

# Down Syndrome



Approximately **1 in 100 babies**  
born in Australia will have Down syndrome.



Approximately **290 babies**  
with Down syndrome are  
born each year.

Down syndrome is the most common genetic disability. Down syndrome is caused when a person is born with an extra chromosome. People with Down syndrome have 47 chromosomes instead of 46. They have an extra chromosome 21, which is why Down syndrome is sometimes known as trisomy 21.

### **People with Down syndrome may have:**

- Areas of strength and other areas where they need more support
- Some level of intellectual disability
- Some characteristic physical features
- Increased risk of some health conditions (many of which are treatable)
- Some developmental delays

### **People with Down syndrome are not different from anyone else. They have the same needs and aspirations in life that we all do, including;**

- A good place to live
- Meaningful employment
- The opportunity to enjoy the company of friends and family
- Love and intimacy
- Having a role in our community
- Some developmental delays

Achieving goals can be harder for people with Down syndrome than it is for everyone else.

People with Down syndrome attend school, work, participate in decisions that affect them, have meaningful relationships and contribute to the community in many ways.

Support from family, friends and the community help enable people with Down syndrome to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

### **Talking to people with Down syndrome**

- Use plain language and speak respectfully. Try not to make assumptions about how much the person can understand
- Assume competence. Give people a chance to show how capable they are
- Speak directly to the person with Down syndrome, not the person with them
- Give them time to respond. Take their lead on what support they need to communicate
- Know that every person with Down syndrome is unique, with their individual personality, strengths and support needs