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Dear Members,

We are excited to welcome in a new year — and a very special one — DSWA's 40th year. 2026 will be a year of connection, celebration, learning and growth, with a full calendar of events and activities, alongside workshops and capacity and skill-building opportunities across all age groups.

As we prepare for our 40th anniversary celebrations later in the year, our DSWA Advisory Network (DSWAAN) has been working hard to develop ideas that reflect our community and our history. We look forward to sharing more as plans take shape.

We begin our event year with World Down Syndrome Day. Please join us for a relaxed picnic on the foreshore and, for those seeking a little adventure, our ziplining experience — taking a leap for DSWA. This will be a major fundraiser for the year, and we hope you'll be able to take part – or just join us for our annual WDSO Lots of Socks Picnic.

Our Ruby Gala will be held on 6 June 2026 at the Pan Pacific Perth, and will be a special opportunity to come together during our 40th year celebrations.

There will be multiple opportunities for co-design throughout 2026, working alongside our teams to help shape programs that are meaningful and responsive to your needs.

On 3 May 2026, we will be hosting a parent workshop with international speaker Steve Wells, who is also a dad to a young man with Down syndrome here in Perth. More information about this event will be shared soon.

I trust you are finding the new events email helpful in keeping up to date with

what's coming up. We are excited to be launching our third DSWA playgroup in Rivervale, funded by Telethon and the City of Belmont, further strengthening our early years support.

As your CEO, my current focus includes a major policy review to further strengthen our governance and compliance. In February, the Board will begin shaping our new strategic plan, followed by community consultation and engagement opportunities.

I wish you all a positive and successful 2026, and we look forward to seeing more of you at DSWA events and activities throughout the year.

Warm regards

Cassandra

Cassandra Hughes

ceo@downsyndromewa.org.au

What's On



Get Involved

Educator Learning Day

Join Down Syndrome WA for a full-day professional learning workshop:
Educating Students with Down Syndrome

- 📅 Friday 20 February 2026
- 🕒 9:00am – 4:30pm
- 📍 Perron Place, Victoria Park
- 🖥️ Attend in-person (\$375) or online (\$330)

This engaging workshop is designed for Educators, Education Assistants and Administrators who want to strengthen their knowledge and practical skills to support students with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities.

Topics include:

- Developing pre-literacy and pre-numeracy skills
- Implementing practical supports and classroom adjustments
- Strategies to promote inclusion and success
- Using Functional Behaviour Analysis in the classroom

Learn directly from DSWA staff and specialist presenters with extensive experience in inclusive education.

Register at: <https://www.trybooking.com/DHPNR>

Educating Students with Down Syndrome

Professional Learning

Join us for a full-day workshop with presentations from DSWA staff and specialist presenters.

Educators, Education Assistants, and Administrators will gain valuable tools and strategies to better support students with Down syndrome and other intellectual disabilities in the classroom.



DATE Friday 20th February

TIME 9:00am - 4:30pm

VENUE Perron Place
61 Kitchener Avenue,
Victoria Park

RSVP <https://www.trybooking.com/DHPNR>



Family Support



Family Support

Nikki and Paula have been working hard organising this year's events, and we have some very exciting activities coming up in the next few weeks. Please keep an eye on our social media pages and monthly Newsletter so you don't miss out!

It's that time of year when we do a tidy-up and move participants into the next age group and Facebook page, as well as welcoming new members.

If your child (or family member) fits into one of the age groups below, please request to join the corresponding social group:

- Playgroup: 0–4 years
- Kids Club: 5–11 years
- Friends 4 Life: 12–17 years
- Aim High: 18+

This helps us keep our groups up to date and ensures you receive the right information for your age group.

PCH Outreach

We're back at PCH!

Nikki and Paula are back at PCH on a rotational basis every Thursday. They'll be so happy to see you if you're attending an appointment or staying as an inpatient on a ward.

