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# Early Intervention Services





# EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

The Early Intervention Program is staffed by trained and experienced Education Consultants. All Consultants have teaching qualifications and post graduate degrees in Special Education. Volunteers are also an important part of the program.

Groups are held in the Early Intervention Room, Hampstead Primary School, West Wing, Muller Rd, Greenacres. The Early Intervention Room is located in front of the Down Syndrome Society office and provides handy access to the Toy and Resource Library, administration staff and the Society's Education Consultants and Family Support Worker.

The Early Intervention Program upholds the following values:

- 1. The family has the most important role in the child's life and we support a family's independence in parenting their child.*
- 2. We recognise that all families are unique.*
- 3. Each child is an individual and has unique needs.*
- 4. The program reflects cultural diversity and family values and beliefs.*
- 5. The program is flexible to meet individual family needs.*
- 6. The program promotes community awareness.*

We offer the following programs:

Baby Groups	birth – 18 months	Held fortnightly for 2 hours
Infant Groups	18 months - 3 years	Held fortnightly for 2 hours
Toddler Group	3 years – 3.5 years	Held weekly for 2 hours for 2 terms prior to Pre- Kindy
Pre-Kindy program	3.5 years – 4.5 years	Held weekly in a mainstream kindergarten for 2 hours
Ages in groups are approximations only		

## COUNTRY FAMILIES

Country families are welcome to attend an Early Intervention session when they are in Adelaide. Flyers are sent out to families each term with relevant dates and times. Country families may receive three visits per year from the Society's Education Consultants.



# Baby Group





# BABY GROUP

Families can commence in the baby group any time after the birth of their child/ren.

*The aims of this group are:*

- ◆ *to provide support and information to the immediate and extended family, that will help the family understand the needs of their new baby with Down syndrome*
- ◆ *provide advice and support to parent(s)/caregiver(s) about the early development of skills for their child*
- ◆ *referral to other agencies, as the family requires/requests*

Specific areas of emphasis include:

## **FAMILY SUPPORT**

- ◆ Providing information and support to immediate and extended family members concerning:
  - (a) Down syndrome
  - (b) Early development in children
  - (c) Linking to other agencies that may be available for the family to access
  - (d) Adjusting to family life with a child with Down syndrome
- ◆ Meeting other families with children who have Down syndrome

## **SPECIFIC AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ Developing feeding skills. This includes the progress from breast/bottle feeding to straw/cup drinking, starting solids and finger foods.
- ◆ Developing early fine motor skills including reaching, grasping and releasing skills.
- ◆ Developing early gross motor skills including head control, rolling, sitting, positioning, and crawling.
- ◆ Developing early communication skills including attending, turn taking, babbling, listening and responding to sound.
- ◆ Developing early cognitive skills including sensory awareness/integration, object permanence, early cause and effect.
- ◆ An early introduction for parents to learn sign language to assist their child to develop communication skills (see parent resources).

The child's development is continually monitored and their individual needs are accommodated within the group activity based program.

Family members and friends are welcome to attend Early Intervention sessions to gain a greater understanding of Down syndrome and the child's development.

At each session, parents are provided with ideas to encourage the child's growth and development at home. Many of these ideas are demonstrated to parents through group activities and individual activities within the session.

***HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW/BRING***

- ◆ *Parent participation is required*
- ◆ *Bring along bottles etc. Warming facilities are available*
- ◆ *Dress your child in 'play' clothes, as some activities are messy. Bring a change of clothes*
- ◆ *If bringing a brother or sister, please bring a change of clothes for them.*
- ◆ *Each session includes time for a coffee and chat.*

*If you are unable to attend a session, please phone the office prior to commencement of the session on phone: 08 8369 1122*

**STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION**

The baby group is very flexible in meeting the needs of the child in feeding, sleeping and playing. While the babies are young, parents are welcome to have a tea/coffee break throughout the session when their child is sleeping or feeding. Each session has the following essential components:

***GROUP TIME***

All children, parents and siblings/visitors sit on the mat for the welcome song, fingerplays, stories and music. Through these activities specific developmental skills are being developed.

***ACTIVITIES/PLAY TIME***

With the guidance of the Early Intervention Consultant, parents work with their child through a range of activities to promote specific developmental skills.

