

The Golf Foundation's Guide to Coaching Young People with Down Syndrome (DS).

What is Down Syndrome?

Down Syndrome (DS) is when someone is born with an extra chromosome. There are 3 different types of DS which are **Trisomy 21** (the most common type), **Translocation** and **Mosaicism**.

Young people with DS have fantastic character and should be acknowledged as a person first and foremost e.g. John is 17 and has DS. They will have different interests and ways in which they respond and learn best.

Below are some top tips and information to help you deliver an engaging inclusive session to help teach young people with DS how to play golf.

Considerations for Coaching Young people with DS:





First time golf coaching sessions with Young People with DS:

- 1** Make sure you have their attention first before giving any instructions (say their name and ensure you have face to face good eye contact)
- 2** Create a visual session, use props, flash cards and colour
- 3** Create a clear and concise structure for the session
- 4** Create consistency, expectations and boundaries
- 5** Teach rules and what they can do clearly
- 6** It is important to demonstrate each golf skill and teaching it in the most accessible way for the participant. For example use differential prompts, teach through verbal prompt, then visual prompt to emphasise and then modelling coach prompt and them executing the skill

■ Working Memory

- Auditory memory often weaker than visual memory
- Young people with DS may have difficulties with retaining information
- You will need to repeat, rehearse and revisit skills to help them understand and learn skill
- As you would coach any golfer you will need to break information down into small steps and use visual aids

■ Visual Memory

- This is a strength for people with DS and should be used to help aid their learning
- Visual memory skills can be better than typically developing children
- People with DS have a good ability to learn and understand sign language. However, sometimes signs are dropped as speech is better understood when becoming older
- Good ability to learn from copying, you as the coach demonstrating will be a strong visual learning aide for them
- Visual memory should be coupled with written word, pictures, diagrams, photographs etc.
- Use visual support to differentiate access to everything
- 100% of people with DS have reduced visual acuity, meaning their world lacks fine details and sharp contrast

■ Language Skills

- Young people with DS are not as strong with expressive skills so a great way to engage them with learning is to task them to **'Show me not tell me'** and use visual prompts to help with this
- People with DS can sometimes find it difficult to find the correct words when forming sentences which can lead to dysfluency when talking
- When asking a question, allow between 10-15 seconds for the young person to process and respond
- Adjust your own language, to the point, short, explicit and concise directives. Use positive instructions, don't offer choice if there isn't one and avoid using negatives