If you need to contact us at any time, please don't hesitate to contact us via our mobile's or email us at FamilySupport@downsyndromewa.org.au

Nikki: 0480 311 739

Paula: 0435 831 085



The graphic features a dark blue background with two circular inset photos. The top-right photo shows a woman (Paula) smiling and holding a young child (Nikki). The bottom-left photo shows a woman (Nikki) smiling with a young man (Paula) hugging her from behind. In the center, a white rounded rectangle contains the following text:

PCH Outreach

If you're at PCH and would like a visit from Nikki or Paula please contact them on
Nikki: 0435 831 085
Paula: 0480 311 739

At the bottom, there are two logos: 'Down Syndrome Western Australia' with a stylized 'D' icon and 'CELEBRATING 40 1986 - 2026', and the 'telethon 7' logo.

Teacher PL

Do you have a child starting school in 2026? Would you like to provide their teachers with additional support on how they can best support your child? DSWA is hosting a Professional Learning Day for teachers, education assistants and school administration staff this February.

Please feel free to forward this information to your child's school, or comment below with the school's name and we'll send the details directly.

Date: Friday 20 February

Time: 9:00am – 4:00pm

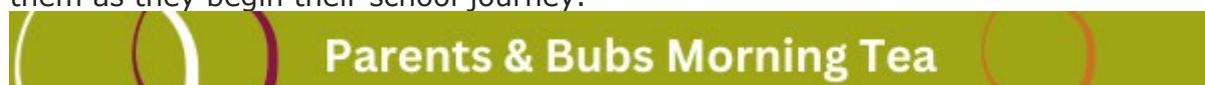
Cost:

\$375 – In person

\$330 – Online

Book Essential: <https://www.trybooking.com/DHPNR>

This is a great opportunity to ensure your child's school is well equipped to support them as they begin their school journey.



We're back again this year and would love to see some new and familiar faces!

Come along and join us for our first Parents & Bubs Morning Tea for the year — a relaxed morning to connect, chat, and enjoy a cuppa.

Date: Wednesday 11th February

Venue: Ellie's Café – 3/397 Warnbro Sound Ave, Port Kennedy

Bookings essential: <https://www.trybooking.com/DINWJ>

Parents and Bubs Morning Tea

We invite parents (both mums and dads!) of bubs with T21 to join us for a beautiful morning tea. This is an opportunity to connect with other parents at a similar life stage to you as well as to meet with the DSWA Family Support Team



DATE Wednesday 11th February

TIME 10:00am to 12:00pm

VENUE Ellie's Cafe
3/397 Warnbro Sound Ave,
Port Kennedy WA 6172

RSVP <https://www.trybooking.com/DINWJ>



CELEBRATING 40 1986 - 2026



Open Employment Program



Our Ready for Work program has started!

We have worked on:

- What jobs are
- Setting goals
- All about me

The next Ready for Work course will start on Tuesday 17th March.

You can book at <https://www.trybooking.com/DIXTD>



Life Skills Lab



Living My Best Life

Living My Best Life (LMBL) means different things to different people.

We asked some people what it means to them.

Many people gave the same answers:

- Being able to make choices
- Being healthy
- Having enough money
- Having friends

The project runs for 5 weeks (for now).

Each week looks at these areas in different ways.

What we have been doing

The LMBL project has been going really well.

People chose what meals to cook each week with the amazing Debbie from [fyieverybodycooks](http://fyieverybodycooks.com).

After cooking together, many people said:

- It was a great way to make new friends
- It helped make existing friendships stronger



Learning about money

Money can be a big and tricky topic.

We are teaching money skills slowly and simply.

We are talking about:

- Needs and wants
- Saving goals

We are not using coins and notes yet.

Join future LMBL events.

If you would like to come to future Living My Best Life events, please sign up using the Living My Best Life Expression of Interest form - <https://forms.office.com/r/XS9ysqKNaD>

Coffee Club for over 35s

We are planning a Coffee Club for people over 35.

It will run every Monday.

The Coffee Club will be in Perth city, close to Perth Underground Station, so it is easy for everyone to get to.

