

DOWN SYNDROME SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA INC.

STRATEGIC PLAN

2008-2010



INTRODUCTION

VISION

..opening doors together to enrich the lives of people with Down syndrome.

MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate for the rights, interests and welfare of people with Down syndrome or other similar chromosomal disorders.

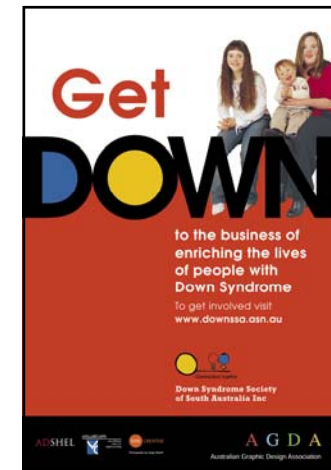
To promote and/or provide specific programs, services and resources which improve their health and well-being, education, personal development, employment opportunities, and recreational and lifestyle options.

What is Down syndrome?

People with Down syndrome have a genetic condition which affects about one in every 660 babies born each year. This syndrome is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome in every cell of the body, an extra chromosome 21. This is why it is often referred to as 'Trisomy 21'.

Every person with Down syndrome is an individual. Whilst they may have some of the physical and medical characteristics common to the condition, and varying degrees of ability, they will also have many traits that they inherit from their family.

Today young people with Down syndrome are not only living fulfilled lives, but are determined to show the world that they are talented young people with hopes and dreams of a promising future. They are challenging the community to accept diversity and difference, and to give them the respect and dignity that they deserve.



Brief history of the Down Syndrome Society

In 1974, a group of concerned parents formed Down's Children Inc., now the Down Syndrome Society of South Australia Inc. This group established a service to provide family support and specialist education programs.

Today through Government funding and considerable fundraising efforts, the Society is able to offer a range of services to people with Down syndrome and their families throughout South Australia. These services are available to people with Chromosomal Disorders that are similar to Down syndrome and their families.

The parents, staff and Board of Management of the Society continue to have a deep-rooted desire to make life as typical and enjoyable as possible for people with Down syndrome.

Current Services, Staffing and Membership

The Down Syndrome Society provides the following services: Family Support, Early Intervention programs, Preschool and School Consultancy Support, Training and Development, Support Services to Country Areas, Signing Classes Family Workshops Information Kits/Publications/Resources, Speakers, Recreation Programs including camps, bowling, 50's & 60's rock 'n' roll club (senior & junior), Life and Work Education Programs, Special Events.

ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST FOUR YEARS

The past four years has seen significant growth in the quantity and quality of the work of the Society. This growth is even more significant when viewed against the backdrop of cuts to Government funding, changing premises and unforeseen issues relating to staff health and welfare issues. Particular achievements include:-

- A purpose built children's playground was installed
- We received sponsorship of \$35,00 per annum over a two year period, to develop a comprehensive speech and language resource kit
- Carried out in-house training about the sensory integration challenges these children face
- Further developed family support networks
- Education Consultancy staffing increased by 1.0 FTE
- We have negotiated with DECS that if a student is registered with IDSC they will not require an IQ assessment, unless requested by parents/caregiver
- 'Spell to Write resource kit was completed
- 17 delegates and their carers attended the 9th World Down Syndrome Congress in Vancouver 2006
- Our delegates performed a rock 'n' roll show before 700 international delegates
- The Right to Know CD ROM was launched successfully
- Education Consultancy staffing increased by 1.0 FTE
- We have re-energised Family fun days
- The appointment of a full time Leisure and Recreation Coordinator
- The website was professionally upgraded
- A Society poster was developed, which was displayed in bus shelters for twelve months
- Service Excellence Framework was implemented
- Successfully relocated to Hampstead Primary School
- Renovations to the kitchen and new landscaping to the courtyard were initiated and completed

THE STRATEGIC PLAN

Developing the New Plan

In forming the key initiatives of the plan the following process of consultation was undertaken:

- Review of the 2004 to 2006 Strategic Plan by the Strategic Planning Group.
- Survey sent to all members and responses collated
- Staff were surveyed and responses collated
- The draft Strategic Plan was sent to all staff and members of the board for further comments.

All this information was tabled by the Strategic Planning Group and 5 Key Initiatives were identified and a number of strategies listed under each initiative.

The process was interrupted during the latter part of 2006 due to the impact of the World Conferences and staff illnesses and an interim Operational Plan was established for 2007.

Role of the plan

The Strategic Plan provides the basis of all planning, activity and documentation for the 2008 – 2010 triennium:

- Business/Operational Plans, Annual Budgets, and Service Team Plans are developed in the context of, and evaluated against, the Strategic Plan
- All emerging opportunities are evaluated in the context of the Strategic Plan
- A link is established between performance management and the Strategic Plan
- The Strategic Plan is matched with local celebrations

Foundations

All activities maintain or build on the existing level and quality of service provision as the starting point for the 2008 – 2010 triennium, and are underpinned by:

- our values statement
- current research and practice
- aim to be world's best practice, and to be recognised as such
- collaborative practices where-ever possible
- improving information management and dissemination
- ongoing human resource development
- continuous improvement.

Assumptions Underpinning the Plan

The Strategic Plan is based on the following assumptions:

- That we will receive similar funding levels to 2007 (less 10% from DECS funding as foreshadowed)
- That there will be no further significant staffing decreases or changes.

Implementation

A feature of the new plan is that targets and strategies will be linked to the financial status of the Society and there will be a focus on working more efficiently rather than doing more with the same amount of resources.

From the main strategic plan, a marketing brochure and yearly business plans will be published.

A sub committee of the board is focussing on Board Development processes. In particular the committee has been looking at the *Policy Governance* model of Governance. The new Strategic Plan will be critical in monitoring the performance of the Society and its Chief Executive.

Key Areas

This plan sets out five Strategic Goals, each of which addresses a Key Area of the Down Syndrome Society's activity:

1. SERVICE PROVISION

Goal 1 - To foster the development of programs/services that enhance the independent living, health and well-being of people with Down syndrome

2. DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Goal 2 - To consolidate and extend the effectiveness of developmental and educational services

3. FAMILY SUPPORT

Goal 3 - To provide quality support for the families of people with Down syndrome

4. HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Goal 4 - To extend the human resource management processes of the Society

5. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Goal 5 - To effectively manage all physical and financial resources of the Society.

KEY AREA – SERVICE PROVISION

Strategic Goal 1 - To foster the development of programs/services that enhance the independent living, health and well-being of people with Down syndrome.

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|--|--|
| <p>1.1 Develop a strategic approach relating to the lobbying for resources and issues which impact on the lives of people with Down syndrome</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rights of people with Down syndrome are represented more widely, vigorously and effectively ➤ There is an increase in the recognition of the specific needs of people with Down syndrome ➤ There is an increase in targeted services provided for people with Down syndrome |
| <p>1.2 Develop opportunities to access and participate in the performing arts</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased arts programs are available ➤ There is increased participation in arts-related activities ➤ Increased activities and opportunities in the Club Slick program ➤ The attendance of the senior Club Slick program is maintained ➤ A Junior Club Slick program for 5 – 12 year olds operates once per month ➤ The Junior Club Slick program is reported on and a research paper is published ➤ A package to help others establish a Club Slick program is available for sale |

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|---|--|
| 1.3 Extend Leisure and Recreation programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Camp costs are reduced ➤ Camp subsidy budget is increased ➤ A comprehensive volunteer program and database exists ➤ Parents are more informed about the importance of L&R activities ➤ A range of leisure and recreation options for 5-12 year olds exists |
| 1.4 Widen services provided for country clients and families across the life-span | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Increased access for country clients to services and events provided in the metropolitan area ➤ Access to information and services in country areas is improved |
| 1.5 To promote and advocate for a wider range of independent/ supported accommodation options for people with Down syndrome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A range of models to meet emerging needs have been identified ➤ More young people have appropriate accommodation placements with appropriate support |
| 1.6 Better understand the needs of aging clients and their carers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Society has a position statement on the needs of aging clients and their carers ➤ Regular information is provided to clients and families/ carers ➤ Collaborative positions, papers, projects have been developed and are being trialled ➤ Medical profession has been provided with information about the differential diagnosis of Alzheimers and Dementia in relation to Down syndrome |

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|--|---|
| 1.7 Increase employability and opportunities for employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Society's work skills programs have been documented and extended ➤ People with Down syndrome are more appropriately supported in work environments (Business Services or open employment) |
| 1.8 Further improve transition programs and services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support exists at each stage of transition. ➤ Individuals and families feel supported during transition phases. |
| 1.9 Advocate for improved general, medical and mental health services for adolescent and adult people with Down syndrome | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A position paper/framework exists that informs government/universities/other stakeholders of needed services ➤ Information resource has been developed and disseminated to relevant stakeholders ➤ Families are better informed about general, medical and mental health issues throughout the lifespan |

KEY AREA – DEVELOPMENTAL AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Strategic Goal 2 - To consolidate and extend the effectiveness of developmental and educational services

