

## Expectations of Parents and Teachers on Language and Social Skills in Children with Down Syndrome

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**Abstract:** Children with Down syndrome are generally weak in the acquisition of language and social skills. To help them cope with these difficulties, it is necessary to implement early interventions at preschool level focusing on these two skills. Parents' and teachers' expectations on these children play a key role in determining ways of nurturing the children. The discrepancy of expectations of the two microsystems may bring about impacts on the children's acquisition of these two skills. This study aimed to investigate the expectations of parents and teachers on language and social skills in children with Down syndrome. This is a quantitative research using a cross-sectional survey research design. The samples consist of 43 children with Down syndrome from Johor Bahru and Kulai. The parent of each child and 6 teachers who work at the sampling sites were the respondents of this study who answered the set of questionnaires on expectation for each Down syndrome child. The findings of the study showed that expectations of parents on children with Down syndrome with regard to language skills are moderate to high and exceptionally high for social skills. Responses from teachers showed varied expectations from low to high for language skills in these children. While for social skills, their expectations are generally moderate to high. There is a weak but not significant positive relationship found between the expectations of parents and teachers on both language and social skills in children with Down syndrome. This shows that the level of agreement between parents' and teachers' expectations are very low. These results implied that teachers and parents should meet and discuss their expectations so that a mutually agreeable specific action plan could be developed to promote effective learning on language and social skills for the child.

### Keywords

Down Syndrome, Expectations, Social Skills, Language Skills

### INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, Ministry of Education is currently committed in raising the overall quality of provision and moving more students with special needs towards the inclusive education model based on current national policy and international best practices. According to Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025, a policy will be adopted by the Ministry whereby schooling options for students with special needs will be linked to competency levels. Special needs students who are high-functioning where he or she can cope with the mainstream curriculum and assessments will be encouraged to attend inclusive education programmes. Although the government of Malaysia recognises the importance of inclusive education as the most effective means of building an inclusive society and overcoming discriminatory attitudes, enrolment of children in such programmes however is low.

Language is a prerequisite and provides a foundation for the development of many cognitive, social, and motor skills (Whitman & Dewitt, 2011). Particularly, speaking and listening skills are fundamental, intrinsic, necessary and essential to all types of social interactions, all aspects of education, most types of work and many leisure activities (Lancaster, 2008). Basic language skills are essential for learning and development. These skills include responding appropriately to verbal instructions and making verbal requests. Furthermore, language plays a key role in regulating children's behaviour and teaching them how to regulate their own behaviour. Language acts as a tool for the children to communicate their desires and to respond to others' needs around them (Whitman & Dewitt, 2011). To achieve the best outcomes possible, skills in areas such as math, literacy, and independent living will not assure successful outcomes for children in the absence of adequate social skills. This is because social skills

form the basis for social competence (Bremer & Smith, 2004). Semrud-Clikeman (2007) described social competence as an ability to take another's perspective regarding a situation, to learn from past experience and apply that learning to protean social landscape. Social competence is crucial to children as it is the foundation where the perceptions of their own behaviour and the expectations for future interactions with others be built upon. Furthermore, well-developed social skills can help children with disabilities develop strong and positive peer relationships as well as succeed in school. Social skills also support the positive development of healthy relationships with family members and peers. Gresham and friends (2001) noted that the key criteria in defining many high-incidence disabilities is deficits in social skills which hinder the academic progress of the students. Therefore, a proactive approach to minimize the impact of these types of disabilities on school success is to help these students learn social skills.

For children with Down Syndrome (DS), a slower progress of development in various areas including motor, social, communication, cognition and self-help is evident when comparing to normally developing individual. Different developmental areas might receive different developmental impacts from the syndrome. Children with DS are like other children with developmental disorders. They are generally suffered from language and social skills acquisition other than delayed physical and intellectual development (Thomas, 2010). These known impacts of DS may affect the education of the individual. Apparently other than academic achievement, language and social skills in children with DS should be regarded as equally important since these two skills greatly determine the inclusion possibility of the children and their educational outcomes. Early years education for every child with DS is a good way to assure them to be able to benefit from their formal education later and to achieve a positive transition. Owing to the significant deficits in the area of language and communication in children with DS, the essentiality of these skills for school and life success, and to promote the full participation goals of inclusion, language and communication have been emphasized as key skills to target ever since the beginning of the history of early intervention for children with DS (Spiker, 2011). More positive outcomes can be predicted for children who are participating in early intervention where early social interactions provide the context for language acquisition (Mahoney, Boyce, Fewell, Spiker & Wheeden (1998)). Therefore, to get the children with DS ready for the inclusion setting, prior training at preschool level in language and social skills is necessary.

