



Parents and Schools in Partnership Program: 2010 - 2011 School Year

Purpose: The Parents and Schools in Partnership Program is a joint effort between southeast Michigan schools and the Down Syndrome Guild of Southeast Michigan (DSG). The goal of this partnership is to provide support for educators and families seeking to build a meaningful education for students with Down syndrome. The DSG is currently recruiting for the 2010-2011 school year.

Overview: The DSG recognizes that many educators feel the need for support and information concerning the educational needs of students with Down syndrome. The Parents and Schools in Partnership is designed to specifically address this need. Teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals, and administrators learn how various aspects of Down syndrome can affect the learning process. This program will provide techniques, approaches, and materials that have been shown to be successful for students with Down syndrome. The Partnership Program also aims to bridge the communication gap between parents and educators through the exchange of perspectives and information.

The Down Syndrome Specialist

Because each school district is different in size and culture, the Down Syndrome Specialist may play a variety of roles. The DSG asks that in return for training, the Down Syndrome Specialist will:

- Serve to educate teachers and families concerning the learning needs of students with Down syndrome;
- Serve as a resource for strategies and information concerning curriculum modifications and adaptations;
- Serve as a facilitator for appropriate inclusion of students with Down syndrome in the school community and/or the general education classroom;
- Serve as a resource for ability awareness training within the school district as well as, alert educators and parents of training opportunities at the DSG;
- Serve as a vehicle for distribution of information concerning the Down syndrome community, and, as appropriate, help to facilitate open discussion among parents and educators.

Training

We will provide four – 2 ½ hour trainings over the course of one school year. The topics that may be covered include:

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| What is Down syndrome? | Health issues that get in the way of learning | Strategies for inclusion of students with Down syndrome |
| Abilities awareness education | Communication issues & behavior | Resources, ideas & finding a middle ground |
| Safety concerns | Social opportunities | Curriculum modifications & adaptations for students with Down syndrome |
| Learning objectives vs. IEP goals | Team communication & planning | Auxiliary materials; Problem Solving |

Program Benefits

During the training year, the Specialists will be invited to participate in periodic trainings and will continue to receive the DSG newsletter, other mailings and the Friday email blast. Specialists will receive materials to help teachers and parents in the efforts to educate students with Down syndrome. This program is in the process of being approved for continuing education credits.

How to Become a Down Syndrome Specialist

Who can be a Specialist? A teacher, therapist, paraprofessional, or school/district administrator

How can a school district join the program? Parents of students with Down syndrome may nominate their school/district. Schools/districts may also nominate themselves. Schools/districts will complete an application and sign a letter of agreement.

Is there other training for teachers other than the Specialist program? The DSG offers monthly topical speakers, a bi-annual conference for families and professionals and on-site in-service training.

Please contact Paulette Duggins at the DSG for further information and an application package.

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