



The Developing Child

All children born with Down syndrome will have some degree of learning disability. It is impossible to predict the level of disability at birth.

However, parents should be put in touch with their local disability service provider on leaving the maternity hospital. The multi-disciplinary team provided by the service should provide ongoing continual assessment of the child's developmental and medical needs from an early age.

Many children benefit from early intervention – the term used to cover the physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech & language therapy and special educational help, given to pre-school aged children.

These professionals work with the child and parents, devising programmes that are followed in the home. Any areas where the child is having specific difficulties are targeted to prevent possible delays with future development.

Nowadays, most children with Ds attend parent and toddler groups, nursery playgroup, and other organised groups alongside their typically-developing peers. In this playful environment, the child has the opportunity to develop co-ordination and strong muscles, good social skills, communication and become more independent from their parents. Most importantly, they are taking their place within their community.

Children with Down syndrome vary in their development and no two are alike; they can take longer to reach milestones than typically-developing children and tend to stay at these developmental stages for longer. With effective early intervention and inclusive strategies, however, the prospect for most individuals with Down syndrome is very positive.

It does not matter how far behind other children a child with Down syndrome is in their development. What is important is that they maintain a constant rate of progress, however fast or slow that may be.

For more information contact:

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