



• A Letter to Nurses •

Although I am a registered nurse, all the education and professional experience did not prepare my husband and I for receiving a Down syndrome diagnosis for one of our twins. Those first few days after having a new baby are always a whirlwind of emotions. Being told your son/daughter has Down syndrome only intensifies those emotions, and sometimes the celebration of the new birth gets placed on hold. I cannot stress enough how important your role as a nurse is to a new parent whether this is their first child or their fifth.

The simple act of congratulating a family is the most caring thing you can do. In addition, families will benefit from you offering support and providing a positive attitude without ignoring the difficult diagnosis. Just know that your simple everyday nursing care and compassion is exactly what every parent needs.

As a nurse you play a role in helping parents form a lasting bond with their newest family member. Even if you do not feel knowledgeable about Down syndrome, having current information to give the parents along with a referral to our local tri-county organization Down Syndrome Association of the Valley (DSAV) will show you care. It is so important that this information is provided to the families during their hospital stay.

Many families like us often verbalize leaving the hospital feeling isolated and alone. Knowing they have DSAV as a resource will allow them to gain the knowledge regarding the diagnosis, the support of other families walking in their shoes and also the understanding that their children will live fulfilling and productive lives.

As a nurse, you are on the front line. Those first few days are difficult for families and you can play a vital role in helping them. Remember, nurses DO make a difference!

Thank You,

Amy DeSantis RN, BSN