Intellectual Disability (ID)

A student with an intellectual disability has certain limitation in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself and social skills. These limitations will cause a student to learn and develop more slowly than a typical student.

Characteristics

Students with intellectual disabilities (sometimes called a cognitive disability) may take longer to learn to speak, walk and take care of their personal needs such as dressing or eating. They are likely to have trouble learning in school. They will learn, but it will take them longer. There may be things that they cannot learn.

The ability of the person’s brain to learn, think, solve problems, and make sense of the world (called IQ or intellectual functioning; and whether the person has the skills he or she needs to live independently (called adaptive behavior). Certain skills are important to a student and difficulties are looked for in at least two of the following areas of adaptive behavior. These are: communication, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health, and safety. A student is eligible as a student with an intellectual disability if he or she has difficulty in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.

Tips for Parents

- Learn about intellectual disability. The more you know, the more you can help yourself and your child.
- Encourage independence in your child. Help your child learn daily care skills, such as dressing, feeding himself/ herself, using the bathroom, and grooming.
- Give your child chores. Break down jobs into smaller steps. Tell him/ her what to do step by step until the job is done. Demonstrate how to do the job and help when she/ he needs assistance.
- Give your child frequent feedback and praise when he or she does well.
- Find out what skills your child is learning at school and find ways to apply those skills at home. For example, if the teacher is working on money, take your child to the store ad help count out money to pay then count the change.
- Find opportunities in your community for social activities. These will help build social skills as well as to have fun.
- Talk to other parents whose children have an intellectual disability. Parents can share practical advice and emotional support.
- Meet with the school and develop an IEP to address your child’s needs. Keep in touch with teachers and find out how you can support your child’s school learning at home.

Resources

The Legal Framework  [https://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-Summary.aspx](https://framework.esc18.net/display/Webforms/ESC18-FW-Summary.aspx)
Texas Project First  http://www.texasprojectfirst.org
Partners Resource Network  http://www.partnerstx.org/intellectual-disability
The ARC of Texas  http://www.thearcoftexas.org
Center for Parent Information and Resources  http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/intellectual