

POSITION STATEMENT ON THE EDUCATION OF PERSONS WITH DOWN SYNDROME

With this Position Statement on the Education of Persons with Down Syndrome the aim of the Down Syndrome Society of SA Inc., (DSSSA) is to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity, worth and equal rights of people, regardless of handicap or disability. All people, including those with Down syndrome, are a part of their local communities, and shall be recognised as having a rich contribution to make in the development and well-being of the human community. The vision of the DSSSA is ‘...opening doors together to enrich the lives of people with Down syndrome.’

Students who have Down syndrome have a right to access and participate in programs offered in any educational institution from preschool to post secondary level.

The following statements describe the optimal education principles for individuals with Down syndrome.

- ◆ All students have a right to an education in the least restrictive setting, which is determined by the needs of the student. Appropriate professional support, classroom organisation, teacher and peer group preparation and other adaptations must be set in place to support the student with Down syndrome.
- ◆ A Negotiated Curriculum Plan (NCP) or similar, must be written for a student with Down syndrome.
- ◆ All students should have the opportunity to access and participate in the curriculum offered to all students.
- ◆ From the NCP an ongoing individualised program must be developed, implemented and evaluated for the student with Down syndrome. A parent and/or caregiver must be involved in the preparation of the NCP and individualised program.
- ◆ All students need curriculum goals that should reflect their abilities, learning styles and future life goals.
- ◆ All students need to have access to specialised programs that promote attainment in Literacy and Numeracy.
- ◆ All students need to be treated with dignity as full citizens of their school communities.
- ◆ The special learning needs of all students must be addressed in a way that reflects current professional knowledge and practice.
- ◆ Persons with Down syndrome are life-long learners and should have access to post secondary learning opportunities (TAFE or university) and continuing adult education.¹

¹ Position Statement on Education. Updated and Approved – Nov 2003 (Canadian Down Syndrome Society)