

I. What a Difference Opportunity Makes!

Dear Readers,

The PREP Program is a Calgary based school and resource centre for children with Down syndrome. During our first decade of service to families, the staff at PREP have been forerunners of a revolutionary change in attitudes towards individuals with special needs. Regardless of ability level, children with Down syndrome are now visible, active and appreciated citizens in the community.

This inspirational progress has transpired because of parents wanting **more** for their child. Enhanced healthcare and education plus better visibility and acceptance are hard won assets that have enriched young lives beyond our dreams.

Achieving the goal of inclusion in the community is the most evident sign of the progress that continues to be made. Today, the norm is for individuals to be raised in the family home and be active participants in community activities. The two remaining challenges for parents and educators to face together are meaningful inclusion in the school and in the workplace.

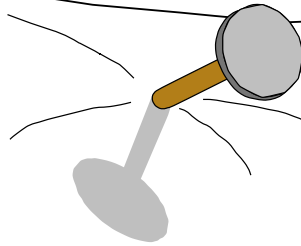


Our passion at PREP is helping children with Down syndrome to learn. To that end, our objective is to share the knowledge we have gained over the past decade with others across Canada and around the world. This resource guide, written for educators and parents, was inspired by the gratitude, enthusiasm and commitment of the families and fellow professionals who have attended our workshops and conferences. The power of parental love and the dedication of teachers constantly awes us.

In closing, I dedicate this publication to all of our students at PREP who are a joyous inspiration and a compelling incentive for us to continue to be a leader in the field of Down syndrome as we move on in the new millennium.

Barbara A. Diew

Executive Director
The PREP Program



One of our fears soon after Alexander was diagnosed with Down syndrome was that he wouldn't be participating in his neighbourhood school, asked to birthday parties or be on a baseball team. He wouldn't be included in anything!

Inclusionary education has given us confidence to see that, not only can it happen successfully at school, but in other settings like swimming, skiing, baseball and summer camps. Alexander's inclusion has involved many people to open their doors for this "new opportunity." It has also opened their minds to many changes in their attitudes, beliefs and stereotypes about children with Down syndrome.

Most importantly, inclusion has given Alexander the confidence to be a part of everything!