

Helpful Hints – for Parents of girls with Turner Syndrome

Please note that this list of hints is an ongoing project. If you would like to submit your favorite suggestions for parents, please email the Turner Syndrome Society of Canada at tssincan@web.net

At Home

- provide tools and utensils that are appropriately sized
- place needed items on shelves within easy reach:
 - - e.g. all items for common snacks
 - - fruit and vegetables on lower shelves of fridge
 - - cereal, crackers on lower shelves in pantry
- buy kitchen chairs or stools that have rungs, it's tiring when your feet never reach the floor
- provide an attractive foot rest to place beneath the feet
- keep foot stools handy in bathroom and kitchen - be sure they are easy to move and won't tip easily
- adapt clothes storage - construct rods at low height in bedroom and entry or suspend extra doweling in the closet, using a rope at each end to adjust height as needed
- laundry supplies - be sure ironing board can be adjusted to low height
- be tactful to switch your toddler from a baby seat to a booster seat, then to the seat of the car when she feels appropriate
- teach her how to manage large-scale things at same age as other siblings - this breeds confidence
 - - ride a bicycle - appropriate size
 - - lawn mower - both ride and push
 - - drive a car (a model with a sloping hood is best)
 - - ride a horse - remember, all jockeys are tiny, and among the world's best athletes!
- hunt for stores that sell age and style appropriate clothes and shoes
- let her try on different styles until she finds what flatters her or suits her personality
- compliment her often on her strengths or coping skills
- tell her and tell other people in front of her, how competent she is: well organized, responsible, reliable, good sense of humour
- never shut a door - if she is interested in any activity, give it your blessing! Trust her ingenuity to make it work.
- encourage her to try! Go for it!

In Her Relations with Siblings

- accord her responsibility and respect according to age not size
- avoid "passing up" clothes from younger siblings
- don't lump in with younger siblings and friends
- discuss carefully her feelings about sports equipment:
 - - e.g. do you find a smaller bike works better, even though siblings on larger model or does she prefer larger model?
- avoid "passing up" skates, skis and other expensive items
- insist siblings treat her with respect
- if she is sensitive to height jokes, explain to siblings how to respond when others tease or ask questions
- teach siblings to be aware of her courage and strengths

At School and Other Activities

- Don't baby her in any way due to height: - give her challenges - she loves responsibility - don't let other kids treat her like a baby - don't let kids carry her around - the pattern for respect and acceptance from kids is set right at the start, ask teacher to help
- Check out physical obstacles.
- Ask her if her desk/chair is too big; if so, be sure she is happy with adaptation - would she prefer a foot-stool; or no changes; or a chair with rungs; or a smaller desk? Most kids find a smaller desk humiliating.
- If she is in band at school, let her choose an instrument she finds comfortable.
- Be involved! Help at school or at Brownies, etc. This allows you to observe potential problems and subtly smooth out, both physical and social problems.
- Invite friends over especially on a one to one basis. This is very important as girls reach age 9 or so, when they start comparing physical appearances and isolating those who aren't "the same".
- Watch for opportunities where height is not an issue: gymnastics, skating, horseback riding, diving, skiing, water-skiing, badminton all favour small, nimble girls; 4-H Club, Brownies, crafts, public speaking, candy striping.
- Volunteering is a great confidence booster: - coaching younger kids at a favourite sport - reading aloud at an Extended Care facility - baby sitting

When She is a Teenager

- do not "baby"
- "expect" from her as you would anyone her age
- encourage her participation in groups or clubs with peers
- teach independence: change a tire, the oil in the vehicle
- - camping - pitch a tent, light Coleman stove/lantern
- - knowledge of outdoors
- - manage financial affairs
- - read a map
- - be a shrewd negotiator - don't be taken advantage of!
- reassure her that she is small but mighty
- help her explore avenues for career and activities where her skills shine