



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION  
OF ORANGE COUNTY

CHANGING PERCEPTIONS - CHANGING LIVES

### DSA|OC Programs/Services for Families and Individuals with Down Syndrome Include:

*Please note that this list is updated as new programs and services become available through DSAOC. This list is not all inclusive, but will give you an overview of how DSAOC serves the community.*

- **New/Expectant Parent Program:** DSAOC's support begins as early as prenatal diagnosis and continues throughout the life journey of the individual with Down syndrome. Our New Parent Support Coordinator conducts hospital visits and in home visits, and either a selected Parent Mentor or the New Parent Support Coordinator will deliver a beautiful DSAOC "Welcome Baby" basket to the family that has beautiful baby gifts, as well as important resources in the form of a pamphlet, books and a DVD about a variety of topics relating to Down syndrome. We also have support groups and an annual New Parent Luncheon held in the Spring. The **National Charity League-Pacific Coast Chapter** is a generous sponsor of our Welcome Baby Basket program.
- **Parent Mentor Program:** At the request of an expectant parent or new parent, **DSA|OC** connects them with a Parent Mentor (a parent who has a child with Down syndrome that has gone through a special **DSA|OC** parent mentor training program.) **DSA|OC** currently has approximately 30 trained mentors living throughout Orange County and surrounding areas available to expectant and new parents.
- **Parent Education Programs (PEP):** Includes parent education seminars, workshops, healthcare seminars and networking opportunities. Each year, **DSA|OC** provides an average of 30 parent education seminars and 50 parent networking and support groups. In total, these seminars and networking/support groups serve hundreds of parents, grandparents and caregivers each year.
- **Prenatal Diagnosis Support:** Due to the recent launch of a new prenatal test that specifically recognizes a fetus with Down syndrome, besides offering our prenatal support services, DSAOC put together a **Prenatal Diagnosis Committee** to create an informational packet for families who receive this prenatal diagnosis. This committee will also stay updated on state and nationwide legislature and resources so we can provide up-to-date and accurate information to hospitals, medical professionals and families.
- **Support Groups:**
  - *Homeschool Friends Social and Networking group* – Held in the **DSA|OC** Center once per month to provide important social interaction and developmental opportunities for the children, and networking opportunities for parents/caregivers who are currently homeschooling or considering this educational option. This group currently serves approximately 20 families per year.
  - *DSAOC 'Superkids' 4H program* – Currently, an extension of our Homeschool Friends group, this group meets once per month to conduct and present on a variety of 4H projects and is an official program through the Orange County 4H organization.
  - *Circle of Friends: New & Expectant Parents (0-3 years)* –Held at the **DSA|OC** Center on the first Thursday of each month. Currently serving approximately 50+ families per year, this parent networking group provides parents with the opportunity to make friends and to share challenges, milestones and triumphs as they raise their child. Expectant parents are also encouraged to participate, ask questions and receive support. Parents are encouraged to bring their little ones with Down syndrome along.

- *Circle of Friends Support & Networking Group (all ages)* – Held at the **DSA|OC** Center on the first Thursday of each month, this program is geared toward parents who have ‘graduated’ from the 0 to 3 group.
- *Circle of Friends Riverside* – Monthly support/networking group for families who live in and around the Corona/Riverside area – this group is for families who have children with Down syndrome of all ages and DSAOC currently acts as a support/marketing arm for this group.
- *DSAOC Dads Group* – A support/networking group specifically for fathers and grandfathers of children with Down syndrome of all ages. This group meets a few times annually and they have their own Facebook page at [Facebook.com/DSAOCdads](https://www.facebook.com/DSAOCdads).
- **Periodic programs include:** Sailing days, Free 2 Be Me Dance, Signing Time, other dance programs, beach/park days, Music programs, Girls Night In and other fun peer mentoring programs and carnivals hosted by local groups for our families.
- **In-Center Therapy Programs:**
  - Coming soon... supplemental therapies in small group settings for young children.
- **Spanish Language programs including:**
  - *Mano a Mano* – Held in the Center once per month, this program enhances student early learning and literacy skills for Spanish speaking families and promotes the participation and support of the entire family during their child’s learning process. An average of 20 families participate in this program each year.
  - *Spanish Language Support Group*- Held once per month, this is a support group for Spanish language families who have children with Down syndrome of all ages.
- **Healthcare Education & Outreach Program:**
  - *Hospital Outreach* – A select group of DSAOC volunteers visits labor & delivery clinics and hospital throughout greater Orange County and provides them with up to date information on Down syndrome, as well as contact information so we can assist families as immediate as possible when they receive the news they will have a baby with Down syndrome, or after they delivery a baby with Down syndrome.
  - *Healthcare Series Seminars & Conferences* – An educated parent is a better advocate, especially when it comes to the healthcare needs of their child with Down syndrome. DSAOC works hard to help educate parents on the healthcare guidelines, as well as health issues that relate to their child with Down syndrome. We help educate by providing information, as well as hosting seminars where specialty service physicians can have discussion with our families and answer questions, as well as hosting 1-day conferences.
  - *CHOC Children’s Down Syndrome Program* – In 2009, DSAOC entered into an alliance with CHOC Children’s to open up a clinic specifically for children with Down syndrome, where doctors who have intimate knowledge about health care for children with Down syndrome can offer health assessments, provide 2<sup>nd</sup> opinions and give overall care to these children in a comfortable surrounding.
  - **OPENED MARCH 2016! Adult Down Syndrome Clinic** – DSAOC has furthered our alliance with the UCI Healthcare System and we now have an adult clinic for individuals with Down syndrome. This Clinic is the first primary care clinic of its kind in Orange County for adults with Down syndrome, offered at the UCI Family Health Center in Santa Ana.
- **Educator of the Year Award & Recognition program:** Each Winter/Spring DSAOC calls for nominations for teacher(s)/therapist(s)/aide(s)/administrator(s) or an education team whose outstanding efforts and innovations have helped a student with Down syndrome to grow and learn.

