

All about Freddie



This is a book about Freddie. The reason I have written this book is because Freddie has a condition known as Downs Syndrome. The book explains Downs Syndrome and how it affects Freddie and tells you about ways you can help him.



Do you know Freddie?

He's in the middle of the picture here with his brothers George on the right and Samuel on the left.



Freddie is 10 years old.

Here he is on his birthday blowing out his birthday cake with some of his friends.



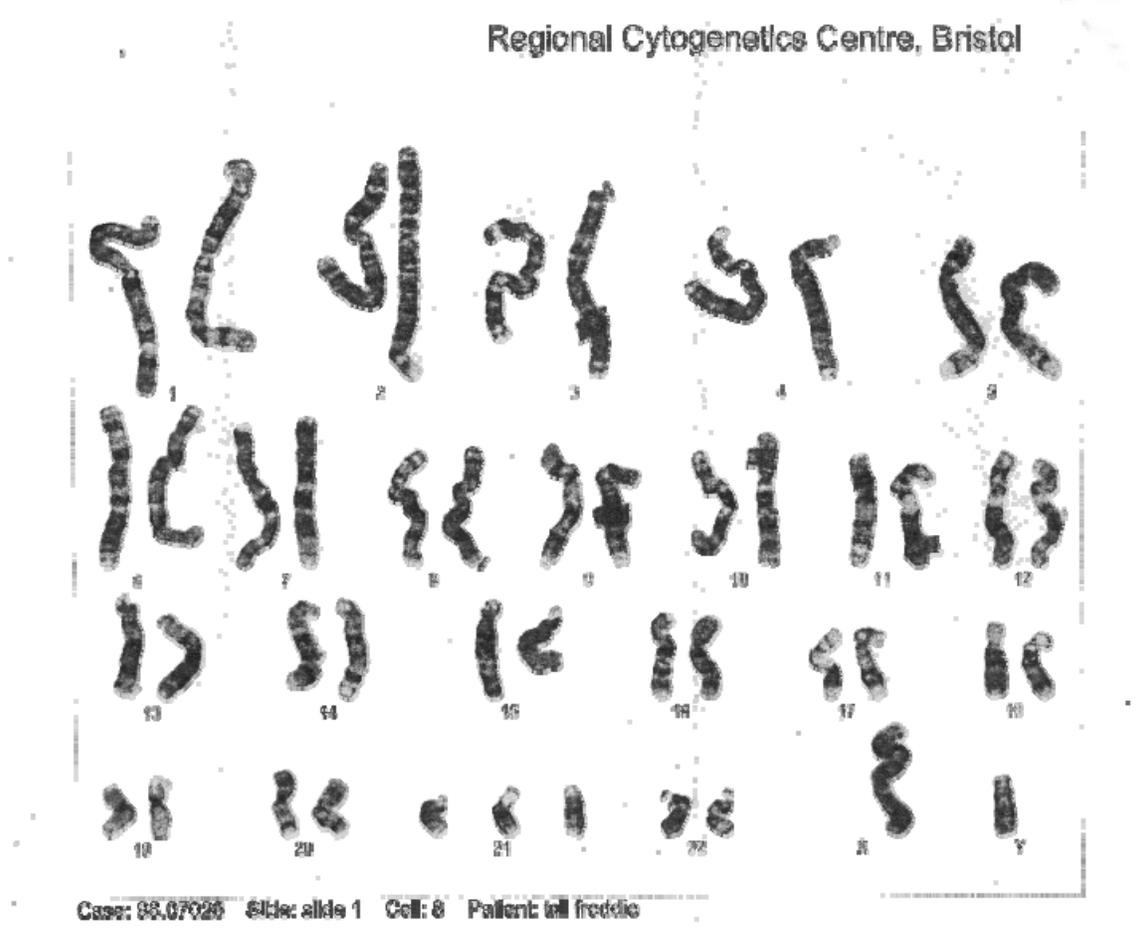
When he was born, Freddie was very ill and spent lots of time in hospital while the Doctors mended him.

Here he is in an incubator to keep him warm.

When he was 1 day old the Doctors told us that he has Downs Syndrome.

In your body you have instructions (called chromosomes) that tell your body how to work. Most people have 46 sets of instruction, but Freddie has 47.

