



## **An unexpected path can be the beginning of a great journey.**

The rewards and pleasures of parenting a child with Down syndrome can be abundant. The challenges of raising a child with special needs have been shared by many. Talking with parents who share the same joys and struggles can make all the difference in the world. In the end, our children with Down syndrome are more like typical children than they are different, each with his or her own personality and capabilities.

## **PACDS is a network of parents who have children with Down syndrome. The group provides:**

- Telephone, home or hospital visits to new parents
- Information and resources, including a lending library
- Suggestions about programs and services
- Support meetings and activities for children, young adults and families

## **Up-to-Date Information Is Critical...**

Our Marjorie Gibbs Memorial Library contains a comprehensive collection of books and journals related to Down syndrome. Located at the Peekskill Field Library, all resources are available through interbranch loan through any Westchester library. For a complete bibliography, email us at [pacds@westchesterarc.org](mailto:pacds@westchesterarc.org).

## **To Contact Us**

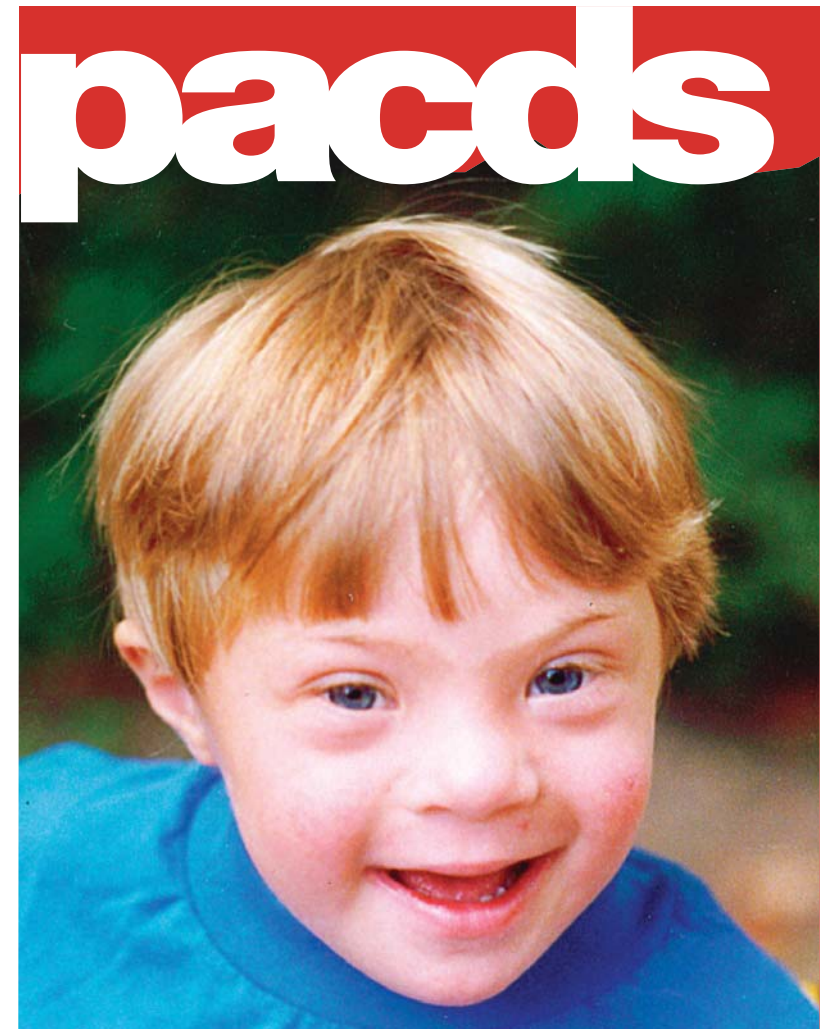
**24-Hour Down Syndrome Hotline**  
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Visit us online at  
[www.westchesterarc.org](http://www.westchesterarc.org)



## **Parent Assistance Committee on Down Syndrome**

A volunteer arm of Westchester Arc



## In the Beginning...

The birth of a baby is a moment of great joy. For new parents of a baby with Down syndrome, that joy is often mixed with uncertainty about what Down syndrome is and how it will affect their child and their family.

PACDS parents have all faced the same questions and fears. Learning that your baby has Down syndrome is initially painful and scary but talking to PACDS parents can be tremendously reassuring. Raising a child with Down syndrome can be a rich and rewarding journey. The diagnosis of Down syndrome means that your family will walk down a different path than the one you envisioned. But this path has its own joys and challenges and has been travelled by many families all over the world.



## The Changing Face of Down Syndrome...

Down syndrome is a condition caused by an extra chromosome. No one knows why this happens. It has been around for thousands of years and occurs in approximately one in 800 births. It affects every race and all national and ethnic groups worldwide, regardless of socio-economic status. Down syndrome is easily diagnosed, either prenatally or soon after birth.

While children with Down syndrome usually have certain physical characteristics in common, there is wide variation in their intellectual potential. Today, many

young children with Down syndrome are being educated alongside their typical peers and, when given the proper support, are accomplishing far more than anyone expected.

In a world where diversity is fast becoming the norm, children with Down syndrome are being welcomed and embraced by their communities in ways that were unimaginable 20 years ago. And because of their unique contributions, our schools, synagogues, churches and neighborhoods are enriched by their participation.