

Shining Star

Kyle Miller

My name is Brad Miller. I am 12 years old and I will be in the 7th grade this fall. I have two younger brothers. Steven is 10 and will be in the 5th grade and Kyle is 7 and will be in 1st grade this year. Kyle has Down syndrome.

I was asked to write about what it is like to have a brother with Down syndrome. I think there are a lot of misconceptions about people with down syndrome. One is that kids with Down syndrome are always happy. That is not true. Kyle has the same feelings as everyone else. Kyle can be happy as well as sad or angry. If he doesn't get his way, he will cry and be stubborn. It seems like my friends have different reactions when they see Kyle. Some act like Kyle is cool and let him do what he wants to keep him amused. Others just want him out of their hair. They ask me to take him inside so we won't be dragged down.

Another misconception is that people with Down syndrome can never learn. This is also not true. Kyle learns every day. He just finished regular kindergarten. He may take longer to learn things but he is very persistent and does learn. He knows letters and numbers and is beginning to read. I kind of admire him because he works so hard to learn things.

Actually, having a brother with Down syndrome can be hard at times. Kyle was born with a heart defect, but he is doing fine. He had to have surgery to repair his heart. We have had to attend many doctor appointments. He also needs speech and other therapies. We also need to keep a close eye on him because sometimes he wanders. He can be very stubborn when he doesn't understand what we want him to do.

Mostly, Kyle is fun to be around. He is a lot like my other brother and

me. He likes to wrestle in fun and play video games. (Actually, he picks up a controller and pretends to play.) He loves to be "with the guys." We have a lot of kids of all different ages in our neighborhood, and we always include Kyle when we play. He doesn't always understand the rules of the game, but he plays along anyway. He is just like any other kid. He just wants the chance to play with everyone.

Kyle also copies what we do. Steven and I have to be careful how we act, because Kyle will do the same thing. At night, I usually read. Kyle will also pick up one of his books and read it too. He models behavior a lot. He does exactly what I do. If I stand up next to a wall, he will stand the same way right next to me. If I jump on something, he will do the same thing as if we were playing "Follow the Leader." It's kind of funny. He enjoys being with me. He will just stand there if I'm talking to my friends, we play with him too. He loves it when we play. When he needs to get dressed, usually my mom or I will try to help him, but sometimes he just pushes us away and tries to do it himself. He does the same thing when he tries to tie his shoes. He wants to be independent and do things by himself.

It also seems like it's his nature to share. When he goes to get a popsicle or some other treat, he will get one for everyone in the family. My mom says we should all try to be like Kyle when it comes to sharing. He never had to learn to share. He just does it.

So, I think having a brother with Down syndrome isn't so bad.



We all help to keep an eye on him so that he says safe, but mostly, we just treat him like anyone else. Even though Kyle may look a little different, he is just like you and me. He has the same emotions as anyone else. The only difference I can see is that he is delayed in his learning progress. But that cannot stop me from loving him. He is just like my best friend.

-Brad Miller



Andy Zachman and Kyle Miller join over 100 DSANI members at a May Wards Game.