

Down Syndrome and Regression

Regression is a fast and unusual loss of thinking skills, socializing and daily activities. It also may include an increase in unhealthy behaviors. This handout will help you learn about the signs of regression and when to seek care for your child with Down syndrome.

SIGNS OF REGRESSION

It is common for children to experience some of the behaviors below. However, if you have concerns or notice these behaviors for an extended time, such as 6 months or more, begin by calling your child's primary care physician. It is also helpful if you begin to track when these behaviors occur and things that may precede these behaviors.

- Loss of adaptive skills (e.g., going to the bathroom on his/her own, eating on his/her own)
- Increased difficulty talking
- Depression
- Increase or change in obsessive-compulsive behaviors
- Increase in repetitive behaviors
- Fatigue, headaches, irritability or difficulty sleeping
- Anxiety behaviors
- Aggression
- Attention seeking behaviors
- Self injury
- Poor concentration
- Overactive bladder
- Change in food habits
- Stubbornness
- Preferring to be alone

WHEN CAN REGRESSION HAPPEN?

Transition Periods

Children with Down syndrome often like consistency, repetition and order every day. Change can be harder for children with Down syndrome. During times of transition and change, you may notice signs of regression in your child (such as transition from elementary to middle school, or transition from school to adulthood). You may also notice signs of regression at times with fewer demands (such as summer break).

Puberty and Adolescent Years

Regression may be related to changes in the body. For women, physical and mental changes related to the menstrual cycle may trigger signs of regression.

Life Changes

It may be more difficult to cope with life changes for children with Down syndrome. Regression may happen during the following times:

- Death of a loved one or pet
- Siblings moving out of the family home
- Moving to a new home
- Changes in school or work

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I NOTICE SIGNS OF REGRESSION IN MY CHILD?

If you notice your child experiencing many of the signs of regression, contact your primary care provider or your established Down syndrome specialist.



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