Deaf Plus Intellectual Disabilities

This Wiki page will provide information regarding Intellectual Disabilities—if you have any further questions we have included links and the references for the source material. It will include some broad definitions, however a unique focus on not only individuals who have intellectual disabilities, but also experience deafness.

**IDEA definitions**

Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act aims to provide services to those who may need additional help being successful in school. An Intellectual Disability appears during the developmental stage, it is when a child's cognitive functioning is not the same when compared to his peers while displaying characteristics of maladaptive behavior impacting a child's ability to succeed in the classroom environment\(^1\). These may be caused by:

- **Genetic Conditions**—each person is a combination of two parents genes, however sometimes a certain combination may result in an intellectual disabilities.  
  example: down syndrome or fragile X syndrome
- **Problems during pregnancy or birth**—when a child is in the womb and does not develop appropriately or there is complications during the birthing it may have an impact on the child's development.  
  example: a baby not receiving enough nutrients or born at breech
- **Health Problems**—specific diseases can often adversely impact development.  
  example: meningitis or lead exposure

However, caution must be exercised when reviewing if a child has an intellectual disabilities especially to rule out other factors such as language barriers, cultural differences, or situational influences. A child's abilities must be impacted from organic causes not situations. Prior to 2010 the word intellectual disability was once referred to as mental retardation, Rosa’s law initiated the shift from using the old terminology (Rosa’s Law). Additionally, if you would like to see the original version of the IDEA definitions of Intellectual Disability you can go to IDEA - Intellectual Disabilities.

**Functional definitions**

Functional definitions serves to specifically focus on what the child's strengths and weaknesses are related to their disability. Children with Intellectual Disabilities will show limitations in their cognitive functioning and difficulty in three or more of these areas\(^2\):

- **Daily living skills**—a child's ability to handle simple tasks that are encountered daily to take care of oneself.  
  example: tying shoes or showering
- **Social situations**—how a child is able to relate to other children, adults, or teachers  
  example: has frequent behavioral problems or unable to connect with others
- **Communication**—a child's ability to express one self and communicate appropriately.  
  example: speaking one-two words at the age of 5 or comprehending instructions
- **Learning**—a child's ability to remember and process new information.  
  example: remembering the multiplication chart or being able to add/subtract
- **Independent living skills**—a child's ability to learn and utilize daily routines required for maintaining a healthy lifestyle.  
  example: being able to cook or plan meals

**Identification**

In order for a child to be diagnosed with an Intellectual Disability they must meet **both** criteria below\(^1\):

- **Subaverage intellectual functioning**—this simply tells us that a child is struggling in their ability to learn, process information, and solve problems when compared with peers of the same age.  
  score of 75 or less on a cognitive assessment
- **Impaired adaptive functioning**—a child struggling in one of three areas: Communication, social skills, or daily living skills.  
  a child who struggles in both communication and carrying out required daily living routines

**Incidence**

- For every 1,000 people, 7.8% will have an Intellectual Disability\(^5\)
- Students with Intellectual Disabilities are at higher risk (1.4 times greater than the general population) of having an undetected hearing loss\(^6\)
- Estimates show that approximately 20-50% of deaf children also have other disabilities\(^3\)
- The most common secondary disability for deaf individuals are learning, emotional, and intellectual\(^4\)

**Identification Confounds Unique to Deaf Children**
As mentioned earlier careful investigation must be done to ensure that a child is truly experiencing intellectual disabilities versus other factors. This is especially true for deaf children as their hearing levels are varied and language is impacted as a result. For identification-specific examples of how a deaf person may look like they have intellectual disabilities are explained:

- **Subaverage intellectual functioning** - currently a majority of psychological assessments are NOT normed for deaf individuals with communication barriers (using an interpreter) and lack of expertise on the proctor's part may influence the child's scores on intellectual assessments. Specific subtests may not be appropriate to administer to deaf individuals, thus reducing our abilities to truly understand their full abilities.

- **Impaired adaptive functioning** - a child who is deaf automatically struggles with hearing and speech thus this may be seen as a "communication disorder" especially when discussions focuses on how a child is unable to perceive speech or speak appropriately. If this same child is placed in a mainstreamed school (where they are the only deaf individual with an interpreter) one may also see social skills difficulty. They are unable to understand their classmates or the classmate does not understand them, thus they are often playing alone.

