

# FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Information Guide



## **Preface**

This Information Guide is written to help members understand more about DSA's Family Support Services. The information contained in this guide does not create any contractual rights or obligations for staff or families. This guide is to be used as a guide and is not inclusive of all policies and practices. Changes to specific policies and/or procedures will be distributed to members in writing. Any questions and/or concerns should be directed to the Executive (Family Support Services).

## **DSA Vision**

To be the Centre of Excellence for individuals with Down syndrome, their families, and the community.

## **DSA Mission**

- Develop individuals with Down syndrome through lifelong learning, and social integration.
- Support families through specialist services, information, and education.
- Advocate for equal opportunities, quality of life, and their contribution to society.

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## **History of Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)**

Early in 1995, a group of parents of children with Down syndrome recognized that a great need existed in Singapore to support and educate families, professionals, and the public about Down syndrome. Out of a meeting held on 1 October 1995, the Down Syndrome Support Group was formed. In May 1996, the group organised and hosted, with great success, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia Pacific Conference on Down syndrome. The enthusiasm generated among parents, professionals, and community members spurred the formal registration of the group as, Down Syndrome Association (Singapore) in 1996. The Association was awarded official recognition by the National Council of Social Services on 4 July 1997.

DSA is primarily a self-funding, non-profit social service agency that works closely with healthcare and educational professionals, as well as voluntary welfare organisations.

## Introduction

DSA Family Support Services provide legal, medical and advocacy support as well as offer referrals to other services that clients may need, parent mentoring, relevant information, and other resources. It also organizes talks and trainings on a regular basis to educate caregivers in their journeys of caring for their children with special needs.

## Admission

Family Support Services provide support to all DSA members and their families including siblings of children with Down syndrome. Members will be supported through various programs and key services.

Members can get access to Family Support Services through the following channels:

1. Email enquiry from DSA's Website
2. Direct message through social media platforms
3. Phone call
4. Inter-department referral
5. Hospital referral
6. Community partners referral

### Member's Benefit and External Referral of Service

Members are encouraged to keep their membership valid to enjoy our programmes and services that are entitled for member's benefits.

When requested by members for external referral of services to community partners, assistance would be provided with proper guidance and required information.

## **Fees and Payment Methods**

Family Support Services provide service to DSA members at no additional charges.

There are 3 methods for fees payment:

1. Cheque
2. PayNow
3. Online Bank Transfers

DSA bank account details and fee payment instructions would be provided upon request.

### Financial Assistance

If members require any financial assistance, please contact the Family Support Services executive for more information.

## Key Services

### Parent Mentoring Services

Parent mentors share their personal experiences about their caregiving journey with their child with Down syndrome.

Parent mentors are trained to connect and share experiences regularly with new parents to provide the guidance and support new parents need, in terms of Emotional Support, Social Support and Informational Support.

Parent mentor will:

1. Have an honest and open conversations e.g., how they learn to cope and accept help as a new parent, the helpful/useful services for their child, their family and themselves.
2. Share ideas on areas that they would have done differently.
3. Co-create guidelines and useful tips to support other parents of children with Down syndrome.

### Emotional Support

Why is emotional support important?

Emotional Support involves showing empathy, compassion, and genuine concern for others. It is one of the basic needs of a person.

Studies have proved that individuals with healthy relationships and friendships have greater emotional well-being.

### Social Support

What is social support?

Social support refers to the psychological and material resources provided by a social network to help individuals cope with stress. It might involve helping a person with various daily tasks when they are ill or offering financial assistance when they are in need. In other situations, it could involve giving advice to a friend when they are facing a difficult situation or simply involves providing care, empathy, and concern for loved ones in need.



## Informational Support

Why is informational support important?

It involves providing guidance, advice, information, and mentoring. Such support can be important when making decisions or major changes in one's life.

By having this form of support, people may feel less anxious and stressed about the problems they are trying to solve thanks to the advice of a trusted friend, mentor, or loved one.

## Care Planning Services

DSA Care Planning Services is a service provided by Family Support Services to our caregivers in supporting their journey of raising their child with special needs.

A plan that describes in an easy, accessible way the needs of the person, their views, preferences and choices, the resources available, and actions by members of the care team, (including the service user and caregiver) to meet those needs. It should be put together and agreed with the person through the process of care planning and review.

A Care Plan is:

1. The written record of a plan of action negotiated with the person to meet their health, social needs, and their goals for the year.
2. Something which sets out who is doing what, when and why (outlines aims, actions and responsibilities).
3. A tool to support the safety of the services user and others.
4. A plan which people feel they own, based on a thorough assessment of need.
5. Produced in partnership with all those concerned.
6. Coordinated by the most appropriate person, such as a Care Plan Officer.
7. Produced in the most appropriate forum and shared effectively with those who are part of it.

## Deputyship Application Services via DSA

A deputy is a court-appointed individual who is granted specific powers by the Court to make decisions for the benefit and welfare of client (P), as P would if P still has the mental capacity.

DSA Deputyship Services is a collaborative effort with NUS Pro Bono Office, law students, under the guidance of their professor and MSF doctors to provide pro-bono legal services to our members in their applications for deputyship.

