

(Free pdf) Issues for Families with Children with Down Syndrome (Down Syndrome Issues Information)
(Pt. 18)

Issues for Families with Children with Down Syndrome (Down Syndrome Issues Information) (Pt. 18)

Sue Buckley

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Drawing on available research and personal experience, the experience of families with children with Down syndrome is explored with the aim of identifying the strengths and positive coping strategies used by most families. The evidence shows that almost all families love and value their child with Down syndrome and list the benefits they have gained as a family from raising this special child. Some two-thirds of families lead ordinary lives, with no long term negative effects for other members of the family. These families do experience extra demands and extra stress but they find the resources to cope successfully. Research has identified some of the strategies that families use to cope successfully. One third of families have a more difficult time and the reasons that they experience more stress have been identified. Knowing the causes of additional stress allows families and service providers to pinpoint their difficulties and offer appropriate support and services. Knowing the successful strategies that reduce stress is equally important in helping families to use all the positive resources that they have available to them. Families are encouraged to evaluate their own situation using this information and to identify any additional resources that they

could use. Practitioners are encouraged to use the information to improve their practice and to focus on family centred ways of working, recognising that the family unit is the child's main resource throughout his or her life-time.