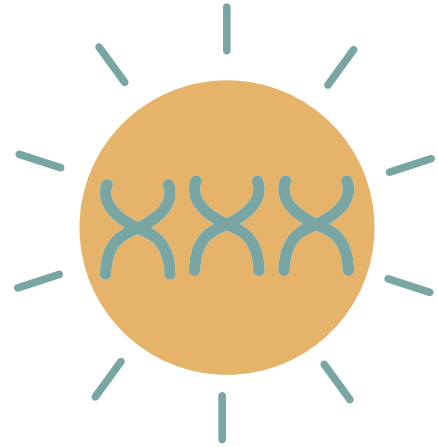


Down Syndrome

What is Down syndrome?

- The most common chromosomal disorder
- Children with Down syndrome have an extra 21st chromosome within the cells of their body
- This extra chromosome can lead to intellectual, physical, developmental, and medical challenges.



Common Challenges

Medical:

- Heart complications
- Vision/hearing challenges
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Sleep complications
- Hypothyroidism

Developmental:

- Cognitive challenges
- Decreased tone and strength
- Motor challenges
- Fatigue and motivation
- Communication
- Social participation

Important: ✨

Children with Down syndrome are not defined by the challenges they face. The variations of this condition are broad. Each child is unique with their own individual strengths! A collaborative therapy team can help children with down syndrome increase their overall independence and quality of life!

Down syndrome in Everyday Life

Children with Down syndrome will display challenges within their school, home, and social environment.

Amongst many things, children with Down syndrome may have difficulty with feeding and other self care activities, communicating with their peers, adapting to challenging demands of daily life, engaging in physical play, and completing academic tasks.

What Can Occupational Therapists Do?

OTs can equip children with Down syndrome and their families with the tools needed to conquer their daily challenges so they can participate in the occupations that bring them meaning and joy!

Examples of how OT can help:

- Screen and assess for areas of potential self care, sensory, vision, development, and motor difficulties
- Provide environmental supports to increase independence
- Enhance fine motor skills needed for self care and academic tasks
- Provide adaptations for self care skills such as dressing and feeding
- Collaborate with families and teachers to incorporate strategies to support success in daily routines.
- Address oral motor and other feeding challenges
- Encourage physical activity to increase endurance, strength, control, and coordination
- Introduce appropriate adaptive and behavioral strategies
- Address bowel management and toilet training
- Facilitate social participation opportunities
- Advocate for socially inclusive environments

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