

Intellectual Disability

Children with intellectual disability have difficulties learning and communicating. Every individual is different and these statements are general and may not apply exactly to your child.

Generally, people with:

- **Mild** intellectual disability can learn to do some of the things taught at school and will generally be able to live independently as adults.
- **Moderate** intellectual disability need more help at school but can master some social, self-care and work skills.
- **Severe** or profound intellectual disability will have difficulty performing daily living activities independently. They will require constant support from adults for the rest of their lives.

Children with any level of intellectual disability can attend special or mainstream schools, depending on the amount of support available at the school. They may need to learn different things, for example life-skills such as learning about money, telling the time and communicating. A common progression for children with moderate or severe intellectual disability is to graduate from school and enter technical and vocational training programs.

Some children with intellectual disability also have impairments in their physical abilities, hearing or vision, as well as other health

conditions such as epilepsy.

Children with intellectual disability may:

- Learn to sit up, crawl, walk and talk later than other children their age
- Have difficulty learning new information and performing academic skills such as reading and writing
- Have difficulty understanding, remembering and following instructions
- Be easily distracted and have a short attention span
- Have trouble showing appropriate social behaviours
- Have difficulty understanding the consequences of their behaviours
- Have trouble solving problems and thinking logically.

Some of the conditions that can cause intellectual disability include:

Down Syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, Prematurity (born at less than 30 weeks), foetal alcohol spectrum disorder, hypothyroidism, oxygen deprivation around birth, Autism Spectrum Disorder, and cerebral palsy (note, cerebral palsy does not always lead to intellectual disability).

"All schools shall promote fair and equitable access to education for all learners with disabilities regardless of their gender, age, social status, economic background, geographical location, race, ethnicity, religious background, sexual orientation and gender identity, or intersections between these factors."

(MoE, Special and Inclusive Education Policy)

"Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education."

(Fiji Constitution)

Who can help? For medical concerns, contact your nearest health centre, the hospital in your division and your community health worker. For teaching strategies, refer to www.education.gov.fj/special-inclusive-education

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Please note that this document is for informational/education purposes only and does not replace medical advice.



Ministry of Education

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