

Creating an enabling environment for a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

This list is intended to give general ideas and suggestions – not all adaptations/activities will be appropriate or necessary for every Down's child.

Toys, books, equipment:

- Need to be developmentally appropriate
- Toys/equipment may need to be differentiated for reduced fine motor skills eg. jigsaws with chunky handles on pieces, large wooden beads and stiff string/rod, chunky construction pieces, larger toys / toys for younger child
- May need adapted equipment- scissors (eg. loop, block,), easy grip pencils/ paintbrushes, adapted cutlery, non-spill cup etc
- Accessible lift flap books, easy turn pages, interactive books – visual and following interests
- Non slip mats to steady equipment for two handed tasks (eg feeding)
- Activities to promote fine motor skills and strength- malleable activities- finger painting/prodding/stretching dough/ experience of different textures/instruments to bang together/poppers to un-pop, velcro to pull apart etc.
- Activities that follow the child's interests/schemas eg. Posting/ throwing/ stacking could be incorporated into learning activities
- Outdoor toys at suitable developmental level eg. ride on/scooting toys if not yet pedalling and large bouncy/floaty balls/balloons to help develop ball skills

Physical environment

- Do a risk assessment – look at potential hazards based on known physical skills and behaviour, consider: access, steps, uneven surfaces, trip hazards, space between furniture, fencing, gates, access to water (safety),
- Organise layout of room to allow for cruising and crawling, with floor and table top activities
- Sturdy furniture that will allow pulling to stand (if appropriate)
- Steps/stairs- handrails
- Flooring- inside and outside
- Supportive seating for table top activities
- Heights of tables / chairs / sand and water trays – may need platform/step to stand on
- Washing/ toileting areas– rails / steps / easy use taps / accessible hand drying- also consider safety and supervision
- Appropriate changing area (may require changing bed)

Routines

- Supportive seating – when eating – adapted cutlery, non slip mat, non-drip cup
- Arrangement/height of tasks for activities eg snack/ morning routines – ie. location of peg, plimsols, etc
- First...then boards (with motivators)
- Choosing boards
- Picture schedules
- Visual strips with routines
- Physically appropriate tasks at tidy up time or other routines
- Lunchtime support eg carrying tray

Use of adults

- Sensitive intervention when needed (not velcroed) – try to encourage independence
- Ensuring aids used eg Pedro boots on, hearing aids, glasses
- Assistance with moving around
- Support sitting and attending at large group times
- Small group work and individual interventions
- Encouraging interactions and including other children in play
- Positive behaviour management and high expectations
- Supporting language and communication development – providing commentary, modelling, expanding, repeating and breaking down instructions, implementing augmentative communication techniques eg signing, symbols
- Supporting self help routines, helping develop skills and independence
- Ensuring safety