



Down Syndrome Training & Support Service

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TRAINING NEWSLETTER

February 2024

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

For successful inclusion in a mainstream setting training for all involved is VITAL. We have been delivering early intervention using our five year programme to meet the developmental needs of a child with Down syndrome from age 12 months to 6 years since 2005. The programme is a massive success in that it gives children a head start preparing them for school. As a result more children with Down syndrome are entering mainstream primary and continuing onto mainstream secondary school. The aim is for these children to enter mainstream college and gain meaningful paid employment in the mainstream community. For such a goal to be fully successful it is vital that all schools, colleges and, eventually, work staff receive some level of training in the education, development and inclusion of a person with Down syndrome. Over the last 18 years Wendy Uttley has developed and delivered many different training courses in the specific learning needs of children with Down syndrome. These courses have recently been under review.

OUR COURSES

Every year we schedule a full range of training courses and workshops at our centre:

- Introduction to Down syndrome*
- Teaching basic number skills to children with Down syndrome using the Numicon approach.*
- Let's make it visual - using visual resources to help develop speech, language and communication skills in children with Down syndrome*
- Signing and children with Down syndrome*
- The inclusion of children with Down syndrome - expectations of behaviour*
- Sexuality relationships education course: ME, my body, my friends, my life
- Toileting workshop
- Beyond 10 time and money*
- Reading Language Intervention*
- Sleep workshop
- Transition to secondary school/transition to adulthood

- Down Syndrome and Autistic Spectrum Condition workshop
- Assemblies/group awareness presentations*
- Consultations/observation/assessment

The course 'Introduction to Down syndrome' and our workshops are offered for free, the rest are priced between £15 and £80 depending on length and whether the attendee is a family member or a professional.

LAST ACADEMIC YEAR

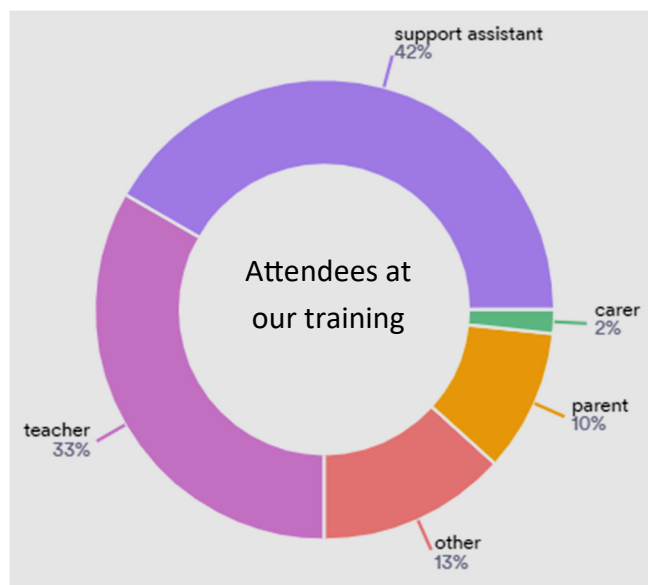
The academic year 2022/23 saw a return to pre covid levels for attendance with the majority of training taking place face to face in either schools or other support groups. The total number of people benefitting from direct training either online or face to face totalled 1687:

- 116 parents
- 960 professionals
- 611 children.

In addition 89 pre recorded training courses were downloaded from our website.

Our most popular course 'Introduction to Down syndrome' was delivered direct 14 times to a total of 638 people and downloaded 30 times.

We continue to offer this training for free 3 times per year at our centre.



EVALUATING OUR TRAINING

Every course we deliver is evaluated using our online feedback form. Last academic year (2022 to 2023)

- *41% of attendees on Introduction to Down syndrome were new to working with a child Down syndrome
- *93% felt their understanding of Down syndrome had increased
- *95% felt more confident in working with a child with Down syndrome
- *93% felt that they could act on the ideas and strategies covered in the training
- *92% felt they could improve their practice
- *92% said they understood inclusion more

COMMENTS INCLUDED

Introduction to Down syndrome

- ◆ *Absolutely brilliant, I wish this had of been available years ago. Today I have a much better understanding and I will remember to apply these practices in the future.*
- ◆ *Definitely feel much more confident and informed on the needs of children with Down syndrome. More training in the specific areas such as literacy and maths etc would be useful next steps for me*
- ◆ *There was so much information, a really useful insight into children with Down syndrome. Really well organised and presented. Would highly recommend*

OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

In January 2024 we employed Melanie Dekker as an additional Early Years Practitioner and Trainer. Mel now works 16 hours per week, term time only, and will shortly be able to deliver our Introduction to Down syndrome course, assessments, observations and consultations.