Group time is structured so the majority of children are able to participate. As the child develops, the session usually begins with group time followed by activities.

As the children in the group are developmentally ready, the Consultant will introduce a formal snack/drink break for the children. This gives the Early Intervention Consultant opportunity to observe and advise on appropriate feeding and eating skills.

**SIBLINGS**

Siblings are welcome to attend and participate in the program. They are expected to sit and join in group time to minimise noise and distraction for the babies. It would be appreciated if siblings would eat their snack at a table.

## **TOY LIBRARY**

The Society has a wonderful selection of toys, games, books, videos and computer software that members are welcome to borrow. Time is available either before or after the session to assist parents to select toys for their child. The Toy Library is located in the Down Syndrome Society's Administration Building.

## **RECORDS**

To ensure continuity of programs, a file is kept for each child. The file usually contains the following information:

- ◆ Family Information form.
- ◆ Developmental checklist which is continually updated to assist programming.
- ◆ Summary of Medical Information.
- ◆ Any other relevant information.

## **VOLUNTEERS**

Volunteers play an important role in supporting staff and families. Their support contributes to providing a high quality Early Intervention program.

## **STUDENTS/VISITORS**

As part of our public awareness and role in training students from various disciplines, visitors may be present in some sessions.

## **MEMBERSHIP/FEES**

Membership of the Down Syndrome Society of South Australia Inc includes:

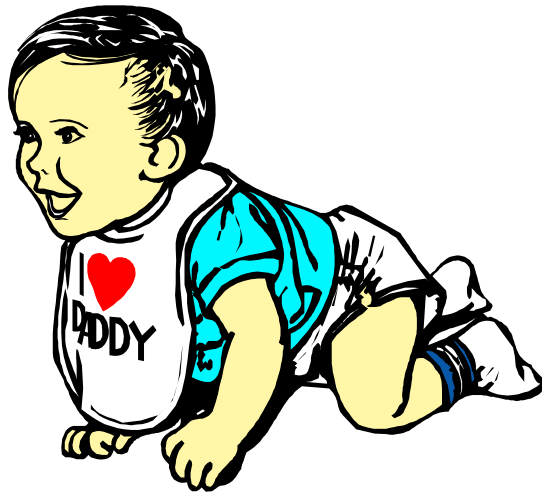
- ◆ Discounted Early Intervention fees, workshops etc.
- ◆ Borrowing rights to the Toy Library.
- ◆ Journal, with articles and upcoming events sent once a term.

Fees are payable for each session, Members \$7.50, Non members \$12.50 . Payment can also be made per term. The first term of Early Intervention is free.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please feel free to contact the Director to negotiate payment by instalments.



# Infant Group





# INFANT GROUP

Children move into the toddler group between the age of 18 months - 2 years of age.

*The aims of this group are:*

- ◆ *Developing, for each child, an increasing level of independence, motivation and skill to interact with the environment.*
- ◆ *Developing fine and gross motor skills, communication, social, and thinking skills for each child.*
- ◆ *Providing parents with support and information to assist their understanding of, and provide practical ideas for parenting, a child with Down syndrome.*

Specific areas of emphasis are:

## GROUP SKILLS

- ◆ Self-motivation to interact with the environment
- ◆ Self-direction and choice making
- ◆ Child to child interaction
- ◆ Attending at small group activities and in 1-1 situations
- ◆ Turn taking skills
- ◆ Understanding and anticipation of sequence and routines of the session
- ◆ Working within the confines of a table
- ◆ Skill development for participating in table top activities - drawing, pasting and painting

## COMMUNICATION

- ◆ Use of total communication by the child and family eg signing and talking
- ◆ Concept development of same/different, big/little and skills of matching and sequencing
- ◆ Responding with increasing independence to instructions
- ◆ Development of non-verbal communication skills including spatial awareness, eye contact and gaining another person's attention
- ◆ Listening skills
- ◆ Turn taking skills
- ◆ Exposure to a range of different language structures ie rhymes, songs, poems, fingerplays and stories

