

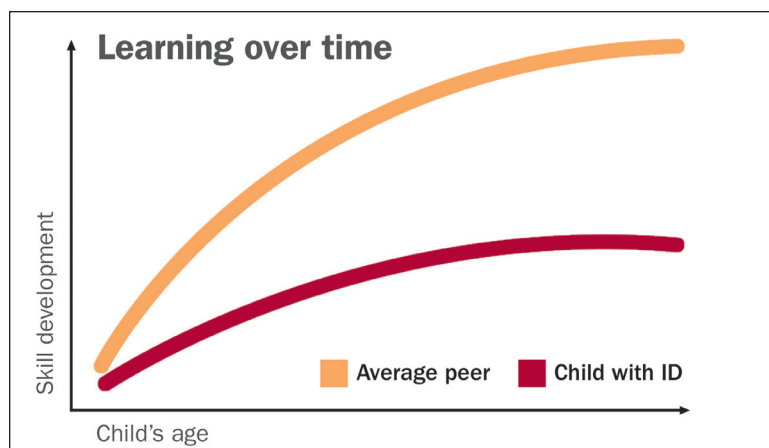
# Intellectual disability



Intellectual disability (ID) describes a developmental disorder that includes lower skills in both intellectual and daily living (adaptive) areas. These skills predict learning in school, home and the community. Children are typically diagnosed with ID when they are in elementary school. It is a lifelong condition that persists through adulthood.

Area	What it means
<b>Intellectual ability</b>	Thinking, planning, solving problems and learning new things
<b>Daily activity (adaptive) skills</b>	Getting dressed, eating, bathing, toileting and communicating

Children with ID learn more slowly than peers, requiring more time to gain new skills. Some skills might be too difficult for some people with ID to learn. The graph to the right shows how skills improve over time. People with ID gain skills more slowly than others their age. As they get older, the gap in skills between people with ID and their peers increases.



There are four severity levels of ID. This tells us how much help a person might need.

## Mild

- Difficulty in school with reading, writing and math
- Having a difficult time understanding emotions and making friends
- Needing help with everyday tasks like handling money and taking care of their health

## Moderate

- Reading, writing and math skills are well below average
- Difficulty talking and making friends
- Needing more help with activities like getting dressed and staying clean

## Severe

- Limited academic and language skills
- Difficulty making social connections
- Needing major support with living skills, like feeding and toileting

## Profound

- Limited moving (motor) and language skills (may not be able to speak)
- Difficulty being involved in social activities
- Needing help with all daily activities (adaptive) skills, including health and safety



**Riley Children's Health**  
Indiana University Health

For more information about intellectual disability, please scan the QR code to visit the Riley Children's website.