The importance of parent involvement in early intervention has been recognized from the beginning by early intervention professionals. Parents have

been increasingly seen as partners with professionals in assessing, planning and implementing program and advocacy efforts (Spiker, 2011). This clearly shows that in spite of where the education of children with DS takes place, parents along with teachers are at the heart of ensuring a good quality of life for the children. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory of development indicates that the development of young children is affected by socialisation settings (1989 as cited in Woolfolk, 2014). For children with DS, the two microsystems – parents and teachers, play a crucial role in assisting the children's growth because they are whom the children depend on in their daily lives. Therefore, both their parents and teachers need to have correct belief, perception and expectation on these children that is different from public's mistaken belief that refers individuals with DS as having a handicap (Foreman, 2009). Expectation is important to be studied as one's expectations can influence the behaviour or performance of another person. Expectations expressed by an authority figure such as parent or teacher either verbally or nonverbally will always give an impact to the supervised person (e.g. the children). Therefore, if parents and teachers have inappropriate achievement expectations for individuals based on their cognitive ability, they will do what they can to realize their prophecy regardless of the children's actual ability. This will definitely affect the children's intellectual development, as well as the children's achievement and attitudes (McGrew & Evans, 2004).

Therefore, agreement between parents' and teachers' expectations on children with DS is necessary to provide the children with an appropriate and unbiased IEP tailored to their specific learning needs either at home or at school, specifically on language and social skills. The disparity of expectations between parents and teachers might otherwise cause stress and educational problems in the children due to things learnt at home and at school are unanimous. For children with DS to acquire basic language and social skills at preschool level and be successfully included into mainstream classrooms later at primary school time, more effort should be given to look into the agreement of expectations between parents and teachers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study used cross-sectional survey research design in order to assess the expectation of parents and teachers on language and social skills in children with DS. This study was conducted at Kiwanis Down Syndrome Foundation centres in Johor Bahru (KDSF JB) and Kulai (KDSF Kulai). The populations of this study are all parents and teachers of children with DS aged 4 to 8 in Johor Bahru and Kulai, Johor. The respondents were chosen via purposive sampling based on their knowledge about DS. A total of 43 children aged 3

to 8 attending the centres were chosen as the samples for this study. The parents of all the children were targeted as the respondents as well as all the six teachers working there. This study was carried out using a survey questionnaire as the research instrument. A tri-lingual (English, Malay and Chinese) questionnaire was developed and modified based on the IEA Pre-primary Project Expectations Questionnaire by High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2007). The questionnaire was divided into three sections namely Section A, B, and C. Section A was designed to collect the demographic information from the samples; Section B was aimed to explore the expectations of parents and teachers on the listed language subskills for the particular children; Section C was constructed to investigate parent's and teacher's expectations on the child's social subskills.

### Results

The children with DS targeted for this study are from age 3 to 8 with the majority of 3 and 4 years old (51.2%). Female children have made up the majority of the target population which is 65.2%

while male children are 34.9%. The majority of the parents (79%) are female and Malay (81.4%). Most of them (76.7%) fall into the age ranging from 31 to 45. Seventy-two percent of them having monthly income in between RM 1000 to RM 5000. Almost all of them are educated with 58.1% of them having at least a pre-university, certificate, or diploma qualification. There is 23.3% parents who claimed that they had received training on teaching or taking care of individuals with DS or SEN before. All of the teachers participated in this study are female and a majority of them is Malay (66.7%). Most of them have a pre-university, certificate, or diploma qualification. There is only one with bachelor degree. Four of the teachers have teaching experience of 5 years or less and another 2 with 6 or more years of experience. All five teachers except one have underwent training on teaching and taking care of individuals with DS or SEN before. Overall, the parents hold a moderate to high level of expectation that their child with DS is able to achieve the language skills mentioned. The percentage of total score under moderate level of expectation is 44.2% while for high level of expectation is 55.8%.

