

Disability fact sheet

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

Produced as part of the *Toolkit for Disability-Inclusive Education - Fiji*

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Every person has the right to early childhood education, primary and secondary education and further education (Fiji Constitution)

All children should be given the opportunity to learn together wherever possible, regardless of difficulties, disabilities or differences (Fiji Ministry of Education Policy on Special and Inclusive Education)

*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: 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. People with **moderate** intellectual disability need more help at school but can master some social, self-care and work skills. People with **severe or profound** intellectual disability find it difficult to perform most activities of daily living independently and may require constant care from adults for the rest of their lives.*

Children with any level of intellectual disability can attend special or mainstream schools, dependent 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 difficulties understanding, following instructions and remembering.
- Be easily distracted and have a short attention span.
- Have trouble showing appropriate social behaviour
- Have difficulty seeing 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, cretinism brain injury, prematurity (less than 30 weeks), oxygen deprivation around birth, autism spectrum disorder, and cerebral palsy (note, cerebral palsy does not always lead to intellectual disability).

Who can help? Teachers in regular schools who have learnt about inclusion of children with disabilities, special schools, Community Rehabilitation Assistants.