



## **Downright Special Update – October 2023**

Welcome to our latest half-termly update! In this issue you'll find updates and info on:

- Speech Sounds Resources
- Downright Special Social Events
- Coffee & Chat Sessions
- Training
- Downright Special Friday Groups
- Health including Annual Health Checks
- Down Syndrome with Complex Needs
- Fundraising

### **New!!!! Speech Sounds Resources**

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Goodbye Jolly Phonics, Hello to our New Speech Sounds Cards!

Over the summer we've been busy updating the resources we use to teach your little ones different speech sounds, moving away from the old (and sometimes confusing) Jolly Phonics cards to a new set of speech sounds cards, designed and produced by The Downright Special Network, based on evidence-based research. Huge thanks to Bob Bloomer for doing all the design work free of charge for us. We couldn't have done it without you!

We will be gradually handing these out on Fridays to parents and Teaching Assistants and you will start to see them in our lessons. Children on our outreach caseload who are working on speech sounds will also be given them at the next visit to their setting.

These cards are intended to support children with Down syndrome to listen to speech sounds, develop awareness of the different sounds, and to be able to make the different sounds. There are 40 cards in the set, and each one represents a different speech sound within the English language.

Children with Down syndrome find it easier to learn and remember new information when they can see it, rather than just learning by listening. These picture cards work with your child's visual learning strengths and provide a visual prompt for each sound.

The cards can be introduced when your child is around six months old and are suitable to continue using alongside any other resources that your child uses throughout nursery and school.

Research shows that frequent/regular practice of speech sounds is vital for helping children with Down syndrome develop clearer speech, so we recommend a 'little and often' approach, ideally on a daily basis.

## Downright Special Social Events

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Since September we have enjoyed a soft play party at Monkey Bizness and a Youth Club Pizza-Making Party at Ask Italian. Coming up this weekend on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October we have our Halloween Dance Parties at Swanland Village Hall with Joanna from The Little Yorkshire Dance Academy so look out for some spooky pics on our Facebook and Instagram pages!

We've continued to send out social stories before events and we've been using the events checklist created from the work of our parents' complex needs group but please do give us a call if you'd like to chat about other adjustments that might be helpful for your child or young person.

### Events Round-Up

#### **Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Christmas Crafts for all ages.**

10am-12pm Darby & Joan Hall, Cottingham

Make decorations for our Christmas Tree that will be displayed at Beverley Minster's Christmas Tree festival in December and enjoy some festive treats, tea & coffee afterwards. Brothers and sisters welcome!

Book here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial/t-xmryvye>

#### **Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Party**

12pm-3pm, Lazaat's, Cottingham.

The event of the year!! Suitable for all ages. Brothers and sisters are welcome.

Entertainer, crafts, karaoke, pamper zone, quiet room with sensory toys, buffet for the children/young people and of course Santa!

**Tickets are going quickly so don't delay booking your places!**

Book here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial/t-ojmjmmz>

## Coffee & Chat

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Sorry folks - we know it is only October but it is time to get another Christmas date in the diary and we do need your help with this one!

    DOWNRIGHT SPECIAL CHAT AND WRAP    

Our November parents / carers coffee morning will be a 'Chat and Wrap' morning of festive fun on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November at Bodmin Road Church, from 9.30am**. We have the room booked for a couple of hours but stay as long as you can.

With the Downright Special Christmas Party looming (10th Dec), there will be a LOT of presents to wrap! So, let's chat and wrap at the same time. Mince pies, tea and festive music provided.

Just bring yourself and if you can cope with it, your Xmas jumper!

No need to book but it would be helpful if you can let us know if you are coming so we can get enough mince pies. All welcome!

Babies and under 5s not at school or nursery are also welcome to come along. Just let us know in advance so we can set up a play area with some toys!

Future coffee and chat dates: 22nd Feb 2024, 23rd May 2024.

## Downright Special Training

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Our Autumn term training programme is now available to book. Although many of these courses are aimed at school staff, parents are very welcome to attend these too.

All courses and information sessions can be booked here: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/downrightspecial)

Downright Special Education Training	
Thu 16 Nov 2023, 3:45PM - 5:15PM	Teaching Reading to pupils with Down syndrome: Phonics and Sight Vocabulary - Teams online course
Wed 29 Nov 2023, 3:45PM - 5:15PM	Teaching Reading to pupils with Down syndrome: Comprehension Skills – Teams online course

We were also delighted to be invited to deliver training on 27<sup>th</sup> October to The Consortium Trust group of schools at their Annual CPD day. Nicola will be delivering workshops on Working Memory and Reading.

## Downright Special Fridays

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We have had some lovely feedback on the new format for Friday mornings which seem to be working well but do let us know if you have any comments/suggestions on how you think it is working for you and your little one. We are always open to listening to your feedback.

