

Sunflower Challenge activity plan and ideas for EYFS

This activity plan has been created by Down syndrome UK, registered charity number 1184564

It is available for general use but would ask that if a setting has a member(s) who has/have Down syndrome, or there are close relatives of a young person with Down syndrome, that you seek permission of the Parents/Carers first.

World Down Syndrome Day (WDSD) is observed on March 21st however Down syndrome Awareness Month includes the whole of October. Across the world people run events to raise public awareness, advocating for the rights and inclusion of people with Down syndrome. World Down Syndrome Day is on March 21st, chosen to represent the 3 copies of the 21st chromosome present in individuals with Down syndrome.

Aims:

- To realise that children with Down syndrome are more alike than different.
- To identify similarities and differences in people.
- To have some understanding of what Down syndrome is.

Developmental areas covered within these

- Physical Development; Fine motor skills
- Personal, Social & Emotional
- Understanding the World
- Communication & Language

British Values:

- We treat everybody equally
- We listen to and respect other people's opinions and values
- We know that we are all special
- We try to help other people

Main activity: The Sunflower Challenge

On March 1st plant sunflower seeds in egg carton, (seeds provided in Sunflower Challenge pack). Watch them grow over the next 21 days.

Observations and discussion points during the activity:

- What do you need to grow a sunflower?
- Observing each sunflower, are they growing at the same rate, which sunflower is the tallest, which is the shortest?
- How does a sunflower grow?

On or near March 21st (World Down Syndrome Day) talk to the children about how each sunflower grows and blooms in different ways. Sunflowers, just like children, all grow and develop in different ways. We have different likes and dislikes, we have different facial characteristics, hair colour and texture, eye colour etc. We are all special and unique in our own ways.

Suggested fundraising element – children to take their sunflower home for a suggested donation of £1. Don't forget to share your growing sunflowers with us using the hashtag #DSUKSunflowerChallenge

Other activities you may consider when celebrating World Down Syndrome Day with us and raising awareness.

Activity: Drawing ourselves to explore similarities and differences

What you will need:

- Mirror (optional)
- Paper, A4 or bigger
- Pencils/colouring pencils/crayons/paints

Explain that we will be learning how we all have similarities and differences. We will also be learning about Down syndrome.

[Sesame Street: Same and Different with Elmo and Abby - YouTube](#)

Children draw themselves using a mirror and/or have the children draw their friend. Using the children's pictures, talk about what is the same and what is different.

Ask: Do any of these differences make us better than anyone else? Explain that we are all equal and that our differences make us special and unique.

Activity: Mark Making with a twist

What you will need:

- Paper, large or small
- Pencils/crayons/colouring pencils/paint/chalk
- Socks

You could either do the activity in larger groups using a roll of paper across the floor or on a table or with individual paper.

Explain that children with Down syndrome find some things hard, just like you find some things hard to do. Mark making and writing are more challenging, and it can be hard to hold and grip pencils and crayons. Have the children use their non-writing hand to try and draw a circle or write a letter of their name etc... Children could also try mark making with a sock on their hand.

Talk to the children about how much more effort they had to put into their creations and how they felt as the writing tool was slipping or maybe it took more concentration to make straight lines.

Activity: Makaton sing and sign

Explain children with Down syndrome have a lot to say but can't always communicate easily. When they are young, some children with Down syndrome use actions (signing) alongside words to help them communicate.

Learn and sing Wheels on the Bus using Makaton signs

Use Resource sheet – Wheels on the Bus Makaton sheet

Show [Singing Hands - Wheels on the Bus](#)

Join in with Wheels on the Bus using singing and signing.

Activity: Share a story

Some books we recommend that feature characters with Down syndrome, to share with the children:

- This is Ella by Krista Ewert
- Ava the mermaid by Eleanor Baggailey

Encourage the children to think of similarities and conclude that we are more alike than different.

The Wheels on the Bus



The **wheels** on the **bus** go **round** and **round**,
Round and **round**, **round** and **round**,
The **wheels** on the **bus** go **round** and **round**
All day long.

Verse 2: The **wipers** on the **bus** go **swish, swish, swish ...**

Verse 3: The **doors** on the **bus** go **open** and **shut ...**

*Verse 4: The **children** on the **bus** go **up** and **down ...**

Verse 5: The **babies** on the **bus** go **waah, waah, waah ...**

Verse 6: The **Mummies** on the **bus** go **shh, shh, shh ...**

Verse 7: And then at **night** the **bus** goes to **sleep ... all night long**

Additional verses can include:

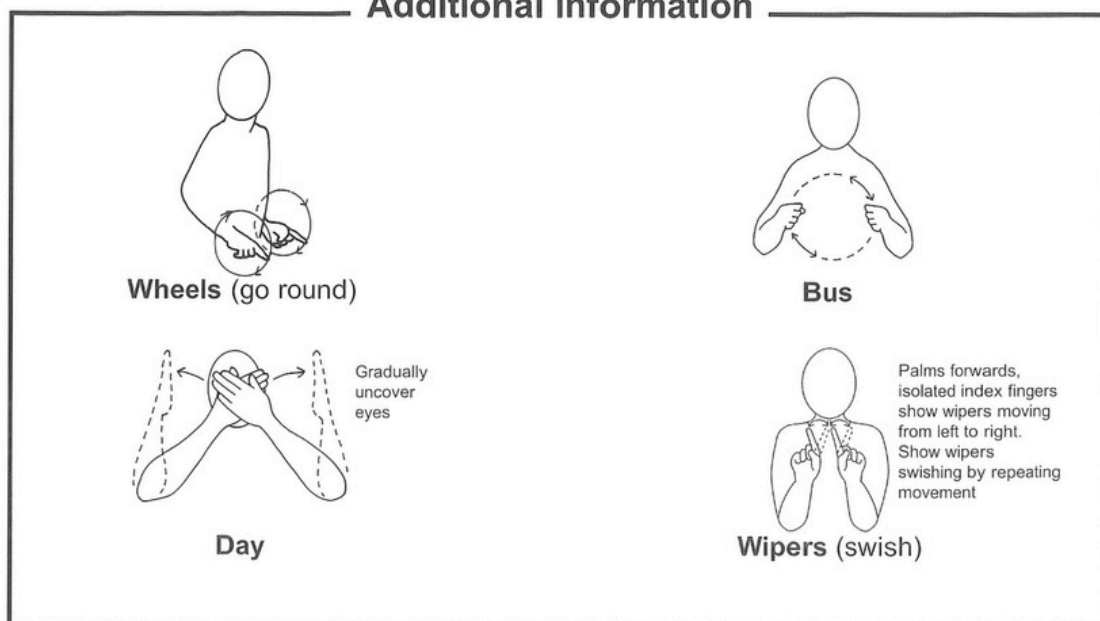
The **Daddies** on the **bus**, they read their **paper ...**

The **Grannies** on the **bus** go **knit, knit, knit ...**

The **Grandads** on the **bus** go **nod, nod, nod ...**

** For verse 4 'Children on the bus' you can bounce up and down or lift your child up and down instead of signing.*

Additional Information



The Wheels on the Bus CONT

Additional Information

For plurals, repeat the sign.

