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### **History**

In 2012, Marleen Oosterhof – van der Poel (mental health psychologist) and D. Flud van Giffen (anthropologist) conducted an exploratory study on the specific abilities of persons with Down Syndrome. The results of this study are outlined in the document *Down Syndrome, 'dis'abilities versus 'other' abilities? Paradigm shift and the consequences for research, education, and social participation*. The study was first presented during a lecture at the 11<sup>th</sup> World Down Syndrome Conference in South Africa in 2012. Subsequently, it has been presented at a transcultural symposium in Romania and a number of locations in the Netherlands.

In a follow-up study in 2015 we invited a large group of parents, healthcare professionals, and teachers to indicate what they do and do not recognize in the behavior of their own child/pupil with Down syndrome. Moreover, we asked them if they could name additional typical talents and whether they had suggestions for the further development of these talents.

Here is a summary of the answers of the 62 respondents:

Our first question was:

- 1) *What is your opinion on the contents of the lecture? Did the lecture provide new insights for you? If so, can you indicate what these are?*

25% of the respondents indicates that the contents of the lecture were new to them. The importance of looking at talents, of looking at what does exist rather than what does not, is currently generally accepted within circles concerned with both education and care of persons with Down syndrome in the Netherlands. However, what is really new is to look specifically at 'other' characteristics (that do not occur or are less common with so-called 'normal' people).

A few respondents felt resistance towards the perceived generalization in the alternative conceptual model. They wish to look at the person with Down syndrome as an individual with talents rather than investigate whether there are talents specific to persons with Down syndrome as a group.

We also received a lot of compliments for the refreshing point of view: "It is good to look at Down from a different perspective."

25% of the respondents indicates that the contents are partly new. The alternative paradigm is clearly described. Especially the positive view concerning the lower tongue position is new to this group.

A few quotes:

- "Now I apply the lower tongue position daily to myself. I especially do this when I notice I'm starting to feel tense."
- "It's new to me that you experience things differently when you relax your tongue."
- And from a speech therapist: "An eye-opener: another way of observing from a low alertness (due to the low tongue position) that we quickly want to label as low muscle tonus in the mouth area and wish them to unlearn."

50% of the respondents indicates that the contents are not new to them. Everything is known, but presented in a new way.

Dilemma:

- "In education, I see that too much mental strain occurs at the expense of their life force. Our son (16 years old) often comes home from school stressed and unhappy (special primary education)."

Our second question was:

- 2) *What are your experiences with the abilities referred to? Can you give a specific example for each talent of your child or pupil? Preferably examples of a situation that occurred in the previous week/month.*

The answers are given per talent/characteristic.

- 1. Cheerfulness:** 80% of the respondents recognizes cheerfulness as the basic mood. This is especially true in relaxed situations. In addition to this basic mood, large mood swings and grumpiness may occur from time to time, as is the case for all other people in this world.

10% of the respondents indicates that his/her child/pupil is only cheerful when he or she feels comfortable and this is often not the case due to the circumstances. The majority of the time, this group is gloomy, sulky and/or frustrated. The cheery basic mood is recognized from earlier years.

**Unconditional love** is recognized by over 80% of the respondents. It is a non-judgmental, forgiving disposition: things are easily righted if they were wrong for a while. 20% of the respondents does not explicitly experience this characteristic. A few even resist the idea that this would be a generally recognizable characteristic.

Conclusions:

In a relaxed environment, a cheerful basic mood and unconditional love occur in notably more persons with Down syndrome than in persons without this syndrome.

- 2. Brightening depressive moods:** 80% of the respondents indicates that the person they are describing has the talent to brighten depressive moods in others. Their children/pupils with Down syndrome feel that something is wrong and they act with a gesture, a smile, a hand on someone's back, etc. More introvert types often cheer others up by visibly enjoying little things themselves.

A few quotes:

- "He feels it when I'm tired, he softly brushes his fingers against my fingertips."
- "Her way of being already cheers me up."
- "She is only able to brighten my mood when she feels well herself."

The other 20% of the respondents describes that the persons with Down syndrome take over the depressive moods from those around them and behave accordingly.

- "She (47 years old) acts as an instigator when she feels unhappy."
- "He (8 years old) doesn't cheer me up, but takes over my grumpiness."

