



## **In The Picture** *Inspiring the book world to include disabled children*

### **Down's Syndrome [DS] – Guidance for Illustrators**

Children born with Down's syndrome [DS] can look like each other but they will also look like their family. Below are some of the characteristics of DS – please note that not all people with DS have all the characteristics and to get the balance right it may be better not to show them all.

1. Many babies born with DS have poor muscle tone. Muscle tone is usually greatly improved by the age of 3 – 4 years. By that age most children with DS can do the physical things that other children do such as running, jumping and using a trampoline!
2. Children tend to have a smaller head but this isn't that noticeable and a child certainly wouldn't worry about it when looking in a picture book - they always see their head as large and that's the way they draw them too!
3. Children with DS tend to have a short broad hand with shorter fingers. They also have broad feet with short toes if an illustrator needs to draw them barefoot!! There is also a 'line' across their palm but there is little need to go that far unless you are drawing a close up of the hand!
4. Children born with DS may have a flatter back of the head than average. However this will not be so obvious when their hair begins to grow.
5. Their ears are slightly lower set than others and people with DS often have quite small ears.
6. Their nose starts coming out as if it were a little lower than the norm and from the side the face is quite flat looking.
7. The eyes slant up slightly as they move out and there are folds of skin above and to the middle of the eye. Sometimes they have slightly crossed eyes.
8. As they grow they tend to be smaller in stature than their peers so you could draw the contrast in size.

You can see more pictures of children with Down's syndrome on these websites: <http://www.downs-syndrome.org.uk/> and <http://www.downsed.org/>  
For more information about In The Picture email: [inthepicture@scope.org.uk](mailto:inthepicture@scope.org.uk)

**June 2008**