

Inclusive Developmental and Therapy Center

Supporting Your Child with Down Syndrome at Home

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✓ Can I help my child at home?

Yes, you really can. Help your child learn, communicate and take part in family life — celebrating every step at their own pace. This free program breaks it down into simple weekly steps, built from proven therapy techniques — things any parent can do at home, in everyday moments, at no cost. It doesn't replace a professional assessment where one is needed, but for a lot of children it makes a real difference, and it never does any harm.

Go at your own pace — a new, gentle focus each week.

Download the whole program as a printable PDF to keep.

Includes the signs that mean it's worth getting a bit of extra help.

Yes — there is a great deal you can do at home for a child with Down syndrome, and you can start today, in ordinary moments. This free home program turns play, mealtimes, dressing and bedtime stories into learning, built around the visual strengths most children with Down syndrome share. Your child is a learner first. We start from what they can already do and what they love, not from what is hard.

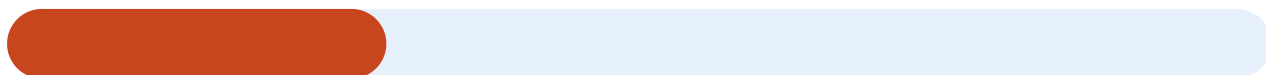
Parents often tell us the same thing: “bacha samajhta hai, lekin bolta nahi” — he understands us, but he doesn't speak. That gap between understanding and talking is very common in Down syndrome, and it is exactly what this program works on. Understanding is built first; signs, gestures and pictures carry your child through until speech catches up. This is one of our free **parent-led home programs**, and it is the one to start with when a child has Down syndrome.

Understanding usually runs ahead of talking

What your child understands



What your child can say so far



the gap signs and pictures fill



Signs, gestures and pictures
carry your child across the gap

Most children with Down syndrome hold on to what they can see — a sign, a photo, your gesture — far more easily than words on their own. So this program leans on seeing, adds plenty of gentle repetition, and breaks every skill into small, doable steps. It backs up the work your child's therapy team and school are already doing; it doesn't stand in for them. It is the same approach we use with families at our centre in Multan, and nothing here needs special equipment. If you would like a therapist to see your child's own stage and shape these steps around them, you can **book a visit at the Multan centre**.

♥ Who this program is for

- ✓ Children of any age with a diagnosis of Down syndrome
- ✓ Parents who want practical, everyday ways to help at home
- ✓ Families waiting for a therapy place, or living far from any therapy centre — including parents travelling in from Layyah or Lodhran
- ✓ Children who understand far more than they can yet say
- ✓ Families already in therapy who want to practise the same skills between sessions
- ✓ Anyone wanting a strengths-based plan that respects their child's own pace

Important – when to get professional help

This is a supportive home program — it isn't a diagnosis, and it doesn't replace a proper assessment. Please speak to a professional soon if:

Your child seems not to hear you, or keeps getting ear or chest infections — ask for a hearing check early

Skills, words or movements they used to have suddenly slip away

Loud snoring, long pauses in breathing, or very restless, broken sleep — mention it to your child's doctor

Feeding, swallowing or breathing that worries you, coughing during meals, or poor weight gain

Eyes that don't seem to focus or follow — ask for a vision check

New neck pain, a change in how they walk, or new clumsiness or weakness in the arms or legs — get this looked at promptly

Your gut says something has changed — take it to your child's doctor sooner rather than later

Getting help where you live

Everything here is free to use **anywhere in the world**. If you'd like a professional to take a closer look, the best next step is someone local to you:

Work with us online, from anywhere. We offer **online sessions and parent coaching** worldwide — book an online consultation and we'll guide you and your child directly.

Talk to your child's **doctor, paediatrician, GP or health visitor** — share what you noticed.

Ask about **free early-childhood or early-intervention services** in your area — many countries offer them for young children (e.g. Early Intervention in the US, NHS referrals in the UK).

Search **“child speech & language therapist near me”**, or ask your doctor for a referral.

Near Multan, Pakistan? You're also warmly welcome in person at our centre — **contact us here.**

☆ Your step-by-step roadmap

Move at your child's pace, not the calendar's — the “weeks” are just a gentle order, not a race. Feel free to repeat any stage for as long as it's helping.

Stage 1 — Connect and tune in

Build warm, face-to-face back-and-forth as the base for all learning.

Get down to your child's eye level and follow their lead — join in with whatever they're enjoying rather than steering it.

Copy your child first: repeat their sound, their bang on the table, their wave. Being copied is what makes a child want to copy you.

Pause, and then wait a little longer — give your child real time to look, gesture or answer in any way they can.

Answer every attempt to reach you warmly, so your child learns that connecting with you always works.

⚡ **Try** Sit facing your child so they can see your face and mouth — it's how **this:** they read your expression and start to copy your sounds.

Stage 2 – See it to learn it

Use your child's visual strength — signs, pictures and gestures alongside words.

Pair a simple sign or gesture with the words that come up all day: “more”, “finished”, “milk”, “bye”.

