



Down Syndrome
Australia

Community participation

This Fact Sheet has been developed to provide information about inclusion in the community. It is for people with Down syndrome, their families, sporting and community groups and interested members of the community.

What is the experience of people with Down syndrome in the Australian community?

People with Down syndrome are involved in a wide-range of community activities including sports, volunteering, dance groups, and social clubs. Unfortunately some people experience barriers to participation.

Down Syndrome Australia's national survey completed in March 2017, revealed that some of the barriers people experience include the availability of appropriate activities, the availability of support, and transport. While most people felt that their community was supportive and inclusive, 30% indicated that they or the person with Down syndrome have experienced stigma or discrimination in the community because of their disability.

People with Down syndrome have the right to access the same services and participate fully in



the community as all other Australians. This is mandated in the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with a Disability (CRPD).

What is community inclusion?

Community inclusion is where all people, including people with disability or any other difference, have the same access and opportunities to participate in activities in the same way as other members of the community. This includes each person making their own choices and having the support they need to take part.

People with Down syndrome want to take part in community and sporting activities for exactly the same reasons as their peers without a disability, including social contact, fun, fitness, to increase their skills and to increase their confidence and self-esteem.

An inclusive community for people with Down syndrome is where:

- All people in the community have an understanding and awareness of Down syndrome.
- People with Down syndrome make their own choices and decisions.
- People with Down syndrome can join and take part in activities, and are able to contribute, regardless of their disability.

- People with Down syndrome understand their rights to inclusion.
- People with Down syndrome receive the same level of care in health and hospital settings as any other person.
- Government and businesses welcome and provide accessible services to people with Down syndrome, including having staff who know how to communicate effectively.
- Employers provide paid employment opportunities for people with Down syndrome.
- Social groups and organisations are welcoming and inclusive of members with Down syndrome.

An inclusive society is good for everyone. It is one where people feel valued, respected and equal.

What steps can I take to make my community more inclusive?

“All people with Down syndrome have potential (like anyone else) and this should be realised and supported through flexible and innovative/creative groups which will allow inclusion and further skill development”

Parent of a person with Down syndrome, Toolkit Consultations 2018

First of all, understand what real inclusion is and what it isn't:

- Read other resources in the Down Syndrome Australia Community inclusion toolkits.
- Watch the videos at: www.communityinclusion.org.au
- Talk to your friends and family about community inclusion and why it is important for people with Down syndrome.

Then, look at how you can help make changes to support inclusion:

- Be positive and look for opportunities to support inclusion in your community.
- Look at what practical changes need to be made to an organisation you are involved with. Talk with the people involved and help them make the changes.
- Talk with your Down syndrome association about how to support inclusion and participation in your community.
- Share your story of inclusion on social media making sure the person with Down syndrome is actively involved and ok with promoting his or her story.
- Subscribe to the *Voice*, the journal of Down Syndrome Australia.
- Join your local Down syndrome association.

Where can I go for more Information:

Down syndrome association contact details

There is a Down syndrome association in each state and territory. You can contact these associations for support and advice. We are here to help you. Our associations are made up of a wide range of parents, professionals and people with Down syndrome who work or volunteer with us. Please visit our website at www.downsyndrome.org.au or call 1300 881 935 to be automatically connected to your closest association.

Helpful resources

Videos on Inclusion

Values of Inclusion - www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcblijXFFIPw

A World That Works For Everyone -

www.youtube.com/watch?v=iktEhD4e8qw