



Genes Day a fun and exciting way to learn all about genetics and Down syndrome! We want to thank you for allowing your school to participate in this exciting event. As an extra learning experience for your students, we would like to make some suggestions to add fun to your day and teach your students more about Down syndrome (DS).

Activity 1. **RACE:** Designate a start and finish line. Students get into a squatting position and race to the finish line. Explain that this demonstrates how children with DS often have trouble running because of their low muscle tone. Further explain that even though someone with DS may have trouble running, they still like to run and play like everyone else.

Activity 2. **WRITING:** Ask your students to bring a pair of mittens or large gloves to school with them on Genes Day. During class, allow them to put on the gloves and write a sentence (or name depending on age of group). (If gloves are not available ask them to write with the opposite hand. Explain that this demonstrates how children with DS often have trouble with writing skills because of the fine motor skill delays they experience.

Activity 3. **SPEECH:** Ask your students to stick their tongue out. While their tongue is still out, ask them to say to their friend sitting next to them, "I am having a lot of fun during Genes Day". Explain that this demonstrates how children with DS often have trouble with their speech due to low muscle tone and language delays. Further explain that although someone may have trouble with speaking, they still have a lot to say and their speech difficulties do not mean they do not understand what someone is saying to them

Activity 4. **LEARNING:** Give your students a math worksheet from the grade ahead of them. Do not give any instruction on the assignment and tell them they have one minute to complete the assignment. During this time teachers may hear students complain that the assignment is too difficult or that the students are frustrated. When the minute is up, congratulate the students for trying their best. Then, explain that just because the students could not finish the assignment does not mean that they were not smart enough; it just meant that they were not ready for that kind of learning. Explain that children with DS sometimes take longer learning something, but in time, they will learn it.

Final Activity: Once all activities are complete explain to the students that even though they had trouble accomplishing these tasks it did not mean they were not the same individuals. They still could feel happy, sad, frustrated, and mad. Conclude that even though students with Down syndrome have difficulties in these areas they still feel and think the same way that the other students feel and think. Tell students the importance of being a friend to children with Down syndrome.