



## General tips - What to say when referring to someone with Ds

Many changes in recent years have meant that people with Down syndrome are regarded in a new and generally positive light.

To help safeguard this perception and uphold the dignity of people with this disability, there are certain ways of describing and discussing the condition which should be followed.

1. When referring to a person with this disability always describe them as a person / child/ adult with Down syndrome and not as a Down syndrome person. They should not be defined as having a disability first and being a person second.
2. When describing the disability the preferred term is “a person with a learning disability”. The terms retarded or handicapped have negative associations and should not be used

In essence, the only difference between a person with and the rest of the population is that they look a little different and learn and develop at a slower rate.

## General Facts About Down Syndrome :

- The incidence of Down syndrome in Ireland is one in every 550 births.
- Down's syndrome is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome in a baby's cells. It occurs by chance at conception and is irreversible.
- Although the chance of a baby having Down's syndrome is higher for older mothers, more babies with Down's syndrome are born to younger women.
- Down's syndrome is not a disease. People with Down's syndrome are not ill and do not “suffer” from the condition.
- People with the syndrome will have a degree of learning difficulty. However, most

people with Down's syndrome will walk and talk and many will read and write, go to ordinary schools and lead fulfilling, semi-independent lives.

- Today, people with Down's syndrome can expect to live to between 40 and 60 years of age on average.

**For more information contact:**

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