



The NZDSA's position statements

Position Statement on Prenatal Screening for Down syndrome

The New Zealand Down Syndrome Association believes that people with Down syndrome have a right to life.

- We value babies, children and adults with Down syndrome.
- We believe people with Down syndrome lead full and satisfying lives and enrich the lives of those around them.
- We provide support and information to parents, whānau and people with Down syndrome.
- The NZDSA advocates that the primary goal of prenatal screening should not be to reduce the birth prevalence of Down syndrome in the population, but rather to improve prenatal health care and delivery care for the mother and baby.

The NZDSA respects the rights of parents and realises that parents need to choose whether to decline or engage in prenatal screening and that this decision is influenced by a complex interplay of factors.

If parents choose to have prenatal screening, the NZDSA believes that screening must be presented in a way that does not discriminate against people with Down syndrome. In addition, people must not be pressured into having prenatal screening for Down syndrome. The screening process must include the following:

- Non-directive counselling.
- Support and up-to-date information about Down syndrome for parents.
- Information about prenatal screening must be available and this should include accuracy, waiting time for results and associated risks of further testing.
- Professionals involved in prenatal screening must have up-to-date information about Down syndrome and the lives of people with Down syndrome.

Position statement on termination

The New Zealand Down Syndrome Association does not consider Down syndrome in itself a reason for termination.

The NZDSA adopted a position statement on prenatal testing for Down syndrome in 2004. This position statement was reviewed in 2007 and 2011. The above position statements were adopted in April 2012.