

Hi, my name is Katherine Long, but most people call me Kate. I am a developmental science Ph.D. student at Florida International University and a licensed occupational therapist. I worked for 6 years as an occupational therapist during which I realized the extent of the inequities faced by the disability community in society. Currently, my research focuses on Down syndrome, motor skills, and independent living. I am working on a mixed-methods project investigating how people with Down syndrome transition to adulthood. The transition from school-based services to community-based services is a critical period for children with Down syndrome. After age 21, emerging adults with Down syndrome lose special education services and are left to navigate multiple complex systems serving adults with disabilities. In my research, I ask questions like “What skills are most important as children with Down syndrome become adults?” “How do motor abilities impact independent living?” and “What do people with Down syndrome need to participate fully in their communities?” My hope is that the answers to these questions will help guide educators and therapists who support people with Down syndrome and their families.