*Table 1-Expectations of parents on language skills in children with Down syndrome*

No	Question	Percentage				
		VU	U	NS	L	VL
1	Engage in conversation with peers and adults	0%	4.7%	4.7%	62.8%	27.9%
2	Pronounce words correctly	2.3%	2.3%	20.9%	53.5%	20.9%
3	Use new words properly	2.3%	4.7%	23.3%	51.2%	18.6%
4	Describe an experience clearly	0%	11.6%	44.2%	30.2%	14.0%
5	Ask questions when he/she is confused or curious	0%	7.0%	32.6%	37.2%	23.3%
6	Explain his/her point of view	0%	7.0%	46.5%	41.9%	4.7%
7	Retell stories or make up his/her own stories	2.3%	7.0%	32.6%	46.5%	11.6%
8	Answer questions about a story	0%	2.3%	41.9%	41.9%	14.0%
9	Communicate his/her feelings in words	0%	0%	16.3%	67.4%	16.3%

The overall expectation of parents on their child with DS regarding social skills is very high as the total score that falls under the high expectation level is as many as 83.7%. Only 16.3% falls within the

moderate range of expectation. The same distribution is also applied to the parents' expectations on the children's social skills with peers.

*Table 2 - Expectations of parents on social skills with peers in children with Down syndrome*

N	Question	Percentage				
		VI	U	NS	L	VL
1	Initiate interactions with other children and to form friendships	0%	0%	2.3%	53.5%	44.2%
2	Play cooperatively with other children	0%	0%	4.7%	46.5%	48.8%
3	Share toys	0%	0%	9.3%	32.6%	58.1%
4	Correct his/her mistake with a peer (e.g., to admit he/she is wrong, to apologize to give back a toy)	0%	7.0%	23.3%	46.5%	23.3%
5	Treat other children's work or belongings with respect	0%	2.3%	25.6%	51.2%	20.9%
6	Understand that other children have different opinions	0%	0%	53.5%	32.6%	14.0%
7	Offer help to another child in difficulty	0%	0%	23.3%	44.2%	32.6%
8	Comfort another child in distress	0%	0%	18.6%	48.8%	32.6%
9	Express anger or frustration with peers appropriately	0%	0%	30.2%	46.5%	23.3%

When comes to the expectations of parents on their child with DS with respect to social skills with adults, the result obtained is exceptionally high. 93% of the total score of expectation for this skills that falls under the level of high. While the remaining

7% is within the moderate level of expectation. Generally, over 70% of the children were rated as likely and very likely to achieve all the subskills under the social skills with adults at the age of 10.

*Table 3 - Expectations of parents on social skills with adults in children with Down syndrome*

N	Question	Percentage				
		VU	U	NS	L	VL
1	Initiate interactions with adults	0%	0%	4.7%	60.5%	34.9%
2	Be quiet when asked	4.7%	9.3%	14.0%	39.5%	32.6%
3	Be polite	0%	0%	23.3%	41.9%	34.9%
4	Listen carefully to adults	0%	2.3%	7.0%	51.2%	39.5%
5	Be cooperative with adults	0%	0%	9.3%	51.2%	39.5%
6	Follow directions	0%	0%	9.3%	41.9%	48.8%
7	Correct his/her mistake with an adult (e.g., to admit when he/she is wrong, to apologize, to help clean up his/her spill)	0%	2.3%	11.6%	46.5%	39.5%
8	Be honest with adults	0%	2.3%	20.9%	39.5%	37.2%
9	Treat adults respectfully	0%	2.3%	14.0%	41.9%	41.9%

The analyses of data collected from the teachers show that the expectations of teachers on language skills in the children with DS were varied, ranging from low to high level with the most at moderate

level. The highest expectation of the teachers on these children was on the “engage in conversation with peers and adults” subskill.