All nominees are recognized prior to the end of the school year with a certificate and letter, and the winner is provided a plaque, recognition at the school assembly, and further recognition on stage at our annual Orange County Buddy Walk. Additionally, their name will remain on our center plaque for 1 year until the next winner is chosen.

- **Teen & Adult Programs/Activities:**
  - *Social Events*– Includes the annual Red Carpet Ball dinner and dance (Feb), the Boo Bash costume party and dance (Oct), and the Adult ‘Singles’ Mixer (18+).
  - *Monthly Bowling league* – Held at a local bowling center during the Fall, Winter and Spring, this exciting league for teens and adults with Down syndrome ages 12yrs and up is a great social and fitness activity.
  - *Drama Therapy with Alexis Maron, M.A., RDT*- Held at the DSAOC Center every Tuesday evening, it is an acting and social skills program for special populations, needs and abilities and currently serves teens and adults with Down syndrome ages 15 +. Drama Therapy is the intentional use of drama and/or theater processes to achieve therapeutic goals. Students learn to tell their stories, set goals, solve problems and express feelings. Through drama, the depth and breadth of inner experience can be actively explored and interpersonal relationships and social skills can be enhanced and rehearsed. Behavior change, skill-building, emotional and physical integration and personal growth can be achieved through drama therapy.
  - *Fitness & Nutrition program for teens and adults 15+* – Held at the DSAOC Center 3 to 4 Wednesdays per month, this 75 minute activity is taught by a certified personal trainer and blends a cardio workout with discussion on exercise and nutrition.
  - *Book Club for Adults with Down syndrome* –This Book Club/Social for adults with Down syndrome age 18yrs and up runs for 8 weeks at a time and uses guidelines from Next Chapter Book Club, and Try Reading Again.
  - *Orange County Bike Camp* – A collaboration with UCP-OC - Held at Soka University each summer, this week-long program teaches children, teens and adults with disabilities (8 years old and up) how to ride a conventional 2-wheel bike using the specialized equipment provided by iCan Shine, Inc.
  - **Adult programs coming soon...** Art Therapy, Adult literacy program, Social Skills learning
- **Annual Conferences & Mini-Conferences:** Conferences with multiple presenters relating to Education Resources and Advocacy as well as Healthcare topics are held at local conference centers and hotels. Most ½ day mini-conferences are held at our Center in Costa Mesa and focus on education advocacy, IEP consulting, Conservatorship, Financial Planning and Special Needs Trusts, as well as topics covering the current needs families express.
- **DSAOC Jr. “Just Dance” Party:** By popular demand, DSAOC launched an annual dance and social activity for individuals with Down syndrome ages 10-14yrs. This dance activity is meant to be fun, but also has a purpose to prepare this age group for school dances and other community dance activities. During this event they will work on proper social behaviors, learn appropriate dance moves and gain some independence. This event is currently held at Mater Dei High School, and they provide a majority of the volunteer support.
- **DSAOC Sibshops:** This is a monthly program held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month at the DSAOC Center, for **siblings** of individuals with Down syndrome ages 8-13yrs. DSAOC’s Sibshops are decidedly fun to attend. It provides peer support and information within a recreational context. It may be “therapeutic” to attend, but it is not therapy. It is a wonderful blend of making friends,

having fun, receiving information, and sharing their lives with others. Friendship will be a cornerstone component, as these siblings will likely support one another over the years.

- **Family Activities:** Held at various locations throughout Orange County, annual family activities include: Summer Picnic, Halloween Picnic & “Trick or Trunk” and Breakfast with Santa.
- **Summer Programs:** DSAOC holds annual Summer Programs in June, July and August which consist of Dance classes, TaeKwonDo, Yoga, Improv, Book Clubs, Art and more...
- **Community Awareness Events & Fundraisers:**
  - **Golf Tournament, Banquet & Auction / Orange County Buddy Walk** - Reaching more than 3,500 people combined, our annual Golf Tournament and Orange County Buddy Walk raise funds and awareness and help us provide public recognition for many of our amazing corporate and other community sponsors. The golf tournament is typically held in June, and the Buddy Walk is typically held in late October/early November.
  - **World Down Syndrome Day** - Held annually on March 21 (3/21) DSAOC and our families recognize this day by holding an awareness activity in a public place. Since 2013, this activity has been held at Downtown Disney. “Downtown for Down Syndrome” is a chance for our families to gather in a public place and socialize, while bringing awareness to Down syndrome by wearing Down syndrome awareness colors and other awareness clothing. We gather together for a large group photo and individual photos under a banner, then we meet in groups and enjoy the day/evening at Downtown Disney.
- **Multimedia Resource Library:** Open to the community; books, DVD’s, learning programs/resources and more, highlighting many topics surrounding raising a child with Down syndrome or other special need.
- **Outreach/Awareness Programs:** Includes **DSA|OC**’s Hospital Outreach, Speakers Bureau, attendance at resource fairs and school activities, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn), Comprehensive/Interactive website, and the **DSA|OC** Blog.
  - **Optimist Newsletter** – DSAOC’s bi-annual Newsletter highlighting programs, activities, community news and anything upcoming that we need to promote to our families.
  - **“Community Corner”** - a video project highlighting stories about individuals with Down syndrome, and the people and organizations making a difference in their lives. “Community Corner” can be viewed from the homepage of our website at [www.dsaoc.org](http://www.dsaoc.org).

*Last updated July - 2016*