


**Engaging and Motivating Learners with Disabilities**



Down Syndrome Guild  
of Greater Kansas City  
Amy Allison, Chief Operating Officer

---

---

---

---


---

---



---

---

**Disability Overview**



- Health conditions
- Stamina
- Communication
- Processing Time
- Working Memory
- Cognitive Profile
- Age Appropriate Activities

© 2012 Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City. All rights reserved. This document contains confidential and/or proprietary information which may not be reproduced or transmitted without the express written consent of DSG.

---

---

---

---


---

---


---

---

**What Is Motivation?**



*"If there is anything that we wish to change in a child, we should first examine it and see whether it is not something that could be better changed in ourselves." – Carl Jung*



© 2012 Down Syndrome Guild of Greater Kansas City. All rights reserved. This document contains confidential and/or proprietary information which may not be reproduced or transmitted without the express written consent of DSG.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What Motivates You?



- Why are you here?
- Why do you go to work every day? (even after the tough days?)
- Reflect on your favorite teacher in high school.
- Who was your favorite boss?
- Which parent motivated you?



Learning begins with motivation. Without motivation, there is no learning.




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### A Motivating Teacher is...



- Enthusiastic
- Focuses on strengths
- Celebrates effort as much as task completion
- Creative and flexible
- Promotes cooperation vs. competition
- Encourages independence




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### A Motivating Teacher...



- Establishes long-term and short-term goals
- Provides choices
- Teaches vs. punishes
- Thinks about the future
- Promotes peer relationships
- Provides opportunities to realize success




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What Impedes Motivation?

- Lack of rapport
- Lack of understanding
- Frustration
- Embarrassment
- Being rushed
- One-size fits all instruction
- Anxiety




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Is Your Student Really Unmotivated?

- Tension
- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Overwhelming environment
- Confusion
- Exhaustion




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Pace Should Be Priority

- Can't keep up, so why try?
- Too many verbal directions
- Need more time
- Activity is too big
- Unable to gauge time
- Processing time
- Multiple transition meltdown




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Effective Use of Praise



- Intermittent
- Effort and improvement **not** finished product
- Attention to pleasure and pride related to learning
- Encourages social development
- Accompany a behavior
- Recognize expectations




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic



**Intrinsic Motivation**

- comes from within a person
- feel a sense of responsibility
- feel a need to achieve something for its own sake
- connect the activity with their self-esteem
- enjoys working on the assignment
- tries to achieve growth as an individual
- imagine being in a car - you are the driver in your car - completely in control

**Extrinsic Motivation**

- comes from outside forces
- tries to achieve a higher position, pay, or status
- feels it will ensure their position or status
- done for recognition from supervisors or superiors
- values rewards or awards for completing the work
- outside forces controls life
- luck
- imagine being in a car - you are the passenger in the car, not driver

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How should this look in school?



- Previous Performance
- Chart performance
- Recognize effort – bulletin board
- Lesson plans – identify if lesson is:
  - Individualized
  - Cooperative
  - Competitive
- Focus on relationship building
- Back off tangible rewards for motivation
- Adjust for learning needs




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Learned Helplessness



- Presume students are capable, then provide supports
- Are your supports transferable?
- Are you rescuing?
- Readiness myth
- Cycle of dependency
- First response may be “no”




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Avoiding Helplessness



See one, Do one, Teach One

- Step 1 – Student watches task
- Step 2 – Do it with him
- Step 3 – Have student do it
- Step 4 – Have him teach someone else task




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Fostering Independence



- I'll get the job started, and you can finish it
- Let's do the first two together
- I know you can...
- Sounds like you have a problem, let's find a solution
- Let me teach you how to do this yourself
- What comes next?




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Teaching Strategies to Motivate

- Environmental supports
- Simple directions
- Verbal and visual input
- Modified test or response
- Positive praise and encouragement
- TEACH organizational skills
- Proximity
- Errorless Learning – unmastered concepts
- Backwards chaining
- Collateral success




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Teaching Strategies to Motivate

- Avoid overloading with information
- Allow for breaks
- Utilize cue or private signal with child
- Scaffold or divide large tasks
- Encourage movement and activity
- Visual schedules
- Plan the day for success
- Adjust the learning environment




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Teaching Strategies to Motivate

- Jump start task
- Pre-teach as needed
- Organization is daily routine
- Have eye contact before giving directions (use name or hand signal)
- Modify materials and make them contextual
- Response time




---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Classroom Motivation



*“If you want to build a ship, don’t recruit the men to gather the wood, divide the work and give orders. Teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea.” – Antoine De Saint-Exupery*



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Environmental Factors



- Seating
- Noise
- Mother hens
- Proximity of teacher
- Proximity of staff
- Navigating building



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Scheduling Issues



- Pushed in/pulled out more frequently
- LONG day
- Transitions
- Unexplained changes
- Difficult tasks/subjects strung together



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Questions???



To learn more about supporting students with Down syndrome:

Down Syndrome Guild  
of Greater Kansas City  
5960 Dearborn St. Suite 100  
Mission, KS 66202

913.384.4848  
info@kcdsg.org  
www.kcdsg.org



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---