



Canadian  
Down Syndrome  
Society

Société  
canadienne de la  
trisomie 21

## **Inclusive Education**

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society is committed to ensuring that the Down syndrome community in Canada is valued, supported and that individuals with Down syndrome are given equitable opportunities to contribute to society as fully participating citizens. We work to empower Canadians with Down syndrome and achieve this by raising awareness and providing information on Down syndrome for all life stages from prenatal to retirement years. We foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity, worth and equal rights of people.

### **Background:**

Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of school life. Inclusive education is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive. Students participate in the education program in a common learning environment with support to diminish and remove barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion. <sup>1</sup>

### **Position Statement:**

The Canadian Down Syndrome Society respects the right of families to make personal decisions about the child's education based on what is best for the child in terms of academics, social, behavioral and support needs. The Canadian Down Syndrome Society asserts that all students including those with Down syndrome, have a right to be included and progress within an inclusive educational environment where students of all abilities learn together and are accepted, valued and participating students.

The CDSS supports the following guiding principles to serve our position:

- By promoting inclusive education, we help to ensure that today's students create an inclusive society tomorrow. Inclusive education provides the foundation that enhances the wellbeing of every member of the community and helps strengthen their capacities to be valued, productive members of their communities.
- Individualized Education Plans (IEP's) should be aligned with the student's personal capacity, goals and academic potentials. Ensure that the plan identifies specific needs, establishes clear priorities and that there is a plan for implementation with appropriate accommodations and program modifications in place.
- It is essential for teachers, education assistants and other support staff to receive opportunities for professional development for appropriate skills and strategies that promote student-centered teaching.

- Engage in effective and ongoing communication between parents and teaching teams to ensure students are supported, regularly assessed and accommodated.
- Commitment and leadership from school principals, staff and parents must be obvious, to ensure a whole school approach to inclusion that builds capacity by implementing policies and developing learning environments that are respectful, supportive, safe and engages the school community.
- Promote a positive learning environment where students are able to fully participate, contribute, have a sense of belonging and are free from discriminating attitudes and beliefs.

<sup>1</sup><https://inclusiveeducation.ca/about/what-is-ie/>

*Please quote fully and reference the Canadian Down Syndrome Society*

*Reviewed and revised June 2020*