*Table 4 - Expectations of teachers on language skills in children with Down syndrome*

No	Question	Percentage				
		VU	U	NS	L	VL
1	Engage in conversation with peers and adults	2.3%	9.3%	18.6%	46.5%	23.3%
2	Pronounce words correctly	2.3%	14.0%	16.3%	44.2%	23.3%
3	Use new words properly	4.7%	14.0%	27.9%	34.9%	18.6%
4	Describe an experience clearly	4.7%	27.9%	41.9%	20.9%	4.7%
5	Ask questions when he/she is confused or curious	4.7%	30.2%	27.9%	34.9%	2.3%
6	Explain his/her point of view	7.0%	41.9%	30.2%	18.6%	2.3%
7	Retell stories or make up his/her own stories	7.0%	25.6%	32.6%	27.9%	7.0%
8	Answer questions about a story	2.3%	16.3%	39.5%	27.9%	14.0%
9	Communicate his/her feelings in words	4.7%	16.3%	25.6%	30.2%	23.3%

The expectations of teachers pertaining to the social skills achievement of the children with DS at the age of 10 is moderate to high as a whole, in which 48.8% at moderate level and 51.2% at high level.

Half of the children (51.2%) were expected highly from their teacher in achieving the social skills with peers listed at the age of 10, where another 46.5% children were expected moderately.

*Table 5 - Expectations of teachers on social skills with peers in children with Down syndrome*

N	Question	Percentage				
		VU	U	NS	L	VL
1	Initiate interactions with other children and to form friendships	0%	4.7%	7.0%	55.8%	32.6%
2	Play cooperatively with other children	0%	7.0%	7.0%	53.5%	32.6%
3	Share toys	0%	2.3%	4.7%	55.8%	37.2%
4	Correct his/her mistake with a peer (e.g., to admit he/she is wrong, to apologize, to give back a toy)	4.7%	9.3%	41.9%	34.9%	9.3%
5	Treat other children’s work or belongings with respect	0%	2.3%	25.6%	65.1%	7.0%
6	Understand that other children have different opinions	4.7%	20.9%	58.1%	14.0%	2.3%
7	Offer help to another child in difficulty	0%	23.3%	23.3%	37.2%	16.3%
8	Comfort another child in distress	2.3%	27.9%	20.9%	37.2%	11.6%
9	Express anger or frustration with peers appropriately	2.3%	23.3%	27.9%	27.9%	18.6%

Finally, the teachers’ expectations on social skills with adults in the children with DS are found to be slightly high, with 62.8% of the children being expected highly and 37.2% being expected moderately.

Table 6 - Expectations of teachers on social skills with adults in children with Down syndrome

No	Question	Percentage				
		VU	U	NS	L	VL
1	Initiate interactions with adults	2.3%	7.0%	20.9%	30.2%	39.5%
2	Be quiet when asked	0%	4.7%	9.3%	41.9%	44.2%
3	Be polite	0%	0%	14.0%	55.8%	30.2%
4	Listen carefully to adults	0%	2.3%	18.6%	48.8%	30.2%
5	Be cooperative with adults	0%	7.0%	16.3%	41.9%	34.9%
6	Follow directions	0%	9.3%	16.3%	48.8%	25.6%
7	Correct his/her mistake with an adult (e.g., to admit when he/she is wrong, to apologize, to help clean up his/her spill)	2.3%	18.6%	32.6%	27.9%	18.6%
8	Be honest with adults	0%	18.6%	32.6%	37.2%	11.6%
9	Treat adults respectfully	0%	11.6%	23.3%	32.6%	32.6%

Spearman's rank correlation analyses were carried out to determine the agreement between the expectations of parents and teachers on language and social skills in children with DS. Analyses yielded insignificant results for both the skills. Hence, the

null hypotheses are failed to be rejected and there is no significant relationship between the parents' and teachers' expectations on language and social skills in children with DS.

