

# Support literacy and numeracy using recommended approaches

A suggestion for implementing the strategy 'Key areas to support' from the Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

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## **Includes:**

- Use recommended reading activities
- Adopt practical hands-on approaches
- Build phonics skills
- Build auditory memory
- Take a multi-sensory to teaching numeracy
- Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Down syndrome and learning](#)

Strategy: [Key areas to support](#)

Suggestion: [Support literacy and numeracy using recommended approaches](#)

Date

14 June 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/down-syndrome-and-learning/support-literacy-and-numeracy-using-recommended-approaches](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/down-syndrome-and-learning/support-literacy-and-numeracy-using-recommended-approaches)

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## Use recommended reading activities

Examples of recommended activities to support reading for students with Down syndrome.

- ✓ Make short phrases of 2–3 words using previously-learned words. Select words that will have high interest for the student.
- ✓ Create sentence strips or Velcro-backed cards. Students can copy a sentence structure to make their own sentences in response to an image.
- ✓ Create books with students based on the sight words and sentences they are learning. Give students frequent opportunities to read them.
- ✓ Play games using sight words; practise in relevant settings.
- ✓ Emphasise and provide practice reading connecting words – for example, “and”, “or” and “but”.
- ✓ Use repetitive sentence patterns to help match words to pictures, sequence, predict and expand on their sight words – for example, “I like ...”.

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## Adopt practical hands-on approaches

Strategies and practical ideas to support beginning readers with Down syndrome.



Video hosted on Youtube [http://youtu.be/oW\\_sExZjGEs](http://youtu.be/oW_sExZjGEs)

No captions or transcript

**Source:**

[DSRFCANADA \(Canada\)](#)

[http://youtu.be/oW\\_sExZjGEs](http://youtu.be/oW_sExZjGEs)

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## Build phonics skills

Activities to support the development of phonics skills and reading fluency.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/4xabdeH34ow>

No captions or transcript

Source:

[DSRFCANADA \(Canada\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCQ9LYhISvhZjqBnokVNAPw>

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## Build auditory memory

Reading strategies for building auditory memory and sound discrimination for students with Down syndrome.



Video hosted on Youtube <http://youtu.be/unKKz2Fe5hc>

No captions or transcript

Source:

[DSRFCANADA \(Canada\)](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCQ9LYhISvhZjqBnokVNAPw>

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# Take a multi-sensory to teaching numeracy

Allow students to develop concepts using all their senses. Connect activities to real life whenever possible.

- ✓ Use concrete materials and hands-on activities.
- ✓ Maximise the use of visuals and support learning with visual materials, cues and supports where possible.
- ✓ Break tasks into small component steps and provide lots of practice and reinforcement.
- ✓ Find extra activities to practise and consolidate skills in a range of contexts.
- ✓ Revisit and consolidate previously-learned skills before introducing new material that builds on them.
- ✓ Relate mathematics to daily living skills wherever possible.
- ✓ Use simple language – explicitly teach the language of mathematics alongside the concepts.
- ✓ Use app games for skills practice – they increase motivation and allow intensive repetition of skills.

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## Useful resources



## Primary education support pack

Ten units providing teaching strategies for different curriculum areas, learning skills and social skills.

Publisher: Down's Syndrome Association

[Visit website](#)



## Resource hub

Information guides and resources from Down Syndrome Australia that can help to support parents, learners and educators.

Publisher: Down Syndrome Australia

[Visit website](#)



## Reading (Downs Syndrome Family Network)

A teacher-oriented PDF packed with phonics tips (onsets/rimes, letter-sound matching), sight words, visual sorting, and using software and sign to support reading development.

Publisher: Down Syndrome Family Network

[Visit website](#)



## Number skills development

A playful, visual guide full of activities and structured steps to build early number concepts. Great for pre-school to early school numeracy. Offers games, songs, visual supports, and clear links to key skills.

Publisher: Downs Syndrome Association of Central California

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