- 3. Social harmonizer:** 80% of the respondents agrees that persons with Down syndrome are almost constantly strengthening the harmony between people. They are true 'social bridge builders'. Young children and older persons with Down syndrome can literally 'connect' by drawing people together or pushing them together. For older people, humor is also a frequently occurring social connector.

Quotes:

- "He is the one who strikes up a conversation or gets someone else to laugh and talk by giving them a radiant smile."
- "It occurs simply by who she is. No specific action is required."
- "So true... We are a family unit because she makes it happen..."

Respondents often mention that persons with Down syndrome greatly dislike conflicts and try to amend the situation.

- "He (28 years old) never feels inhibited, he will simply walk up to people. And you can see this moves them. The other day, he walked up to a few tough-looking young men, shook their hands and said: 'Bye!' They said, with tears in their eyes: 'Bye, dude!'"

Critical remark from one of the respondents:

- "They really aren't constantly trying to build social bridges. That's nonsense."

Dilemmas:

- Do you simply let them walk up to every group spontaneously? Parents of younger children often fear that this behavior will no longer be accepted once their child with Down syndrome gets older. Therefore, they seek to inhibit this behavior by at an early age teaching their children that it is not commonly accepted behavior.
- Persons with Down syndrome thrive in a good group atmosphere. In an unpleasant atmosphere, however, they feel responsible for amending it. This creates quite a bit of stress and costs them a great deal of energy.
- "No matter how much he enjoys to live on his own (assisted living), he misses sharing the cozy atmosphere with others."

- 4. Pure and authentic:** 75% of the respondents agrees that purity and authenticity are characteristics of their child. He/she is who he/she is and will not pretend to be anything else. He/she does not ask for confirmation. However, when something must be done quickly, or in a certain manner, stress arises and the purity and authenticity disappear.

A few quotes:

- "My little brother (7 years old) follows his impulses without losing himself in all sorts of inhibiting thoughts."
  - "All emotions are pure and intense (29 years old). When there is sadness, there is crying. When there is fear, they're afraid. When she is happy, she's truly happy. If someone else is not authentic, she keeps her distance."
  - "He is not sensitive to hierarchy."
  - "She is always honest, and never has a hidden agenda."
- Even the sulkers are viewed as pure and authentic:
- "She (44 years old) is herself, with all her troubles and grumpiness."

Dilemmas:

- Parents must often mediate, also with their 'children' between ages of 40 and 60. "He (58 years old) can't conform to something he doesn't like. This creates problems. However, if there's understanding and space, it always works out."
- The characteristics 'purity' and 'authenticity' are believed to be expressed easily by persons with Down syndrome, according to some respondents: "We ('normal' people) have to do so much, which has led to our loss of purity. It's easier when it's tolerated that you do things 'differently'."
- "She (16 years old) speaks her mind, also in uncomfortable situations. This makes for wonderful moments." (Or, looking at it differently: yes, it's easy when that's tolerated.)

- 5. Spontaneous, unconventional:** 90% of the respondents recognizes this characteristic as one of the talents of persons with Down syndrome. Simply walking up to strangers (even the queen), introducing themselves, and asking a question. Or joining in the singing or dancing when there is music somewhere. Walking away from the group, because they suddenly see something they want to take a closer look at, simply saying it when they feel something is not right where others might remain silent out of politeness. Many will enthusiastically embrace others, are generous in giving hugs, or say hello to everyone. They are spontaneous towards the most annoying boy in class, but can also be selective when the others are not open, or if the other person has a disapproving manner. A person with Down syndrome does not want to have anything to do with that person. They might even push them away. It is often stated that people with Down syndrome are not burdened by feelings of shame.

The unconventional characteristic can provide surprising new insights, a few quotes:

"I think differently,' one of my course participants said, a very strong and incredibly true statement that moves you to the core."

"She does or says things that we feel are inappropriate or wrong, but that we would actually like to say or do ourselves."

### Dilemmas:

- Some will play the clown. They like to make others laugh. In that case, the spontaneity may become false. As a result, the behavior is repeated because it is rewarded and thus it is no longer spontaneous.
- Sometimes, they take it too far:  
"During the performance of the marching band, he pulled a trumpet from someone's hands."  
"He (18 years old) even told the perfumed Belgian queen: 'You smell!'"
- "If someone without Down syndrome wants to give a spontaneous hug to the queen, this is often not tolerated. From persons with Down syndrome, such behavior would be tolerated, which makes it seem that they are more spontaneous."

