WITH US NOT FOR US

Schools guide

Produced for World Down Syndrome Day 2023

By Down Syndrome International
Hello!

Thank you for downloading our schools guide.

This pack has been made to help you talk with the children in your school about advocacy - speaking up about the things that matter to them and bringing about change in the world.

Schools are responsible for preparing children for the role they will play in the future of our world.

There is much for children to learn about the world. But that is not all. They must also understand how to use that knowledge - how to make their mark on the world, however big or small that might be.

We have created this pack for World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD).

WDSD is a global awareness day that is observed every year on 21 March.

On WDSD we encourage people around the world to speak up together to create a single global voice. Together we advocate for the rights, inclusion and well-being of people with Down syndrome and other disabilities.

Read on to learn more.
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For World Down Syndrome Day 2023, we are calling for people and organisations around the world to be 'With Us Not For Us'.

What does that mean?

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people should have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

Decisions should be made WITH children, not FOR them.

But making decisions is a big responsibility. We must prepare children so that they can make good decisions about their lives.

To make a good decision, we need...

1. Information that is accessible.
2. Information that is accurate.
3. The ability to spot inaccurate information.
4. To understand the outcomes of a decision.
5. The opportunity to ask questions.
6. The means and opportunity to have our say.

School is the perfect place for children to learn all of these skills.
**What is advocacy?**

**Advocacy** is speaking up to create change. For example, I don’t agree with this rule. I am upset that my friend can’t join in.

**Self-advocacy** is speaking up for yourself and communicating your needs. For example, I am hungry. I don’t understand; I would like to ask a question. This is my decision.

There are many different ways that people advocate...

- **Voice** - speaking to a person or a group of people.
- **Pen** - writing a letter to a decision-maker.
- **Music** - writing a song or piece of music that expresses your thoughts.
- **Create** - making a piece of art to express how you are feeling.
- **Join** - get together with like-minded people.
- **Protest** - for example, refusing to work until your needs are met.
Why advocacy matters in schools.

We asked our team of Ambassadors why they think it is important for children to learn about their rights and self-advocacy at school...

All children should learn about their rights and self-advocacy when they are at school so no one can take advantage of them and to prevent them from being bullied. It’s never too young to learn about rights and inclusion.

**Janet Charchuk, Canada**

Children should learn about their rights so they know that what unites is more than makes us different.

**Carlos Ramirez, Mexico**

Children should know their rights early as possible. So they can stand and fight for their rights and advocate when needed.

**Morgan Maze, Indonesia**

Children should learn about their rights to protect inclusion and to raise awareness.

**Favour Onyisi Jideonwor, Nigeria**

Learning about self-advocacy helps young children who are vulnerable to speak up from an early age. If they don't speak up, no one will listen to them.

**Chaica Al Qassimi, United Arab Emirates**

I really think it is very important that children learn about their rights and self-advocacy, so that they have the skills to speak up for themselves.

**Andrew Oswin, New Zealand**
Why advocacy matters in schools.

Children have the right to speak up and to be heard, and the right to be able to learn together as a group and to help each other to speak up to the teacher.

*Kate Powell, United Kingdom*

Children should learn about their rights so they understand we are all the same.

*Eileen Dunne, Ireland*

When I was at secondary school, students treated me ‘as an outsider’. They had their own popular group, I was new and different, and they didn’t even try to get to know me as a person.

*Andrew Oswin, New Zealand*

When I was young, I was denied a place at our local school. My mum knew my rights and fought for my right to be included in school. It motivated me to become an advocate. I want to help people with disabilities.

*Chaica Al Qassimi, United Arab Emirates*

I give motivational talks all over the world. And people can hear and see that I am an example of a person with Down syndrome who is happy to be exactly who I am.

*Sheri Brynard, South Africa*

It was included in some of the events at my school. I should have been there for all of them, but I wasn’t.

*Andrew Domahidy, Australia*
ACTIVITY 1: Would you rather...?
- an imaginary school trip.

This activity is about making an informed decision.

Introduction:
"We are planning an imaginary school trip, and we want you to choose where we will go. There are 4 options, and each of you must choose the place that you would like to visit. There is no right or wrong answer."

1. Tell the children the name of each place. Put the names on a board or table so everyone can see them. Ask them if they have enough information to make a decision. (Hopefully, they will say 'no'.)

2. Add the picture for each place. Ask them if they are ready to decide.

3. Ask the children what they would like to know so that they can make an informed decision. Display all of the answers together. (We have provided some answers; you may need to give your own answers to other questions.)

4. Each place has a piece of information from a 'source' (yellow box). Ask the children if they think the information is reliable.

5. When the children are ready to make a decision, you might like to ask why they chose this one.

6. If anyone cannot make a decision, ask them what would have helped them to choose.
ACTIVITY 2: Up for debate.

This activity is about understanding that other people might think differently from you, and that is ok.

Choose a topic for debate that everyone can take part in, for example:
- Should children wear uniforms to school?
- Should we be allowed to bring pets to school?
- Which are better - books or television?

1. Ask the children to **set some rules** for the debate, e.g. listen to others, be kind, make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.

2. Split the class into two groups - **for** and **against**. Ask each group to spend time **preparing** their argument.
   - Share your ideas for the argument.
   - Choose the key points of the argument.
   - What information/evidence do you need to support the argument?
   - How are you going to present your argument?
   - How are you going to include every child in your group?

3. **Time to debate.** Give each team a set amount of time to deliver their argument. You might like to ask questions about each argument.

4. Ask the children to think about what they have heard and to **vote** for the argument they agree with.
This activity is about exploring the idea that some people might need support to speak up.

