



Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC)

Education Task Force

WHO, WHAT, WHY and HOW

TEACHER PARTNERSHIP NETWORK

WHAT is the Teacher Partnership Network?

MDSC's TEACHER PARTNERSHIP NETWORK is an exciting new initiative that our Education Task Force first piloted in the fall of 2010. This statewide network is made up of educators with experience teaching students with Down syndrome and a desire to share their knowledge. These "experienced educators" are matched by grade, specialty and location when possible with "educator partners", teachers with limited or no experience teaching students with Down syndrome.

WHO are the "experienced educators" that have volunteered to be in the TP Network?

Experienced Educators are general and special education teachers, administrators, inclusion specialists, paraprofessionals, therapists (OT, PT, and SLP) that have at least 2 years of experience educating students with Down syndrome.

Experienced Educators are nominated by parents, colleagues and or administrators.

Experienced Educators are interviewed by members of the MDSC Education Task Force. They need to provide at least one reference and are strongly encouraged to attend an MDSC TP Network orientation/training.

WHO should request an "experienced educator" partner from the TP Network?

Educator Partners have little or no experience working with students with Down syndrome and can be...

- regular education teacher
- special education teacher
- administrator
- inclusion specialist
- paraprofessional
- therapist (OT, PT, and Speech)
- behaviorist/guidance counselor/school psychologist/social worker

WHY should educators partner with an “*experienced educators*” from the TP Network?

WE BELIEVE that our “experienced educators” are uniquely positioned to offer invaluable support, share skills, and effectively mentor new teachers. Ultimately, this partnership will help dispel myths about the potential of students with Down syndrome and lay the groundwork for a valuable and productive educational experience for both educator and student.

HOW will partners connect?

Partners will be...

- given contact information for members of the TP Network and are able to connect either by email, phone or in person throughout the school year.
- welcome to attend a free orientation/training in August.
- encouraged to attend the MDSC Educators Forum on Thursday, November 3rd at Holy Cross College in Worcester, MA and/or the MDSC Annual Conference on March 17th at the DCU Center in Worcester. Members of the TP Network will be given the chance to meet informally with other members of the TP Network at both conferences.

WHAT are the expectations of the partners?

Partners will be

- expected to provide feedback to the MDSC Education Task Force regarding the usefulness of the partnership.
- encouraged to inform Rosalie Forster, MDSC Education Resource Specialist and Conference Coordinator, at rforster@mdsc.org or 781-221-0024 ext 301 if any questions/concerns about the partnership arise at any point throughout the partnership.

The Massachusetts Down Syndrome Congress (MDSC) Education Task Force is a volunteer team of educators and parents who are dedicated to offering quality information and on-going support to Massachusetts educators and their students with Down syndrome.