



DOWN SYNDROME ASSOCIATION OF WEST MICHIGAN

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

BECOME A MEMBER

DSAWM members enjoy free access to dozens of programs, events, services, and resources, and join a community of lifelong support and camaraderie.

VOLUNTEER

Whether you volunteer alongside our members at a program, join a committee, or serve on our Board, your support is valued and makes our work possible!

DONATE

DSAWM relies on public funding to achieve our mission. Every dollar is appreciated and supports the vital programs and services offered to our members.



LOCAL & NATIONAL RESOURCES



Michigan Parents of Children with Down Syndrome Facebook group
[/DownSyndromeMichigan](#)



Down Syndrome Diagnosis Network (DSDN)
www.dsdiagnosisnetwork.org



National Down Syndrome Society (NDSS)
www.ndss.org



Global Down Syndrome Foundation
www.globaldownsyndrome.org



National Down Syndrome Congress (NDSC)
www.ndsccenter.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!



@dsawestmi



@dsawm



Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan
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Visit our website to learn more: www.dsawm.org



WHO WE ARE

The Down Syndrome Association of West Michigan (DSAWM) was formed in 1985 and has since become one of the state's leading resource and advocacy organizations promoting public awareness of and supporting lifelong opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome.

Our service area covers 12 counties in West Michigan and includes our members with Down syndrome, their families, community partners, educators, medical providers, and therapists.

We aim to support all families in the West Michigan Down syndrome community through our values of:

- **Inclusion**– We work to ensure that the needs of our diverse membership are met and that all members are equitably included in the community regardless of their distinct needs or differences.
- **Empowerment**– We provide resources, opportunities, and knowledge to empower our members to realize their full potential in life.
- **Education**– We gather and distribute knowledge and resources to educate and bring awareness about Down syndrome to West Michigan, ensuring that our members are fully supported and have access to the highest quality of life.
- **Community**– We foster a network of support for families with Down syndrome, as well as work to build partnerships that connect our members to the West Michigan community at-large.
- **Service**– We focus on continuous improvement to respond to the needs of and provide the best support to our membership.



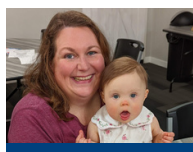
WHAT WE DO

DSAWM programs and services address barriers and support social and learning opportunities for our members through all life stages. We also work to bring awareness to the systemic challenges faced by those with Down syndrome and advocate for the rights, inclusion, and well-being of our community. DSAWM's work includes:

- **Therapeutic and recreational programs** like Baby Sign Language, Shape Up, Cooking Capers, and iCan Bike Camp, all offered free to members
- **Parent support groups** for those on the unique journey of raising a child with Down syndrome
- **First Call Network** to connect new and expectant parents with relevant resources and trained Parent Mentors
- **Annual fellowship events** like the Member Picnic and Step Up for Down Syndrome
- **Financial assistance** to offset costs for medical and therapeutic services and equipment, educational programs, adoption, and hospital stays
- **Conferences and workshops** for parents, educators, and medical professionals on topics ranging from IEP support to aging
- **Advocacy training** through our Self-Advocate internship position and Self-Advocate Board
- **Community partnerships and engagements** to spread awareness and create opportunities for members
- **Resource sharing** by means of our weekly newsletter, DSA Press, and social media



PROGRAMS & EVENTS



PARENT SUPPORT



AWARENESS & ADVOCACY



WHY IT MATTERS

One of every 700 babies born in the United States is diagnosed with Down syndrome. This chromosomal condition occurs when an individual has three, rather than two, copies of their 21st chromosome. The additional genetic material alters the course of development, affecting how a person may learn, speak, or look.

While the cause of the extra full or partial chromosome is still unknown, we do know that Down syndrome affects people of all ages, ethnicities, and socio-economic backgrounds.

With early intervention, loving homes, quality education, appropriate medical care, and positive public attitudes, people with Down syndrome develop to their full potential. Children with Down syndrome often participate in regular classrooms, learn to read, and enjoy integrated community activities. Many adults hold jobs, form lasting relationships, vote, and live independently.

By supporting and advocating together, we show the world that people with Down syndrome are truly more alike than they are different!

