

When you are ready, whether you are an expectant parent or a new parent, make the MDSC your first call:

1.800.664.MDSC (6372)

You can also visit us on-line at www.mdsc.org or e-mail the Parents' First Call Coordinator at mdsc@mdsc.org.

Did You Know?...

- There are more than 400,000 individuals with Down syndrome in the United States
- Down syndrome occurs in approximately one in every 671 live births
- Around 80% of babies with Down syndrome are born to mothers under the age of 35
- Down syndrome affects people of all ages, races and economic levels
- Early Intervention services through the state help children with Down syndrome develop to their full potential
- Children with Down syndrome often participate in regular classrooms, learn to read and enjoy many integrated community activities
- Children with Down syndrome really are "more alike" other children than different



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"For months after I was informed that my son had Down syndrome I was angry with the world. I did not know how to calm my negative feelings. Fortunately we reached out to the MDSC's First Call Program. Kim (a First Call parent) invited us into their home, and it was then that I finally began to accept my son for who he is. Our First Call put us on the road to recovery. Meeting their daughter touched our hearts and from that moment on, I knew things would be OK."

– New Parent (Whitman, MA)

Connecting with Parents' First Call

MDSC makes First Call parent connections based on:

- Geographical area
- DADS network
- Similar health issues
- Ethnic background
- Religious background
- Primary language

For all First Call connections in English, please call **800.664.6372**.

For Spanish, please call **781.801.9319**.

For Haitian Creole, please call **978.677.4608**.

For all other connections, including Vietnamese, Portuguese, Greek and Middle Eastern languages, please call **800.664.6372**.

About MDSC

The Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC), established in 1983, is a not-for-profit organization made up of parents, individuals with Down syndrome, educators, health care providers, and others interested in gaining a better understanding of Down syndrome.

MDSC offers information, networking, and advocacy for and about Down syndrome through programs and services including:

Parents' First Call

Annual Conference

Educator's Forum

Annual Buddy Walk and Family Picnic

Teen and Young Adult Program

Legislative Advocacy

mdsc

MASSACHUSETTS DOWN SYNDROME CONGRESS

Parents' First Call Program



For expectant and new parents of children with Down syndrome



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Welcome New Parents

Congratulations on your new baby! The most important thing to remember is that your baby is a baby first and is not defined by his or her diagnosis of Down syndrome. Right now there may be a lot of emphasis on how your baby may be different and possible medical problems he or she may face, but try to take things one day at a time. You will soon find that children with Down syndrome are more alike than different from other children.

And Expectant Parents

Learning that your baby has Down syndrome is an overwhelming and emotional experience for most parents. You may initially feel confused, frightened, angry, saddened, and/or isolated. The good news is that you are not alone in your journey.



“I would never be the person I am today if it wasn't for Kelly (a First Call parent) being there for my family and I as we went through the very confusing and emotional time after my daughter was born. Kelly had calming words, great information and all the encouragement I needed to just let me enjoy my new child. She was a tremendous support to us during that trying time in our lives and I treasure our friendship today. I could never thank her enough!”

– New Parent (Westport, MA)



You Are Not Alone

A dedicated group of experienced parents of children with Down syndrome are available state-wide to offer you support and information through the Parents' First Call Program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC).

Parents' First Call Program offers:

- Accurate information about Down syndrome for expectant and new families
- The opportunity to talk with other parents about your concerns and questions
- A chance to meet other children with Down syndrome and their families
- Support groups for parents, including a network specifically for fathers
- Assistance locating helpful medical and early intervention services
- Referrals to local and national resources including: books, websites and other helpful organizations
- Special support to families who have a child that will undergo heart surgery
- Access to MDSC's full range of resources, programs, and community events

Training Healthcare Professionals

MDSC partners with health care providers, hospitals and other groups throughout Massachusetts to develop ways to best serve new and expectant families.

Experienced trainers are available to offer customized presentations to any size group including:

Grand Rounds, physician groups, genetic counseling groups, or individual meetings. Please contact MDSC for more information.

Complimentary “Down Syndrome Health Care Guidelines” as well as other materials and resources are available to health care providers.



“When we received our prenatal diagnosis of Down syndrome, I worried about our future, and our children's future. I wasn't sure our family could handle it. Meeting another family with a young child with Down syndrome helped us overcome our fears. We are now the proud parents of a beautiful little girl, Grace. She has taught us so much about love and acceptance.”

– New Parent (Medford, MA)

