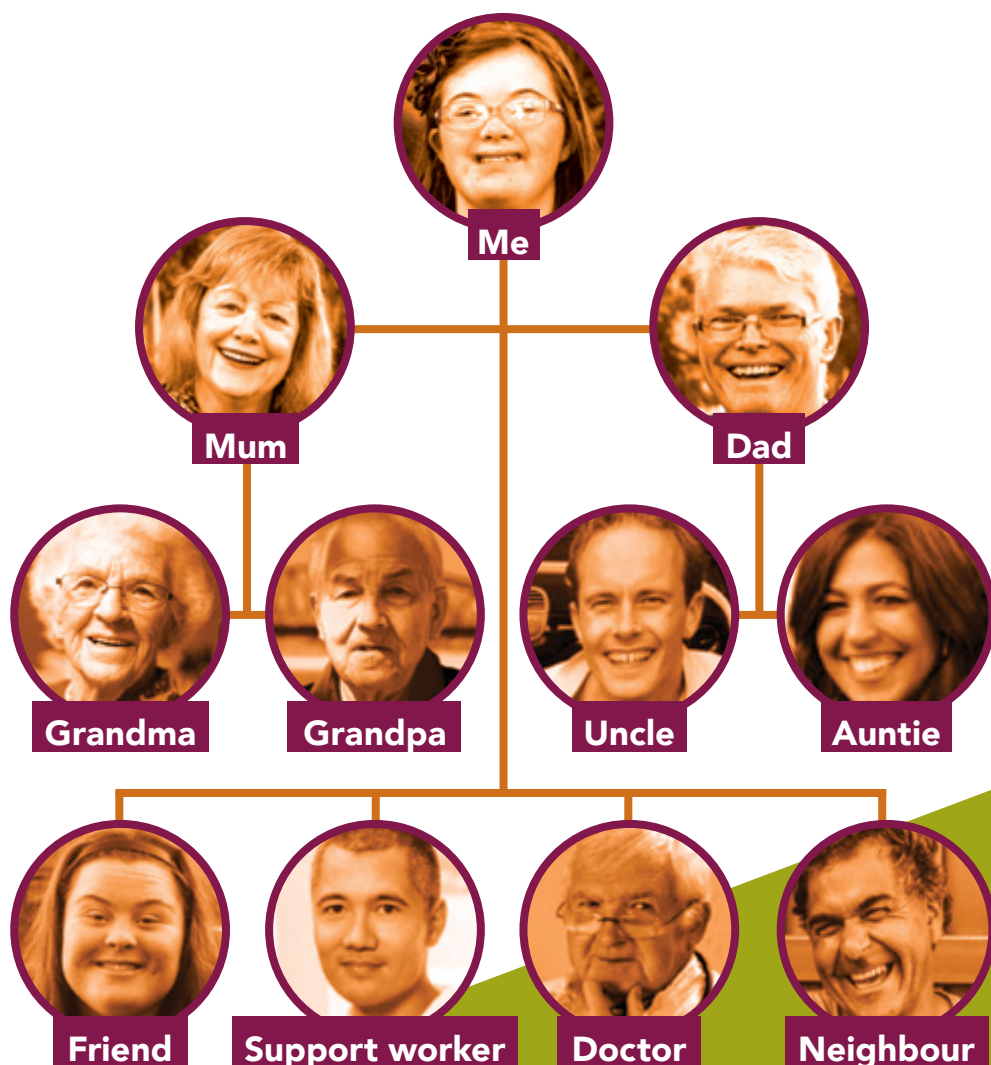
- Practise doing things on your own.
- Try doing new things you haven't tried before, like cooking, paying bills, cleaning up, using keys, getting money out with an ATM card.
- Make a timetable of the things you would need to do if you lived on your own.
- Have pictures that show you how to do things. For example, step-by-step pictures on how to do the laundry.
- Try out different ways to help you remember what you need to do if you were living alone. For example, have a noticeboard in your kitchen, keep a diary, use a calendar and sticky notes, and use alarm reminders and apps on your phone or computer.
- Some people practise living away from home. They have short breaks away to get used to being away from their family. Some people start by just living in their new place for a few days of the week, until they are ready to move.