This activity can be done as a whole class or in small groups with a whole class discussion at the end.

Ask the children to discuss these three questions,

1. Why do you think it is important that everyone gets to speak up?
2. What might make it difficult for a person to speak up?
3. How could we support that person to have their voice heard?

We have made sheets for the children to record their ideas (pg. 22-24).
ACTIVITY 4: School council.

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says that children and young people should have a say in decisions that affect their lives.

**A school council can provide a meaningful way in which pupils can voice their opinions and have their views taken into account in decisions that impact upon them.**

1. Each year, every class should nominate two representatives to be members of the school council.

2. School council members should meet regularly with a teacher to discuss issues of their choice. They might like to think about the school environment, e.g. changes to play areas or the school lunch menu. Lots of children are interested in recycling and reducing plastic.

3. The teacher should support the children to explore how they could bring about the change that they are hoping to achieve. This could include:
   - Speaking or writing to a decision-maker;
   - Raising awareness in school or the community;
   - An art project;
   - A fundraising activity.

4. School council members should then work together to take action. They may like to invite other children from the school to join in with the action.
ACTIVITY 5: The LotsOfSocks campaign.

The LotsOfSocks campaign exists to raise awareness about Down syndrome.

Believe it or not, socks help us to get people talking on World Down Syndrome Day (21 March).

To take part, all you need to do is choose some socks that will get noticed - they might be mismatched socks or your craziest and most colourful socks, whatever takes your fancy!

When someone asks you about your socks, you can tell them, "I’m wearing them to raise awareness of Down syndrome".

What should I tell them?

People with Down syndrome have the same rights as everyone else. But sometimes, people with Down syndrome are denied those rights.

For example, people with Down syndrome should have the freedom to make their own choices. But, often other people take decisions for them, not with them.

Tell them,

*With Us Not For Us!*

Resources on pg. 25-26
About Down Syndrome International (DSi)

DSi is an international network of organisations of people with disabilities. We work together to promote the rights of people with Down syndrome and other disabilities. We speak up for inclusion on a full and equal basis with others.

We are also the custodians of World Down Syndrome Day. We develop the annual campaign theme and organise celebratory events at the United Nations headquarters in New York and Geneva.

Get in touch

If you need help, get in touch with the DSi team:

Email contact@ds-int.org

Phone +44 (0)1395 493108

We value your feedback.

In April we will send you a survey to ask if these guides were helpful. We would appreciate any feedback you can give.

Visit:

www.ds-int.org
OTHER GUIDES AVAILABLE

**Theme guide**
Created to explain the theme for World Down Syndrome Day 2023, 'With Us Not For Us'. The theme has been developed from ideas generated by our team of Ambassadors.

**Advocacy guide**
Created to help you to speak up about the things that are important to you. You can join us in speaking up for the rights, inclusion and well-being of people with Down syndrome and other disabilities.

**Organisations guide**
Created to help your organisation to think about how people with intellectual disabilities are included in the work that you do. The pack includes examples of great inclusion and tips to help your organisation to become more inclusive too.

**Fundraising guide**
Created to help you raise funds to support the work of organisations of people with disabilities, like Down Syndrome International.
ACTIVITY 1: Would you rather...?
- an imaginary school trip.

Mysterious caves
Enchanted forest
Snowy mountain
Unexplored island
ACTIVITY 1: Would you rather...?
- an imaginary school trip.

- Mysterious caves
- Enchanted forest
- Unexplored island
- Snowy mountain
Mysterious caves

How will we get there?
Submarine.

What we will see?
Cave art made thousands of years ago.

What will we do there?
Search for crystals.

What will we eat?
Glow-in-the-dark slime.

What will the weather be?
Cold and damp.

Source: A local tour guide said...
"There are bats living in the caves, they won't hurt you if you leave them alone."
**ACTIVITY 1: Would you rather...? - an imaginary school trip.**

**Enchanted forest**

**How will we get there?**
Ride horses.

**What we will see?**
Poisonous mushrooms.

**What will we do there?**
Build a tree house.

**What will we eat?**
Berries.

**What will the weather be?**
Warm.

**Source: A person on social media said...**
"There are fairies living in the forest who play tricks on visitors."
**ACTIVITY 1: Would you rather...?**
- an imaginary school trip.

**Snowy mountain**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How will we get there?</th>
<th>Dog sled.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What we will see?</th>
<th>The northern lights.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we do there?</th>
<th>Build an igloo.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will we eat?</th>
<th>Hot chocolate and biscuits.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What will the weather be?</th>
<th>Very cold!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Source:** A meteorologist said...
"There are no storms expected."
**ACTIVITY 1: Would you rather...? - an imaginary school trip.**

### Unexplored island

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How will we get there?</td>
<td>Sea plane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What we will see?</td>
<td>We don't know!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will we do there?</td>
<td>Snorkeling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will we eat?</td>
<td>Seafood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will the weather be?</td>
<td>Sunny and hot.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source: Scientists said...**

"There are likely to be animals there that are yet to be discovered!"
ACTIVITY 2: Up for debate.
ACTIVITY 2: Up for debate.

Key points

1

2

3

4

5

6
ACTIVITY 3: Let’s talk advocacy.

Why do you think it is important that everyone gets to speak up?
ACTIVITY 3: Let's talk advocacy.

What might make it difficult for a person to speak up?
ACTIVITY 3: Let's talk advocacy.

How could we support that person to have their voice heard?
GET YOUR LOTS OF SOCKS ON!

21 March

#LotsOfSocks

www.worlddownsyndromeday.org
Have a sock design competition or make sock bunting to decorate your school!

Name: .............................................................
Class: ............................................................
ARE YOU WITH US?