Table 7 - Spearman's rank correlation analysis on the relationship between the expectations of parents and teachers on language skills in children with Down syndrome

	Correlation Coefficient	p-Value
Spearman's rho	.259	.094

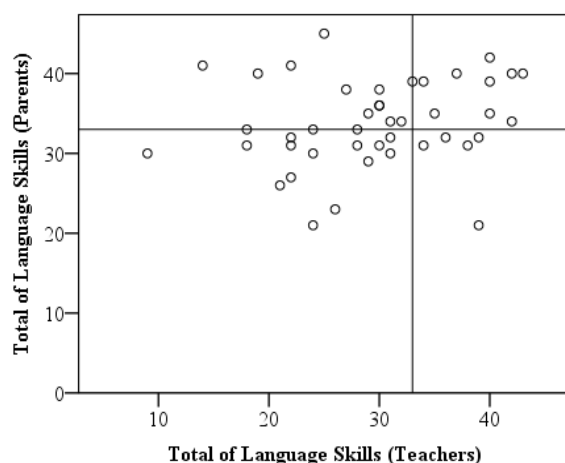


Figure 1 - Scatter plot on the expectations of parents and teachers on language skills in children with Down syndrome

### Discussion

The expectations of parents on language skills in their child with DS is moderate to high. Despite the problems children with DS are facing, where there are more variables in their errors of sound production and difficulties in understanding new or subject specific vocabulary (Chapman and Hesketh, 2001; APPGDS, 2012), the parents still have a high expectation on their child regarding the subskills "pronounce words correctly" and "use new words properly". For the subskills "answer questions about a story", "retell stories or make up his/her own stories", "ask questions when he/she is confused or curious", "explain his/her point of view" and

"describe an experience clearly", almost or slightly more than half of the parents are having high expectations on their child regarding these skills yet at the same time, there is also a substantial number of children whom their ability to achieve these skills is uncertain to their parents. Most probably these parents have already encountered the difficulties experienced by the children with DS before in learning from listening, coping with long sentences, word finding, forming sentences and understanding instructions (APPGDS, 2012).

Basically, the parents have higher expectations on their child with regard to social skills either with peers or with adults than language skills. These

expectations are congruent with the fact that social understanding and relatedness are relative strengths of children with DS (Fidler and Daunhauer, 2011) although they suffer from significant delayed language and speech. It was the delayed development of language that renders them to rely on non-verbal skills for a longer time than typical children (Buckley, 2000). The way of forming interpersonal relationships in children with DS is much the same as compared to their typically developing peers (Freeman and Kasari, 2002). There is only one social subskill with peers of which half of the parents rated are not sure for their child's ability to achieve it at the age of 10, "understand that other children have different opinions". This may be due to the subtle observations made by their parents on the children that lead to the uncertainty. This uncertainty is confirmed by Thompson and Evans (2005) where children who do not have well developed language skills would face difficulty in understanding received information and to extend their thinking. Therefore, it is understandable if the children with DS could not understand that other children have different opinions.

In general, the parents hold a moderate to high level of expectation that their child with DS is able to achieve the language and social skills mentioned at the age of 10. This is in accordance with what Buckley (2002) accounted for that parents evaluate their DS child's progress against the expectations for children with DS and feel positive about the child's progress. The parents who participated in this study were mostly female (79%) who are the mothers to the children. The high expectations that these mothers hold towards their child is different from the finding of the study by Wishart (2001) who reported that even the mothers with a child with DS readily endorsed a lesser degree stereotype, as well as the research by Lipp, Laura Kolberg, Martini, Fernanda de Oliveira, & Oliveira-Menegotto, Lisiane Machado de. (2010) in which the mothers had presented difficulty to construct positive expectations with regard to the development and schooling of their children. The study by Skotko, B. G., Levine, S. P., Goldstein, R. (2011) on perspectives from mothers and fathers of having a son or daughter with DS showed that some of the parents learned to set higher expectations for their child. This is somewhat in congruence with the high expectations that the parents in this study hold towards their child. On the other hand, the findings of this study may somewhat in accordance with the finding of a research cited in the work of Cunningham (2006) where the mothers of children with DS had unrealistic expectations with regard to the child's capacity to respond to instructions and tasks.