Support to help you

When you are making decisions about where you want to live, it helps to know who will be able to support you. Some people have lots of friends and family while other people may only have a few people in their support network. Everyone is different.

Here is a Support Tree. This is a picture of a person's support network – the people who they have around them who could support them when they are living away from their family home. You could draw your own 'Support Tree' to see who is in your network.

My Support Tree



Putting a plan together

Moving out of your family home can be a lot of work, having a plan written down is a great way to keep yourself organised and make sure you don't forget anything.

Make sure your plan includes:

- what you want now
- your goals for the future to help you stay focused
- the funding you have (or need to find)
- the support you have and support you will need.

Remember that these things will change over time. You can keep updating your plan to make sure it always shows what is important to you and your life.

A checklist for moving out

It's a good idea to have a checklist in your plan, to make sure you haven't forgotten anything. The checklist contains what you need to do and when things need to be done. It's like a countdown to moving out.

This is an example of a checklist for someone who decided to rent a house to live by themselves. A checklist for someone who chooses to live in supported accommodation will have different timelines and different actions. Your checklist will also be different from this, and will depend on your plans for where and how you want to live.



A checklist for moving out checklist

At least 12 months before you want to move out

- ☒ Talk to your family about what you want to do
- ☒ Think about where you'd like to live. Look at different options to help you decide
- ☒ Think about what support you will need
- ☒ Think about what furniture and equipment you might need to buy
- ☒ Find out how much it will cost and what funding you will need to get. (It can take a long time to get funding). Ask for the funding you need in your NDIS plan
- ☒ See if there is any other funding you can get to help you to live away from the family home
- ☒ Find and talk to organisations that help people with housing and see if they can help you

2 months before moving

- ☒ Check what you can afford. Have you got the funding you need?
- ☒ Look at housing options that are now available
- ☒ Think about things like how close they are to work, family, shops and check if there is transport
- ☒ Pick an option that suits you and you can afford
- ☒ Apply to rent the house or flat
- ☒ When you have arranged to rent, think about a moving date



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A checklist for moving out checklist continued

1 month before moving

- ☒ Organise packing materials such as boxes
- ☒ Think about who might be able to help you move. Get friends and family to put 'Moving Day' on their calendars.
- ☒ Think about whether you need to hire a moving truck or ute to help with the move
- ☒ Think about your furniture and what you want to take with you
- ☒ Organise for water, internet, gas and electricity accounts to be set up and to be connected when you move in
- ☒ Organise for support workers to come to your new house
- ☒ Make sure organisations have your new address

Moving day

- ☒ Start early enough so that you have enough time to move everything
- ☒ Make sure nothing is left behind and your old room is clean
- ☒ Move into your new home
- ☒ Celebrate with and thank family and friends who helped you move!

Understanding your feelings about moving out

Leaving home is a big change in your life. Deciding to live more independently can be an exciting time and you may be very keen to make this change. Moving out of the family home can make you feel more mature and give you more privacy. It also makes you feel independent and more part of the community.

But moving out can make you feel lots of other things too. Sometimes people will feel happy, other times they might feel worried or scared. Sometimes, it might feel like too many things are changing. It is normal to feel different things at different times but it is important to remember you are never alone. If you are feeling scared, or if you are worried or sad it is important to tell someone. It helps just to talk about how you are feeling and why you are feeling this way. And you can tell them if you need more help to sort out the things that are worrying you.

There are always people around you to help. Becoming more independent takes a lot of planning and practice. Your family and friends are there to support and help you, and there are other people and organisations who can also help.



Part 2: For parents and carers

Supporting decisions about living independently

Preparing for changes to living arrangements

All families are different, and discussions about supporting a person to live away from the family home will vary depending on each family's customs, beliefs, culture and values.

Many families have different cultural values that influence how and where the family live. For example, many cultures, with or without a person with a disability in the family, live in multigenerational households. In multigenerational households, adults can still live quite independently. But regardless of customs and culture, it's important to remember that it's the person's right to decide once they reach adulthood.

Moving out is a major life change for anyone, but it's something most families tend to expect and talk about. It's important and helpful for families of people with Down syndrome to start thinking and talking about the topic early. The teenage years are a good time to start talking about the idea of living independently, but it is never too late to start.



