

## QUICK GUIDE:

# Substitute Teachers



**Every substitute teaching job is different. Some teaching assignments will be for part of the day, and some will be for an extended period of time with the same classroom of students. Regardless of the time frame, you may get the opportunity to get to know the students and teach in a classroom where a student has Down syndrome. Students with Down syndrome have differing abilities, just like the rest of the students in the classroom.**

### Suggestions for your time in the classroom:

- Take time to introduce yourself and get to know the students.
- Try to follow the plans. The regular teacher will usually leave a teaching plan with instructions, suggestions and routines for the classroom. Students with Down syndrome tend to thrive when there is a predictable environment and routines are adhered to as closely as possible.
- Be patient. Having a substitute teacher in the classroom could be a big change for the student with Down syndrome. The student may feel overwhelmed and out of sorts with the temporary change. Help them by spending some time with them, providing clear, simple verbal cues, and sticking with the plan.
- Go in a bit earlier if you can to chat with the principal, other teachers or education assistants that could help you throughout your day. They may have some suggestions or advice on what to expect in the classroom and how they might be able to help out.
- Communication is key. Leave notes or a report for the regular teacher at the end of the teaching day. You can inform the teacher of what was completed, what wasn't completed, and you can share any challenges or successes that the student might have had while their regular teacher was away.
- Ask the other students for help. The students in the classroom are a helpful resource. They know the routines, what works and what doesn't for the student with Down syndrome and their peers.

- You might not have enough time to see a task through with the student with Down syndrome, but simply do your best to ensure that all students are learning together.
- Learn about Down syndrome. It may be the first time or fourth time you are teaching a student with Down syndrome but either way, gaining a better understanding of Down syndrome will help you support and ensure that the student with Down syndrome is valued in the classroom and around the school during the time you are the substitute teacher.

## Try these tips in the classroom:

- Keep it simple
- Follow the daily plan set by the regular teacher
- Review safety plans for all students
- Review daily schedule for students with different learning needs
- Be aware of environmental triggers
- Follow the routine
- Keep the seating plan
- Review class rules
- Give verbal prompts
- Use technology as prescribed
- Use visual aids
- Use classroom peers, ask the students!
- Give breaks



Check out our full  
resource for more info:

