

## DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF ATLANTA FACT SHEET

Founded in 1979, The Down Syndrome Association of Atlanta (DSAA) is a 501 (c)(3) Georgia non-profit organization dedicated to providing individuals with Down syndrome and their families life-long community connections.

DSAA provides:

- Year-round **educational conferences** and **social gatherings** for our member families
- **Parent liaisons/First Call Ambassadors** to 26 metro Atlanta birthing hospitals to provide information and support to parents with a new diagnosis and to distribute accurate information about Down syndrome to OB/GYN practices in metro Atlanta
- Administration of **Educational Liaisons** providing information and activities for educators working with students who have Down syndrome
- **Community-based parent support groups**, a metro wide D.A.D.S group and social media groups to provide support, information and resources for parents and caregivers
- Information on **advocacy** opportunities and issues affecting persons with special needs in Georgia and influences legislative action and public policy
- An annual **Buddy Walk®** each October to raise awareness and support
- The **Buddy Awards** program that recognizes citizens and organizations who have made a significant contribution to the Down syndrome community
- **Financial support** and partnership with the Emory Down Syndrome Clinic, the Adult Down Syndrome Program (ADSP) and the Asociación Hispana de Síndrome de Down en Atlanta (AHSDA) and GiGi's Playhouse

Since our inception, DSAA has been dedicated to support early intervention, education, awareness and advocacy for persons with Down syndrome and their families. We serve the greater Metro-Atlanta area, which includes the following counties: Fulton, DeKalb, Cobb, Clayton, Fayette, Coweta, Forsyth, Gwinnett, Cherokee, Rockdale, Henry, Newton, Troup, Douglas, Oconee, Spalding, Paulding, and Floyd.

The organization offers memberships at \$25 per year per household annually or a lifetime membership for a one-time payment of \$250. Parents of a newborn child with Down syndrome receive the first year's membership at no cost. Membership dues include a quarterly newsletter, discounted registration at select events, Member appreciation events and more!

The DSAA is thankful for its hundreds of dedicated volunteers who help run our programs, social activities and educational seminars, assist with fundraising events, participate in advocacy efforts, speak to local groups, run community-based support groups, provide photography services and raise awareness through our website, newsletter and social media.

## FACTS ABOUT DOWN SYNDROME/ TRISOMY 21

Trisomy 21, commonly known as Down syndrome, occurs when an individual has three, rather than two, copies of the 21st chromosome. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome. Down syndrome is the most commonly occurring chromosomal condition occurring in people of all races and economic levels.

- One in every 691 babies is born with Down syndrome.
- There are more than 400,000 people living with Down syndrome in the United States.
- Down syndrome is not a disease. It is a genetic disorder occurring at conception for which there is no known cause or cure.
- The incidence of births of children with Down syndrome increases with the age of the mother. But due to higher fertility rates in younger women, 80 percent of children with Down syndrome are born to women under 35 years of age.
- People with Down syndrome have an increased risk for certain medical conditions, such as congenital heart defects, respiratory and hearing problems, Alzheimer's disease, childhood leukemia and thyroid conditions. Many of these conditions are now treatable, so most people with Down syndrome lead healthy lives.
- A few of the common physical traits of Down syndrome are low muscle tone, small stature, an upward slant to the eyes and a single deep crease across the center of the palm. Every person with Down syndrome is a unique individual and may possess these characteristics to different degrees or not at all.
- Life expectancy for people with Down syndrome has increased dramatically in recent decades - from 25 in 1983 to 60 today.
- People with Down syndrome attend school and work, participate in decisions that affect them and contribute to society in many wonderful ways.
- All people with Down syndrome experience cognitive delays, but the effect is usually mild to moderate and is not indicative of the many strengths and talents that each individual possesses.
- Quality educational programs, a stimulating home environment, good health care and positive support from family, friends and the community enable people with Down syndrome to develop their full potential and lead fulfilling lives.
- Researchers are making great strides in identifying the genes on chromosome 21 that cause the characteristics of Down syndrome. Many feel strongly that it will be possible to improve, correct or prevent many of the problems associated with Down syndrome in the future.
- People-first language is preferred when referring to a person with Down syndrome. The person has Down syndrome and is not a 'Downs' baby/child/adult.

For more information about DSAA, to request a Membership application, volunteer or donate please visit [www.dsaatl.org](http://www.dsaatl.org).