Breastfeeding Your Baby with Down syndrome

Congratulations on Your New Baby!!!

If breastfeeding is something that you want to do, chances are you WILL be able to do it! Breastfeeding can be hard, and babies with Down syndrome may need extra support. But the support is out there so try not to get discouraged!

ADDED BENEFITS:

- Since babies with Down syndrome are at an increased risk of getting infections, the immune system support that breast milk provides is extra beneficial
- Breastfeeding helps babies strengthen the muscles in their mouth, jaw, and throat, which can help later on with feeding and speech
- Breastfeeding can help strengthen the bond you have with your baby
- Knowing that you're giving something so nutritious to your baby can help empower you as a mother

POTENTIAL Challenges:

(your baby may not have any of these)

- Decreased muscle tone and strength may make it harder for baby to latch on and suck
- Increased risk for ear infections means paying attention to baby's position during feeding is important
- Some newborns are extra sleepy during the first few weeks
- Heart issues may mean your baby needs extra calories, and also tires out more quickly during feeding

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Seek support early and often! (Pediatrician, Lactation Consultant, Support Groups)
  - Frequent check-ins to make sure your baby is gaining weight, having normal bowel movements, and that YOU are doing okay
- Remember that pumping is a very suitable alternative
  - If your baby is struggling to latch on in the beginning, pumping can help maintain your supply of milk until your baby does build the strength and coordination (most babies eventually DO)
- Positioning: DanCer Hold & Football Hold
  - If your baby has low muscle tone, the DanCer hold can help support the chin/jaw
  - Keeping your baby upright (DanCer or Football holds) will keep the ears positioned above the mouth during feeding (to prevent fluid going from the mouth into the middle ear)
  - Use a firm cushion to support baby's body if necessary
- Tips to keep your baby awake during nursing:
  - Wake fully before feeding and stimulate frequently during feeding
  - Undress her/him, change diaper, wipe face with a damp cloth, switch sides, upright positioning (DanCer and Football holds)
  - Using a pacifier can help to strengthen baby's oral muscles, but discontinue use once baby is no longer breast/bottle feeding to prevent tongue protrusion

La Leche League International:
1-877-4LA-LECHE (452-5324)
www.LLLI.org

talktools.com
about us→ for parents → "information for new parents" video

Thank you Dr. Carly Siglock for the compilation of resources and tips.