Speech and Language Therapy for children with Down Syndrome

Information for families, carers and young people

For more information, please contact:

For York and Selby:
Child Development Centre
The York Hospital
Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE
Telephone: 01904 726599

For Scarborough, Whitby, Ryedale:
Children's Therapy Department
Springhill House
19 Springhill Close, Scarborough,
North Yorkshire, YO12 4AD
Telephone: 01723 342357

Caring with pride
The Speech & Language Therapist can support with feeding difficulties and communication skills.

**Will my child have difficulty with feeding?**

Some babies with Down Syndrome are slower to learn to suck, chew and swallow. Some babies are also sensitive to different textures and may prefer smoother foods and familiar flavours. We can give advice on weaning and chewing to encourage your baby’s feeding skills.

Remember to:
- introduce solids and finger foods at the expected time
- encourage your baby to learn to chew

**Will my child have difficulty learning to talk?**

Many children with Down Syndrome show a delay in learning to talk. There are three main reasons for this:
- it takes them longer to learn to control their tongue, lips and face muscles
- they have more difficulty remembering spoken words
- they often have hearing difficulties making it harder for them to pick up speech

Most children do learn to talk, but it takes longer. Advice from a Speech & Language Therapist is recommended.
What can you expect from your Speech & Language Therapist?

We will work with you and your family to find out what issues are important to you as your child develops. The therapist may work with your child directly sometimes. However therapists are more likely to advise you or other people who work with your child more frequently, in how to support development of communication or feeding. Therapy might include:

- advisory home visits with your Portage home visitor
- advisory nursery or school visits
- access to a monthly early development group
- some individual appointments
- joint appointments with Physiotherapy or Occupational Therapy

Will you teach my child Makaton signing?

Research tells us that Makaton signing supports the development of speech in people with Down Syndrome. Signing can give your child a way of communicating before they are able to speak. Information on Makaton training is available from: www.york.nhs.uk/childrenstherapytraining or from your Speech & Language Therapist.
Useful websites and support services:

- Portage
- Early Support
- York Down Syndrome Support Group (Chatterbox groups)
- Down Syndrome Education international: www.dseinternational.org
- The Down’s Syndrome Association: www.down-syndrome.org.uk
- www.makaton.org
- www.singinghands.co.uk
Space for your notes
Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact your local service, our contact information is on the front page of this leaflet.

Teaching, training and research

Our Trust is committed to teaching, training and research to support the development of health and healthcare in our community. Healthcare students may observe consultations for this purpose. You can opt out if you do not want students to observe. We may also ask you if you would like to be involved in our research.

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email pals@york.nhs.uk.

An answer phone is available out of hours.
Please telephone or email if you require this information in a different language or format

01904 725566
email: access@york.nhs.uk

Braille  Audio e.g. CD
Large print  Electronic

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