

A Girl with Down Syndrome

Concepción Luna

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Have you ever seen the TV series, "Glee"? Or the movie, "Peanut Butter Falcon"? If so, you might remember two of the stars in those shows who have Down Syndrome. Read more about them in the box on the right.
2. Share what you know about Down syndrome.

She Attended My School

When I was young, I went to a boarding school in Mexico. The school was for girls. One of the girls had a disability. She had Down syndrome. She was about 8 years old. The school put her in a regular classroom. She acted differently than us. She walked slowly. She spoke with a lot of baby sounds. She played with us. Everyone was friendly with her.

Some Things Were Hard for Her

We understood that she was a little different. She always wanted to participate, but it was hard for her to join certain activities. She always tried to follow the rules, but sometimes she could not. We noticed it was hard for her to interact with others.

There Was No Special Education

In those days in Mexico, schools did not have special education programs. She did not receive special help. The school treated her like any other girl. They ignored her disability.

The U.S. Has More Resources

In the U.S., the law is that all children are guaranteed free and appropriate public education. Many children with Down syndrome attend public schools. They can be part of regular classrooms, and they also get special attention.

Famous Actors with Down Syndrome

Lauren Potter and Zach Gottsagen are actors who have starred in major TV shows and movies. Look them up and watch some clips of their acting on YouTube.



Be Together and Get Special Help

Going to school with this girl helped me to understand people with disabilities. It is good for everyone of all abilities to be together. It is also good for people to get special help if they need it.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What is the author's main point? How does it compare the main idea in the article on p. 18?
2. What do you think? How should schools be set up to accommodate everyone?

Concepción Luna is a student at the VITA Literacy Program at Oakton Community College in Skokie, Illinois. She is 78 years old. She grew up in Mexico City and moved to Chicago in her 30s. She worked at Carson, Pirie, Scott and Company in downtown Chicago, and she raised two boys. She feels very lucky to be part of her adult education program where she has learned a lot thanks to the instructors who are very dedicated to the students.