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ Development of gross motor skills including:
  - (a) walking
  - (b) running
  - (c) jumping
  - (d) climbing
  - (e) sliding
  - (f) swinging
- ◆ Development of body and spatial awareness
- ◆ Development of finger, arm and upper body strength
- ◆ Alternative ways of positioning themselves - kneeling, squatting etc
- ◆ Development of balance
- ◆ Sensory programs including touch, taste and movement
- ◆ Awareness and location of, tactile stimuli and pain

## **SELF HELP SKILLS**

- ◆ Skills and food experiences needed to eat a range of food - self feeding with fingers, spoons and forks
- ◆ Dressing skills - shoes on/off, assisting to get dressed/undressed
- ◆ Toileting, if developmentally appropriate

## **LEARNING SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ Development of attending and focussing skills, on one task.
- ◆ Following a sequence to complete a task.
- ◆ Developing an understanding of routines, rules and expectations.
- ◆ Positive behavioural management techniques for parents to use.

## **PARENT EDUCATION**

- ◆ Development of an understanding of the child's self-motivation and independence skills
- ◆ Assist in the development of self helps skills - dressing, feeding etc
- ◆ Specific information on a range of developmental areas including:
  - (a) behavioural management strategies for home
  - (b) communication skills and strategies for home
  - (c) physical development and strategies for home
  - (d) play for your child and ideas for home
- ◆ Linking to other agencies as required

### **HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW/BRING**

- ◆ *Parent participation is required*
- ◆ *Children need to wear old and loose fitting clothes for art activities*
- ◆ *A change of clothes may be required for 'wet' activities*
- ◆ *Bring a drink and healthy snack for your child*
- ◆ *Brothers and sisters are welcome to attend. Visitors are welcome, with prior arrangement with the staff*
- ◆ *Each session includes coffee and chat time*

*If you are unable to attend a session, please phone the office prior to the commencement of the session on 08 8369 1122.*

### **STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION**

- ◆ Greeting and settling in
- ◆ Small group - stories, language, listening and songs
- ◆ Participation through a range of activities to promote:
  - (a) gross and fine motor skills
  - (b) communication skills
  - (c) social skills
  - (d) group skills
  - (e) thinking skills
- ◆ Snack for child and parent information, signing etc
- ◆ Small group - songs, movement, music, relaxation, listening
- ◆ Coffee and chat for parents while children have free play time
- ◆ Goodbye song

Reviews are held twice a year to discuss each child's progress using the HELP checklist as a guide. Parents are encouraged to bring to the meeting any concerns/future goals they wish addressed. Representatives from other agencies may also be involved, at your request, and their availability.

### **TOY LIBRARY**

The Society has a wonderful selection of toys, games, books, videos and computer software that members are welcome to borrow. Time is available either before or after the session to assist parents to select toys for their child. The Toy and Resource Library is located in the Down Syndrome Society's Administration Building.

## **RECORDS**

To ensure continuity of programs, a file is kept for each child. The file usually contains the following information:

- Family Information form
- Developmental checklist which are continually updated to assist programming
- Summary of Medical Information
- Review Summary
- Any other relevant information

## **VOLUNTEERS**

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## **STUDENTS/VISITORS**

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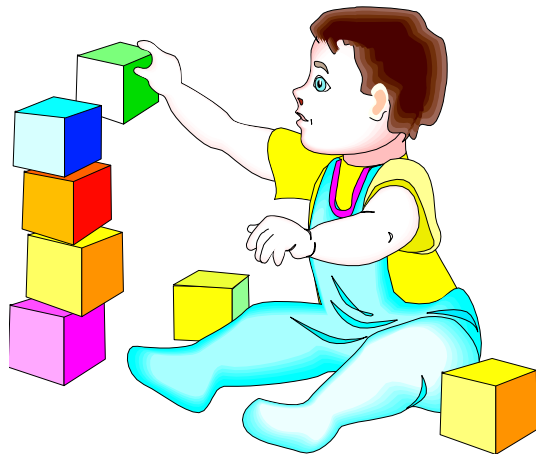
## **MEMBERSHIP/FEES**

Membership of the Down Syndrome Society of South Australia Inc includes:

- discounted Early Intervention fees, workshops etc
- borrowing rights to the Toy and Resource Library
- Journal, with articles and upcoming events sent once a term

Fees are payable for each session, Members \$7.50, Non Members \$12.50. Payment can also be made per term. The first term of Early Intervention is free.

