



## Where to Begin

Since each family is unique, there is not a single answer to this question. There are, however, five things that you can do immediately that will aid your peace of mind as you face the beginning of this new situation.

Enjoy your baby. These early months will pass very quickly. Do all the things you had planned to do before you learned that your baby has Down syndrome. If you are facing some major health condition with your baby, you may have to postpone some of these things – but only temporarily. This little bundle is a baby first and foremost; he or she just coincidentally has Down syndrome.

Talk to other parents who have a child with Down syndrome. Another family who has gone through what you are now facing is better able to understand your feelings. You may wish to talk with another parent, visit another parent or have another parent visit you.

Explain Down syndrome to your relatives and friends simply and candidly. How you accept your new little person will be reflected in the way others will accept him or her. The involvement of your family and friends can be a deeply supportive experience for you and a broadening one for them.

Understand that it is not your fault that your baby was born with Down syndrome. Nothing in the mother or father's activity caused this. Down syndrome occurs in all races, religions, environments, and at all income levels. The chromosomal abnormality that results in Down syndrome happens most often during the development of the sperm or the egg before conception, or immediately after the sperm and the egg come together at conception.

Be Mom and Dad First. As you learn more about your baby's condition and what you can do to help him or her learn and grow, you will find yourself in many different roles. One mom said, "Before I knew it, I was so wrapped up trying to be his teacher, therapist, his nurse or doctor, that there didn't seem to be any time left just to be Mom. I really wish I would have just enjoyed him more and been more of a mom to him and let everything else be more secondary...I felt like I always had to be 'working' with him. I know now that a normal, healthy family life is also so important to a child; a lot more so than a mother who is running herself ragged and not doing anybody any good." The key, then, is to strike a balance, keeping in mind that being a parent is your primary role.

*Source: Getting a Good Start, Down Syndrome Association of Greater Cincinnati*



**DOWN SYNDROME  
ASSOCIATION**  
OF YORK REGION

Down Syndrome Association of York Region Phone: (416) 410-DOWN  
Toll Free: 1-800-649-DOWN  
Email: [info@dsayr.ca](mailto:info@dsayr.ca)  
[www.dsayr.ca](http://www.dsayr.ca)