



## November Newsletter

Thanksgiving is upon us and the holidays are quickly approaching. This month's newsletter provides gift ideas for individuals with Down syndrome as well as tips for surviving the holidays.

We are also excited to bring back our Real Families, Real Stories segment where we feature families, their stories and their message about their loved one with Down syndrome.

This year, we are introducing holiday ornaments featuring artwork from individuals with Down syndrome. We invite artists of all ages to submit their Holiday or Christmas art.

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### Submit Your Holiday or Christmas Artwork

This year, the IDSC is excited to offer ornaments that will feature artwork created by individuals with Down syndrome!

We invite individuals with Down syndrome of all ages to submit their Christmas or Holiday themed artwork for consideration. All submissions are reviewed by a panel of judges and the top 3 designs will be selected and featured on ornaments that will be available in the [IDSC online store](#).

Photos or scanned copies of the artwork can be submitted by individuals with Down syndrome or their parents or legal guardians.

Visit our website to complete the [submission form](#).

**Submissions are due by November 22, 2015.**

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### Real Families, Real Stories

We are re-introducing our Real Families, Real Stories segment. If you would like to submit your photo and story, please visit our [website](#).



Alex has been a little Soldier since birth. He was born with a heart defect, then diagnosed with Leukemia aged 3. He has also had to cope with the death of his younger Sister Maisie. He has lived in the UK, the USA and is now settled Perth, Western Australia. As parents we know next to nothing about DS, but Alex has shown us that there should be no barriers and is loved by everyone. It has been a challenge, with people being unintentionally condescending and uneducated, but we have learned that his condition does not define him; he is Alex and a wonderful Brother and Son.

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## Preparing for the Holidays

The holiday season can be a hectic time of the year. Here are a few articles that we found may be helpful when preparing for holiday season.

### Surviving the Holidays with Your Sanity Intact

Our families are far from typical. So why do we try to be that perfect "Norman Rockwell" family during holiday get-togethers? Tell yourself right now that you and your family are going to enjoy the holidays in your own way and at your own pace. Stop worrying about what others think and make the holidays meaningful for your children. Here are some holiday issues that might come up and some creative ideas to make it work for your family.

[Read more...](#)

## **Surviving (and Enjoying!) Holidays with a Child with Special Needs**

Holidays can be stressful enough with family members you love to pieces but sometimes want to strangle. If you have a child with special needs, you may not be the only one experiencing anxiety. Grandparents, aunts and uncles and other holiday hosts often mean well but sometimes just aren't sure how to help.

[Read more...](#)

## **Dealing with Relatives**

At family gatherings you may be with relatives who you see only once a year. Relatives who are not familiar with your child's disability may make well meaning but misinformed comments. Some may make comments that appear insensitive and rude. Try not to let it ruin your day. Focus on your child and resist the urge to snap back. Turn the conversation into something positive. Prepare ahead of time by anticipating what certain relatives might say to you.

[Read more...](#)

## **Surviving the Holidays**

The holiday season is often challenging for most of us. For our family members with special needs, it is even more stressful. We need to employ all of our "social thinking skills" during this season when we are attending parties, family gatherings, shopping, traveling, etc. How can we do this gracefully and comfortably?

[Read more...](#)

## **Wishing You a Happy and Sensory Friendly Chanukah**

Chanukah....It's the little jug of oil that lasted for 8 days. It's the holiday of lights. It's the holiday of miracles. It's the holiday of presents, latkes, oil, candles, music, parties...and meltdowns. Too much, too fast, too loud, too smelly and maybe too many parties.

Sound familiar? If you have a child with special needs you may have mixed feelings around holiday time. You're thrilled to have your kids out of school but dreading their being off routine. Here are a few tips that can make Chanukah not only miraculous but joyous too!

[Read more...](#)

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## **Gift Giving Ideas for Individuals with Down Syndrome**

Gift giving can be difficult when trying to shop for gifts that are appropriate for your child. Here are some articles that will help you brainstorm on gift giving ideas.

## **Six Developmental Toys for Your Child's First Toy Box**

Welcoming a new baby into your life is an exciting and sometimes confusing time full of equal

parts laughter and late nights. Preparing for a child involves a lot of logistics, including baby furniture, clothes, various baby products ranging from tubs to teethingers, and of course...toys. One aspect that is not to be overlooked is play products for young infants. Why does a child need to play?

[Read more...](#)

## The Best Toys for Kids with Down Syndrome

"What makes a good toy for children with Down syndrome is often the same as what makes a good toy for any child," notes Emily Jean Davidson, M.D., clinical director of the Down Syndrome Program at Boston Children's Hospital. Dr. Davidson suggests toys that encourage social interaction (balls; dolls for pretend play) and cause-and-effect toys that help develop the foundation for math, such as counting toys or blocks. She also encourages reading out loud daily, and incorporating music into play. "Many children with Down syndrome love music, and singing and dancing are wonderful ways to work on language, social interaction, and motor skills." Here's a roundup of some of our favorites items for children age 2 and older.

[Read more...](#)

## 10 Toys Great for Kids with Special Needs

Fun stuff that will help kids with Down syndrome, autism, juvenile arthritis, cerebral palsy, and sensory integration impairment.

[Read more...](#)

## Fat Brain Toys: Special Perspectives

Whenever possible, we gather feedback from our customers on how our toys are being used by children & adults with down syndrome in hopes of providing guidance for other special needs caregivers. We hope you find these "special perspectives" helpful as you shop for developmentally appropriate toys and games.

[Read more...](#)



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