



Canadian
Down Syndrome
Society

A workforce
is waiting.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a red and white polka-dot sleeveless top and light green pants, is fist-bumping a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black t-shirt and light blue jeans. They are in an office environment with a blurred background.

inplayable
Guide for Employers

Welcome to **in**playable

Let's Get Started!

Welcome to Inplayable! Before you begin connecting with candidates, please review this helpful information about Down syndrome, inclusive recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding practices. We've also included free resources and printable posters to help you along your journey to becoming an inclusive employer.

Let's begin with a few communication tips you can use when speaking to a jobseeker with Down syndrome.

- Speak clearly at a regular volume and a slower pace.
- Use everyday language.
- Keep in mind that the job seeker is an adult.
- Ask them to repeat themselves if you did not hear or understand what was said.
- Emphasize the person first. For example, 'my friend has Down syndrome' or 'the child has Down syndrome, not 'the Down syndrome child.'

When in doubt, think O.W.L.

OWL was developed by the Hanen Centre



O bserve body language

W ait for the person to respond

L isten and do not interrupt

About Down Syndrome

Before hiring employees with Down syndrome, it's important to understand what Down syndrome is and appropriate ways to speak to and about people with disabilities.

- Down syndrome is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement associated with Chromosome 21 that has always existed.
- Down syndrome is universal across racial, gender, and socio-economic lines.
- There are three types of Down syndrome: Trisomy 21, Translocation, and Mosaicism. Trisomy 21 is by far the most commonly occurring.
- People with Down syndrome have some intellectual disability and some delay in development, which may include delays in speech development and motor skills.
- No matter which type of Down syndrome a person has, the effects of the extra genetic material will be unique to them. They will have their own strengths, likes, dislikes, talents, personality and temperament. Down syndrome is simply one part of who they are.

Is an employee with Down syndrome a good fit for my organization?

Each individual with Down syndrome is suited to different types of work and will be interested in pursuing different kinds of jobs. The best way to find out if a person with Down syndrome has the skills required for a particular job is to ask them!

Employee Stories



**Matthew
Restaurant Host**

"The best thing about having a job is that it keeps me motivated each day to work hard and show my employer that I can be trusted to do that job. I am working on being the best employee I can be at my work."



**Janet, Advocate and
Motivational Speaker**

"I do advocacy work as I am Canada's rep for Down Syndrome International. I am also an athlete leader with Special Olympics and a motivational speaker, so sometimes have work to do on talks and meetings. My big goal was to live on my own and I am doing that now. My next goal is to be an assistant coach with Special Olympics."



Lindsey, Barista

"I decided to get a job to be more independent and be more active. I like to be busy and have lots of things to do. I also like money and tips! My co-workers help me succeed at my job. My manager trains me slowly and they have a lot of patience. She takes me through the tasks step-by-step which really helps me."



**Jessica, Path Forward
Classroom Assistant**

"What helps me to succeed at Centennial is I have a To-Do List and when I first started, one of my co-workers trained me on how to do my job. I love working at Centennial, it is a part-time and seasonal job. I also love modelling and acting, so I go to many auditions, too."

Inclusive Recruitment

Best Practices

- Review person-first language with your HR staff. Person-first language emphasizes the person before the disability. Example: A person with Down syndrome, a person with a disability.
- If you are using an eRecruiting tool, avoid complex navigation features, timeout restrictions and confusing or inconsistent instructions that are known challenges.
- Ensure your website is in accordance with accessibility standards .
- Review your outreach process: beyond social media and job posting websites, Sharing your job postings to Inployable is a great start - think about where else you could share your job postings.
- Consider connecting with Supported Employment Agencies and disability organizations in your area.
- A support person may help to manage the communications between you and the candidate. The level of support needed will vary for each candidate.

Inclusive Recruitment

Accessible Job Postings

- Use simple, straightforward language.
- Avoid using complex terminology and jargon.
- Include working hours, schedule, pay, and accessibility details like building entrances for the workspace.
- Include a statement of inclusivity; simply say that your company welcomes applications from people with employment accessibility barriers and that jobseekers can contact the hiring lead via email or phone for support. This can help lessen challenges during the online application process.
- Include a wider set of diverse workplace skills on your job postings so they can be easily discovered by people with disabilities on LinkedIn:

- Routine Oriented
- Repetitive Tasks
- Physical Strength
- Inventory Skills
- Serving
- Host Duties
- Customer Greeter
- Handy Work
- Culture Builder
- Loyal
- Punctual
- Low Absenteeism
- Eager
- Detail Oriented
- Long-term Employment
- Organized
- Positive Attitude
- Physical Endurance

Inclusive Recruitment

Interviewing

- Some candidates may want a family member or an employment agency employee to accompany them to the interview.
- We recommend having a casual “get to know you interview” to assess if the candidate is the right fit for your work environment.
- If possible, give a tour of the working environment and introduce the candidate to current staff to observe their comfort level in the environment.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Do not reply for the person; allow time for the candidate to process the question.
- Rephrase the question to elicit a yes or no answer, if required .
- Is your location accessible and close to public transportation?