# Toddler Group





# TODDLER GROUP

Children move into this group, usually two terms prior to attending the Pre-kindy program, at approximately 2.6 – 3.5 years of age.

The aims of this group are:

- ◆ *Developing positive behaviours when separating from parents for increasing amounts of time*
- ◆ *Developing self motivation and independence skills to participate in a structured environment*
- ◆ *Developing early reading and writing skills*
- ◆ *Continue to develop specific areas of emphasis as per infant group, depending upon individual needs of the child*

Specific areas of emphasis include:

## **INDEPENDENCE SKILLS**

- ◆ Separation from parents for gradually increasing amounts of time
- ◆ Following routines of session with increasing independence
- ◆ Following simple instructions independently
- ◆ Becoming an independent member of a group, when in structured group time
- ◆ Making choices and following activity sequences ie putting on smock before painting

## **COMMUNICATION SKILLS**

- ◆ Developing social language skills ie asking for help, gaining attention of peers/adult appropriately, waiting for a turn etc
- ◆ Developing vocabulary to increase length of sentences when signing/talking
- ◆ Early pre-reading skills including matching, sorting, sequencing, letter awareness etc

## **MOTOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT**

- ◆ Continued development of gross motor skills as per infant program
- ◆ Continued development of fine motor skills to developing manipulation of tools, grasp development and using two hands to complete an activit\

### **HERE WHAT TO BRING/KNOW**

- ◆ Your child needs a named bag that can be hung on a hook
- ◆ A healthy snack in a named snack box. eg sandwich, yoghurt, savoury biscuits
- ◆ A change of clothes including socks and pants/nappy/pull ups
- ◆ A **hat** in term 1 & 4

Parents are welcome to have coffee in the Down Syndrome Society Administration Building when leaving their child for short periods of time. When children are left for the full session, shopping centre's are nearby, and/or volunteer your services in the Down Syndrome Society office.

If you are unable to attend a session, please phone the office prior to the commencement of the session on 08 8369 1122.

### **STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION**

- ◆ Greetings and activities on the mat as parents leave. The Consultant will notify you on a sessional basis of when to return
- ◆ Small group – stories, language, listening, physical games
- ◆ Participation in a range of activities to promote areas of emphasis, under the guidance of the Early Intervention Consultant
- ◆ Snack time for child, including washing hands and unwrapping snack etc
- ◆ Small group – a range of activities to promote specific areas of emphasis
- ◆ Goodbye song

### **REVIEWS**

Reviews are held twice a year to discuss each child's progress using the HELP checklist as a guide. Parents are encouraged to bring to the meeting any concerns/future goals they wish addressed. Representatives from other agencies may also be involved, at your request, and their availability.

### **HINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL SEPARATION FROM PARENTS**

- ◆ Be positive even if your child is upset
- ◆ Follow a routine ie settling you child on mat and then saying goodbye
- ◆ Always say goodbye and leave immediately. Don't stay even if your child is upset, clinging to your leg etc. The Consultant will assist and settle your child once you have left
- ◆ Return on time and give a big hello and hug
- ◆ Join in an activity with your child so your child becomes confident in the environment now that you have returned

Remember each child is unique and will take different amounts of time to feel confident in separating from their parents.

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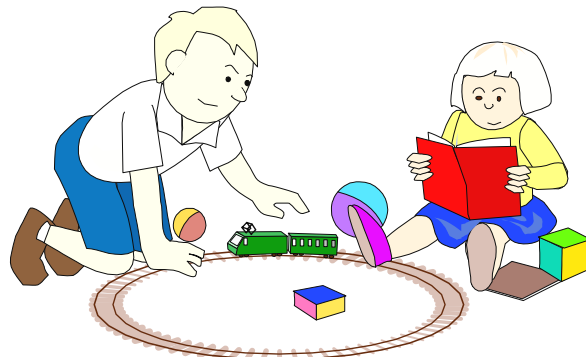
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# Pre-kindy Program





# PRE-KINDY (P-K) PROGRAM

The P-K program is held in a local preschool on a weekly basis for 2 hours per week. The Early Intervention Consultant develops a program within the local preschool program.