An important thing to keep in mind when assessing a deaf child for an intellectual disability is to distinguish *language barriers, cultural barriers, or situational influences*. This is especially important when one is considering placement options as these situations may arise and to someone who does not have much experience with deafness may deem the child as having an intellectual disability. One way to think about this is to remember the idea of functioning-can the child do this? Is he able to process this or understand this? IS there something that is causing this problem?

Be sure to take caution when evaluating children for intellectual disability!

**References and Resources**


**Video Links**

- Intellectual Disabilities
- What causes intellectual disabilities?
- Signs of Developmental Delay at Age 2

**Contributors:**

Lead Name: Jessica Contreras
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Peer Eval (Other Group feedback) #1, Group/Individuals: Academic Disabilities
Name 1: Zack J. Name 2: Kelsey G. Name 3: Jenn C. Name 4: Meg M.

Peer Eval (Other Group feedback) #2, Group/Individuals: Social Disabilities
Name 1: Rachel L Name 2: Anna K Name 3: Chelsea P

Quick Links

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)
The ARC
do2Learn
The Process

The goal is to develop the student to reach their potential to the fullest. Evaluation is an important step in this process. Another important step is the child’s Individual Education Program (IEP). There are a number of different steps for this process: identifying the child possibly has a special need, evaluation, eligibility, services are found, scheduled IEP meeting, meeting is held and IEP is made, services are provided, progress is measured and reported to parents, IEP reviewed, reevaluation, and the continuous loop of IEP meetings there after. (Steps with details) As one can see this is a busy stressful time.

The NICHCY provides a list for teachers to help them understand their basic duty in working with students with Intellectual Disabilities.

1 | Recognize that you can make an enormous difference in this student’s life!
2 | Be an active participant in the student’s IEP team.
3 | Provide accommodations and supports that help students with intellectual disabilities.
4 | Be as concrete as possible.
5 | Go step by step.
6 | Give immediate feedback.
7 | Help the student learn life skills.
8 | Address the social aspects of school.
9 | Communicate with your student’s parents.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation process can be a long stressful process. Knowing the process and what is to be expected will alleviate some of that stress.

Some assessments are:

- Norm-referenced tests
- Standardized tests
- Group tests
- Individual tests
- Curriculum-based assessments (CBAs) or curriculum-based measurements (CBMs)
- Criterion-referenced tests
- Functional assessment
- Functional behavioral assessment

More on the evaluation process can be found at: NICHCY Shool Evaluation.

Developmental Needs and Skills K-12

- Teach culturally responsive life skills relevant to independence
- employment
- accessing public transportation
- cooking
- shopping
- laundry
- communicating with others
- taking care of personal needs
  - dressing, bathing, going to the bathroom
- health and safety
- home living
  - helping to set the table, cleaning the house
- social skills
  - manners, knowing the rules of conversation, getting along in a group, playing a game
- reading, writing, and basic math
- as they get older, skills that will help them in the workplace.

Professional Development

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities has a number of different ways in which a teacher can further their education. Two ways in which one can do this is via the webinars and online learning this site offers.
Classroom Accommodations and Modifications

Quick Link - Accommodations

_modification_ means a change in what is being taught to or expected from the student.

_accommodation_ is a change that helps a student overcome or work around the disability.

Can include:

- one-on-one aides
- peer tutors
- adapted equipment
- assistive technology
- training for staff, student, and parents
- speech-language pathology and audiology services
- psychological services
- physical and occupational therapy
- recreation, including therapeutic recreation
- early identification and assessment of disabilities in children
- counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- orientation and mobility services
- medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- school health services and school nurse services
- social work services in schools

- Scheduling
  - giving extra time
- Setting
  - smaller groups or one-on-one
- Materials
  - providing a different way in which the material is presented
- Instruction
  - reducing difficulty
- Student Response
  - accept a different method of answering (orally)

UDL - Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning - a set of flexible principles for curriculum development that accommodate all individuals and provide equal opportunities to learn.

The Learning Program Boston (LPB)

Learning to read a visual way.

The universal design for learning provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone—not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. - National Center on Universal Design for Learning

Suggestions for Working with Parents
Understand that their child one represents 1-3% of the general population.

Anything related to the child and evaluations is required by IDEA to notify the parents in writing. This should include

- explain why it wants to conduct the evaluation (or why it refuses);
- describe each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report used as a basis for proposing the evaluation (or refusing to conduct the evaluation);
- where parents can go to obtain help in understanding IDEA’s provisions;
- what other options the school considered and why those were rejected; and
- a description of any other factors that are relevant to the school’s proposal (or refusal) to evaluate the child.

