

CASE STUDY

Parents Ask, the Canadian Down Syndrome Society Answers With Search Ads and YouTube Videos



When expecting parents learn that their child has Down syndrome, what's next? The hours and days following a diagnosis are critical for parents who may not know much about the genetic disorder; they may have hundreds of questions and don't know where to get started. According to the [Canadian Down Syndrome Society](#) (CDSS), one of the first places parents turn for answers after they receive their diagnosis is Google Search.

CDSS looks to common search questions for answers

While there are vast resources available to answer questions about the syndrome, CDSS's creative agency, [FCB](#), noticed that answers online tended to be clinical in nature and lacking in warmth.

"Just by casting real people with Down syndrome, we started to dispel some misconceptions about the developmental disability. But what made this campaign effective was ensuring people find the videos first when they turn to Google looking for answers."

— Nancy Crimi-Lamanna, CCO at FCB Canada

FCB also saw that common search terms turned up organic results from doctors, charities, and government organizations—and only a few ads. "There are lots of websites offering the medical perspective, but they typically use very clinical terms that don't capture the emotional and human side of the Down syndrome story," said Kirk Crowther, the CDSS's national executive director.

About Canadian Down Syndrome Society

- The Canadian Down Syndrome Society (CDSS) is a non-profit organization promoting awareness, advocacy, and support for people with Down syndrome.
- Headquarters: Alberta, Canada
- [cdss.ca](#)

Goals

- Reach expecting parents in the moments after they receive a Down syndrome diagnosis
- Dispel misconceptions about Down syndrome

Approach

- Monitor search trends to identify common keywords that parents in Canada ask after getting a Down syndrome diagnosis
- Answer those questions with search ads that lead to YouTube videos featuring answers from real people with Down syndrome, instead of a clinical response

Results

- 455M impressions
- 240K questions answered
- 893% increase in referral traffic to the Canadian Down Syndrome Society website

FCB found that many of the questions pertained to more than just clinical facts around Down syndrome. Parents sought to understand whether someone with Down syndrome could ride a bike, among other questions that required a new perspective.

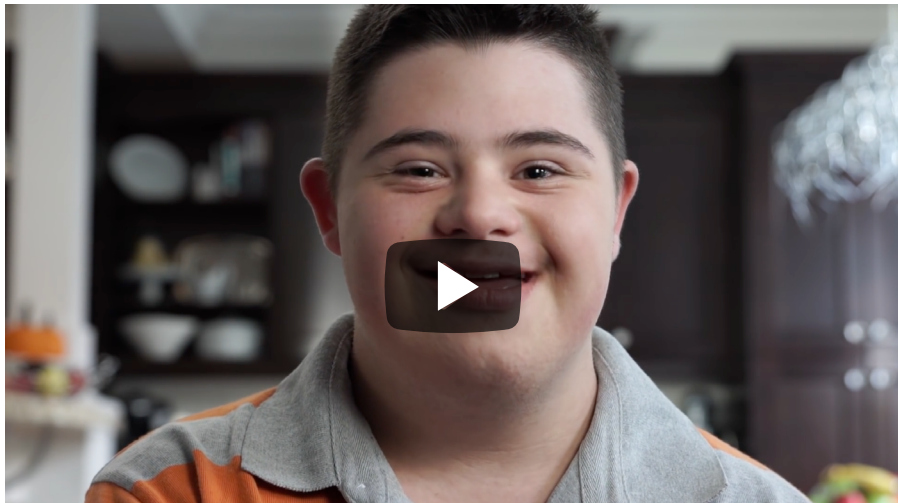
FCB saw a unique opportunity to reach parents in the moments they need answers most—and from the people they'd most want to hear from—with its "[Down Syndrome Answers](#)" campaign.

CDSS dispels misconceptions about Down syndrome with YouTube videos

Google helped FCB pull top queries about Down syndrome and then narrowed down those queries even further to find questions that expecting parents who have just received a diagnosis most often ask. Knowing parents' most pressing questions, the CDSS and FCB created a series of [42 YouTube videos](#) featuring answers from real people with Down syndrome. The touching—and informative—videos answer common questions such as "[What is Down syndrome?](#)" and "[Can a person with Down syndrome learn to read?](#)"



Down Syndrome Answers: Can a person with Down syndrome learn to read?



Down Syndrome Answers: When do babies with Down syndrome learn to talk?

CDSS's media agencies, [Initiative](#) and [Reprise](#), set up an [AdWords](#) campaign to serve the videos next to commonly searched terms. Thus, when expecting parents turned to search to ask questions such as, "[When do babies with Down syndrome learn to talk?](#)," they were served helpful ads right in that moment.

"Just by casting real people with Down syndrome, we started to dispel some misconceptions about the developmental disability," said Nancy Crimi-Lamanna, CCO at FCB Canada. "But what made this campaign effective was ensuring people find the videos first when they turn to Google looking for answers."

Answering 240,000 questions (and counting) with search and video ads

Since the launch, the campaign has received 455 million impressions and answered 240,000 questions about Down syndrome. The CDSS considers that a job well done, given that 25,800 Down syndrome diagnoses are given to pregnant mothers in North America each year.



455M+
impressions



240,000+
questions answered



893%
increase in
website traffic

The CDSS's site has seen a 893% increase in web referral traffic and racked up great [local](#), [international](#), and [ad press](#), including winning a Webby Award in [Best Use of Data Driven Media](#). The CDSS and FCB are energized by the creative potential of marrying search and video ads. The campaign will live on on YouTube, continuing to answer pressing questions about what living with Down syndrome is really like.

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