*Families commence in the P-K program between the ages of 3 – 3.5 years old.*

*The aims of this program are:*

- ◆ *Developing preschool and independence skills necessary for future attendance at the child's local preschool*
- ◆ *Developing social skills necessary for inclusion in the child's local preschool*
- ◆ *Developing communication skills, including signing, necessary for successful interaction with staff and peers*
- ◆ *Providing information and support to families about transitioning to their local preschool*

Specific areas of emphasis include:

## INDEPENDENCE SKILLS

- ◆ Separation from parents
- ◆ Following the routines of the preschool
- ◆ Self help skills eg hanging up own bag, putting on/off shoes, smocks etc
- ◆ Following behavioural expectation within the preschool
- ◆ Completing the routines of common activities in the preschool eg painting
- ◆ Initiating interaction with peers and adults in the centre

## PRESCHOOL SKILLS

- ◆ Developing pre-writing and drawing skills through painting, drawing and a specific pre-writing program
- ◆ Developing fine motor skills including cutting, threading, eye hand coordination skills and finger strength
- ◆ Developing gross motor skills including using common preschool equipment, ball skills, running, climbing and jumping skills
- ◆ Developing play skills including dramatic, constructive and social play skills
- ◆ Developing communication skills including signing, vocabulary development, social language, non verbal skills eg eye contact, and development of short and long term memory skills
- ◆ Most children will commence a reading program during P-K which will be home based with assistance from the Early Intervention Consultant. The early introduction of reading, assists development of spoken language skills for the child.

## **P-K SESSION TIMES**

Sessions are held for 2 hours weekly, and the day/time is negotiated with the local preschool. Families are notified of session days.

## **STRUCTURE OF THE SESSION**

The structure of the session is dependant upon the preschool program but usually includes:

- ◆ group time, which may include songs, stories and games
- ◆ activity time, which includes inside and outside activities including painting, drawing, playdough, puzzles and other programmed activities. During this time the Consultant works individually with the child to develop specific skills for each activity
- ◆ snack time – this may be shared fruit at large group or may be when the child chooses to have their snack, depending upon the preschool's policy. The Consultant assists the child to develop feeding skills necessary for independent preschool attendance

The Early Intervention Consultant and volunteer are happy to support your toileting program, when your child attends P-K. Please discuss your program with the Consultant.

## **WORKSHOPS**

Workshops are held for parents, in the P-K program, on a regular basis. Topics may include:

- ◆ developing drawing skills
- ◆ pre-writing skills
- ◆ developing a home based, early reading program
- ◆ behavioural management
- ◆ personal development including appropriate social behaviour for different setting, importance of proper vocabulary for labelling body parts etc

The Early Intervention Consultant will notify you of when a workshop is to be held.

### ***HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW/BRING***

- ◆ *Parents leave the child for the whole session*
- ◆ *Bring a preschool bag which is named*
- ◆ *Please bring a change of clothes including socks & underpants/nappy/pull ups*
- ◆ *Please bring a healthy snack eg yogurt, fruit, sandwich*
- ◆ *Check the preschool policy on drinks*
- ◆ *In term 1 & 4 a hat must be provided if your child is to play outside*

*If you are unable to attend a session, please phone the preschool and leave a message for the Early Intervention Consultant.*

## **REVIEWS**

Reviews are held at six monthly intervals. At the reviews the child's development, health and future school options are discussed. Parents are encouraged to bring to the meeting any concerns/future goals they wish addressed. When reviews are held, the session is cancelled and parents/child come to the centre at their interview time. This ensures the safety of the children while the review is on.

## **TOY LIBRARY**

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## **RECORDS**

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# **TRANSITIONING TO THE LOCAL PRESCHOOL**

Planning to attend your local Preschool needs to begin 6-12 months before anticipated date of entry. The Preschool Consultant can assist parents in selecting a local Preschool.

