

European Down Syndrome Association news

Italy Associazione Italiana Persone Down (AIPD)



Internet: www.aipd.it

Founded: 1979. Non profit organisation

President: Giuseppe Cutrera

Members: 1500

Finances: membership fees, financial support from state, donations, selling materials/books, special events



Anna Contardi, National Coordinator and contact person for AIPD



Main goals

AIPD supports people with Down syndrome and their families (even if they are not members) through non profit activities.

AIPD supports research on Down syndrome and gives up-to-date information.

AIPD supports school inclusion, job training and the social life of individuals with Down syndrome following them from childhood to adult life.

Services

- counselling
- seminars, courses – library
- family days, leisure activities

One of our main projects, that we would like to publicise here is: The educational course in the acquisition of autonomy.

The impulse to autonomy, towards making people able to manage by themselves, rather than by others acting in their stead, is really the animating spirit of not just this project but more in general the policy and operational standpoint of the Association. We aim to help the whole family by: offering consultancy, for example, rather than direct help; by informing parents of their rights and, in general, at returning to persons with Down syndrome their role as subjects endowed with rights rather than objects of welfare.

The first educational course aimed at developing a capacity for autonomy in persons with Down syndrome was introduced in the AIPD association in Rome in 1989. The course, which was designed for boys and girls from 15 to 20 years, has been repeated every year with an ever greater participation and has been replicated in many other cities.

In order to face the problem of autonomy it is necessary to present oneself not only the objective of obtaining some skills, but also that of recognising and favouring the change in the subject's condition of child to that of adolescent and then adult. It therefore, means creating a feeling and a way of relating oneself to others, a mentality of trust and of respect towards the adolescent. It is in such a climate that the adolescent may find greater motivation to learn and may grow as a person in an ever more global manner.

The programme of the course has kept account of the premises and has, therefore, at the same time developed its actions and turned its attention in this direction.

The structure of the course

The educational course for the acquisition of autonomy, takes place in free time and takes the form of a series of afternoon meetings (of about 3 hours each).

Each adolescent meets up, once a week, with a group comprising 8 or 9 persons with Down syndrome and 3 or 4 social workers. After a joint session the group divides up into subgroups of 2/3 persons with Down syndrome plus a social worker and a volunteer worker.

The greater part of the proposed activities take place inside the subgroup. In contrast, the whole group as such is involved in situations dedicated to pure recreation and enjoyment which are organised as parties in coincidence with such calendar events as the New Year, Christmas etc.

In order to draw up an educational programme in the context of external autonomy and define the areas to explore as well as the skills to reach it, it is necessary to answer the questions:

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- What are the minimum skills needed to get by outside the home?
- What do I need for my daily life, for work, for my free time?

Publications

Our journal is called "*Sindrome Down Notizie*" and is published every 4 months.

AIPD has published a whole range of brochures, books and videos. They are listed on our website: www.aipd.it/materiale_informativo/pubblicazioni.shtml

Awareness campaign

The regular DS-awareness campaign in Italy takes place every second Sunday of October.

We did not organise anything on World DS Day 21.03.2006, we only distributed some information about it.

Projects and campaigns

Our main projects in the next years is to widen our activities for adults with Down syndrome (housing, job inclusion).

Successful campaigns or projects over recent years were our:

- Calendar Campaign 2002
- *One cent, one opportunity* Campaign
- Family weekends
- Courses in autonomy
- General information

Main problems in Italy for persons with Down syndrome are:

- no uniformity of services
- lack of jobs
- lack of housing facilities

These things should be urgently change:

- To get adult dignity for adults with Down syndrome (even though things have become better in the last 20 years)

Numbers

There are approximately 1000 children per year born with Down syndrome in Italy.

We estimate that there are about 40000 persons with Down syndrome living in our country.

Situation of babies and toddlers under 4 years

All children get public care services

Situation of schoolchildren

In Italy all children with disabilities have the right to attend public school from kindergarten to secondary school.

Situation of adults


Not all adults with Down syndrome work. The people who do have simple jobs in well organised, public and private companies. The job offer depends on the area they live in.

Most adults live at home. There are some housing facilities, financially supported by public administration.

We have no data of the number and the situation of persons with Down syndrome over 50 years.

A proposito di sentimenti...

un film di
Daniele Segre



Per informazioni ed ordinativi della videocassetta
"A proposito di sentimenti..."
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AIPD's video about "feelings"