

Understanding intellectual disability

Every child has their own strengths and challenges. Inclusive education means all young people can have educational opportunities and choices.

Some young people live with an intellectual disability which may affect their ability to:

- learn new things
- communicate
- understand concepts
- solve problems
- concentrate and remember.

If your child has an intellectual disability, they can learn, achieve and join in at kindergarten and school. Your child can also get extra support to help them reach their full potential.

All children grow and learn at different rates. Teachers regularly assess your child's learning needs and can work with you to put in place extra support and reasonable adjustments to support their learning.

Assessment helps teachers and schools to understand a student's strengths and challenges and what kind of support will be the most helpful.

If you have concerns about your child, talk to their teacher or your family doctor.

What will help my child?

Supports for your child with intellectual disability may include resources and strategies for their development, education, interests and wellbeing.

Supports can come from family, friends and the community. Or, from services such as kindergartens, schools and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Supports can be given in a range of settings, and by different people in your child's life. It's important to remember that the support your child needs will reflect their own unique profile.

How can the school can help my child?

Teachers make sure all learners are supported to engage in learning, understand the curriculum and show their knowledge.

For students with an intellectual disability, education providers may need to make reasonable adjustments to support the student's participation. This may include:

- modifying or tailoring lessons
- providing extra time or using different ways to assess the student's learning
- using special equipment or technology
- access to specialist staff.

If your child has an intellectual disability, the principal will set up a student support group. You can discuss your child's needs, any reasonable adjustments, and keep a track of how your child is progressing.

Find support and advice

You can talk to your doctor or allied health professional about information and resources on intellectual disability. There are also support organisations and services to help you and your family.

Association for Children with a Disability – helps families find support and advocacy services
Better Health Channel – provides health and medical information in Victoria
Raising Children Network – provides information and advice for parents in Australia
Carers Victoria – information and support for carers of people with disability.

Reference: Victorian Department of Education and Training (education.vic.gov.au)

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