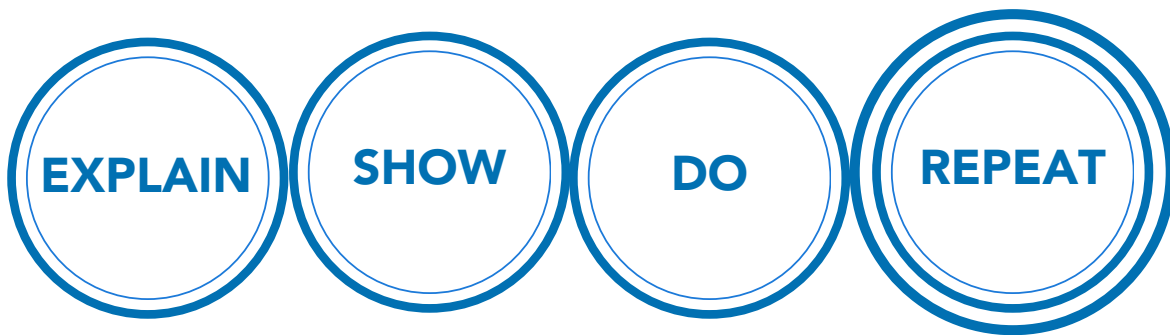


Don't Forget
O.W.L.!

Inclusive Recruitment

Onboarding

This training method along with the tips below should help your new employee succeed in their new role. When training: explain the task, do the task, have the employee do the task, and have the employee repeat the task.



- Review person-first language with your staff.
- Be sure to explain basic workplace information, such as where the washroom is, when lunch time is, how long it is, where to eat, etc.
- Give information in shorter phrases.
- If possible, start with shorter shifts and build up to longer shifts.

Inclusive Recruitment

Onboarding

- Provide training visuals.
- Training may take longer; repeating information is key.
- Provide a specific schedule and list of tasks.
- Assign a coworker or supervisor that the employee can go to when they need assistance or have a question about a task.
- Job shadowing and mentorship have proven to be successful methods for long-term training.
- Have regular check-ins with your employee at the end of the first day, week, and month to ensure a successful fit and to resolve any challenges.
- Remember that every individual is different and will have unique needs.

Workplace Scenarios

Situation	Solution
There are sharp objects, machinery, or equipment in the workplace that could pose a danger.	Make sure all employees are trained in the proper use of any equipment with WHIMS and safety protocols.
During training, an employee does not respond to a question or a series of instructions.	Repeat the information. If possible, rephrase it, break it down into shorter phrases, or ask a yes or no question.
An employee is inactive during slower periods at work.	Give the employee a specific assignment list or ideas of tasks they can work on when things are slow.
There are unexpected loud noises or flashing lights; an employee gets distracted.	Whenever possible, let employees know ahead of time if there will be loud noises or bright lights.
The power goes off in the workplace or a fire drill occurs.	Reassure the employee that it is okay and the power will go back on soon or direct them to the nearest fire route.

Next Steps

- 1 Make sure you are following Inplayable on LinkedIn for resources, news, featured candidates, and important updates.
- 2 Visit the [People tab](#) on the Inplayable page to view candidates in your area.
- 3 Send job postings to inplayable@cdss.ca to be shared with the Inplayable network. Ensure postings are accessible and written in plain language (see page 6 of this guide) and ask applicants to mention that they saw the job opportunity through Inplayable in their cover letter or email.
- 4 Stay connected with us! Let us know if you interview and/or hire Inplayable candidates. Send updates, comments, or questions to inplayable@cdss.ca anytime.

Show Your Support for Inclusive Employment

Tell the world you're an inclusive employer! Add the Inplayable badge to your website and LinkedIn page and display the OWL poster in your workplace.



[Download Inplayable Badge](#)

[Download OWL Poster](#)

WHAT IS O.W.L.?



Observe body language

Wait for the person to respond

Listen and do not interrupt

#InclusionMatters

Resources

For Further Learning

»»» Canadian Down Syndrome Society

- About Down Syndrome
- Down Syndrome Answers
- Employment Hub

»»» Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE)

- HR Inclusive Policy Toolkit
- Free Accessible Communications Courses

»»» Ontario Disability Employment Network (ODEN)

- Business Leaders Video Series
- Disability Awareness and Confidence Training



Over 50% of individuals with Down Syndrome struggle to secure paying jobs.



Invest in Inemployable

Inemployable is solely funded through the generous support of individuals and businesses like you!

CDSS offers this free employment resource across Canada and are looking for opportunities to connect with businesses who would like to make a corporate social investment to help make people with Down syndrome more visible to potential employers.

Please contact Pamela Massaro to discuss investment opportunities at pamelam@cdss.ca.

Contact