

European Down Syndrome Association news



Belgium/Flanders Downsyndroom Vlaanderen



Internet: www.downsyndroom.eu

Founded: 2001, as a non-profit organisation of parent members in the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium

Presidents: Pia Wösten and Allard Claessens

Members: 500

Finances: membership fees and donations

Main goals

Promoting inclusion, equal rights and equal treatment, respect for diversity.

Supporting families and persons with Down syndrome.

Services

- counselling
- seminars, courses
- family days

Publications

- our regular journal "Tripliek" is published 4 times per year
- information flyers

Awareness campaign

There has been no regular DS-awareness campaign in Belgium until now. But we organised various activities (e.g. invite a person with Down syndrome for breakfast or lunch!) on World DS Day in March 2006 and will do that again next year.

Projects and campaigns

Our main project next year is organising a congress in March 2007 on medical and developmental topics for parents and medical and therapeutic professionals.

General information

The main problems in Belgium for persons with Down syndrome, which should be urgently changed are:

- there are still many prejudices against people with Down syndrome
- there is no official support for inclusion
- lack of medical protocols

Numbers

Approximate number of children born with Down syndrome in Flandren/Belgium per year: We estimated that there are about 50 babies per year, but a new official number for 2005 was only 27 (probably due to prenatal diagnosis).

The approximately total number of persons with Down syndrome living in Flandren/Belgium is 3000.

Situation of babies and toddlers under 4 years:

Medical care, physiotherapy an early intervention are relatively good, but could be better in many places.

Situation of schoolchildren

About 50% of children up to 6 years are in mainstream kindergarten

About 10% of children (6-12 years old) are in mainstream schools

All other children go to special schools.

Situation of adults

Adults work in sheltered workshops or spend the day in day centres

They mostly live at home with their parents or are in residential care.

We do not know about older people with Down syndrome. They probably live in institutions or homes/hospitals for old people.



Veerle Vandeputte, contact person for Downsyndroom Vlaanderen in EDSA. Veerle has a son with Down syndrome.



The Journal of Downsyndroom Vlaanderen is published 4 times a year.