
Intellectual Disability (ID)

What is Intellectual Disability?

Intellectual disability is characterised by deficits in general mental ability is, such as reasoning, problem solving, planning, abstract thinking, judgement, academic learning, and learning from experience. The deficits in general ability also result in impairment of adaptive functioning, such as reduced daily living skills (i.e communication, social participation, occupational functioning, etc). An individual may be born with an intellectual disability, or an intellectual disability may be acquired (e.g., severe head injury), which may also result in a diagnosis of a neurocognitive disorder (impaired condition has not been present since birth).

Development and Course of Intellectual Disability:

The age and characteristic features at the time of onset of intellectual disability may vary between individuals, depending on the etiology (cause) and severity of the brain dysfunction.

- Global developmental delay is diagnosed in the first five years of life when an individual fails to meet expected developmental milestones in several areas of intellectual functioning (i.e., delayed cognitive, language, motor and/or social milestones).
- The child will experience both deficits in general mental abilities (reasoning, problem solving, planning abstract thinking, academic learning and learning from experience) and impairment in everyday adaptive functioning (personal independence skills [practical and conceptual] and social responsibility skills).
- After early childhood, the disorder is generally lifelong; and although Intellectual Disability is typically non-progressive, severity levels may change over time (the course may be influenced by medical/genetic or co-occurring conditions).

Booking an assessment to determine whether your child has ID:

An Initial Clinical Interview will be conducted to collate all relevant developmental, psychosocial, physical health and mental health history for the child. This may also include various diagnostic screeners and structured interview screening tools to investigate any underlying concerns or co-occurring conditions and to understand the child's presentation across settings (i.e., home and pre-school/school). To determine whether a child meets criteria for intellectual disability, the following psychometrics will additionally be utilised:

- Cognitive assessment is utilised to determine an individual's general mental abilities and typically included their Intelligence Quotient (IQ) and other cognitive profile components (i.e., comprehension, reasoning, processing skills).
- Adaptive behaviour assessment which includes obtaining information regarding daily functioning from multiple sources (i.e., parent, teacher/care-providers) in relation to the individual's personal independence and social responsibility skills (i.e., their adaptive behaviour abilities in the areas of community use, conceptual understanding, safety, self-care, etc).

Where can I find more information? (Click for each link)

- [Council for Intellectual Disability](#)
- [Raising Children Network](#)
- [Australian Institute of Health and Welfare](#)
- [Inclusion Australia](#)