

Home Schooling a Child with Down Syndrome:

Biblical Training Resources

*This material would be for
Down Syndrome children
of all ages*

*“And thou shalt teach them
diligently unto thy children, and
shalt talk of them when thou
sittest in thine house, and when
thou walkest by the way, and
when thou liest down, and when
thou risest up.”
Deuteronomy 6:7*

The “Old Nature”

Your child may have been born with Down Syndrome but he was born with an old nature too. He needs training just like your other children do. There are some things to remember as you train your child with Down Syndrome:

- ∞ Training begins at birth with or without a special need.
- ∞ Training may take longer. You may need to show him repeatedly what you expect. You may need to physically help him do what you are asking him if he does not understand. You will also need to give him repeated practice and reminders.
- ∞ List goals for your child in the areas of training. This may be part of your every day lesson plans for teaching. For example, “Comes when called” might be one objective for the month or until obtained.
- ∞ Teach good habits right from the beginning. Once bad habits are established, they are difficult to break. For example, if your child tends to run away from you. Decide as parents what consequences you will adhere to in this situation before it arises so that your child learns to stay near you where he can be safe.
- ∞ Remember that your child may be chronologically at the age of 5, but his mental age may only be 3. So when training, you need to focus more on his mental age because this is his level of understanding.
- ∞ A child’s reaction to training corresponds with the parents’ reaction to the child’s action, whether it be an act of disobedience or an act of childishness. To train efficiently, the parent must be under control in bodily actions and in tone of voice.

- ∞ Beware of humanistic philosophies if you use curriculums that are secular. If you read carefully, you might notice some suggestions that you will not agree with. Some secular books tell you that if your child does not want to do what you are showing him, let him do it his own way. Does this hold true biblically? However, when your child has difficulty with a skill and does not cooperate you need to ask yourself a few questions first before you decide what action to take. For example ask yourself
 - ∞ Does my child have the physical ability to accomplish the task I have asked him to do?
 - ∞ Does he understand what I am asking him to do?
 - ∞ If it is a school activity, have we been working too long and he needs a break?
 - ∞ Is he tired, hungry, or sick?

In other words, does my child want his own way or does he have a need? Your child may need something such as physical maturity, further modeling and explanation of a skill, a break, a nap, some food, or help for an illness. If you allow your special needs child to insist on “having it his way” in one area when you are trying to teach him, he will seek out other areas in which to have his way.

The Best Source for Child Training

Remember that the number one book on child training is God’s Word. Biblical principles on child training apply to your special needs child as well. You might begin a Bible study in Deuteronomy chapter 6 and then use a concordance to check other references.

Additional Resources

The following additional books can be used along with your biblical study. Many of the books can be found in Christian bookstores, at home school conventions, or you can write to the address given.

❖ **Lovingly Guiding Their Footsteps**

Published by NATHHAN
Porthill, ID 83853
(253) 857-4257
www. NATHHAN.com
(This 22 page booklet deals specifically with special needs children.)

❖ **To Train Up a Child**

❖ **No Greater Joy Volumes 1 & 2**

By Michael and Debi Pearl
1000 Pearl Road
Pleasantville, TN 37147
(These book stress the need for consistency in discipline. The books are inexpensive and you can also request a free newsletter.)

❖ **Child Training and the Home School**

Parable Publishing House
RD1, Box 1281
Charlotte, Vermont 05445

❖ **Instilling Self-Discipline in Children**

(booklet)
Plain Path Publishers
PO Box 830
Columbus, NC 28722

❖ **Shepherding a Child's Heart**

Shepherd Press
Box 24
Wapwallopen, PA 18660

❖ **On Becoming Baby Wise Book 1 & 2
By Gary Ezzo and Robert Bucknam, M.D.**

Questar Publishers, Inc.
Post Office Box 1720
Sister, OR 97759

❖ **Growing Kids God's Way**

By Gary and Anne Marie Ezzo
Published by Micah 6:8
Chatsworth, CA 9131
(This manual accompanies a parenting training class.)

❖ **Child Training Tips**

Family Ministries Publishing
PO Box 1412
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
(916) 965-PURE

❖ **Withhold Not Correction**

By Bruce A. Ray
Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co.
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865

❖ **Training Your Children to Turn Out Right!**

A Biblical Guide for Christian Parents
By David Sorenson
American Association of Christian Schools
PO Box 2189
Independence, MO 64055

❖ **What the Bible Says About...Child Training**

By J. Richard Fugate
Aletheia Division of Alpha Omega
Publications
Tempe, AZ 85280

Training Requires a Plan of Action

Do you see any behaviors in your child that need to be changed? After studying the Bible and reading some good child training books, both parents should sit down and decide if any changes need to occur in the current training system. If there are specific behaviors you want

to see changed in your special needs child, get a sheet of paper and write down a list of unbiblical behaviors. Then decide which one to work on first.

- ∞ If there is a major behavior problem, decide to work on this one first.
- ∞ If all the behaviors are on about on the same level, choose the behavior that might be the easiest to change first.

Next get another sheet of paper and write at the top of the paper the behavior that needs attention. You might list a verse associated with this behavior. In the first paragraph write down all the details pertaining to this behavior: when and where it tends to occur, what happens right before the behavior occurs, and who is usually involved. Finally, write the consequences that you will administer to your child as an outcome of the behavior. Before putting your plan into action, pray with your child (if he is older), open your Bible, and explain within his level of understanding that God says what he is doing is wrong. Then show your child by demonstrating what it is he does and what he needs to do instead. Practice the desired behavior before your child actually needs to use it. (This will depend on the situation.)

*“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.”
James 1:5*

*This pamphlet was prepared by Diane Brown
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