

# March 21

# WORLD DOWN SYNDROME DAY!



Canadian  
Down Syndrome  
Society

Société  
canadienne de la  
trisomie 21

## TEACHING PLAN

Grades K-6

CDSS.CA





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World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS) is **March 21**. We encourage raising awareness about Down syndrome in your school and in the community and we appreciate your support! We want to help you teach and talk about Down syndrome and help people **#SeeTheAbility!**

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society has developed a WSDS Celebration Kit and we have some great tools for your classroom, community or event:

**1 Presentation!**

“About Down Syndrome” in Powerpoint or PDF to share some information about Down syndrome.

**2 Posters!**

- “World Down Syndrome Day Awareness”
- “Let’s Talk About Down Syndrome” (available in poster and handout format)
- “See the Ability” (available in English and French)

**3 Videos!**

- “Just Like You”
- “My Friend Isabelle”

**4 This Teaching Plan!**

Complete with classroom and individual activities and handouts.

**5 Wear #LotsOfSocks!**

Ask your students to wear colorful, fun socks on WSDS, it helps to raise awareness and puts some fun into the celebrations!

**6 Share your celebrations!**

Share your group pics with us at **@CdnDownSyndrome** on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Use: **#SeeTheAbility #WSDS20 #WorldDownSyndromeDay #LotsOfSocks**

*Please respect privacy when sharing images, especially photos with minors. Please follow your school or groups approval policies prior to sharing on social media.*

**7 Look for Lights!**

On the evening of March 21, ask your students to keep their eyes open for landmarks around the city and across the country that are lit up in blue and yellow to recognize this important day.

**8 Donate! at [cdss.ca/donate](https://cdss.ca/donate)**

CDSS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness and providing information on Down syndrome and all the life stages.

Thank you from the Canadian Down Syndrome Society for your participation and helping everyone to **#SeeTheAbility** about World Down Syndrome Day and every day!

[info@cdss.ca](mailto:info@cdss.ca) | 1-800-883-5608 | Suite 103 - 2003 14 Street NW, Calgary, AB T2M 3N4

The Canadian Down Syndrome society is a Registered Charitable Organization | Charitable Tax Number 11883 0751 RR 0001

cdss.ca  
See The Ability

# TEACHING PLAN

## GRADES K-6

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### Lesson Aim:

To raise awareness about Down syndrome in school/community settings to assist with social and educational inclusion. Students will participate, learn and discuss inclusion and acceptance of people with Down syndrome.

### Teaching Tools:

**If you want to do this exact lesson, you will need all of the following.** The approximate time for each segment are as follows. Please feel free to use what you want to build up a lesson appropriate for your students.

- 1 CDSS About Down Syndrome PowerPoint Presentation**  
*Suitable for grades K-6, approx. 10 minutes*
- 2 Just Like You Video**  
*From Youtube, might be suitable for older children grade 3/4-6, 3 minutes*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4p9GyWXWcw>
- 3 My Friend Isabelle Video**  
*From Youtube, suitable for grades K-2/3, 4 minutes*  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEB2bk29AMQ>
- 4 Let's Talk About Down Syndrome Poster**  
*Available as printable poster and handout format, discussion approx. 5 minutes*
- 5 Teaching Plan**  
*Includes class activity and independent student activity with handouts, approx. 45-60 minutes*

### Outcomes:

- People are more alike than we think. By creating a school community of diversity, children are less likely to develop a bias towards people who seem different from them.
- Kids can learn about, accept and celebrate each person's uniqueness.
- A classmate or student at the school might have Down syndrome which can affect how they look and how they learn, but they are still a student, just like you.
- Kids have a lot in common, they can have similar interests, likes and dislikes. By learning about one another, we get to find out how similar we are.

## What to do:

This activity aims to show how we are unique, but we are all people, we all have things in common and we are all part of the school community.

*Students can be seated at their desks or can sit on the floor in a circle.*

## Teacher's Explanation:

**“I’m going to read some questions. If you answer “yes” to the questions, silently stand up off from your chair. Look around to see who else is standing up. These people standing have some things in common with you. Sit down at my direction and listen for the next question.”**

## Sample Questions:

Questions can be tailored to the grade level and the known interests of the class:

- Who has brown eyes?
- Who likes to watch hockey?
- Whose favorite food is pizza?
- Does your family have a four legged pet?
- Do you have brothers or sisters or both?
- Do you like video games?
- Whose favorite color is blue? Pink? Red?
- Who loves math?
- **Last question:** Who goes to this (our) school?  
*All kids will stand---they all have something in common!*

## Let's Talk About It:

Did you notice that some students stood up at the same time? What does that mean?