According to Garcia and Magnuson (2000), religion is one of the way in which cultures differ concerning their understandings of and responses to

disability. Belief systems about the perceptions of developmental disability form an integral part to parents' views of the effect of their child with DS on their lives. The high expectations of the parents in this study is mainly owing to the religious beliefs and convictions among the parents who are mostly Malay (81.5%) and hence Muslim that the child is the gift from God and predestined with a divine purpose. A sense of confidence and hope might then be gained through the beliefs and convictions within the parents and might subsequently exert positive influence on their perceptions and acceptance of having a child with DS Chan, K. G., Abdullah, K. L. and Ling, H. K. (2014). Such beliefs could have a positive influence on the parents' expectations on their child's development, which includes language and social skills acquisition.

As in the study by Mohammed Nawi, A., Ismail, & Abdullah, S. (2013), parents with higher education levels were found to have a more positive result in the family outcomes. Parental adjustment is a crucial element in influencing the perception as well as the expectation of the parents on the child. Higher level of parenting stress is surely associated with more negative expectations. Many of the parents in this study are assumed to not having parenting stress that may bring forth various disadvantages such as job opportunities and financial resources that may cause them decreased level of accessibility to practical support and assistance in alleviating strain of care demand (Chan *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, higher educational level in parents contributes to the gain of more knowledge on DS and higher monthly income which lead to less parenting stress that subsequently helps promote the positive expectations towards the children.

The expectations of teachers on the language skills acquisition ability of the children with DS varied from low to high. A substantial number of children does not give confidence to their teachers that they are able to achieve the language skills at the age of 10. This is mostly caused by the personal experience of the teachers with the children in which the children failed to perform related tasks or subskills. In fact it is common that the children with DS experience difficulties in speaking intelligibly, learning from listening, coping with long sentences, word finding, and forming sentences (Lancaster, 2008; APPGDS, 2012). From their slow progress shown, the teachers conjectured the children's future potential and hence lead to such low expectations on the children. With regard to the acquisition ability of the overall social skills, the teachers put a higher expectation on the children as compared to the language skills. However, teachers still doubted DS children's ability in understanding that others have different opinions since children who do not have well developed language skills would face difficulty in understanding received information and to extend their thinking (Thompson and Evans, 2005). Besides

that, for the subskills “correct his/her mistake with a peer”, “offer help to another child in difficulty”, “comfort another child in distress”, and “express anger or frustration with peers appropriately”, half of the children were rated as unlikely to achieve or not sure by their teachers. The finding was supported by Martin and his colleagues’ study that the expressive language of the children with DS is found to be normally weaker than their receptive language (Martin, Klusek, Estigarribia & Roberts (2009). Overall, the expectations of teachers on the children with DS with regard to their ability in acquiring the language and social skills mentioned varied from low to high. The variation in expectations may be subjected to the teachers’ bias that underestimated the achievement of low achievers and have least accurate prediction pertaining to the responses of low achievers but overestimated that of high achievers, as discovered by Gottfredson and his team (1995). Although these teachers were specifically trained to teach SEN children, particularly children with DS, it is unknown whether the more potential insidious forms of stereotype-based expectation do exist in the mindset of the teachers towards the children as a result of the attachment of diagnostic educational or medical disability labels (e.g. DS, intellectual disabilities, learning disabled) to the children which is the major source of lowered teacher expectations (McGrew and Evans, 2004). Anyhow, the research by Gilmore, Campbell & Cuskelly (2003). showed that special education teachers are likely to have more accurate knowledge about disability, given the training and experience they had underwent. With the reasonably accurate beliefs, the teachers are able to make judgment regarding the particular child’s language and social skills development. In addition, the expectations of teachers also hinge on their experience of working with children with DS in education (Buckley, Bird, Sacks, & Archer (2007)). Moreover, knowledge of past performance and test results help in accurately assessing the children that can bring about expectations that are just right for them (Cotton, 1989).