Laura Hempel, who for the last two years has been delivering the bulk of our Early Development Groups is also in a position to deliver the above services.

From Easter Wendy Uttley will be reducing her hours from full time to 30 hours per week.

Moving forward we will be in a position to better support schools and families around the needs of individual children with Down syndrome.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations can be offered face to face or online, via Zoom, and include discussions on EHCPs, concerns over school placement and behaviour.

OBSERVATIONS

Observations are offered in school. We can come into school and observe for 1 to 2 hours, preferably while the child is doing some literacy and number work, within their usual timetable. It is also good to observe interactions with other pupils and staff, moving round school and general inclusion. This is then written into a detailed report which includes suggested targets.

ASSESSMENTS

Assessments are offered at our centre. A child can be assessed across maths, reading, language, speech and general development. This usually takes one hour. This can be followed up with a detailed report and suggested targets.

INTRODUCTION TO DOWN SYNDROME FOR A SETTING

This training is usually 2 hours long but can be adapted. It can be delivered in house face to face or via Zoom, but preferable face to face.

*****This training is VITAL for all schools, colleges and work placements*****

COST

There is a cost for all of these services. Consultations, observations and assessments are £60 per hour plus £120 for a written report.

In house training is £120 per hour .

All can be booked by contacting our Office.



TRAINING AT OUR CENTRE

It has been decided that the only course we will continue to deliver at our centre is the 'Introduction to Down syndrome' course. This will be scheduled once per term and offered for FREE. It can be booked via our website.

The majority of our other courses (see * on page 2) have been pre-recorded and can be downloaded from our website (<https://www.downsyndromebradford.com/buytrainingvideos>). They will no longer be scheduled as face to face courses. They are, however, available to be delivered in house, or, if demand is sufficient, we will arrange for a course to run at our centre.

MONTHLY FOLLOW UP SESSIONS (new service)

Following any training either attended at our centre, online or downloaded you will be invited to attend our new monthly online meeting. This will take place the last (term time) Friday of every month. It will be one hour long and cover a scheduled topic (30 minutes) followed by a question/answer session. Questions can be submitted beforehand. This online meeting will be free to attend but will need to be booked.

WORKSHOPS AT OUR CENTRE

Our behaviour, toilet, sleep and sexuality relationships education (SRE) workshops will continue to be scheduled to meet demand. The toileting and sleep workshops will be delivered online via Zoom. The behaviour and SRE workshops will be face to face at the centre. This is because these two workshops are very much activity based with lots of discussion; these are most fruitful when everyone is sat together in a room.

Workshops on Down syndrome and autistic spectrum condition and transition to secondary school/college have not been offered this year due to lack of demand. If you are interested in either of these workshops please let us know.

COST

All workshops will be charged per 'team around a child' at £30 per team for the sleep and toileting workshop (workshops run over 3 weeks) and £60 per team for the behaviour (the workshop runs over 6 weeks) and £60 per team for the SRE workshop (the workshop runs over 2 full days). However we do not want cost to exclude anyone and if cost is a deterrent please contact the Office.

ASSEMBLIES

A pre recorded assembly is FREE to download from our website. We are also available to come into school and deliver an assembly on Down syndrome. Such assemblies are about 30 minutes long allowing for questions and answers.



Since September 2023 we have seen a decline in the number of people booking our courses . We decided to send out a survey to families and schools asking about cost and other barriers to attendance.

The results are below.

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING – PARENTS

39 responses – 14 mainstream primary, 8 mainstream secondary, 3 special primary, 6 special secondary, 3 college, 5 other.

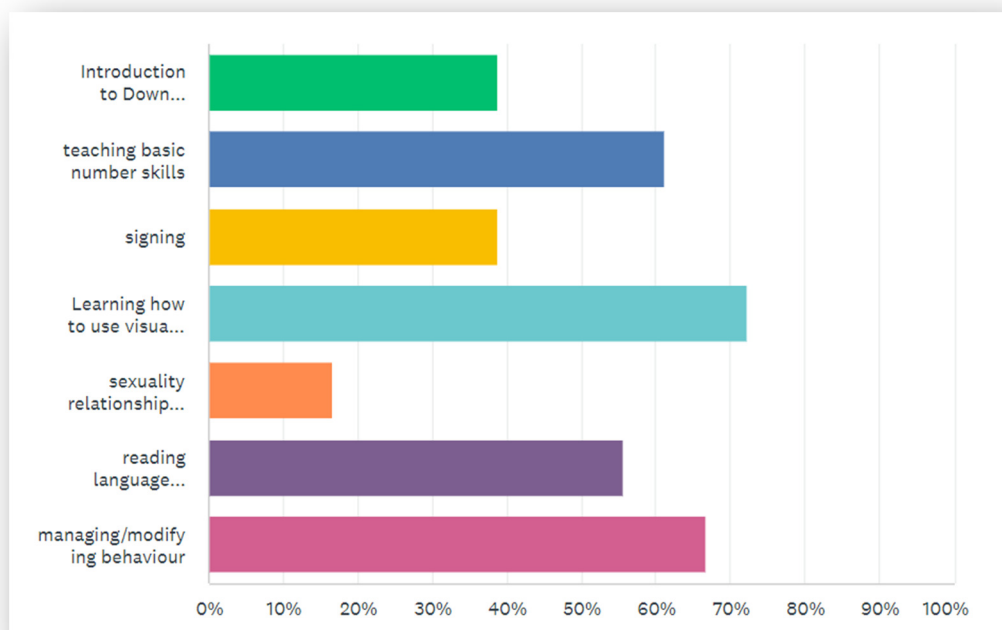
Training in school

76% (28) of the parents said that we had never been into their child’s school to deliver training, consultation or observation. Seven said we had been in to deliver training, three for observation and one for a consultation.

The need for training

The parents were asked if they felt like their child’s school needed training. 76% (28) said yes.

The course most asked for by parents was ‘Using visual resources to teach language and literacy skills’. The course Introduction to Down syndrome, teaching basic number skills, reading language intervention and managing/modifying behaviour were asked for by 50-55% of parents. 36% said training in sexuality relationships education was needed, 33% said signing training was needed. The notable differences between parental responses and school responses is the request for training on using visual resources, with only 35% of schools wanting this and 71% of schools requesting Introduction to Down syndrome.



Barriers to training

76% of parents felt that funding was a barrier to training. Feedback from schools did not reflect this with the release of staff being the biggest challenge for schools.

Other responses included:

‘the system is broken’,

‘regular observation in school would benefit school and family’,

‘I am considering home schooling as school refuse to take on board the specifics needed’,

‘its not a funding issue. Apparently it’s a staffing issue. I would absolutely love them to access some training’

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING – SCHOOLS

18 responses – 14 from mainstream primary school, 1 from mainstream secondary school, 0 from special school, 3 other setting.

In school training

78% (14) of the schools reported that we have never been into their school to deliver training, consultation or observation. Two schools had received training, three had used us for consultation and we had been into one school to do an observation.