- 6. Confronting, self-willed, straightforward:** 90% of the respondents has experienced these characteristics. People with Down syndrome can be very clear when they do not feel like doing something. Most of them absolutely detest being belittled and will clearly show this. The confronting part is that they thus serve as a mirror for their caretakers and family. They will become cross when the parent/caretaker is impatient or has a bad day. They walk away or do what they want. A present that they do not want is simply returned. It is difficult to get them to do something when they do not want to do it.

The above is recognizable both at a young age and at an older age. The respondents who do not recognize these characteristics (5%), do realize that persons with Down syndrome display discomfort when they feel impatience or belittlement from their caretakers.

### Dilemmas:

- Willfulness is often experienced as difficult by the rest of the world. The understanding parent/caretaker, however, is able to value this, although this often gives rise to misunderstandings with colleagues in daily activities or housing arrangements.
- A number of respondents describes that it has taken ten years before the people in the institution learned that the child does better when there is room and respect for their willfulness.
- The straightforwardness of persons with Down syndrome is difficult for people who do not know how to handle this.

- 7. Sensitive and response to atmosphere:** 95% of the respondents recognizes that their child/pupil is highly sensitive and strongly responsive to the atmosphere of the people around them.

Young children cry when others cry, or when others are sad.

Quotes:

- "It sometimes seems as if she (4 years old) suddenly cries for no reason. But there is always a reason."

- "If he (7 years old) is somewhere that doesn't feel right to him, he immediately wants to put on his jacket again and leave. If he can't leave, he puts on his jacket for protection."
- He (8 years old) sometimes displays 'difficult' behavior at school. When you ask a few more questions, it's nearly always on days that the teacher wasn't feeling well or during a special event at school, making it a little chaotic."

Older people with Down syndrome respond with a smile and relaxation in case of a good atmosphere and withdraw or become cross in case of a negative atmosphere, if the parent/caretaker is stressed, or if it is too busy.

Quotes:

- "He (58 years old) is very sensitive to atmosphere and in case of arguments, little attention, or haste, he can get very upset and freeze. In doing so, he forces me to look at my own behavior."
- "He can't stand arguments and tension. During a very intense fight between his brother and sister, he literally became unwell and had to lie down on the couch."

Some persons with Down syndrome will improve the atmosphere (brightening and cheering up), others will change the atmosphere with their presence, whereas others become fearful and compulsive and/or withdraw.

A teacher:

- "You have to be aware of the impact of scolding. This is often more devastating than it is to a 'normal' child."

Dilemmas:

- If you as a parent/caretaker are highly sensitive and if you can name the change of atmosphere, withdrawn, fearful and/or compulsive behavior may disappear. However, for most parents/caretakers, it takes years before they have become sufficiently sensitive.
- In such a case, how can a person with Down syndrome learn to interpret his/her own sensitive reactions and learn how to handle these?
- Persons with Down syndrome can be greatly disturbed by chaotic or messy situations. For instance, when they are walking through a crowded and messy hallway, they have to catch their breath afterwards. And that might take some time.

**8. Gifted in non-verbal comprehension:** 85% of the respondents recognizes this talent. 15% says they do not recognize it, but that might also be because the child is still too young.

This talent can be described as a very good comprehension of non-verbal communication, in which only a single word is needed to clarify a situation. People with this gift have difficulty when others use too many words to explain or say something. Because the majority of human communication is non-verbal and our non-verbal communication does not always correspond to the verbal part, persons with Down syndrome often do not understand us.

Over 50% of the respondents calls this talent 'telepathic comprehension'.

Quotes:

- "We also understand each other very well without words. His eyes (7 years old) say and ask a lot, all I need to do is confirm it with a nod or wink."
- "Our son (28 years old) is no chatterbox and is sparse with his words, but you can notice that he understands difficult conversations by a sudden remark he makes."
- "After a long battle with the institution, he (47 years old) was allowed to work for me again and he told me his story in tears and said he had not believed that I had said it wasn't allowed. He had felt that."
- "When I worry about a situation she (29 years old) is in, but try not to let her notice, she looks at me and says: 'Don't worry, mom. You can let it go, I'll be fine.'"
- "She perfectly picks up on the intention with which something is said."
- "If I ask him in Spanish whether he (8 years old) wants to close the door, then the door will actually be closed. I suspect that he reads my intention in spite of the language."

35% confirms the talent for 'comprehension-without-words' and indicates that gestures, images, and examples have more effect than verbal explanation.