Playgroups



We are thrilled to announce that our Playgroups are returning and will be running weekly across three locations, thanks to the generous sponsorship of Telethon.

All family members and carers are welcome including siblings, grandparents and aunts and uncles.

Playgroup Locations & Days:

- Playgroup South – Mondays in Baldivis
- Playgroup East – Tuesdays in Rivervale
- Playgroup North – Fridays in Gwelup

All playgroups will commence the week of 2 February.

Cost: \$5 per family, per week.

If you require any additional information, please contact familysupport@downsyndromewa.org.au

We look forward to welcoming you at Playgroup!

The poster has a dark blue background with colorful illustrations of a yellow rocket, a green car, and various flowers. It features several circular photos of children playing. The text "PLAYGROUP is BACK" is prominently displayed in yellow and white. Below it, it says "FUN & CREATIVE INDOORS & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES". A green circle contains the text "\$5 PER FAMILY". At the bottom, three columns list the dates and locations: "FEBRUARY 2ND PLAYGROUP SOUTH MONDAY IN BALDIVIS", "FEBRUARY 3RD PLAYGROUP EAST TUESDAY IN RIVERVALE", and "FEBRUARY 6TH PLAYGROUP NORTH FRIDAY IN GWELEP". The Telethon 7 logo is in the bottom left, and the Down Syndrome Western Australia logo with "CELEBRATING 40 1986 - 2026" is in the top right. A red wavy border is at the bottom.

PLAYGROUP is BACK

Down Syndrome Western Australia
CELEBRATING 40 1986 - 2026

FUN & CREATIVE INDOORS & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

\$5 PER FAMILY

FEBRUARY 2ND
PLAYGROUP SOUTH
MONDAY IN BALDIVIS

FEBRUARY 3RD
PLAYGROUP EAST
TUESDAY IN RIVERVALE

FEBRUARY 6TH
PLAYGROUP NORTH
FRIDAY IN GWELEP

telethon 7

Please contact: FamilySupport@downsyndromewa.org.au

Kids Club

Supported by



Kids Club is back for the year!

We're starting with a gentle Yoga session and finishing with a tasty afternoon tea.

Relax, recharge, catch up with friends, and make new connections.

When: Sunday, 8th of February | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM (please arrive 10 minutes early to get settled)

Where: Loftus Recreation Centre, Djilba – First Spring Room, 99 Loftus Street, Leederville WA 6007

After the class, join us for afternoon tea (provided) and a play in the playground attached to the venue.

Get your tickets now: <https://www.trybooking.com/DIVSC>

RSVP by Wednesday the 4th of February.

We can't wait to see you on the mat!

Siobhan

kidsclub@downsyndromewa.org.au

DSWA - Kids Club

YOGA



SUNDAY 8TH OF FEBRUARY



2:00PM-4:00PM



LOFTUS RECREATION CENTRE
DJILBA - FIRST SPRING ROOM
99 LOFTUS STREET, LEEDERVILLE WA 6007



FREE FOR MEMBERS WITH DS \$5 FOR SIBLINGS

Friends for Life

Friends for Life is back for 2026!

We're planning a February event and will be sharing all the details very soon. Keep an eye on our socials and the Events email so you don't miss a thing.



Aim High



Aim High 2026 is getting bigger every time we share news!

Bingo

Next month we are going to Bingo at the Wanneroo Sports and Social Club.

The session starts at 7pm and finishes at 10pm.

We will play Bingo, try to win prizes, and hopefully shout "Bingo!" a few times.

The cost is \$15.

To book your spot, please follow this link - <https://www.trybooking.com/DISKA>

Acting Class

We are also planning a new Acting Class with Act Up WA.

The class will likely run for 5 weeks.

You will learn about:

- Acting basics
- Creating characters
- And more fun acting skills

We are not sure yet what day or time the class should be.

We want your help to decide.

