



What are Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities?

The terms intellectual disability and developmental disability are often used interchangeably to describe a variety of disabilities that become apparent prior to age 22. They may include:

Autism typically appears during the first three years of life. It is the result of a neurological disorder which affects the functioning of the brain. The symptoms and characteristics range from mild to severe.

Cerebral Palsy is a developmental disability that affects body movement and muscle coordination. It is caused by damage to the brain, usually during fetal development, before or shortly following birth, or during infancy.

Epilepsy is a physical condition caused by sudden, brief changes in how the brain works (called seizures). A seizure is caused by an abnormally excessive discharge of electricity in the brain. It is not contagious and any one at any time may experience an injury or disease that can lead to epilepsy.

Physical Disabilities interfere with an individual's ability to use his or her body. They can be congenital (present at or soon after birth) or acquired (usually through injury or disease).

Orthopedic Disabilities involve the muscular or skeletal system. They can result from spinal cord injury, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, arthritis, cerebral palsy, polio, aging and other conditions.

Intellectual Disability means the person functions at an intellectual level significantly below average. This is evident before age 18. There are limitations in two or more of these areas: communication, self-care, home living, social skills, self-direction, health and safety, community use, academics, leisure or work.

Sensory Disabilities are physical disabilities that affect the senses of sight and hearing. They can be congenital or acquired through sickness, injury, aging or accident.