

TEACH

Presents:
Social Skills

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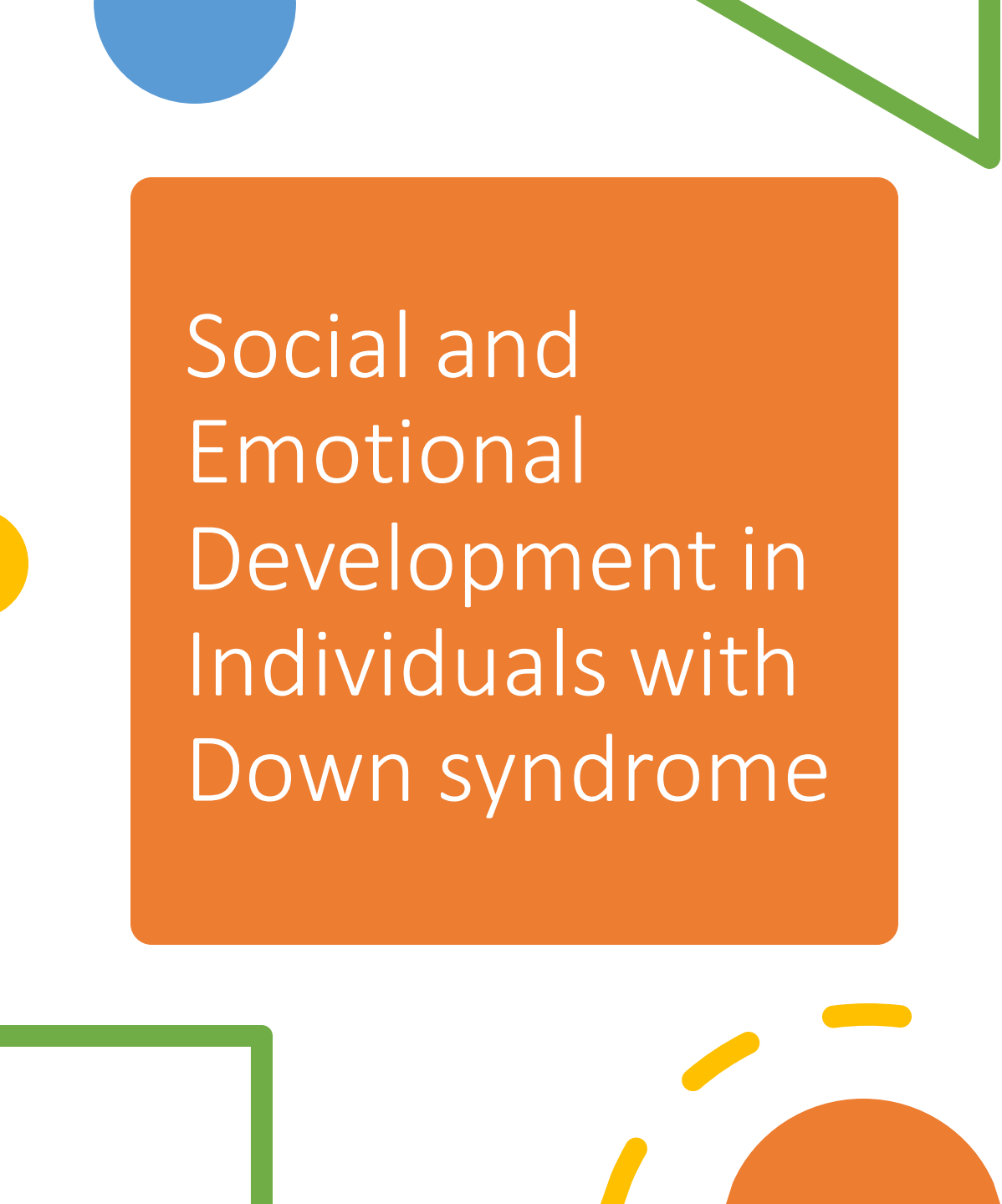




Social and Emotional Development

Social and emotional development is an individual's ability to understand the feelings of others, control his or her own feelings and behaviors, get along with others, and build positive relationships.





Social and Emotional Development in Individuals with Down syndrome

- Social functioning is usually less delayed than other areas of development (can be a big strength!)
- Cognitive processing delays can contribute to challenges with reading social cues, impulse control, and ability to cope/manage feelings
- Communication challenges impact ability to engage meaningfully with others and may contribute to challenging behaviors in social situations
- Sensitivity to stressors and feelings of "unrelatability" can cause anxiety and withdrawal



Additional Challenges

Dual-diagnosis (e.g. DS and ASD)

Sensory processing issues

Flexible thinking

Ability to identify and articulate feelings

Self-regulation

How Can You Help?


- Always start with empathy – cognitive and physical disabilities play a large role in a person's ability to effectively navigate the social world around him/her
- Ensure your child has a means to communicate (verbal, gestures, low-tech AAC, high-tech AAC)
- Model, model, model!
- Practice social-emotional learning throughout the day (little problem-solving opportunities exist all around us)
- Create social stories to help your child navigate common social situations (pragmatic to more complicated)
- Older children/teens - practice healthy and appropriate ways to interact with peers (hormones, curiosity, and challenges recognizing when to "stop")
- Hold your children to high expectations! For younger kids, remember the "try again" strategy.

While Sheltered in Place...

- Model and practice appropriate social behavior through play
- Involve siblings and other relatives to help generalize skills
- Utilize "feelings cards" and other visual aids
- Read books about feelings, making friends, sharing, taking turns, etc.
- Role play with puppets, dolls, etc.
- Create a "reward" system to reinforce appropriate behaviors
- Join online social groups (e.g. PDC) or try a virtual play date with classmates
- Practice self-care strategies in compliance with CDC guidelines (masks, washing hands, social distancing)



Continued...

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- Ability Awareness – help "typical" kids better understand how to support a peer with Ds (virtual for now)
 - Social emotional learning online (utilize technology if it is a big motivator for your kiddo!)