

QUICK GUIDE:

Parents



Every school year will bring its own challenges and successes, but what is most important is always modelling patience, respect, and kindness. Remind your child that they are part of their school community. Here are some suggestions for parents as they help their child transition throughout the school years.

- Help your school community learn about Down syndrome. This might be the first time the school is welcoming a student with Down syndrome or they might have had students with Down syndrome over the years. Share the most current information about Down syndrome, how to talk about Down syndrome, and general information to help build awareness in the school community. These tools and more are available in the CDSS Education Hub.
- Establish good communication with the school.
 - ▶ Reach out and connect with school principals, classroom and support staff, and all education support teams early in the school year.
 - ▶ Use a communication booklet so that both you and the classroom team can add daily insights and notes about your child and their day.
 - ▶ Share contact information and the ideal times and ways to communicate.
- Get on the same page. Review your child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and go over all of the services and supports that should be in place at the beginning of the school year. The IEP is developed collaboratively by the IEP Team to build a plan to help your child succeed in school. It describes your child's present levels of academic achievement and how they are currently doing in school. It also describes the goals for the school year and entails all accommodations and any curriculum modifications that your child needs to help them achieve. The IEP is reviewed by the parents and teaching team at the beginning of each year and revised if necessary.

- Practice at home. Starting a new school year means new routines and expectations and it can be overwhelming for many people. Help minimize the stress by preparing your child and practicing the new routines ahead of time: go over their class schedule, visit the school, go over the school rules, practice daily skills like packing their backpacks, opening and putting away their snacks, changing their shoes and getting their seasonal outdoor clothing and boots on. These small steps can help put both yours and your child's mind at ease as they transition daily routines in the classroom.
- We are in this together. As a parent, you know your child best. And as an educator, the teacher knows their classroom best. It is ideal that parents and teachers both contribute to planning and meet somewhere in the middle. Be open to hearing what the teacher can offer, and add value by letting them know what has worked and what hasn't worked for your child. Work together by compromising, understanding, and communicating to ensure that your child is getting the support they need to succeed during the school year.
- Confront the issues before they get bigger. Problems related to your child's performance or behaviour at school, are easier to resolve when confronted early. Talk with the school principals and teaching teams about issues as they arise, and work together to develop solutions that will help in the short and long term.
- Don't forget to recognize the successes. Let the teacher and school staff know when they have helped your child. This can help build stronger relationships between you and your child's school community, and doing so can help make successes happen more often. Knowing what works for your child is just as important for the school as knowing what doesn't work.



Check out our full
resource for more info:

