

## USE THIS LANGUAGE WHEN REFERRING TO DOWN SYNDROME AND PEOPLE WHO HAVE DOWN SYNDROME

- People with Down syndrome should always be referred to as people first.
- Instead of "a Down syndrome child," it should be "a child with Down syndrome." Also avoid "Down's child" and describing the condition as "Down's," as in, "He has Down's."
- Down syndrome is a condition or a syndrome, not a disease.
- People "have" Down syndrome, they do not "suffer from" it and are not "afflicted by" it.
- "Typically developing" or "typical" is preferred over "normal."
- "Intellectual disability" or "cognitive disability" has replaced "mental retardation" as the appropriate term
- NDSS strongly condemns the use of the word "retarded" in any derogatory context. Using this word is hurtful and suggests that people with disabilities are not competent.

### Down vs. Down's

- NDSS uses the preferred spelling, Down syndrome, rather than Down's syndrome.
- Down syndrome is named for the English physician John Langdon Down, who characterized the condition, but did not have it. An "apostrophe s" connotes ownership or possession.
- While Down syndrome is listed in many dictionaries with both popular spellings (with or without an apostrophe s), the preferred usage in the United States is Down syndrome. The AP Stylebook recommends using "Down syndrome," as well.

*The mission of the National Down Syndrome Society is to be the leading human rights organization for all individuals with Down syndrome. The National Down Syndrome Society envisions a world in which all people with Down syndrome have the opportunity to enhance their quality of life, realize their life aspirations, and become valued members of welcoming communities.*

**For more information on Down syndrome and NDSS, visit [www.ndss.org](http://www.ndss.org) or call 800-221-4602.**