**Dates for next term (morning groups):**

3<sup>rd</sup> November (No sessions due to half-term)  
10th, 17th, 24th, November  
1st, 8th, 15th December

*Our team put a lot of time and effort into preparing resources, so please email us on [office@downrightspecial.co.uk](mailto:office@downrightspecial.co.uk) as soon as you can, or give one of us a call/text if you are unable to attend a session. We do ask that you do try your best to attend every session please. Many of the*

*activities within lessons are repeated and built on from one session to the next, so the children will make more progress and probably enjoy the sessions more if they regularly attend.*

## Health

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### Down Syndrome Care Pathway

This term Sam has been planning priorities and making connections for what needs updating or including in the 2024 version of The Down Syndrome Care Pathway. Priority areas for this update are likely to be:

- Health Visiting
- Local Authority Services. Specifically
  - Accessing a social care assessment of need or carer's assessment
  - SaPTS and iPass (services for children with physical difficulties, visual impairments or hearing impairments)
- The Eye Hospital

If anyone would like to share their experiences of any of these services please get in touch by emailing [sam@downrightspecial.co.uk](mailto:sam@downrightspecial.co.uk) or chatting to her on a Friday.

### Support to Families

We are delighted to have quite a few new babies join the Downright Special family this year and Sam has been giving them copies of our Down Syndrome 0-18 months directory to help them on their journey. If you haven't yet had yours then do let us know.

Sam has also been able to give some individual advice to parents about upcoming medical procedures, behaviours and neurodiversity and has been happy to be helped in this role by many parents contributing information from their own experiences.

We have been updating our Paediatric first aid training and we have made some changes to the way we work to ensure that we are more prepared for emergency situations.

### Annual Health Check for Teenagers and Adults

Did you know that from the age of 14 everyone with Down Syndrome should be able to access an Annual Health Check with their GP? You will find further information on this in the local Care Pathway. In addition, the Down's Syndrome Association have just updated their Annual Health Check Checklist for GPs which includes information on the routine blood test that should be done. <https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/about-downs-syndrome/health-and-wellbeing/#annualhealthchecks>

## Down Syndrome and Complex Needs

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Sam and Katie attended the DSUK conference in October with Sam presenting the work we did for our complex needs project. The next steps on the complex needs project are to create a tracker to keep us all up to date on where we are with making the positive changes the parents group identified as being needed.

At the conference there was a strong theme of strengthening the whole family in order to support the child with Down syndrome, for example by having fun and making connections with other families to develop resilience and a network of support. This is important for all our families, and we'll be thinking of ways to bring this inspiration to our group.

### **Complex Needs Resources**

The Down's Syndrome Association has a section on their website dedicated to complex needs with lots of great resources and information on topics such as Autism, ADHD, mental health, parent carer support and assessment & diagnosis.

<https://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/about-downs-syndrome/lifes-journey/downs-syndrome-with-complex-needs/>

## **Lending Library**

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We have a huge range of books and resources that you can borrow from us.

Our entire catalogue can be viewed online. You can browse for books and resources and then request/reserve the ones you'd like to borrow. Books can be borrowed for up to four weeks.

Email [louise@downrightspecial.co.uk](mailto:louise@downrightspecial.co.uk) to request library login details or to request a pdf version of the catalogue.

## **Easy ways to support Downright Special**

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### **Sign up to Easy Fundraising**

**Easy Fundraising** is an online shopping directory which features major online stores, including eBay and Amazon. Visit [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) whenever you shop online and we'll receive a free donation of up to 15% from every purchase you make and it won't cost you a thing! We've had a few new people sign up to this recently and we are so grateful for the support!

### **Amazon Wish list**

You could purchase items from our **Amazon Wishlist**. This list is regularly updated with items we need such as stationary, specialist books, resources for Fridays or items for events such as the Christmas party [https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1PGPTF1B55IEW?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1PGPTF1B55IEW?ref=wl_share)

### **Movement for Good Awards**

**Please nominate Downright Special for The Movement for Good awards for a donation of £1000.** To nominate Downright Special please complete the short nomination form below:

[https://movementforgood.com/?utm\\_source=Email-giving&utm\\_campaign=Draw2-reminder&cmp=1&utm\\_medium=HTMLEmail#nominateACharity](https://movementforgood.com/?utm_source=Email-giving&utm_campaign=Draw2-reminder&cmp=1&utm_medium=HTMLEmail#nominateACharity)

Our Charity Number is: 1175863

Charity Type: Disability

Winners are drawn in June, September and December. You can only vote once this year.

## Suggestions and Ideas

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If you wish to chat about anything in this update, have suggestions or ideas for events, training or support you would like, or you'd like to pass on any tips, please do get in touch.

Have a lovely half-term break and see you in November!