Early discussion and planning is a gradual and practical way to help the person with Down syndrome, and you, adjust to these changes. It will also help make the process smoother when the time comes.

The person with Down syndrome needs to be at the heart of making decisions about how they want to live when they leave home, but it's important that they have the information and support they need to make practical decisions. There is an Easy Read version of Part 1 of this resource that you can read with your son or daughter, to help them understand about living away from the family home. You can use it as a workbook, to discuss the choices they need to think about and decisions to be made.

Preparing for change

Moving out is a big change for any young person and requires some adjustments. Talk to the person with Down syndrome about the changes that are happening. Acknowledge that while moving out is a bit scary, it is a normal part of life with lots of positives – for example, spending more time with friends, having more independence, having your own space, having more freedom. Reassure them that you will still be part of their lives and will see them often.

Your own feelings

Sometimes people think that the road to independence is a straight one, starting off with a low level of independence that increases over time and ends up with a person who needs little or no support. This isn't usually the case. For example, some people may start off seeming very independent, but need more support at a later point. Other people will gradually gain more skills and become more confident and capable. Most people will need some ongoing support and all will need extra support sometimes. It is also important to remember that everybody is unique and will need different levels of support for different things. All of this is quite usual and absolutely fine, but important to be aware of.

It's vital to keep in mind that there needs to be enough support in place to meet someone's actual needs, rather than their perceived needs. Putting the right support in place from the beginning goes a long way to ensuring the best outcomes for the person with Down syndrome.

As well as being a big step for the person with Down syndrome, leaving home is also a big change for parents. You may feel worried, anxious or sad, excited or even guilty about your son or daughter leaving home. You may feel that support workers won't be able to provide the same level of care that you do. This is quite normal and it's ok to feel this way.

While there is always a sense of 'letting go' when your child moves out, you will still be very much a part of their life and support network. As a parent, you know your child best. You should be fully involved in the support planning process and support staff should listen to, and value, what you say.

Some people are able to move into a new home very close to their family home, so that the support network of family and friends is always close by. This can sometimes help make the transition easier. Other people will live further away, so may need other additional supports.

Whatever happens, it helps to remember the reasons why the person with Down syndrome is moving out, and the positives that change can bring. For example, living away from the family home can help the person with Down syndrome to gain independence, learn new skills, build confidence, and meet new people without losing a close relationship with their family.



Starting to think about living independently

The next part of this resource helps you think about some important practical aspects of moving out, including:

Choices – What does your son or daughter want in terms of where they live? For example: Where do they want to live? Who do they want to live with? What is important to them?

Funding – Where and how do you get funding for housing and support?

Change – Moving out is a big step. What support will they need to understand what it will be like living outside the family home? Are there ways you can help them to process this change?

Being prepared – Help your son or daughter to get ready to be more independent. What kind of skills do they need to learn? What help will they need to develop their skills?

Support – How much support will the person need when they are living more independently? What kind of tasks are they good at, and what do they need help with? Who will provide this support?

Let's now look at each of these.

Choices

While your son or daughter might already be keen to have more independence, it's important to talk with them about some of the details and realities of moving to a new home, and what it will mean for them, so they can make decisions about their living arrangements.

It can be difficult to understand what it means to live in their own home, without having experienced it first. Providing examples of other people's lives can help. For example, they could talk to other people in the family who have moved out or spent time away from the family home, such as older siblings. If you know anyone with intellectual disability who has moved out of home, ask them to talk to your son or daughter about their experiences.

Look at some resources
on living in your own home
and the choices people can make.

