

## Is routine Down syndrome screening a social justice issue?

Upon delivering my first child 11 years ago, I heard the words “Down syndrome,” and my world collapsed. Visions of children sitting passively in a corner watching life go by, not participating, kept me awake those first nights as a mom.

It didn’t take me long, though, to figure out that my ideas were based on negative, outdated information that had nothing to do with the reality of life with Down syndrome today. My daughter April is an active, outgoing girl. She’s my nature child, wildly passionate about anything with four legs. Although April uses few words, she’s a master communicator. Through her, I’ve learned that Down syndrome is not the scary, terrible condition it’s made out to be.

But while governments (rightly) ban gender selection, selective abortion continues to be encouraged for children with Down syndrome. In the United States and abroad, screenings are a routine part of health-care programs, and the result is the near-elimination of these children.

With DNA tests called MaterniT21 being popularly referred to as the “Down test,” the primary aim of testing needs no further explanation. I detest the fear that is cultivated by medical professionals, the medical industry and politicians about giving birth to a child with Down syndrome. Down syndrome does not cause human suffering. The real danger lies in voices that claim our children need to be tested before we can decide who is worthy of life. Women are not incubators of socially preferable descendants.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Down syndrome screening isn’t about public health. It’s about eliminating a group of people.](#)**