*That means that they have things in common, likes and dislikes. Now we know more about our classmates, things that we might not have known if we just looked at them.*

By taking the time to get to know each other, we learn more than by just judging them by their looks. What did we learn from this discussion about friendship?

*Teacher can write down key points on board/ chart paper to reference later in the lesson.*

What did you realize about the other students who stood up with you?

*We like the same things. We have those things in common.*

Can someone give me a specific example?

*Bob and Ted play soccer.*

Did you know that Ted played sports before we did this activity?

*No.*

What can you do next to figure out more about Ted?

*Ask him what kind of sports he enjoys most. Invite him to play that sport at recess.*

Can you tell that you and some of your classmates share the same interests by just looking at them?

*No.*

How can we figure out if a person can be our friend or not?

*We get to know them. We ask them questions.*

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## **Additional Resources:**

**PowerPoint Presentation:** Canadian Down Syndrome Society's "About Down Syndrome"

**Video:** "Just Like You"

*From Youtube; might be suitable for older children grade 3/4-6, 3 minutes*

**Video:** "My Friend Isabelle"

*From Youtube: Suitable for grades K-2/3, 4 minutes*

**Poster:** "Let's Talk About Down Syndrome" (handout also on next page)



**Nolan & Ashlan  
want to answer  
your questions  
about:**



# Down Syndrome

**Q. What should I say to someone who has Down syndrome?**

**A.** Talking and learning from those who are different than ourselves is what makes the world great! So go ahead, ask someone who has Down syndrome anything. As long as you are using language that is respectful and kind.

*Making everyone feel accepted and valued is important to remember when joking around with friends.*

**Q. What is person first language?**

**A.** When someone has a disability and you are talking about them, always say **WHO** they are before anything else. You want to focus on the person, not the disability. This is called **person first language**.

*“This is my friend Ethan. He loves playing piano!”*

*“My friend Maggie has three older brothers! She also has Down syndrome.”*

**Q. Are people with Down syndrome always happy?**

**A. This is not true.** People with Down syndrome can experience lots of emotions. They can get angry, frustrated and excited just like you.

Labels like this are not helpful when getting to know someone new. Some people with Down syndrome are very social while others can be shy.

**Q. Should I feel bad for someone with Down syndrome?**

**A. Not at all!** A person is not “suffering from” Down syndrome. People with Down syndrome like and do many of the same things as you!

Hope this helps  
you to...

**See The Ability!**

**-Nolan & Ashlan**

## Summary:

- Sara has Down syndrome. She has the same interests as her friends.
- Sara's friends didn't judge her because she has Down syndrome. They got to know her and found that they have similar interests.
- When we meet a person with Down syndrome, we should find out how we are similar by asking questions and getting to know him or her as a person.
- What do you notice about them?  
*The kids are friends and are happy and smiling.*
- What do you think the kids in the poster enjoy doing together?  
*Playing at recess and eating lunch together.*
- Down syndrome is a disability that usually affects how they learn and how a person looks. However, people with Down syndrome are just like you and me.
- Why do you think these kids hang out together?  
*They like the same things.*
- Do you think it matters that Sara has Down syndrome to her friend?  
*No.*
- What sorts of things matter to her friends?  
*That they like the same things.*
- How did her friends find out that they had so much in common with Sandy?  
*They asked her questions and got to know her.*
- If a new student with Down syndrome came to our class tomorrow, what would you do?  
*Ask him or her questions about themselves, ask them to play at recess.*
- Does anyone have any questions about Down syndrome or what we spoke about today?  
(Teacher should encourage honest questions and dialogue to clear up any misperceptions about the conversation)

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## Independent Student Activity/Reflection:

**Grade K-3:** Students draw a picture and write a short story about a new friend they made this year. Why are you friends? What do you both like? What matters most in a friendship?

**Grades 4-6:** Students write an advice column for the school newspaper on the following prompt: A new student arrives in your class. The student appears to have Down syndrome. How should you treat the new student?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a picture and write a short story about a new friend you made this year:



Why are you friends? What do you both like? What matters most in a friendship?

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Grade K - 3



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