



Down Syndrome
Australia

Living independently

Easy Read



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.

Acknowledgements

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Living independently



Are you thinking about moving out of home?

Do you want to have your own place?

This information will help you to decide what to do and make plans.



This information is written in an easy to read way. We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Some words are written in **bold**. We explain what these words mean.

It's a good idea to read this information with your family.

A friend or support person might also be able to help you.



They can help you to think about how you want to live and being more independent. This means doing more things for yourself.

There is also a long version of this information for families and other support people.



When we are children, we usually live with our family. They look after us until we are grown up



When people are adults they usually think about moving out and living somewhere else.

As an adult, you have the right to choose the way you want to live.



First of all, do you want to move out?

If you do, there are lots of things to think about. And lots of choices to make.



You will need to do some planning to get ready to live the way you want.

This information will help you to make choices and plan.

Making choices



Everyone makes choices.

Some everyday choices are:

- what time to go to bed
- what to eat and drink
- what to do for fun.



Some choices can be harder, such as how you want to live.

This includes things like:

- choosing where to live
- choosing who to live with.



You can ask your family or someone else you know to help you find information and talk about the choices.

You could make a list of the different choices, to help you decide. Think about what is good and what is bad about each one.

Choosing where to live



Here are some questions to help you think about where you want to live.

Do you want to live near your family?



Do you want to live near your activities? This could be work, where you study, your gym, the pool, cafes and other places you go to a lot.



Do you want to live near the shops?

Do you want to live near transport, such as buses or trains?

What else is important to where you want to live?

Choosing who to live with



Here is some information to help you think about who you want to live with.

You could stay with your family.

You could live by yourself.



You could live with a friend,
or a few friends.

You could live with a partner.



You could live with people you haven't met before

Use the next few pages to think about what is good and what is bad about each one.

Staying with your family



Some good things might be:

- you like being with your family
- you feel at home and relaxed
- it doesn't cost much
- you have a say on everyday decisions
- you have people to help you.



Some bad things might be:

- you may not get much time alone
- you may not get much privacy.



You may not get to make your own decisions.

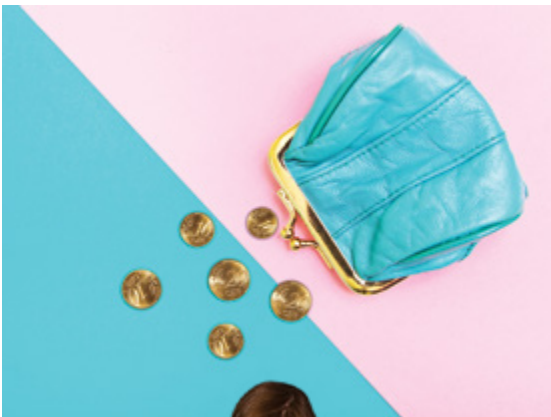
You just may not want to live with your family when you are an adult.

Living by yourself



Some good things might be:

- making your own choices
- feeling proud of having your own place and being independent
- having more privacy
- having more freedom to do what you want
- getting to spend more time with friends.



Some bad things might be:

- it costs more to live by yourself
- some people might feel lonely.



You will need to do more by yourself, and might not have the help you need all the time.

Living with a friend or friends



Some good things might be:

- making your own choices
- feeling proud of living away from home and being independent
- sharing household jobs
- sharing the costs of food and bills
- having more freedom to do what you want
- helping each other if you need it
- having fun together.



Some bad things might be:

- you may not get as much privacy as you like
- you may not always agree with friends when you live together.



You will need to sometimes sit down and decide things together.

You may need to make **compromises**. This means not getting what you want all the time.

Living with people you may not have met before

This might be called **Supported Accommodation**, or a **group home**.



Some good things might be:

- being independent from your family
- joining in with housemates to do things in the house and social activities
- having a team of support staff to help you do things.



Some bad things might be:

- it might be hard to find a house, and it may not be close to your family and other things that are important to you
- you may only be able to have your own things in your own room
- you won't be able to choose your housemates. You may not get along them
- you may not be as independent as you want to be
- you may not get as much privacy as you want
- it might be noisy.

Other things to think about



Costs

- how much will it cost to live the way you want?
- you need to think about things like rent and paying bills
- are there things you will need to buy? This might be things like furniture, a fridge, a TV, kitchen equipment
- you might also need other things like cookbooks, noticeboards, pens and paper, a torch
- make a list of what you will need.



Looking after yourself and your home

- think about looking after yourself and keeping your home and garden clean and tidy
- what things can you already do?
- what things do you need to learn how to do?
- make a list of things you can do and things you need to learn.

Support



Everyone needs some support in their lives.

There will be some things that you can't do by yourself.

What things do you need help with?



This could be help with looking after yourself, such as shopping, cooking and washing your clothes.

It could be keeping your home clean or doing the gardening.

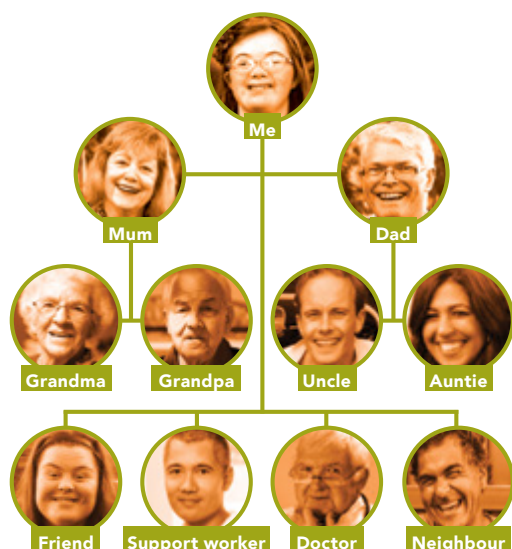
It could be working out your money and paying the bills.

It could be help with getting to places on time. It could be help to remember things.

Make a list of the things you need help with.



People who will help you



Think about who could help you with different things. This could be family, friends or paid support people.

The Support Tree

The Support Tree is a way of making a picture of all the people who could help you.

You could make your own support tree and put in people's names and photos.

This will help you work out who can help with different things. It can help you work out if you still need help with some things.



Helping Hand

A **Helping Hand** is a picture of a hand. It has the names of five people you feel safe with and can contact when you need **urgent** help. Urgent means help for something very important and you need help in a hurry.

This could be when you are sick, you are hurt, you feel very sad or when you don't feel safe and you are scared.

Ask your family and friends to help with making your Support Tree and Helping Hand.

Making a plan



Have you got all the information you need?

Have you talked with your family and other people about moving out?

Have you made your choices and made some lists about living the way you want?



Now you can start to make a plan. This is important to make sure everything is organised and you don't forget anything.

The plan will have:

- your goals and choices about living the way you want
- the things you need to do
- when you need to do them
- the people who will help you.



Make a plan with a **checklist**.

This means you can tick things off when you have done them.

Thinking about how you feel



Leaving home is a big change in your life.

You might feel excited and happy.

You might also feel a bit worried.

You might still not be sure about some things.

This is normal.

It takes time and practice to become more independent.



You might want to try living away from your family for a few days to see if you feel ready.



You might like to get more information and talk to more people about living independently before moving out.

It helps to talk to someone about how you feel. They can help you with things if you are worried.

They can help before you move out and when you are already living independently.

You aren't alone and people are happy to help.

Associations

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