

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES

Information Guide





Borne out of love and devotion by a group of parents of children with Down syndrome, Down Syndrome Association (Singapore), is a primarily self-funding, non-profit social service agency established in 1996 to support and educate families, professionals, and the public about the genetic condition. The Association is committed to providing holistic support for families and caregivers; facilitating a person with Down syndrome to attain his or her full potential; and enabling them to contribute back to the society.

Vision

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

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.

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).

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Family Support Services

DSA Family Support Services (FSS) provide legal, medical and advocacy support as well as offer referrals to other services that clients may need, Caregiver Support, relevant information, and other resources. It also organises talks and trainings on a regular basis to educate caregivers in their journeys of caring for their children with special needs and activities for caregivers to encourage 'me' time to provide respite care for temporary relief from everyday daily routines.

Admission

FSS provides 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:

- Email enquiry through DSA's Website
- Direct message through social media platforms
- Phone call
- Inter-department referral
- Hospital referral
- 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.

Financial Assistance

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

If you require any financial assistance, please reach out to the Family Support Services Executive.

Key Services

Caregiver Support Group

Caregiver Support Group aims to provide a holistic peer support ecosystem in DSA for caregivers of children with special needs. The group offers a safe environment for you to share your caregiving journey and enhance your access to knowledge, skills, resources and support within the community. Such interaction can provide emotional support, social support, and informational support which allow better stress management and reduce the sense of isolation.

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 Care Plan 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. A 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 their needs
5. Produced in partnership with all those concerned.
6. Produced in the most appropriate forum and shared effectively with those who are part of it.

Deputyship Application Services via DSA

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.

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. The court-appointed individual manages his/her personal welfare and property and affairs matters as his/ her deputy.

Criteria:

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

Frequent Q &A:

1. Can I continue to manage 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 and 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.

The Medical Passport 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:

\$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

FSS regularly conducts workshops for our members (mainly parents and caregivers) to equip them with 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

Learning an instrument and playing together builds rapport between caregivers and promotes caregiver resilience in a supportive environment. This instrument is chosen as it is easy to learn and has reported stress-relieving benefits.

Family bonding and festival celebration events

Family bonding activities help to build closeness among family members and strengthen family relationships. FSS organizes a variety of fun-filled activities such as art and craft, music workshop, cooking and baking sessions and festive celebrations such as Lunar New Year, Christmas and more at our center which are well received by our members. We also collaborate with external partners to bring extra cheers to the family.

Confidentiality

The 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, messages and emails 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 Family Support Services Executive.

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.



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