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Summer has arrived and many families consider inscribing their children - with or without Down Syndrome - to "summer camps".

Some families value the social experience that comes from it, others simply want to give their children the occasion to try something new... Many parents work and don't really have an alternative, especially this year, with grandparents being advised to spend less time with their grandchildren because of the pandemic. Whatever the reason, our region of Ticino (Southern Switzerland) offers a variety of "day camps" for children of all ages.

Despite this, our association has noticed that families of children with Down Syndrome in Southern Switzerland still tend to rely on specific integrated camps organized by local associations for their son's and daughter's activities. These camps can be great and are usually organized for children with different disabilities, their brothers and sisters and other typically developing children, with approximately half of the participants having a disability. It's a great option, but is this really the only option...? Why do some families not consider "typical" day camps for their children with Down Syndrome? It might be the consequence of limited inclusive education options or the expression of specific worries and fears (of families and organizers). Sometimes families ask and organizers might feel they are not "equipped" for inclusion.

We strongly feel this needs to change for everybody to have access to equal social and recreational opportunities.

This is why our association is promoting, since 2019, a concept of "summer camp inclusion" which is tailored on the specific needs of each child with Down Syndrome.

We invite families to choose a summer camp based on:

- age group (fitting the age of the child)
- practical reasons (distance from home, dates, hours, price, etc)
- program and activities (do they fit the child's interests?)

Families can regularly inscribe the child, then our association will contact the organizers and analyse the needs of each component: the child, the organizers and the family.

Some questions guide the strategy towards inclusion: has an inclusive experience ever been done at this camp? What questions or doubts

do the organizers and their team have? How many children per adult will be present? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the child? What kind of activities is the child likely to need help with? What are the parents' fears or worries?

Depending on the information gathered, we then arrange a plan which can include any of the following:

- a meeting with an association delegate + family + organizers (and for some situations, this is actually all that's needed to make it work!);
- a short training for the operative team (with basic notions on talking about diversity, inclusive terminology, how to answer children's questions, effective strategies to manage behaviour and safety, etc);
- special arrangements (half time participation, help during lunches or transitions, etc);
- full time presence of an assistant or educator, to help with inclusion during the camp (paid by the association).

In our experience, organizers sometimes decide to start with caution and they ask to have an extra person all the time. "Just in case".

Then, once they discover through their experience that they are in fact able to welcome a child with intellectual disability, they might decide that the following weeks no extra help is needed. And maybe, in that context, children with Down Syndrome might be welcomed in a spontaneous and natural way in the future.

This is, in our opinion, the greatest success and one of the main responsibilities of our association, that we may help society feel comfortable with being inclusive, knowing you don't need "special training" to interact with children with Down Syndrome while also knowing that any challenge or question can be addressed with our help and support.



EASPD report: Service Provision to People with Disabilities that are Ageing



The various services available to persons with disabilities that are ageing are outlined in this report, with particular attention to long-term care facilities in Europe. The report also identifies lessons from European countries which are providing these services and the implications for service recipients.

[Read it here in English](#), here [in French](#) and click [here to read it in Dutch](#)

Funding opportunities from the European Commission

Europe for citizens: Civil society projects

The call

Call name: Europe for Citizens programme – actions grants 2020 | **Call ID:** EACEA/52/2019

This measure aims at supporting projects promoted by transnational partnerships and networks directly involving citizens.

Those projects gather citizens from different horizons, in activities directly linked to Union policies, with a view to give them an opportunity to **actively** participate in the Union policy-making process in areas related to the objectives of the Programme.

As a reminder, this can be achieved at all stages, and with all institutional interlocutors, and includes notably: agenda-setting activities, advocating during the preparation phase and negotiation of policy proposals, providing feed-back on relevant initiatives that are implemented. To that end, those projects will invite citizens to act together or debate on the multiannual priority themes of the Programme at local and European level.

The project should consist in stimulating and organising reflection, debates or other activities related to the multiannual priority themes of the Programme and propose **practical** solutions that can be found through cooperation or coordination at European level, and ensure a concrete link with the policy making process indicated above. Projects should actively involve a large number of citizens in the implementation and aim at setting the basis for, or encouraging the development of, long-lasting networking between many organisations active in the field.

This measure supports projects implemented by transnational partnerships promoting opportunities for solidarity, societal engagement and volunteering at Union level.

A Civil Society Project must include **at least two of the following types of activities:**

- Promotion of societal engagement and solidarity: activities promoting debate/campaigns/actions on themes of common interest in the framework of the rights and responsibilities of the Union citizens and making the link to the European political agenda and policy making process.
- Gathering of opinions: activities aiming at gathering the individual opinions of networks, webinars, etc.) and media literacy.
- Volunteering: activities promoting solidarity among Union citizens and beyond.

FOLLOW YOUR DREAMS! (From Australia)

Promoting community inclusion.

[Click, look and listen!](#)

Part of society in every way. www.communityinclusion.org.au

[Down Syndrome Australia](#)

MAKE THIS NEWSLETTER REALLY YOURS!

Have you got any news that we could publish in EDSA newsletter? Please send us any information you would like to announce and we shall be happy to disseminate it all over Europe!

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