Please tell us what day and time works best for you by filling in this form - <https://forms.office.com/r/kWUp7F6gPP>

This class is expected to be very popular, so please share your ideas with us.

The graphic is a purple rectangular poster with white text. At the top, it reads 'AIM HIGH' in a large, bold, sans-serif font, followed by '2026 EVENT CALENDAR' in a slightly smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, there are twelve rounded rectangular boxes arranged in two columns, each representing a month. Each box contains the month's abbreviation in large, bold, white letters, followed by the date, day of the week, and event details in a smaller white font. At the bottom center of the poster is the logo for Down Syndrome Western Australia, which consists of a stylized white icon of a person's head and shoulders next to the text 'Down Syndrome Western Australia'.

Month	Event Details
JAN	Saturday 24th January 6 pm Pub Meal Cicerellos - Fremantle
FEB	Thursday 19th February Bingo Wanneroo
MAR	Friday 20th March Sip and Paint South of Perth
APR	Sunday 19th April Kings Park walk and photos North of Perth
MAY	Friday 22nd May Mini golf South of Perth
JUN	Friday 19th June Music making workshop North of Perth
JUL	Saturday 18th July Christmas in July and Disco South of Perth
AUG	Sunday 23rd August Pub Meal North of Perth
SEP	Friday 18th September Video making ready for world Down Syndrome month in Oct South of Perth
OCT	Saturday 24th October Rock climbing North of Perth
NOV	Sunday 22nd November Pub Meal South of Perth
DEC	Saturday 5th December Christmas party

Down Syndrome Western Australia

Current Research Projects

Share Your Playground Experience

Help Us Make Playgrounds More Inclusive for Children with Disabilities

Have you visited your local playground with your child who has a Down Syndrome?

We would like to hear your story

Playgrounds are vital spaces for fun, connection, and community—but not every child has equal access. Our research project is exploring the barriers and enablers families with a child with a disability experience when accessing their local community play spaces.

Why Your Voice Matters

Your insights will help shape the future of playgrounds by:

- Identifying what works—and what doesn't—for families like yours
- Informing councils and designers on how to create truly inclusive play environments
- Supporting advocacy for better planning, development, and design of public play spaces

Who Can Participate

Parents and caregivers of children with Down Syndrome (under 12) who have experience attending local community playgrounds within the last 12 months.

How to Get Involved

Share your experience through an interview.

📍 Location: Online or in person at a location and time of your convenience

🕒 Time Commitment: Up to 1 hour

✉ Contact: If you are interested, please contact Professor Angus Buchanan a.buchanan@curtin.edu.au

Your contribution will help build a more inclusive future for all children.

Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved this study (HREC number HRE2024-0344-03). Should you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, in particular, any matters concerning the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, or you wish to make a confidential complaint, you may contact the Ethics Officer on (08) 9266 9223 or the Manager, Research Integrity on (08) 9266 7093 or email hrec@curtin.edu.au.



