

Louise and Theodore's Story

Dear new parent,

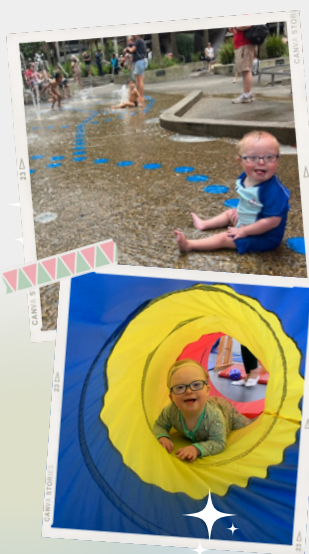
You've got this.

I know it seems really overwhelming right now and you are worried about what the future will bring. When my son, Theodore, was diagnosed with Down Syndrome, I felt the same way. I knew nothing about Down Syndrome really and had a lot of outdated ideas about what this meant.

I remember feeling really lonely in those early weeks. Turns out, having a child with Down Syndrome has been anything but lonely as I've been plugged in to the most wonderful community of people who have either been

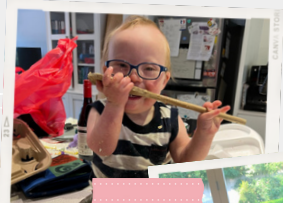
there before you or are experiencing alongside you the joys and puzzlements of raising a child with an extra chromosome. **Anything you are wondering about, there is someone out there to offer advice, ideas, and friendship to help you and your child. You are not alone, even if it feels like it right now. I found Down Syndrome NSW was the best place to start our new journey.**

I felt really strongly about meeting other families with babies with Down Syndrome as I wanted my son to grow up with friends with Down Syndrome as well as with typical babies too. Thankfully, through playgroups I was able to make lots of friends for both myself and my son.



The thing that worried me the most in those early months was that my son was also diagnosed with having serious complications with his heart that would require surgery. He went in for his heart operation at 3 months of age and it was the scariest time of my life. **I was so grateful to have made those friendships with other parents who offered me so much support during that time, with many parents having gone through similar experiences with their own children. Thankfully, the operation went really well and Theodore has been doing very well since.**

Above all, remember this is your baby. They are just a regular baby who needs to be loved and encouraged like anyone else. Some days will be harder than others, but you have a whole network of people who have your back. For me, seeing my son's cheeky face every morning fills me with so much gratitude that he is my son, I couldn't imagine wanting him to be any different. He is the best thing that has ever happened to me.



It might be a myth that people with Down Syndrome are 'always happy', but what they usually are is authentic. Theodore has allowed me to embrace a more authentic life and in doing so has given me a richer and happier life than I thought possible. I hope your baby will do the same for you - congratulations!

Love from Louise and Theodore.