Attendance at Preschool usually consists of:

- ◆ 1 session per week of pre-entry, usually the term the child has their fourth (4) birthday (depending upon school entry date this may be later)
- ◆ 4 sessions per week, for 4 terms, of sessional Preschool. Each session is usually 2.5hrs either morning or afternoon
- ◆ At the discretion of the Director of the Preschool, some children may be able to attend for 1 session per week of Early Entry. This occurs prior to the pre-entry term.

Children are able to continue to attend P-K on a weekly basis, when attending their local Preschool for Early Entry or Pre-Entry.

In determining entry to a local Preschool, parents need to be mindful of when the child will begin school. In South Australia, children can begin school anytime between the age of 5 & 6. Some parents find it helpful to select a Primary School and then choose a feeder preschool to ensure friendships are maintained from Preschool to school.

Once a child is attending their local preschool, the Preschool Consultant from the Down Syndrome Society will assist families and staff to meet the needs of the child in this setting and assist in planning the transition from preschool to school.

# Parent Resources





# HEALTH CHECKS FOR CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

All children with Down syndrome, need to have regular checkups with specialist to assist in their continued development. Medical issues such as hearing loss, vision and thyroid problems can impact significantly on the child's development. Below is a list of health checks that we would recommend.

<b>Examination/test</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Additional information</b>	<b>Impact on learning.</b>
Physical Examination	At six weeks and then annually, usually with the Paediatrician	Looks at development in all areas including skin, feeding, growth and any specific needs of the child	May pick up changes to the child's health that impacts on their ability to learn
Heart Examination	At birth by a heart specialist	If your child does have a heart complaint, then continued monitoring will be needed	Affect child's growth and stamina.
Thyroid	At birth, six months and then annually by a blood test	Important to have regular height/weight information	May lead to slow growth, fatigue, constipation, skin disorders, learning difficulties, sleep difficulties and feeding difficulties
Vision test	Annually from 9-12 months until 10 years and then every two years.	Children often need to wear glasses from an early age. Eyes do not finish developing until the age of 8-10 years .	Impacts in all areas of learning and social development
Hearing test	Annually for 9-12 months and then every year.	The Society has a list of service providers who can do hearing checks on young children	Hearing loss can affect the development of sound awareness and future speech and language development
Dental checks	From the age of two years	The Society has a list of paediatric dentist or contact your family dentist	Early teeth cleaning and gum massage is recommended
Atlanto-axial joint	Screening at 3-3.5 years of age, 8-10 years and before participating in contact sport	X-rays are taken of the neck in several different positions	Children with abnormal x-rays may need to be restricted for sports such as gym and diving.
<p><b>GROWTH CHARTS:</b> These are an important tool in indicating several medical conditions that can occur suddenly in children with Down syndrome. It is recommended that parents regularly take their child to a chemist, GP or health clinic to have their child's weight, height and head circumference taken. Remember to take these charts when you have a Paediatrician appointment.</p>			

References: Van Dyke, D.C. (ed) Medical and Surgical Care for children with Down Syndrome. A guide for Parents.  
The Down Syndrome Association of NSW Inc. Routine Health Checks for People with Down Syndrome.

# COMPARATIVE DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Averages for children with Down syndrome (Age in Months)</i>	<i>Averages for Non-disabled Children (Age in Months)</i>
Lifts head	1.5-3	1.0-2
Smiles and coos	1.0-3	0.5-3
Rolls over	2.0-12	2.0-10
Focuses on objects	2.0-3	2.0-4
Holds objects	3.0-4	3.0-7
Interest in sounds	3.0-7	3.0-9
Sits independently	6.0-17	4.0-8
Rhythmic vocalization	5.0-10	5.0-7
Crawls	7.0-19	6.0-11
Finger-feeds	7.0-26	6.0-16
Speaks single words	9.0-30	7.0-14
Uses spoon	12.0-36	8.0-20
Walks	12.0-38	9.0-18
Solves simple problems	12.0-24	9.0-12
Speaks short sentences	16.0-44	13.0-30
Toileting	20.0-86	18.0-48
Dressing	28.0-70	20.0-42

Sources: Marlene Targ Brill, 'Overview of Special Education' (Workshop for Title 1 Project, Chicago, 1979). Siegfried Pueschel, ed., *A Parent's Guide to Down Syndrome: Toward a Brighter Future*. (Baltimore: Brookes Publishing, 1990).