- "If something is explained with a lot of language, she starts doing something else than what she is asked."
- "He knows exactly how much room there is to negotiate."
- "The words of others often get in his way (23 years old). As a result, he draws the wrong conclusions. He knows exactly who he is dealing with."

A primary school teacher:

- "Make sure that you are present in the here and now with full attention, otherwise you don't even need to try offering something new to these kids."

Dilemmas:

- When persons with Down syndrome are more telepathic than we recognize, they pick up on a lot of our mental imagery during moments in which we are distracted. This can be confusing to them and could be an important cause of their learning problems.
- Implications for education: via what type of 'language' do they learn best: spoken language, imagery, body language, telepathic language, etc.?
- "He (16 years old) 'reads' people. For instance, he perfectly understands the burdens others carry. That's not easy, when others pretend to be something else than they are."

**9. Learning by awareness and experience:** 70% of the respondents recognizes this preferential form of learning.

Persons with Down syndrome have a special gift for learning through awareness, feeling, and experience. Purely mental tasks are very exhausting to them. After tasks that require logical and analytical thinking, they need a long recovery period to return to their natural state, which is more emotion-oriented and intuitive.

25% of the respondents finds it difficult to answer this question, because they do not know the person well enough or because the person is still too young.

70% of the respondents clearly recognizes this talent.

Quotes:

- "Explanations without the experience don't stick."
- "Everything that we as parents wanted to stimulate in him didn't work when he was not ready for it. Everything in his own time and in his own way."
- "If you go by 'what he himself experiences, he can remember it more easily', it will work."
- "She (28 years old) will dance and play guitar for hours. She's not practicing. She's not focused on the result. She's experiencing, for hours. Eventually, I do see progress. It's a great mirror; when I paint, I'm always thinking about the result. And that inhibits me."

Dilemmas:

- In school, it is usually not allowed to spend time on one particular interest for hours.
- Many respondents remark that their children are happier, more active, and more focused at home than at school.
- Is the teaching material aimed at arousing their natural interest?
- Is the starting point of the learning process experience-oriented or mentally oriented?  
"Sometimes I asked too much of the men by giving them mental challenges. This soon resulted in a sigh, a dazed look, or responses that had nothing to do with the subject at hand. I had to discover how to approach this differently."

**10. Taking time to 'experience' nuances:** 80% of the respondents recognizes this characteristic

Persons with Down syndrome take time to experience nuances. They are very capable of staying in the here and now and experiencing situations or things in detail. Afterwards, they like to re-experience it and feel it more deeply. It is also possible that they are talking to themselves and/or tell in a detailed way what has happened. They may also indicate with gestures that they are processing their experiences.

Quotes:

- "When it's done, he gives a nod and he's back in the here and now, in the moment."
- "She (21 years old) often says: "I'm enjoying reminiscing."
- "Sometimes, I wanted to move from one topic to the next too quickly. It was clearly too much for my Down course participants, and I believe it's better for me as well when I conform to their pace. It seems as if they're more emotionally developed than I am."
- "They take their own time but they do."
- "He takes the time to eat and does not participate in the conversations at the table. It's almost like mindful eating."



20% of the respondents does not recognize this talent or has not answered the question.

- "I can't answer this. I can say that things 'sink in' later with him (29 years old). He needs more time."

Dilemmas:

- In our society, you have to be on time and everything is based on time agreements. For persons with Down syndrome, these are all moments of time pressure and stress.
- Activities can make a great impression (a concert, a trip), after which a lot of recovery time is needed. Otherwise, exhaustion follows including all accompanying emotional reactions.
- "It does him (8 years old) good to have the time to calmly and quietly experience the road from school to home."
- "Time, what is that? They live outside the time perspective in a state of being."

**11. Sixth sense:** 50% of the respondents explicitly recognizes this talent. 25% of the respondents has not filled in an answer or has filled in a clear 'no'. The remaining 25% answered with a question mark.

The first group of respondents says that their children/pupils have a sort of sixth sense. Consequently, they are able to notice what animals, plants and people need to thrive. These respondents also describe the talent of non-verbal comprehension as telepathy.