The Doctors even gave us a picture of all his chromosomes. Can you see that they are all in pairs - except the ones with the number 21 under them? There, there are three. If this was a picture of your chromosomes, there would only be two.



The extra set of instructions means that his body got in a bit of muddle when it was making him.

People with Downs Syndrome are mainly just like other people but most have some things that are different.

In Freddie's case:-

- He doesn't hear very well
- He finds it hard to speak
- He finds it harder to learn new things
- He takes longer to learn things like reading and writing
- He was born with his tummy outside his body! (but it's been put back where it should be now)
- He finds it harder to walk
- His ears stick out a bit!
- His tongue is a bit large
- He sometimes behaves differently from other children



Hearing

Freddie doesn't hear very well, if you put your fingers in your ears and listen, that is about as good as Freddie's hearing gets. To help him hear better, he wears a hearing aids which plug directly into his skull. It sounds horrible! but doesn't hurt a bit and means that now he can hear as well as you do.



Freddie used to wear a hearing aid on a band over his head, but the implants are much better.

Because he couldn't hear until last year he can't talk very well, but he can understand everything you say to him and if you give him time can usually tell you what he wants, or show you.

Talking

Freddie can't talk very well and can be hard to understand. Sometimes he gets quite frustrated when people don't understand what he's trying to say. So long as he can hear you, he will understand most of the things you say to him. He uses a sign language called Makaton where he uses his hands to show what he's trying to say. There are signs for lots of words and Freddie knows hundreds.

Can you guess these? Answers at the bottom of the page!

a



b



c



d



e



f



g



h



i



a) sleep b) car c) biscuit d) juice e) boat f) swimming g) play
h) share i) friend

Playing

Like all children Freddie loves playing but can find it difficult to understand what children are playing and sometimes needs help to join in.

He often doesn't hear other children move onto new games, or doesn't realise they've gone and suddenly finds himself sadly on his own! You can help him by taking him with you and explaining, or even better, showing him what you're doing.

Here are some pictures of Freddie playing.



Sharing

Freddie knows how to share and exactly what the word “share” means, but you sometimes wouldn’t think so!

Sometimes when he wants to play with a toy, he may just take it off you because he wants it or wants to join in but doesn’t know the words to ask you.

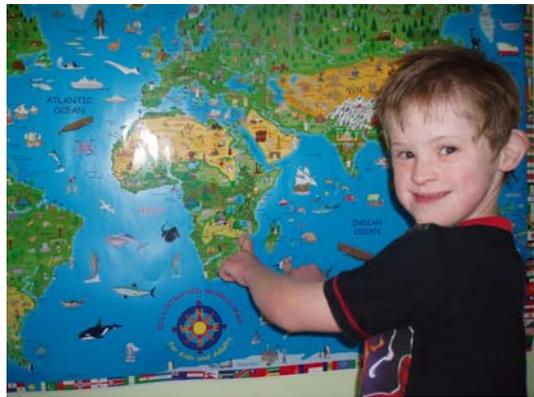
If you are playing a game two people can play (like with cars or trains) see if you can find another similar toy to give him so you can play together. If he’s just taken a toy off you, the best thing to do is to ask him to give it back by asking him to “share” and just putting your hand out. If he won’t, it’s best to ask an adult to come and help you!



It’s important to make sure you are fair and let him have a turn at things as well.

School

Freddie goes to a normal school just like other children. Because he sometimes needs help hearing and understanding what is going on he has a lady in the classroom to help him. Most of the time, he does the same lessons as the other children.



Friends

Freddie has lots of friends! His best friends are children who make an extra effort to help him join in their games and who take just a little bit of extra time to make sure he can hear them and understands what they are doing.

Here are some photos of Freddie with some of his friends.



Things to think about

Downs Syndrome can't be cured like a cold or a tummy ache and it doesn't hurt him, but it is something he'll have all his life.

Despite his differences, he is more like other children than different from them.

He loves playing and doing what everyone else is doing and if you can help him just a little bit he'll be very pleased and happy!



Extra information

If you've got any questions, please do ask me! 01934 832077 or email annabel@tall.org.uk

You might like to look at our family website which has more pictures and information.

You can also find out more about downs syndrome on the DSA website www.downs-syndrome.org.uk or you can call them on 0845 230 0372