### Criteria:

1. Person with Down syndrome must be a DSA member and 21 years of age.
2. Parent applying for the deputyship must be a DSA member too.
3. Mean testing of Monthly Gross Household Income.

### Frequent Q &A:

1. Can I continue to manage the matters for my child with special needs after he is 21 years old?

Your child is considered an adult when he/she turns 21 years old. If he is assessed to lack mental capacity to manage his/her own matters, you will need to apply to Court to grant you authority to help him manage his personal welfare and property & affairs matters as his/ her deputy.

2. Who can apply to Court to be appointed as my child's deputy?

Anyone above the age of 21 can apply to Court to be appointed as your child's deputy as long as they are able to make decisions in the best interest of your child. For children from SPED Schools, parents are usually the parties who will make the application.

3. Do we need to make all decisions together at all times if we are appointed as our child's deputies?

It depends on the manner of appointment and authority granted by the Court where you may need to make all decisions together (Jointly) or you can make the decision either together or separately (Jointly and Severally).

### DSA Medical Passport

The DSA Medical Passport, launched on 20 October 2018, was formulated with the help of Dr Bhavani, our medical advisor, for all our DSA members to organise their medical records for their child with Special Needs.

It will help the doctors and healthcare staff to better access the health status and needs of the child during consultation.

Available at DSA Bishan centre at:  
Only \$7 each (member), \$20 each (Non-member)

All proceeds from the sale of the medical passport will go towards the provision of quality programs for persons with Down syndrome.

### Knowledge-/ skills-based talks and workshops

At DSA, workshops are regularly conducted for our members (mainly parents and caregivers), through our Family Support Services, to equip them with new skills and knowledge to better care for their child with Down syndrome. Our workshops are beneficial to members as they are both educational and practical to address their area of concerns, when caring for persons with Down syndrome and for self-care.

Key workshop topics related to:

1. Healthcare and well-being
2. Personal skills development / growth
3. Legal and financial education
4. Early intervention related workshops
5. Caregiver engagement activities and programs

## Other Activities & Events

### DSA Ukulele Caregiver Group

The Ukulele group was formed in April 2019 with an enrolment of seven caregivers. To-date, we have 10 caregivers who come on a weekly basis to practice ukulele with instructor, Mr Andrew Koh.

We look forward in developing the group and encourage more of our caregivers to participate in this program.

### Family bonding and festival celebration events

Family bonding events like Movie Nite was popular among our members where the whole family comes with their picnic mats, blankets, pillows, and soft toys for a cosy movie screening experience at DSA Centre.

Other family bonding activities like cooking and baking sessions are well received by our members to promote parent-child bonding opportunities.

Festive celebrations like Chinese New Year and Christmas celebrations are our yearly events to engage the families with external invited performing group to entertain our members.

## Confidentiality

The individual dignity of members, families, and DSA staff will always be respected and protected in accordance with PDPA. Information about members and their families will not be disclosed to anyone other than persons who are authorised to view such information.

Our staff are trained regularly about confidentiality matters and will do everything to protect your family's right of privacy.

### Photos, Videos and Media

Photos of members may be taken during his/her enrolment in the programme for the following purposes:

- Internal purposes such as monthly reports, documentation, and program evaluation.
- DSA's corporate newsletters and social media - Instagram and Facebook accounts for awareness, advocacy, and fundraising.

Please inform the staff if you prefer not to have your photos taken.

## Communication

Families are kept informed of Family Support Services happenings through calls, text messages, WhatsApp messages and email of flyers to membership. You may communicate with Family Support Services executive through the same means.

### Grievances

All grievances may be lodged via face-to-face contact, telephone conversations, text messages or emails and a record will be kept of the complaint until resolved.

All grievances will be fully discussed between the parents and the Executive (Family Support Services). In the event that the matter remains unresolved, it can be referred for further mediation to Assistant Director (Services).

### Mutual Respect Policy

Creating the best outcomes for members requires the relationship between parents, family members, caregivers, and staff to be based on the principles of care, integrity, trust, and mutual respect.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a reminder to all parents, family members and caregivers about our expected conduct towards staff so that we can work together to ensure a safe and positive relationship.

## **Contact Details**

### DSA Centre – HQ

9 Bishan Place #09-01 Junction 8 Office Tower, Singapore 579837  
Main: 6500 9321      Fax: 6255 0337

Opening hours:  
Monday to Saturday, 8.30am to 6.00pm  
*Closed during Public Holidays*

### ILT Centre & Thrift Shop

Blk. 17A Telok Blangah Crescent, #01-270  
Singapore 091017  
ILT Centre: 6274 2300    Thrift Shop: 62713811

ILT Centre Operating Hours:  
Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm  
*Closed during Public Holidays*

Thrift Shop Operating Hours:  
Fridays, 10:30 am to 1:30 pm  
*Closed during Public Holidays*

### Family Support Services at DSA Centre

Ms Janet - [janet@downsyndrome-singapore.org](mailto:janet@downsyndrome-singapore.org)  
DID: 6500 9304

### Social Media

Website: [www.downsyndrome-singapore.org](http://www.downsyndrome-singapore.org)

Facebook/Instagram: @downsyndromesingapore