

POSITION TITLE	Family Support Worker
REPORTING TO	<u>Executive Officer</u>
CLASSIFICATION	Social, Community, Home Care & Disability Services Industry Award (Modern Award) Level according to qualifications and experience
CONDITIONS	This position is part time with up to (15 hrs/week) (<i>negotiable</i>) with possibility of increased hours in the future. Access to salary packaging.
LOCATION	18/71 Victoria Crescent, Abbotsford VIC 3067
LENGTH OF CONTRACT	Ongoing subject to funding

BACKGROUND

Down Syndrome Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1978 to provide support, information and resources to people with Down syndrome, their families and the broader community.

Services

Family Support

DSV provides whole of life personal support to individuals with Down syndrome and their families. We provide support when a new baby is born, ongoing facilitated peer support for parents, and support for other members such as siblings and grandparents. We also run a number of events such as a family fun day, StepUp for Down syndrome and workshops on specific topics.

Information

DSV provides information on Down syndrome to members, organisations, students and the general community. We provide professional development for health and education professionals and maintain a library of Down syndrome specific resources. Information sessions are periodically held on relevant topics.

Advocacy

DSV represents the needs of people with Down syndrome and their families to all levels of government and the community with the aim of achieving systemic change.

Awareness

DSV works to educate the Victorian community about Down syndrome, challenge outmoded and outdated stereotypes by providing relevant up to date information. DSV encourages the community to see individuals with Down syndrome as unique with their own talents, abilities, thoughts and interests and as contributing and valued members of their own families and the broader community.

Empowering Individuals

DSV works to empower individuals with Down syndrome by encouraging self-advocacy and by providing mentoring and specific skills training for adults.

Family Support Worker

The Family Support Worker is primarily responsible for providing relevant information and linking individuals to the state-wide peer support network. Support is currently concentrated in high stress transition stages – diagnosis, school entry, transition between schools, leaving school - transition to employment, independent living and ageing issues. Support is also provided to prospective parents seeking assistance with prenatal issues. The overall goal of the position is to empower families to help themselves and their family member with Down syndrome, not to provide intensive case management.

The family support worker will work with the Adult Support Worker and the Education Consultants to provide information and support to families when needed.

Position Objectives

- Provide appropriate and sensitive support and relevant up to date information to families across Victoria who request assistance upon receiving a diagnosis of Down syndrome
- Provide or source support in a location suitable to the parents
- Provide sensitive non directive support and information to parents seeking assistance with prenatal issues
- Provide information on individual topics of concern to families and refer to other services as appropriate
- Collaborate with other DSAV staff to develop and update standard information resources for members and the general community
- Develop ongoing support relationships with families and Support Group Facilitators
- Inform DSV policy and position on issues for individuals with Down syndrome and their families

Key Responsibilities

Family Support

- Ensure that individuals with Down syndrome and their families are provided with sensitive support that reflects the philosophy of Down Syndrome Victoria
- Ensure that individuals with Down syndrome and their families are provided with relevant up to date information that is research based and reflects DSV philosophy.
- Assist with the day to day operations of the various Family Support activities.
- Assist with the development and implementation of Family Support strategies for all staff
- Monitor and report on service provision to members in a timely manner
- Identify and support processes to engage families with other services and community groups
- Develop and ensure the implementation of member feedback mechanisms
- Provide information and support to organisation/service providers as appropriate
- Participate in and assist with the planning of family events

Advocacy

- Report systemic advocacy issues on behalf of individuals with Down syndrome and their families to all levels of government and the community
- Identify gaps in the existing support system for individuals with Down syndrome and advocate on their behalf for improved service opportunities particularly within the new NDIS framework

Information Provision

- Collaborate with other DSV staff to develop and update standards information resources for members and the general community
- Become familiar with a range of government services and funding bodies available to support people with Down syndrome and their families
- Identify areas where more information is needed
- Contribute to and assist with maintenance of the family and online library pages of the Down syndrome Victoria website to ensure they contain information which is relevant and up to date
- Contribute to the Editorial Committee for the stories through Voice, DNews and social media
- Assist with administration of DSV's Facebook pages and closed groups to ensure posts align with social media guidelines and DSV's philosophies
- Provide Support Group Facilitators with current relevant information for their group members
- Collaborate with other DSV staff to develop and facilitate quality ongoing training and information sessions to families and other interested groups

Relationship Management Community

- Develop ongoing support relationships with families and Support Group Coordinators
- Develop and maintain working relationships with relevant community organisations and service providers
- Engage with relevant health professionals likely to interact with children and adults with Down syndrome and their families

Empowerment

- Work to empower individuals and families to build resilience and to source information and services relevant to their situation
- Enform DSV policy and position on issues for individuals with Down syndrome and their families

Other Duties and Responsibilities

- To contribute to grant applications which may generate funding for programs and activities relevant to families
- Coordinate and participate in the planning of family support events
- Effective record keeping and reporting to ensure transparent processes and sharing of information
- Undertake relevant training and professional development which enhance the incumbent's skills
- Attend key Down Syndrome Victoria events, where possible and within budgetary constraints
- Promote the value of Down Syndrome Victoria membership and fundraising events to families
- Support the infrastructure functions of Down Syndrome Victoria, including phone answering, meetings and liaison with other departments of the organisation
- Demonstrate reflective practice by participation in relevant supervision opportunities
- Undertake other administrative duties as appropriate as required by the CEO