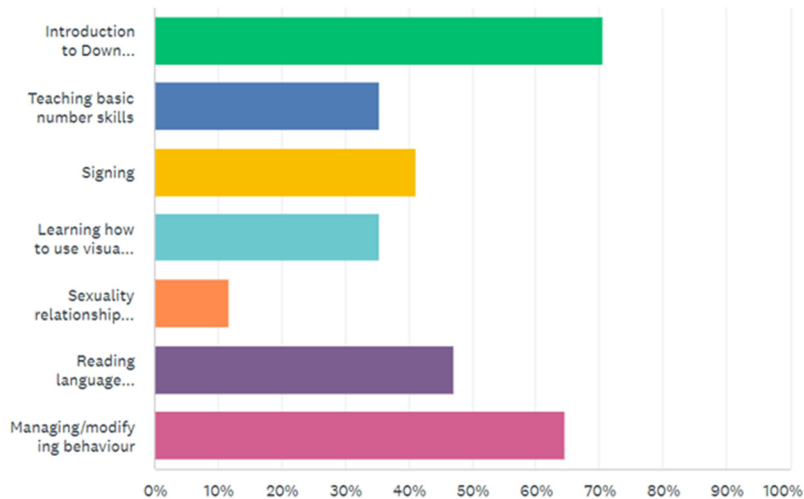
Attending training at our centre

50% (9) of the schools reported that staff had never attended our centre, 6 said staff had been released to attend a training course and 3 said staff had been to our centre to observe/support a child in an early development group.

The need for training

We asked the schools if they felt that they needed training. 75% (13) said 'yes'.

The course schools would most like is 'Introduction to Down syndrome' (71%), training in managing/modifying behaviour (64%), 47% would like training in reading language intervention, 41% would like training in signing, 35% in teaching basic number skills and using visual resources to support language and literacy skills. 11% said training in sexuality relationships education – (however only one response was from a secondary school).



Barriers to training

The biggest barrier was reported to be releasing staff rather than funding. With time constraints and travel also being an issue:

- Releasing staff and providing staff cover 8 (44%)
- Time constraints 4 (22%)
- Distance to the centre/staff who cannot drive 5 (28%)
- Didn't know about the course 2 (11%)
- Funding 5 (28%)

One comment mentions our training videos:

'We have purchased and used your on line training which has been invaluable. It is difficult to release staff for a full session, which including travel time could be a full morning/afternoon/day, when they are the key adult/have the relationship with an individual child. There are also so many other high needs pupils in mainstream schools that covering the staffing is impossible. This is why your training videos have been so helpful as people can either watch them in their own time or we can release staff for a shorter period of time in the school day. Ever shrinking budgets also adds to the difficulty.'

SURVEY ON WORKSHOPS SLEEP, TOILET TRAINING & BEHAVIOUR

In addition we sent out a survey on our sleep, toilet and behaviour workshops asking questions about face to face delivery, online delivery and cost. The results are below:

RESPONSES ON WHETHER PARENTS PREFER ONLINE OR FACE TO FACE WORKSHOPS?

- *I feel I am able to concentrate more, hear better (as online sometimes sound can be distorted) it's easier to start conversation with others face to face.*
- *I feel I'm more engaged taking part in a course face to face but equally happy to do online also as it can be more convenient.*
- *I recently did the toileting course online and although it was extremely helpful I think maybe face to face would bring up more conversations with others*
- *I prefer face to face learning, however considering travel time and commitments it makes it difficult to get to the centre for the timings of the courses*

RESPONSES ON TIMING OF WORKSHOPS

- *9.30/10am start time works best for me as I can get there after the school run and finish time anytime before 2/2.30 to get back for the school run. Often I work on an afternoon too so fits in well if it's only 2hours.*
- *morning, because I can attend while my son is at school*

RESPONSES ON COST OF WORKSHOPS

- *Families often want to do the best they can and if attending a number of courses to help could be costly equally you want to have the best tools to help your child so would pay what it costs so I think a reduced fee would help. Professionals equally what the best for the children in their care but they also get funding (although probably not enough) for such things so should pay.*
- *Maybe a incentive for professionals such as buying so many courses they get a discount*
- *People are more likely to attend if they have paid for it, even if it's a small amount. Consideration can be given to families on low incomes*
- *Everyone likes to think they are getting something for free! Or everyone pays, cost the same irrespective to run*
- *The prices for families are very reasonable and are not a deterrent. It's more fitting the course timings around travel times and family commitments.*

RESPONSES ON REQUESTS FOR OTHER WORKSHOPS

- *Not sure if there are courses for such things but information sessions/support for how to deal with schools, other professionals, what to expect when they start school, how to help schools understand yours and your child's needs and hopes.*
- *Sometimes just having a chat with others and hearing others situations/stories helps.*
- *A workshop for parents who have children with other diagnoses, particularly ASD*
- *A workshop for young adults regarding further education, supported living, activities available*
- *Organization/routines in the home*
- *Form filling, school applications/ EHCPs*