# Being a Health Ambassador

## By Caitlin Woolley

My name is Caitlin Woolley. I work as the Tasmanian Health Ambassador for Down Syndrome Australia. It matters that people with a disability be included in their community, their employment and in health. This is the future I want for Australia.

I am thankful for my job. I want to use my strengths and contribute in the workplace. I’ve learned new skills and confidence. I have made friends and like helping others with my work. We need more support and training for people with disabilities and more employers offering jobs.

People with disabilities need equal healthcare. I teach healthcare workers inclusive communication to better care for people with a disability.

Sometimes healthcare workers don’t take the time to be nice to me or chat – they just talk to my mum and dad.

Kindness and clear communication from healthcare workers is important because I want them to care about me. If healthcare workers are not kind but are serious, rushing or not actually talking to me then I will feel sad.

When I am sad, I don’t talk as much and you won’t find out how I feel. If I think you like talking to me I will listen better to things you tell me.

It is also important that healthcare workers take time to communicate so I understand. When you explain procedures or tests and why I need them, I feel calm. If you take time to explain any results or treatment, I can look after my own health better. I can understand a lot of what you say, so slow down and talk to me. Find out if I understand what you are telling me and if I am not sure then my parent or support person can help. You can ask me if I have any questions.

I want to be included in my community and not left out just because I have a disability. I have talents, ideas and dreams just like other people. I don’t want to feel left out. When I am studying, at my work, volunteering, at church, doing activities in the community, or even with my friends and family, then I want to be part of that group.

Being part of the group makes me feel happy and that I am important. It helps me have fun, make good friends, use my skills and feel that I belong. I don’t want people to make assumptions about what I can and can’t do. They should let me try activities and let me have a say. If I am not included then I feel sad, upset and frustrated.

Each person with Down syndrome is an individual and we all need to feel safe, happy and respected. Like most people with Down syndrome, I see lots of medical specialists in my life so it really helps if you can take your time and think about how you communicate with me.