The Summer Foundation is a good
Australian website to look at for information
and ideas. Here are their online housing resources:

<https://www.summerfoundation.org.au/our-resources/>

You can find some Easy Read resources on the Learning Disability England website. While these are about housing in the UK, the individual stories about people's choices of living arrangements are good for thinking about different possibilities:

<http://hsa.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/easy-read.html>

Down's Syndrome UK has a series of Easy Read leaflets. They are called Living the Way You Want, and cover different aspects of living independently. **<https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/easy-read-information/>**

Here are some questions you can ask to help your son or daughter start thinking about living more independently:

- "What does your perfect house look like?" It doesn't matter if their dream home is not practical – you can use this as a starting point to get them thinking about the idea and what they would like.
- "What would you like to have in your home?" For example, would you like a double or a single bed? Would you like an outdoor space?
- "Where would you like to live?" Ask what is important to them in terms of where they live, such as being near friends and family, going to college or work, being safe, living near leisure activities, parks, and other things they enjoy doing. What do you like to do during the day?
Where do you need to go? What transport do you need?
- "Who would you like to live with?" On your own, or with friends? Or with your partner?
- "What help might you need to do things?" Ask more questions such as: would you need help with cooking? Or doing your washing?

You can also use the Easy Read version of this resource to discuss these things and start to make choices.

www.downsyndrome.org.au/blog/resource-category/housing/

Funding

Decisions about living arrangements rely heavily on funding being available now and into the future. The NDIS is now the main source of funding for supports for the person with Down syndrome.

Centrelink has payments such as rental assistance to help with costs of living independently. You can find more information about Centrelink payments at: www.humanservices.gov.au

State governments housing authorities are responsible for public housing, but there are long waitlists. Some also have schemes to help people on low incomes buy their own home, such as shared equity schemes, where you begin by paying off a percentage of the full price of the home, to keep monthly mortgage costs down.



How can the NDIS help?

The NDIS works with people with disabilities to develop an individual plan to provide support and assistance, and help them develop everyday living skills. NDIS plans are reviewed each year and funding for supports will be based on what the person needs at that time, and what they are expected to need in the year of the plan. So it's important to plan ahead, to be sure the funding is available in the person's NDIS plan when they need it.

When it comes to independent living, a person's NDIS plan could include funding for:

- Helping them make decisions about who they want to live with and where they want to live.
- Support workers to help them now, before they leave home, with developing skills for living independently.
- Support workers to help them when they are living independently.
- Housing – in some situations 'Specialist Disability Accommodation' funds may be available.

Housing

Housing is a complex and changing area. NDIS funding may be available for Supported Independent Living (SIL), or Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA).

SIL is funding for assistance with or supervision of tasks of daily life to help people develop skills to live as independently as possible. Funding is based on three different levels of support needs, including whether a person needs full time support, help with most daily tasks or just drop in support.

SDA is mainly for people with very high support needs. If you get SDA funding, it covers the home itself, but not the support services you may need. Currently, NDIS is focusing SDA on group living arrangements.

Here are some links to information about how the NDIS can help with housing and supports:

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/home-and-living>

The NDIS has some real life stories about independent living on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/DisabilityCare>

Here are some mainstream housing co-ops and affordable housing organisations to look at for ideas:

www.foundationhousing.org.au

<https://www.compasshousing.org>

<https://www.projectindependence.com.au/about.html>

www.thc.org.au

www.silc.coop

Some families who are able to do it themselves set up housing for their sons and daughters. If you do this, you should still look at these links for ideas and you should still ask for NDIS funding for the supports they need.



Getting the right support

Getting the support right is an important part of successfully moving into your own home. The level of support given should reflect what the person with Down syndrome can do themselves and what they need help with.

Start thinking about what kinds of tasks the person with Down syndrome will need to do to live more independently. These could be: Cooking meals, shopping, handling money/budgeting, doing their washing, cleaning/tidying, personal care, travelling around/using transport, taking part in leisure/social activities, getting ready for work/college/going out, and taking medication.

Sometimes people are able to do a task but need reminding or prompting to do it or help with planning the steps to do the task. This is still something they need support with and should be part of the support they receive.

Developing skills

When your son or daughter is thinking about moving out, it's a good idea to think about any skills they need to practise or develop that will help them when they are living away from you. For example, if they have always had their cooking and cleaning done for them at home, they may need some support to learn how to do these things themselves. Everyone is different, so it's useful to build on the person's strengths and existing skills. Some people may find visual aids and reminders around the home will help them learn and remember, such as the steps for making a cup of tea, or washing their clothes.

Developing and building on living skills does not mean living without any support. It is important to be realistic about what ongoing supports the person may need. For example, someone might need help with managing their finances, or may need help to keep their

home clean and everything working well. Everyone is different, so it's important to work out what skills your son or daughter could be working on. A support worker can play this role or family members may help with some things.