Quotes:

- "He (7 years old) knows whether or not something is right. He can wake up in the morning and immediately tell me that a friend of mine is sad. I don't even have to check, it's always true."
- "He (also 7 years old) once stepped out of the elevator and sat down crying on the doormat of the neighbors, while he had stepped into the elevator cheerfully. Our neighbor was pregnant and had just heard that her child wouldn't live. He felt her pain."
- "She (23 years old) can say things from a certain sense of obviousness. She names things that are happening and of which we have no knowledge yet."

The special interaction with animals is mentioned several times:

- "She (21 years old) spontaneously applied horse whispering when she visited a farm where this method was applied."
- "Usually aggressive dogs behave much more calmly and gently around him (16 years old)."

A predictive and/or healing capacity is referred to multiple times:

- "She (29 years old) has developed a strong sixth sense. When someone's in pain, but hasn't said anything yet, she can walk up to that person and touch him or her at the place it hurts."

- "Absolutely uncanny..... my daughter is our family healer and being such a pure soul we all look to her for giving us positive energy. She can predict every situation and we have seen it happen."
- Critical remark: "Everyone has a sixth sense, but we let ourselves be led and influenced by society and the people around us. Therefore, we become more and more disengaged from our feelings, which makes it look like we don't have a sixth sense."

Dilemmas:

- Parents note this talent, but the rest of the environment is not always alert to it.
- Telepathic and predicting qualities can create fears if the environment does not notice them and respond to them adequately.
- So the question is: in which environment can the person with Down syndrome sufficiently develop this gift?

After the questions regarding the individual talents, our third question was:

3) *Which abilities are most important according to you?*

25% of the respondents does not really wish to distinguish, all talents are important.

25% calls 'unconditional love' the most important talent.

Quotes:

- "Her (34 years old) unconditional love is the one quality that draws everyone to her."
- "Academics (13 years old) are important but showering unconditional love is above par."

25% feels 'authenticity', being without a mask, is the most important quality.

- "Being yourself, not pretending to be anything more or less than you are."
- 20% indicates that the social harmonizer aspect is the most important one: "His (23 years old) brightening and capacity to create social harmony are very important. Without trying or doing anything, but especially because he 'is'. Other clients tend to open up because of this."

The fourth question was:

4) *Are there other abilities that you have experienced and that are not mentioned here? (abilities specific for persons with Down syndrome and not or rarely demonstrated by persons who are mentally gifted)*

30% of the respondents answered 'no', did not answer, or said they never thought about it:

- "I can't say at this moment. I should observe the behavior from this perspective to answer this question."

70% of the respondents has filled in a new talent.

The following are mentioned:

- Simply accepting the other as he/she is. Other people can be themselves completely. Absolutely no jealousy. No critical judgement. (27 years old, 25 years old, 45 years old, 48 years old)
- Simply being yourself and feeling perfectly satisfied that way. (60 years old)
- Being able to trust and to live. (47 years old)
- Realizing what is going on around him (19 years old) and yet being able to live carefree.
- Happiness and cheerfulness for no external reason. (47 years old)
- For our son (8 years old), only the here and now counts. He doesn't worry about tomorrow. He is not busy with yesterday.
- Patience and everything at his (29 years old) own time.
- His (23 years old) notion of time is less developed, which means that he is never in a big hurry.
- Humor. This requires abstraction abilities, which she (38 years old) shouldn't be able to have. But she does, you can laugh with her and because of her.
- A kind of naughty humor. (23 years old)
- Recognizing each other. People with Down syndrome always recognize each other (48 years old).
- A therapist: "To me, they all have something forceful and obstinate."
- Pushing to get ahead. When people see she has Down syndrome, they quickly forgive her. And she (16 years old) uses that to her advantage.
- Soulful rather than sad. (28 years old)
- Copying what I, as parent/caretaker do and how I act. (35 years old, 23 years old)
- Show me someone with Down syndrome and I can tell you what his/her parent is/was like, how cheerful or control-oriented.

Our fifth question was:

*5) What abilities of your child/pupil would you like to see further developed?*

For 25% of the respondents, nothing has to be further developed. He or she is good, perfect, just the way he or she is. Or:

- "I let him surprise me, and respond to that."

It has also been said that it is not so much about 'developing', but more about giving space:

- "I hope he is allowed to be himself. Be the way that suits him."

15% of the respondents wishes that the talents 'sensitivity' and 'sixth sense' can be retained and get all the space they need. A number of respondents wish that their child receives his/her own task within society and is acknowledged with his or her talents. One of the respondents expresses this wish as follows:

- "Would he (8 years old) be able to work as assistant of an alternative healer?"

