Inspirational stories about babies with Down's syndrome for parents and carers.

Down's Syndrome Scotland

helping people realise their potential

A little booklet about babies

For more information or to obtain any of our other publications please visit www.dsscotland.org.uk

This booklet is for the parents, families and friends of new babies with Down's syndrome.

This is not an information booklet which will tell you about Down's syndrome and how it may affect your baby, there are plenty of other books and resources available which do that.

This booklet is about beautiful children and their lives.

We would like to thank Caroline and Andy Bell for coming up with the idea for this booklet.

"There was loads of information about Down's syndrome and all the issues that can be associated with the condition but I didn't want to know all that at first.

What really helped me was seeing pictures of babies and children doing all sorts of activities and beaming at the camera. Those pictures pulled us through the early days and gave us a future we could look forward to."

Pictured are Andy and Caroline with their three lovely children Cameron, Aidan and Megan.

A time to celebrate!

Congratulations on the birth of your son or daughter, a new addition to the family who will bring their own unique personality whilst sharing some of the family traits!

My name is...

Ryan

“Ryan is the most perfect little boy, he has such a warm personality and his smile lights up any room.

He is quite the little daredevil, getting up to mischief like every other one year old.

We are just so proud of him and hope his wee smile can help other parents feel the same about their new bundles of joy”

by Lorraine, Ryan’s Mum

Ryan on his first birthday, having a go on his brand new trike and loving every minute of it.

My name is...

Elliot

“I was 25 when I had Elliot and I didn’t have a clue that he had Down’s syndrome. I felt disbelief at first. You think that it can’t be right, there’s been a mistake and the doctors have got it wrong.

After a couple of days you do believe it, but you are still shocked.

I started to worry all the way into the future, I felt sorry for Elliot and worried that he was going to be picked on at school. I had blinkers on and could only see him as a baby with Down’s syndrome for those first six months. After that I realised that he was just a baby and we had to do normal things like going to Tesco’s!

Every day I’m amazed by Elliot, he is determined to reach that light switch and get the coat off the hook and I think ‘how did he work that out?’.

When he was born a friend said to me “I’m not going to say I’m sorry because I’m not, you’ve got a baby” that was the best thing anyone said.

I wouldn’t swap Elliot for the world.”

by Claire, Elliot’s Mum

My name is...

Eve

“Talking about Eve’s birth and where we are now is so different. I was shocked and grief stricken and I don’t feel guilty in saying that when Eve was born, in my mind, this was not the daughter I’d been expecting.

That daughter was going to be tall and athletic and clever like her mother and father. Before she was born all I was wondering about was what colour hair she had and would she have brown or blue eyes.

Being Eve’s mum is a true privilege. In those first weeks I worried about her limitations and how I was going to teach her to live in this world. Eve has enriched our lives and has taught me more about socialising and interacting with other people than I could ever teach her.

So, my daughter is not tall or athletic and I don’t expect her to go to Oxford. Her name is Eve and she is gorgeous.

When she wakes up and smiles she is so open to the world and its beauty.”

by Lesley, Eve’s Mum

My name is...

Cameron

“Cameron was a beautiful baby boy and perfect in every way. Shortly after he was born the midwife suggested that he might have Down’s syndrome, our world was momentarily turned upside down.

We knew nothing about the condition, we were frightened and felt very alone. We weren’t sure what the future would hold but we did know that we adored Cameron and would be there for him every step of the way.

There isn’t a day goes by where Cameron doesn’t fail to amaze us. He has a great sense of humour and brings joy to everyone he meets. He will rush for nobody and has taught us how to slow down and enjoy every moment.”

Cameron enjoying his cycling

Our eyes have been opened to a whole new world in which we sometimes encounter challenges but those challenges bring great rewards. We are so proud of Cameron and all that he has achieved.

He is 9 now and attends a local primary school with his sister where he fully participates in all aspects of school life. He enjoys going to cubs and swimming every week where he has made lots of good friends. He loves basketball, football, reading, bowling with his grandpa and pancakes!!

We have been blessed with 3 amazing kids. We realise life may not always be easy for us and that Cameron might need more support from us than his brother and sister, but we wouldn't change him for the world, we just want to change the world for him.

by Andy & Caroline, Cameron's parents

My name is...

Myles

“As we had no indication throughout my pregnancy that Myles had Down’s syndrome, we did spend the very early part of his life readjusting to the unexpected news. At the same time we felt relieved that he didn’t have a more challenging condition.

Our attitude from the outset was to treat Myles exactly the same way as we did his big sister.

We knew that his development would be slower but we feel positive about his future and want to be part of the generation of people who change people’s perception of Down’s syndrome.

We said when we had Myles that this was going to change all of our lives forever - and it has in the most positive way.”

by Paula and Ian, Myles’ parents

“Me and my big sister Bella. Bella says that I’m the best brother in the world but I’m not sure she’ll be saying that in a few months’ time when she really has to start sharing her toys with me!”

“Just a picture of innocence but he has that cheeky smile and we can already tell that Myles is going to be a character. He is a little bundle of fun and we couldn’t have wished for a happier, content, special little boy.”

My name is...

Michael

"I wanted people to see these photos of Michael – I think they're great, kids being kids and just having fun!"

by Cindy, Michael's Mum

"In this picture he's playing a steel drum and loving making a noise. What wee boy doesn't enjoy banging a drum? The steel drum was a present given to his dad and came all the way from Grenada. I'm not sure whether Michael or his dad can play it better, but I know who has more fun trying."

"This one is Michael dressed as a cowboy for Halloween. He was going trick or treating with his older sisters and needed a costume. He was too small for a mask so we found this little outfit which really suited him. His bag of treats at the end of the night was heavier than him!"