SELECTION CRITERIA

Skills, Knowledge and Experience

Applicants should be able to demonstrate their experience and knowledge with regard to the following selection criteria:

Essential

- Tertiary qualifications in social work or a related field or significant work experience in a relevant field
- Ability to understand and work with both formal (services) and informal (volunteers) community networks and systems
- Understanding and commitment to principles of choice and control, and community inclusion for all abilities
- Understanding of community development principles
- Demonstrated experience of espousing strong positive regard and respect for a diverse range of families
- Understanding of current prenatal screening and testing options
- Demonstrated experience in, and contemporary understandings of, the disability sector in its current environment, including the transition to NDIS and service delivery
- Knowledge and understanding of the importance of the “early years” and Early Intervention principles
- Demonstrated understanding of child and adolescent development
- Understanding of the Victorian Education system and funding
- Highly developed communication and interpersonal skills
- A strong work ethic with a collaborative team approach
- Knowledge and experience in training and group facilitation, especially with vulnerable families and an understanding of adult learning theories
- Experience and understanding of providing support and services for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD)/Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) families.
- Demonstrated IT ability using MS Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, Excel and social media
- Current state/territory Australian driver’s license and willingness to use private vehicle if required. (Reimbursement of approved work related travel expenses are made)

Desirable:

- Experience of either raising a child with Down syndrome or an intellectual disability or the lived experience from a sibling or close family member

Personal Qualities

- Empathy:** Demonstrated ability to understand other points of view, a warm caring approach to people, ability to handle difficult people and situations and ability to understand and appreciate the needs of people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Integrity:** Communicates intentions, thoughts and feelings openly and directly. Has the ability to treat individuals fairly, even in extreme situations.
- Flexibility:** Demonstrates adaptability and flexibility to meet changing situations, is receptive to new ideas and perspectives, responds and adjusts easily to changing work demands and circumstances.
- Resilience:** Perseverance to achieve goals even in the face of obstacles, copes effectively with disappointment and setbacks, remains calm and in control under pressure.
- Teamwork:** Able to work as part of a team and with minimal supervision. Actively seeks to skill and empower members by giving them capacity to meet their own needs and self advocate.

Work Environment

This position is based in an office environment. The nature of this role and its responsibilities deems that some work will be required outside normal business hours. The incumbent will be expected to negotiate with their manager varied work hours to compensate for additional work commitments. Some carrying and lifting may be required. The successful applicant will initially be employed for a probationary period of three months. Acceptance of the position involves a willingness to work within the philosophy and policy direction of Down syndrome Victoria.

This document clarifies your day-to-day responsibilities, by signing below you agree to these responsibilities.

The successful applicant will be required to undergo satisfactory pre-employment checks including professional referees, completion of a satisfactory police records check and working with children check. Completion of the pre-existing Injury Declaration Form is also required.

I acknowledge and agree that the above job description is a true and accurate description of my current role.

Signed: _____ **Name:** _____ **Date:** _____
Employee

Down Syndrome Victoria
Phone 1300 658 873
employment@dsav.asn.au
Website www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au

About Down Syndrome Victoria

Down Syndrome Victoria is the state-wide peak membership organisation representing individuals with Down syndrome and their families. Down Syndrome Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1978 to provide support, information and resources to people with Down syndrome, their families and the broader community.

We are a whole-of-life service offering:

- personal support and information for families, especially when a new baby is born;
- advocacy, information, support, mentoring and training for adults with Down syndrome;
- an education support service to assist students with Down syndrome and their teachers in mainstream schools;
- peer support groups around Victoria;
- annual family fun day and other events;
- conference and education sessions;
- a regular journal;
- information and professional development for health and education professionals;
- a library of Down syndrome specific resources.

Down Syndrome Victoria is a member of the Down Syndrome Australia network of state associations. DSV relies on public and private sector support to fulfil its mission of empowering individuals to achieve a lifetime of meaningful inclusion in the community.

About Down syndrome

Down syndrome is the world's most common chromosome disorder and cause of intellectual disability. It is not an illness or disease, and occurs at conception. It occurs in one of every 700 to 900 births worldwide and affects people of all ethnic and social backgrounds. In Victoria, forty-five to sixty babies are born with Down syndrome each year.

The human body is made up of millions of cells, and in each cell there are 23 pairs of chromosomes, or 46 chromosomes in every cell. Down syndrome is caused by the occurrence of an extra chromosome, chromosome 21 (Down syndrome is also known as Trisomy 21). People with Down syndrome therefore have 47 chromosomes in their cells instead of 46. This results in a range of physical characteristics, health and development indications and some level of intellectual disability. Down syndrome is usually recognisable at birth and confirmed by a blood test.

Down syndrome affects, but does not determine, development. People with Down syndrome are each as unique as any other person, with their own talents, abilities, thoughts and interests. Everyone with Down syndrome experiences some delay in areas of their development, and some degree of learning disability. This will vary significantly from one individual to another, and what happens after birth will be far more important in shaping the outlook for any individual with Down syndrome than the occurrence of an extra chromosome at conception.

With appropriate health and education services and with the support and opportunities available today, people with Down syndrome can look forward to long and fulfilling lives as valued members of their families and the broader community.