Having the right levels of support in place from the beginning will help to develop skills and gain confidence. Despite the best preparation, when someone moves home, there may be an 'adjustment' period. This is not unusual, but having the right preparation and the right support in place will make the change easier.



Different types of support

There are a number of different ways that a person with Down syndrome can get support to live independently. The kinds of support available, the terms used, and how they are organised, may be a bit different depending on where you live in Australia. You can organise these kinds of arrangements yourself, such as when you are self-managing an NDIS plan, or get help from a service provider organisation in your area.

Here are some of the main forms of support people with Down syndrome may receive:

Support workers

Many people with Down syndrome who live in their own homes receive help from support workers in the home. Some people may only need support workers to visit at certain times during the day. Some people may also need support workers to stay overnight. The

important thing is that the level of support is tailored to the individual. It is important to inform the NDIS of the level of support a person needs to make their own choices, to ensure they receive funding for this in their plans.



Circles of support

Circles of support can be another way of adding an extra layer of support. A circle of support is a group of people who know a person well, such as family, friends and supporters, who meet regularly to help the person achieve what they want. This can include sharing ideas to tackle problems, providing a strong network of relationships, helping the person feel more independent and taking action to get things done.

A circle of support usually includes around 3-10 people. It can include friends, family and other people who know and support the person. Setting up a circle of support is usually done informally so you can arrange it yourself.

Here is more information about circles of support and what they involve:

Resourcing Inclusive Communities –
<https://www.ric.org.au/circles-of-support/>

Down Syndrome NSW - The Up, Up and Away Circles of Support Guidance Manual and DVD package is available to purchase from DS NSW contact Down Syndrome NSW at admin@dsansw.org.au

Microboards Australia – Microboards are circles of support that are a little more formalised, by forming incorporate organisations to support each person. You can find out more at www.microboard.org.au

<https://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/learning-disabilities/our-work/family-friends-community/circles-of-support>

<https://inclusionmelbourne.org.au/projects/circles-of-support/>

Lead or support tenants

Lead or support tenants are tenants who live with a person with a disability and provide them with support as part of their tenancy. A lead or support tenant can provide help with household tasks and budgeting, as well as other ways to promote independence.

Lead or support tenants have a contract that specifies the support duties they will provide as part of their tenancy. This can include being in at certain times of day, offering support with daily living tasks such as helping prepare meals and communicating with the family and/or the person's service provider. This may include notifying them when they will be away so other support can be organised.

In exchange, lead or support tenants may not have to pay rent, may pay reduced rent and may receive reasonable expenses for their role in the house. It depends on how much support is involved.

Shared living, home share or co-residency arrangements

A shared living, home share or co-residency arrangement is when a person with a disability lives with another person or a family. This brings together people with a disability – who could benefit from help and companionship – with people who are prepared to help in this way. People with Down syndrome and their families can work out what type of support and help is required then outline an agreement.

More information is available at: www.homeshare.org.au and some service providers in your area should be able to assist.

Moving on

Remember that, just like other people, your family member with Down syndrome may decide to change their living arrangements after a time. Sometimes, people start out in a shared arrangement then, as they become more independent and capable, they may decide to live on their own. Other people start by living alone, but decide they want more company or they may need more support. It's important to be open to change.

Putting a plan together

Once the person with Down syndrome has made their decisions about where they want to live and who they want to live with, you can start helping them with the next steps. A good place to start is to work together on a plan. This doesn't have to be an elaborate document – it can just be some ideas of what the person with Down syndrome wants, what they need to do to achieve it, and what supports need to be put in place. You can use the Easy Read version to gather this information to put in their plan. Here are some things to consider:

- personal preferences
- the type of house or apartment
- who to live with
- who needs to be involved
- where to go for information
- what support is needed
- practical arrangements for moving in.



Tips – tried and tested!

Cooking

Homemade cookbook – Make your own, including favourite family recipes with pictures. You can include your own messages – “Mum put a message for him on each page. It has helped him keep on track with healthy eating, This kept her influence in his life and has helped us feel supported”.