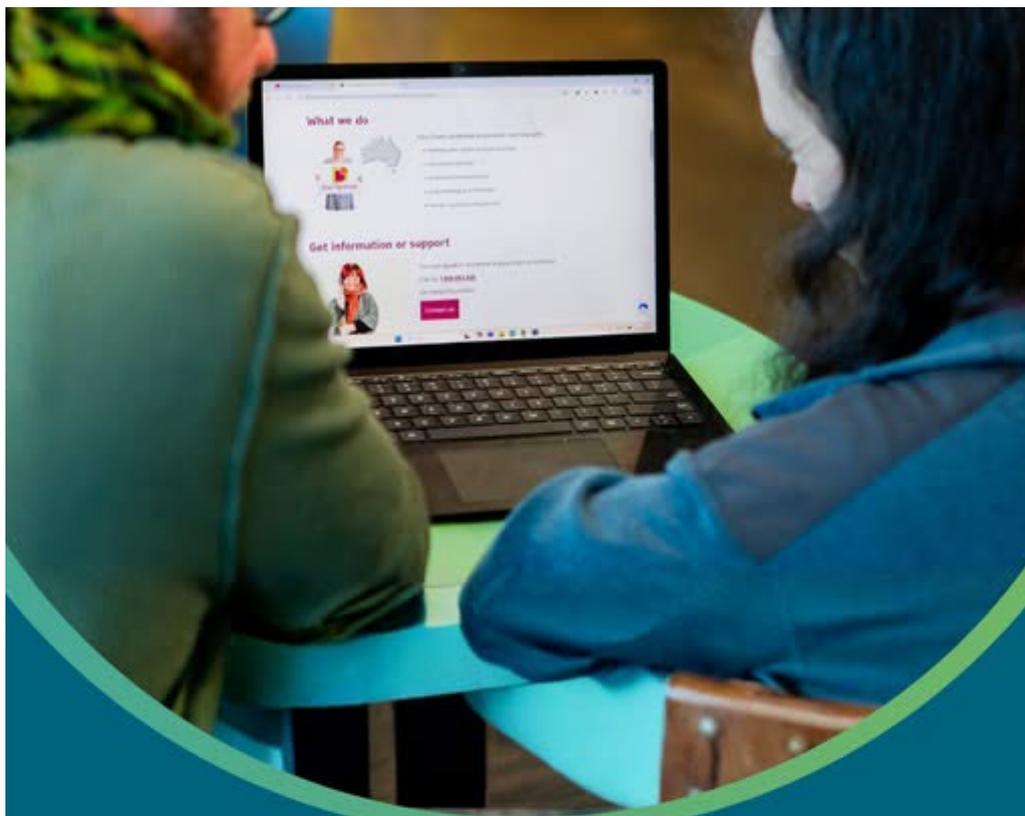
Information for Life helps people with Down syndrome, their families and the wider community find clear and reliable information.

It brings together national resources on topics that matter. Things like health, education, work, rights, the NDIS and social connections.

The information is reviewed and shaped by people with Down syndrome, families and experts from across Australia. That helps make sure it's practical, up to date and useful in everyday life.

Information for Life also supports local delivery through State and Territory organisations, so people can get the right support in the right place.

If you're looking for trusted information and advice, visit our Resource Hub:
<https://www.downsyndrome.org.au/resources/>



**Information you
can trust**



Down Syndrome
Australia

Victoria Park Centre for the Arts

Victoria Park Centre for the Arts delivers a series of music and art workshops for artists with disabilities. We are now inviting enrolments for Semester 1, 2026 workshops. We welcome new artists and musicians to join us.

In addition to learning new skills, our music and art workshops are centred around social interaction, developing friendships, and building connections. Artists are encouraged to make their own decisions in relation to their art and are supported to be independent in their choices.

Each year our Create Connect artists are encouraged to exhibit their artworks. We

have an in-house exhibition and 2 external exhibitions where artists have the opportunity to sell their art, contributing to a sense of achievement and self-esteem. Our artists have won People's Choice Awards and Creative Development Awards.

VPCA creates a virtual tour of our in-house exhibition which allows artists and families to enjoy the exhibition throughout the year. See link to 2025 'Grand Designs' exhibition: <https://my.matterport.com/show/?m=bjQnjoTraGU>

If you have any queries, please get in touch - kyc_admin@vicparkarts.org.au



Presented by Valued Lives and kiind.

This event is all about growing up well together. Supporting parents, caregivers & families at every stage, from early years to adulthood.

You'll connect and learn alongside other who have walked similar paths, discover new tools for building confidence, and uncover fresh ideas for creating possibilities for your future.

With keynote speakers who have lived experience and workshops grounded in real family stories, you'll leave connected, informed, and ready to take the next steps on your journey.

Whatever stage of life you're in, Growing Up Well will help you strengthen your confidence, expand your support network, and gain a clearer vision of what's possible.

<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/growing-up-well-event-tickets-1968353228493>



We always welcome your feedback and suggestions. Send your feedback to admin@downsyndromewa.org.au or use our [online form](#).



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