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|---|--|
| <p>2.1 Further develop the Early Intervention program</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speech and Language program is implemented and under evaluation at the Society ➤ A more structured program and resources for speech and language development have been developed and are available to parents/carers ➤ Children in child care and their support staff have access to the Society's specialist programs |
| <p>2.2 Increase the understanding of the specificity of speech and language development of people with Down syndrome that Speech Pathology providers have</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Speech pathology service providers will have increased understanding of the specific characteristics of speech and language in individuals with Down syndrome ➤ There is increased understanding about the specificity of speech and language development in children with Down syndrome, in undergraduate Speech Path training and in professional development activities ➤ Speech and language outcomes are improved |

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|---|--|
| <p>2.3 Increase the effectiveness of, and, where possible, extend educational programs and services for children and adolescents in all school settings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children in the primary years have increased skills to interact with other children at school ➤ School-age children have access to specialised literacy, numeracy, health and personal development and social and friendship skills programs (for example, Right To Know) |
| <p>2.4 Increase the effectiveness of our delivery of Education Consultancy services to preschools and schools</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attitudinal barriers currently encountered in schools have been reduced, and consequently access to schools by our Consultants is improved ➤ Services are delivered within a framework that takes into account consultation, using a wider range of models/strategies/interventions ➤ Down Syndrome Society staff have a clearer understanding of the impact of social and technological changes on family's ability to support their school |
| <p>2.5 Develop strategy for providing more immediate help in crisis/urgent situations to staff in schools and preschools</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EdCon staff have more options for responding to crisis times and demands ➤ School personnel have increased access to targeted Training and Development, and to crisis support from our staff |
| <p>2.6 Provide support that reflects best practice for successful inclusion for children in mainstream settings</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ EdCons have increased understanding of changing social issues affecting integration so that these issues are addressed/ accommodated in interventions ➤ School communities have an increased understanding of the philosophy and principles of inclusion ➤ Classroom teachers/SSOs have a wider range of support from school colleagues ➤ Parents, teachers and SSOs have an increased range of strategies to apply to inclusion of students with Down syndrome |

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|---|---|
| 2.7 Promote appropriate work education practices for senior students with Down syndrome | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Schools have a wider range of work placements➤ Schools have a wider range of strategies to support the placement➤ Students' work experience is supported by a structured program, so that they are effectively supported before, during and after placement➤ Employers are trained and supported to provide appropriate placements |

KEY AREA – FAMILY SUPPORT

Strategic Goal 3 - To provide quality support for the families of people with Down syndrome

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|---|---|
| 3.1 Provide a broader range of supports to families with children in the primary years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Families with children in primary years have access to support networks ➤ Families with children in primary years have increased access to information regarding their child's educational needs |
| 3.2 Provide support for families by supporting programs which provide care, respite and social interaction. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clients have greater access to appropriate care, respite and social interaction activities |

KEY AREA – HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Strategic Goal 4 - To extend the human resource management processes of the Society

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
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| 4.1 Achieve a formal Quality Assurance accreditation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Society is accredited at the first level of Service Excellence Framework (or other relevant QA accreditation) |
| 4.2 Review and formalise the ethical framework which reflects and informs the values of Society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Position statements reflect current research and practice and ethical thinking ➤ All position statements are consistent with the ethical framework |
| 4.3 Further develop the capacity of staff to respond to the needs of our clients? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff training and development is linked to areas of the Strategic Plan. ➤ Staff skills are utilised more effectively. ➤ A Human Resource plan exists targeting future areas of need. |

KEY AREA –RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Strategic Goal 5 - To effectively manage all physical and financial resources of the Society

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|--|---|
| 5.1 Improve access to information for clients, staff and the community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Website used more often by clients ➤ A plan detailing timeline and resources required to develop and revise information has been developed and implemented |
| 5.2 Manage interstate and overseas enquires more efficiently | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Procedures exist and are followed relating to requests from outside of South Australia ➤ Enquiries from outside of South Australia are funded on a user pays principle |
| 5.3 Maximise effectiveness of available resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Budget decisions show a strong link to the needs expressed by the strategic plan ➤ Fundraising events have a clear focus on the use of funds raised ➤ Board Members have a clear understanding of the Society's financial position and current needs and budget pressures |
| 5.4 Manage publications more effectively to maximise profitability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resources are more easily and more widely available ➤ Income from the sales of resources adds value to the work of the Society |

| Strategic Direction | Targets |
|--|---|
| 5.5 Increase availability and effectiveness of financial resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The Society's financial capacity to provide services to our members is increased |
| 5.6 Develop and implement an effective marketing strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ The profile of the Society is raised and there is increased recognition of the Society as a national and international centre of expertise➤ Sales of our products are increasing➤ Profile of the abilities of people with Down syndrome is raised |