You could use apps to make your own recipe book.

Cooking rosters – Some people who are house-sharing cook on certain days. Cook extra, then use up any leftovers for lunches, or freeze for weekends or when the other person is away.

Have a weekly cooking day with support workers, then freeze portions to be re-heated for dinner during the week.

These are some cookbooks that people have recommended:

Look-n-cook cookbooks (with wipe clean vinyl pages) and DVDs.

[www.spectronics.com.au/
product/look-n-cook](http://www.spectronics.com.au/product/look-n-cook)

Sue Larkey cookbooks, DVDs and accompanying teaching manuals. Sue also has other useful resources such as timers, PECS based resources.

[https://suelarkey.com.au/
cook-books/](https://suelarkey.com.au/cook-books/)



The Easy CookBook Series and One Step-at-a-Time publications are produced in simple, clear and concise language. Includes books, videos and shopping cards.

<https://www.easycookbook.org>

Cool Kids Cook by Donna Hay – Forty kid-friendly recipes with easy-to-follow instructions are sandwiched between essential tips on cooking tools and kitchen safety, and come with a page of food-fun stickers. Written for kids but suitable for any cook.

www.amazon.com.au/Cool-Kids-Cook-Donna-Hay/dp/0060566337

These resources are also available from other online bookstores.

Shopping

Some people have shopping cards or use an app or shopping list pads with areas of the supermarket on.

Keep all the shopping dockets together in a plastic bag, to keep track of spending, or if you need to exchange or return anything.

Cleaning

You can have a roster, but if more support is needed a professional cleaner can teach and supervise what needs to be done each week. In each room, in a cupboard or behind the door, have a list of chores for that room and how to do them. Depending on the person, this could be written or have images/photos as visual aids.

Weekly planners

Use a week-to-a-page book. Write in regular activities for the week plus special occasions and outings. If house-sharing, have one each so that housemates can know what the other is up to when doing their own planning. Keep all planners together so that housemates, family and support workers have a schedule of what is happening. It's good to also keep menu planners, stationery and any documents support staff need, including a communication book to relay messages, all together in one place.

Noticeboards

Have a magnetic whiteboard in the kitchen so it's 'in your face' all the time, for reminders of shopping needed, bin days, how to use the oven and microwave and so on. Extra notes can be added as needed. You can also keep a magnetic torch there so it's easy to find when the power goes out. (Each person can also have a torch in their bedroom).

Some people have a notice board with house rules (revisiting these from time to time), a Helping Hand for each person (five people they can contact if they need help), key people if needed and emergency contact numbers.

Technology and apps

Many people are now using technology and apps to help them be more independent. Here are some that other people have found useful. Have a look and try some to see if they work for your situation. Also get some professional advice from the Independent Living Centre, or peer advice from other people with experience in living independently about what apps they might use to help them. New apps are being developed all the time.

A smart phone can be used to set alarms, write notes and take photos of routes.

You can set multiple alarms e.g. 9am start work, 10am coffee break, 10.15am back to work and so on. Set these for workdays and to just vibrate for a subtle reminder.

Some people may find Siri, Google Assistant or other voice assistants useful.

No speech? No problem. Some people use their phones to communicate using emojis, photos, Snapchat and Facetime.

Use the phone's calendar and add both words and emojis so that non-readers can read it.

Apps – there are new apps being developed all the time, so it's a good idea to see what is currently available. Here are some that people have recommended:

Pictello – Use this to create your own books. You can print a hard copy or save to iBooks.

WhatsApp – Can be used to photograph sequences of steps in a task, to send messages and much more.

Find My Friends – for use in an emergency. If a person goes missing, gets lost or gets on the wrong bus, you can use this app to find them by tracking their phone.

Independent Living Centres in each state can give information and advice about products, assistive technology and services to help people live independently and improve their quality of life. There are centres in all states where you can access individualised advice and look at resources and equipment, as well as a national online catalogue of products and services.

https://ilcaustralia.org.au/search_category_paths

This link is to Down Syndrome Australia's Voice journal featuring stories on independent living by other families:

<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/voice/issue/>



Associations

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Down Syndrome NSW

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Toll Free 1300 658 873

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