Lack of specialist knowledge on DS may result in some cases to have affected teacher’s expectations and hence the expectations with regard to the language and social skills acquisition abilities of the children with DS varied considerably. Inaccurate knowledge about DS and pessimistic expectations on the possible developmental outcomes for children with DS might have caused the particular development milestones achieved at the age of 10 be underestimated by the teacher. These were in accordance with the findings in the studies by Petty and Sadler (1996) and Wishart and Manning (1996). Ironically, the lack of specialist knowledge may also cause unrealistic expectations in the teacher towards the children with DS who overestimated what the average children with DS could do, and what the

children with DS were likely to achieve few years later as discovered by Cunningham (2006). This is most probably due to the teachers’ expectations not grounded on accurate information to be realistic.

A weak and insignificant positive relationship is found between the parents’ and teachers’ expectations on language and social skills in the children with DS. The agreement between the parents’ and teachers’ expectations was very low. The differences in expectations noted between parents and teachers may be due to their different sociocultural and educational backgrounds aforementioned, as well as their interactions with the children across different situations and settings. For the section of language skills, there is a child who was rated as unlikely to achieve all the subskills listed at the age of 10 by her teacher. As the child is already 7 years old, the rating of her teacher regarding her language ability suggests that this child might have serious language development problems. However, her parent put a higher expectation on her that she might achieve some of the subskills at the age of 10 and some other subskills left to uncertainty. There is a one and only case where the teacher’s expectations were higher than the parent for a child with regard to her language skills. This girl is only 4 years old but her parent had denied her ability to achieve some subskills at the age of 10. While her teacher had put a high expectation on her to be very likely to achieve almost all the subskills. This might be explained as the teacher’s expectations were based on her positive experiences with children having the same kind of language problems before where the children have apparent progress in the language skills acquisition as they grow up. Yet the child’s parent has no much confidence with his daughter’s ability.

Another 2 cases pertaining to social skills with peers, the parents affirmed that their child is very likely to achieve the subskills mentioned at the age 10. While to the expectation of the teachers, there are still some subskills that the child is unlikely to achieve at the age of 10 or their abilities are inexplicable. Regarding the child’s acquisition ability of social skills with peers, teachers might have had a more accurate expectation than the parents since the teachers are able to made expectations according to what they observe at the centres on the interactions between the children with other children. There are 3 children who were being put higher expectations by their parents on language and social skills with peers than their teachers. These children have some degree of language developmental problem more severe than their peers with DS according to the teachers’ expectations who are believed to be more accurate owing to their equipment with more knowledge on special education. However, the questions on would the affirmation of the teachers that the children are very unlikely to achieve the language skills be a kind of

underestimation of the children's ability and the parents' high expectations on the children be an unrealistic optimistic belief are left to the future research.

Finally, there are 4 children who are being put high expectations for almost all the language and social skills by their parents yet their teachers did not have the same expectations as their parents. Apart from holding a positive expectation on them, the parents should cooperate with the teachers to develop the language skills of these children. The expectations of the teachers on the social skills acquisition ability in these children at the age of 10 were also more on unsure and unlikely. There might be a relation of the difficulties in language acquisition to the expressive language required in the social skills acquisition that lead to such expectations by the teachers.

### Conclusion

Based on the results, the researcher concluded that parents hold moderate to high and exceptionally high expectations on their child with DS for language and social skills respectively. The expectations of teachers on the children with DS varied from low to high for language skills and generally moderate to high for social skills. Lastly, there was no significant relationship between the expectations of parents and teachers regarding language and social skills in children with DS which indicates a low level of agreement between parents' and teachers' expectations. Although this study pioneered the exploration of parents' and teachers' expectations regarding the language and social skills in children with DS, there is a lot of room for additional discovery on the topic. There are several recommendations that can be implemented in the future research. First, the samples of this study were taken only from private DS centres. It is recommended that future research can be conducted at government, government aided and other private preschools that accommodate children with DS. Depending on the purpose of the research, the scope can be as wide to include the whole nation of those who are related to the study in order to provide a more reliable result. It is hence highly recommended that qualitative methodology such as interview be incorporated into the study to gain more insight of the factors that underlie the expectations of parents and teachers in order to have a thorough view regarding the topic. Future research can assess the accuracy of the expectations of parents and teachers on language and social skills in children with DS by comparing their expectations with the developmental milestones of children with DS to ensure that their expectations are realistic and in line with the child's growth.

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