Bring in photos or picture cards for daily routines and choices, so your child can actually see the options.

Choose the first ten signs from your own home, not from a list — the people, foods and toys your child already cares about.

Keep the signs and pictures going for as long as they help — they open talking up, they don't hold it back.

 **Try** Always say the word as you show the sign or picture, so seeing it and **this:** hearing it build the word together. A simple picture schedule for daily routines works the same way, and makes the day easier to predict.

Stage 3 – Understanding comes first

Grow understanding, which for many children with Down syndrome runs ahead of speech.

The moment your child looks at or reaches for something, name it — short, clear, right there in the moment.

Play easy “find it” and “give me” games with familiar objects to grow the words they understand.

Read the same few picture books again and again, pointing and naming rather than reading every word.

Say their name, wait for their eyes, then give one short instruction — one step at a time, not two.

 **Try** Trust that your child takes in far more than they can say — keep talking **this:** to them richly, just in shorter chunks. We explain this pattern further in why a child understands everything but won't talk.

Stage 4 – Sounds and clear words

Support the mouth and speech muscles so words become clearer over time.

Model single words slowly and clearly, leaning on the first sound: “b-ball”, “m-more”.

Have fun with bubbles, straws and silly mouth-and-sound play — it wakes up and strengthens the muscles behind speech.

Give a few extra seconds after you ask. Many children know the word long before they can plan and say it.

Welcome your child’s attempt warmly, then gently say the clear version back — never turn it into “say it again”.

 **Try** Repeat a new word many times across the day; children with Down **this:** syndrome often need extra hearings before it sticks.

Stage 5 – Move, balance and strength

Support motor skills gently, allowing for hypotonia — the lower muscle tone many children with Down syndrome are born with.

Weave active play into every day — climbing over cushions, walking on different surfaces, carrying light things.

Give steady support for sitting and standing, so your child’s hands are free to explore and play.

Break bigger movements into small steps and expect them to take longer — it’s the steady practice that counts.

Watch for tiring rather than not trying; a short go, repeated often, beats one long session.

 **Try** Follow your physiotherapist or occupational therapist on positioning, **this:** and slip their exercises into play rather than drilling them.

Stage 6 – Everyday independence

Turn daily routines into learning for self-help skills.

Break dressing, washing and eating into tiny steps, and let your child do the last, easiest step first.

Keep the same order and the same words for each routine — that repetition is what builds memory and confidence.

Offer real choices — which cup, which shirt — so your child gets to practise deciding and telling you.

Resist stepping in the moment it gets slow. Waiting is the teaching.

 **Try** Do one small step, then hand the very next one to your child, adding **this:** more each time they manage it.

Stage 7 – Play, friendship and belonging

Grow social play and a sense of taking part with others.

Practise simple turn-taking — rolling a ball, stacking bricks, “my turn, your turn”.

Set up short, easy-to-win play times with siblings or friends, then gently step back and let it flow.

Notice and praise sharing, waiting and joining in, so your child feels the fun of being part of the group.

Give cousins and classmates one simple line they can use — “show him, then wait” — so other children know how to include your child.

 **Try** Keep social play short and sweet at first — ending on a happy note is **this:** what makes your child want to come back to it. There are more everyday ideas in our guide to building social skills at home.

Little tricks that make it work

- ✓ Celebrate the small steps out loud — progress at your child's pace is real progress.
- ✓ Count five slow seconds in your head before you repeat, rephrase or help.
- ✓ Turn off background TV so your voice, and your child's own attempts, are easier to hear.
- ✓ Look for the one thing your child does brilliantly this month and build the next skill onto it.
- ✓ Keep instructions short and give one step at a time, with a picture or gesture to match.
- ✓ Repetition is a friend, not a chore — the same routines, songs and books are what make skills last.
- ✓ Keep an eye on hearing and vision — small changes there can make a big difference to learning, and hearing shapes speech more than most parents expect.

How you'll know it's working

- Your child understands and responds to more everyday words, signs or pictures
- New words, sounds or signs appear, even if they arrive slowly
- Your child does more of a daily routine — dressing, eating, tidying — on their own
- More back-and-forth, turn-taking and joining in during play
- Your child gets their message across more often, so there is less frustration for both of you



Is this based on real methods? This program reflects standard, established practice for children with Down syndrome: total communication — signs and pictures used alongside speech, an approach speech and language therapy bodies such as ASHA and national Down syndrome associations describe as supporting speech rather than delaying it; teaching in small graded steps with plenty of

repetition; and building skills inside everyday routines. Regular hearing and vision checks are part of routine paediatric health care for children with Down syndrome, because even a mild, temporary hearing loss makes learning to talk harder. This program is meant to work alongside your child's therapy team, not replace it.

 **Educational information, not a diagnosis.** Our guidance follows standard, research-based practice (CDC, NHS, ASHA and WHO), is written by our therapy team and **medically reviewed by a GMC-registered doctor**. Every child is different, so we can't promise specific results — always use your own judgement and speak to a qualified professional about your child. **Read our full disclaimer.**

FAQ

Down Syndrome at Home: questions parents ask

