Example Curriculum Adaptations for Students with Down Syndrome

All Subject Areas:
- Identify the goal for the student.
- Utilize visual cues: pictures, objects, overhead projector, pocket charts, etc., objects, etc.
- Break down directions into small steps.
- Only present a few problems or sentences at a time, enlarge font if needed.
- Allow extra time to respond (written and verbal).
- Shorten length of assignment and/or number of problems required.
- Give options on how to complete task (i.e. handwrite or type, counting bears or blocks, etc.)
- Utilize hand-on tangible materials.
- Minimize distractions.
- Review concepts and build on prior knowledge.
- Use simple and familiar language.
- Use peer supports.
- Change content to reflect student’s ability and interests.
- Tie into real life experiences.

Mathematics:
- Sketch out problems, and then write out the arithmetic for the solution afterwards.
- Act the problem out.
- Make it relevant and concrete: use manipulatives.
- Identify the goal for the student; focus on the main ideas, i.e. shapes vs. types of triangles.
- Incorporate the student’s interests and experiences.
- Make sure there is enough visual and writing space.
- Use large grid paper to keep columns aligned.
- Provide an example to keep alongside student’s work - generalizing takes time.
- Write out/discuss the steps involved in a problem and repeat the same problem many times so that students learn the steps not just the answers.
- Provide a number line for counting.
- Provide and teach about a 100’s chart.
- Provide a calculator.
- Color code and/or highlight key phrases or concepts.
- Use consistent cues/visuals for computation process until skill is generalized (e.g. put large number in your head and count up).
- Tweak the general curriculum to build on student’s goal (e.g. a double digit addition worksheet can become counting how many “6’s” there are or building those numbers from manipulatives)
- Embed math concepts into other areas of the day (passing out materials, telling time, etc.)
- Sometimes a parallel curriculum (i.e. Numicon or Making Math Real) is necessary.
- Practice skills in real and meaningful situations.
**Language Arts:**
- Program book and/or portions into a speech generating device.
- Use adapted texts with visuals.
- Pre-read text with student.
- Locate book on tape.
- Have peers read with student.
- Incorporate drama, song and visuals into the story.
- Provide a story map or other graphic organizer.
- Have student sequence a series of events from the story.
- Ask factual rather than interpretive questions.
- Use Spark or Cliff Notes if available.
- Write a brief summary of larger, more complex texts for the student’s use.
- Focus on core vocabulary.
- Provide photographs or pictures for writing inspiration.
- Allow access to word bank and/or stickers with scribed words to allow student to build sentences.
- Provide a starter sentence or stimulus question for writing assignments.
- Have a student or aide scribe for the student.
- Have the student trace over highlighter.
- Use cloze notes and/or just fill in periodic blanks/words.
- Limit the number of spelling words the student is to learn.
- Allow the student to type if handwriting presents a greater challenge.
- Vary writing implements and surfaces.
- Give multiple choice spelling tests (minimum 3 choices).
- Focus on core vocabulary.
- Have student draw picture, make collage, write poem as alternatives to longer writing assignments.