The rest of the responses regarding the development of talents is very diverse:  
everything (5x),  
painting (2x),  
speaking (2x),  
social harmonizer (3x for children that are currently withdrawn),  
talent for experience-oriented learning (5x),  
standing up for him/herself, more guts (4x).

Question 6 was:

*6) Do you think that is possible? If so, how and where should this development take place? If not, what are the reasons for that? Under what circumstances do you consider this to be possible/not possible?*

At home it usually goes well. However, for those that no longer live at home, specific attention must be paid to ensure that the child is 'understood'.

Quotes:

- "The focus often lies on what he (59 years old) is not (so-called) 'normal'. This is slowly changing, but there is still a lot of room for improvement."
- "When people give him (29 years old) the time and are patient with him, a lot is possible and the behavioral problems disappear. (For instance, he can now start his job later, which gives him control and makes him a lot more cheerful.)"

A number of caretakers of persons with Down syndrome note that this study has made them gentler and less judgmental towards persons with Down syndrome and that these persons immediately respond in a more accessible way.

Some more quotes:

- "It's often still about hidden talents, characteristics that are not labeled as such."
- "Both school and parents should go hand in hand and society too should involve themselves to bring out the hidden talents in special needs kids."
- "Due to the sobering trend in healthcare, there is less time and patience to synchronize the care with the specific needs of the client (custom-made care)."

In question 7, the respondents were asked to provide suggestions with regard to the development of the talents:

*7) Do you have any suggestions about how, where and by whom these abilities can be developed? (at home, at an association, at school, in a working environment, etc.)*

Quotes:

- "When you can accept the fact that children with Down syndrome (and all children, really) have their own pace of learning things and developing their own talents, you will have easy and happy children."
- "By giving information. By translating a child's behavior for those who don't understand it. The rules of the school are not always suitable for someone with Down syndrome."

A number of teachers believes that there are already sufficient possibilities and methods at school: 'No additional advisors at school'. A number of other teachers clearly expressed a need for more ideas about experience-oriented teaching.

#### Dilemmas:

- Most persons with Down syndrome are focused and concentrated when an activity interests them and suits them. They can be busy for hours in an experience-oriented way. The problem is that there are also things they must learn that they are not very interested in. Therefore, more ideas on these matters are required. Some parents provide examples about how they do this. It requires a lot of patience. Others indicate: don't push, just leave it.
- On the one hand, parents indicate that there is nothing wrong with the school rules, their child will have to adjust to them. On the other hand, there is something still bothering them. School rules can be a straightjacket and adapting to them costs a lot of energy.
- Housing arrangements are very diverse. Most caretakers think along with the parents, but the initiative often lies with the parents. Institutions do not just think of and work on alternatives. There should be more attention and information at educational programs specifically aimed at Down syndrome. For example, the perspective (paradigm) of the present study is not known.
- Persons with Down syndrome require a lot of recovery time to process experiences, especially when things were different than usual. There is currently often little consideration for this. And that creates a lot of stress.
- A number of respondents is thinking of starting their own daily program because their child with Down syndrome is not happy at present and is much more cheerful and active at home than he/she is during the current daily activities.

#### *Conclusions: questions 3 to 7:*

The talents described above can (only) be properly developed if they are recognized, acknowledged, and valued, both by the person with Down syndrome him/herself and by the people around him/her. This is true for all people, but for persons with Down syndrome this particularly concerns so-called being-oriented characteristics and talents (in addition to their personal and varying characteristics).

A talent/characteristic goes into sleep-mode when it is not activated (see the difference between home, school and institution). Recognition and appreciation of the added value of persons with Down syndrome ensure that other priorities will arise in their daily programs and learning processes.

Finally, the respondents were asked:

*8) Do you have any comments/suggestions for the researchers?*

30% of the respondents explicitly indicates that they are pleased with this exploratory study. Participating in it forms a welcome confirmation and broadening of horizons. Although it is not an easy questionnaire that you fill out in a few minutes.

A few quotes that represent the tendency of many of the comments:

- "I think that this study contributes positively to the way persons with Down syndrome are viewed, but especially how we look at or handle certain things ourselves. Eye-openers."
- "I am glad that you take steps towards more recognition of persons with Down. That is helpful to us as a society and persons with Down syndrome get to be themselves more and more often."
- "Very interesting to look at your pupil in this way. I will definitely be teaching with a different view tomorrow."

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