"Michael makes us laugh by wearing his sunglasses on holiday. He wanted to be like the rest of us so we bought these small sunglasses but he won't keep them on. As soon as he gets us giggling he takes them off."

Beautiful babies & charming children...

Poppy, on her 1st birthday with a smile that lights up the room!

Ruaridh, having a ball in the ball pool!

Jack, having a great time on the swings

Ryan, loving the beach on holiday in Majorca

Jennifer,
peek-a-boo!

Charlie-May,
saddle up!

Aaryan,
a little prince!

Cameron,
a proper
little lad!

My name is...

Mikyla

"Mikyla was born on Christmas eve – our little star. She is a real handful!

The picture was taken on holiday in Alcudia in July, Mikyla had the best time and made more friends than us!"

My name is...

Fraser

Fraser, just getting on with his life.

Calendar photos

A selection of photos from one of our previous calendars.

Kaylee – a little fairy

Sean a little heartbreaker

Zara counting her easter eggs

Leithen – Santa's Little Helper

Photos © Alexa Taylor-Watts

My name is...

Grace

“Before we had Grace we knew we had a 1/12th chance of having a child with Down’s syndrome. It was not something we dwelled on we just looked forward to the birth of our baby.

It still came as a surprise to be told that Grace had Down’s syndrome and it obviously brought some uncertainty into a period of joy as we really did not know anything about Down’s syndrome and what this meant for us. However nothing distracted us from the most important thing, the joy of looking after our new baby girl.

I live life one day at a time and I think this helped me as I had never planned my baby’s life before she was born and I don’t worry about issues that I have not come across yet. Obviously more time and patience is required but the rewards are so much greater and every little thing brings great joy. Grace is a determined little girl and surprises us in every way. Her love of life brings so much out of everyone.

Life for us has been full of so many positive experiences and I was surprised by how much support there was for Grace in all aspects of her life. To date we have had a great journey and met so many great people along the way.

One of the days that gave me great satisfaction was returning to see the nurse who told me some months earlier that I had a one in 12 chance of having a child with Down’s syndrome and explaining my options. When returning I had Grace with me and could explain to her that I would not change things for the world. Grace is now almost 5 and she has a little brother Max. They get on so well together. Grace is at mainstream nursery. She loves it and has made lots of friends. Grace is a very sociable little girl. Grace will move to mainstream primary after the summer and we look forward to the next chapter in her life.”

by Wendy, Grace’s Mum

My name is...

Oliver

“When Oliver was born, I did not notice anything different about him. He was a normal delivery but 2lbs lighter than his brother had been. After the midwife had weighed him she immediately pointed out some differences about his appearance and gently introduced her diagnosis of Down’s syndrome.

We were shocked. For a few brief moments the earth stood still. I wondered if she could be wrong. I did not have any blood tests for Down’s syndrome in my pregnancy as I did not want to worry myself over what might or might not be. However, I did not think for a minute that this baby would have been any different from his older brother.

When Anthony went home, I thought I would sleep, I guess at that point the diagnosis had not sunk in. It soon did. I could not sleep and sat staring at this perfect little baby in his cot, wondering what life would be like for us now. I became very tearful and felt cheated that I had a baby born with a disability.

I wondered if I was being punished.

“We wouldn’t change a thing about Oliver. He is a fantastic brother to Aidan and is funny, adventurous, determined and loving.”

The next morning a nurse came round to do a hearing screen test. Of course Oliver failed it and at that point the Down’s syndrome diagnosis became insignificant as I immediately started to worry myself sick that he was deaf as well!

My mum was my first visitor and it took everything within me not to burst into tears as I told her the news. I did not want her to think that I was disappointed in my baby, even though inside I was trying to push aside those feelings.

Gradually as the days went on I began to feel stronger and as I held Oliver I began to feel better about things. I realised that all the medical terms didn’t matter, Oliver was our baby and he was as precious as any other child in the world.

Over the weeks the negativity melted away as I learned about Down’s syndrome. We had lots of issues with Oliver in his first year but everyone loved him. Our families treated him like the other little ones in the family and this was a great support to us.

Three years on and we wouldn’t change a thing about Oliver. He is a fantastic brother to Aidan and is funny, adventurous, determined and loving. He has opened doors to a world we knew nothing about. The best thing of all is watching him grow in slow motion.

Our children are very special to us. We are lucky to be parents of two unique little boys.”

by Claire and Anthony,
Oliver’s Mum and Dad

And before you know it they're off to school!

This is Cameron on his first day of school at Birkhill Primary School. A very proud day for his mum and dad and a milestone we could not envisage when he was born. A few tears were shed at the thought of our wee boy going to school.

Mum, Sarah

Here's a photo of my wee girl Jenna on her first day at school. We are so proud of her and in typical fashion Jenna has adapted to her new routine at school without so much as a tear!

Dad, David

Aaron started at Langlands Primary School in Forfar in Angus and is loving every minute of it. He loves playing on the interactive white boards at school.

Mum, Lynne

We have a Family Support Service Officer covering your local area, please do get in touch to see how we can support you.

Down's Syndrome Scotland is a registered charity in Scotland and we rely on donations to carry out the vital work we do in supporting families.

If you are interested in supporting us please visit **www.dsscotland.org.uk** or give us a call today.

T: 0131 442 8840
E: info@dsscotland.org.uk
W: www.dsscotland.org.uk
facebook.com/dsscotland
twitter.com/DSScotland

Down's Syndrome Scotland,
Riverside House, 502 Gorgie Road,
Edinburgh, EH11 3AF

A Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee, Registered in Scotland No. 356717. Scottish Charity No. SC011012.

Down's Syndrome Scotland