They may need support for behavior challenges. Deaf Notes is a forum that allows for parents to network with other parents and individuals in the community.

**Articles supporting and explaining Intellectual Disability Education**

“The Influence of Intellectual Disability on Life Expectancy” by: Bittles, Petterson, Sullivan, Hussain, Glasson, and Montgomery

“Effective Teaching Methods for People with Intellectual Disabilities”

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**Contributors:**

**Lead Name:** Catherine Neary

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**Inclusion**

Inclusion is about the child’s right to participate and the school’s duty to accept the child. Inclusion rejects the use of special schools or classrooms to separate students with disabilities from the general education setting.

**Articles to review:**


**Placement Options**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the nation’s federal special education law that ensures public schools serve the educational needs of students with disabilities. Placement options for children are discussed during the IEP meeting with a team of educators. These placements are able to be negotiated to best meet the needs of each child.

**Some placement options are:**

**Public School -**

- Often the deaf or hard-of-hearing student is the only one in their grade level and sometimes the only one in the school.
- These students do not have any academic services and go into their classroom the same as a hearing student.

**Public School with tutor/aide/academic services**

- These students are often served by an special ed teacher.
- These students are normally mainstreamed into a general education class(es) for the majority of their day with maybe one period of resource room (often the resource room is staffed by special education teacher(s)).
Specialized classroom within a public school
- This is a public school that is identified as having a special ed program
- Often these schools have a small population of students with special ed needs.
- These schools might have one or two self-contained resource room for students.

Specialized school
- This is a school that focuses on the special education needs of the student.

Home School
- Students do not attend a public or specialized school, but are either taught by a parent, family member or member of the community alone or in a small group of other homeschooled students.

Online Resources:
NICHCY

Developmental Needs/Preschool - 12th grade
Children with Intellectual Disabilities may accomplish milestones late such as basic motor development, and speech. They also might experience trouble remembering things as well as interacting in social situations. In social situations they might have trouble understanding social norms and rules, understanding consequences and logical thinking.

Academic Performance:
Students who are identified with intellectual disabilities lag significantly behind peers in developing academic skills. Students with intellectual disabilities are likely to be significantly delayed in learning to read and learning basic math skills. Most students with mild intellectual disabilities learn basic and functional mathematic skills related to money, time, and measurement.

Students with ID also may have delayed language development, which has the most negative effect is reading. However using strategies and the learning of vocabulary they too can improve their reading comprehension skills.

Cognition:
Students with intellectual disabilities are characterized by delays in cognitive development that influence the acquisition of language and academic skills. Some areas that are impacted are Attention, and Memory. Student's attention demands in the classroom include orienting to a task, selective attention, and sustaining attention to a task. By presenting information in a specific way students will be able to attend better. A student with ID's memory demands often rely on short term memory, provided proper strategies such as rehearsal of information the student can slowly work on their ability to remember and retain information.

Primary Characteristics

Suggestions for Working with Teachers
In depth and routine IEP meetings and discussions on the progress of the child. IEP meetings can involve multiple people within the child's academic experience.

Guide to Parent/Teacher Communication
Parent/Teacher Strategies
The Parent/Teacher Partnership
Basic Guide for Parents
Developing a Partnership

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Name 1: Anna Kammen  Name 2:  Name 3:  Name 4: 

Checklist Section #1:
- Part 1 IDEA definitions:
- Part 1 Functional definitions
- Part 1 Incidence
- Part 1 Identification
- # Research Summaries: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (10 required across three sections)
- # Links: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (10 required across all three sections)
- # videos: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (minimum one required in each section)

Checklist Section #2:
- Part 2 Teaching strategies:
- Part 2 Classroom Accommodations and Modifications
- Universal Design
- Developmental Needs/Preschool-Grade 12
- Working with Parents
- # Research Summaries: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (10 required across all three sections)
- # Links: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (10 required across all three sections)
- # videos: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (minimum one required in each section)

Checklist Section #3:
- Section 3 Inclusion:
- Placement Options
- Development from Preschool - Grade 12
- Working with Teachers
- # Research Summaries: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (10 required across all three sections)
- # Links: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (10 required across all three sections)
- # videos: Date: _______ Number so far: _______ (minimum one required in each section)

Overall Requirements:
- Holistic understanding of students with these disabilities?
- Attention to ASL/Signed, SIMCOM/Total Communication, and Oral settings and placement options?
All sources are properly cited
All sources are trustworthy and of high quality?

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