

# What Are Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities?

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## What is an Intellectual Disability?

Intellectual disability is a below-average cognitive ability with three characteristics:

- ⇒ Intelligent quotient (or I.Q.) is between 70-75 or below
- ⇒ Significant limitations in adaptive behaviors (the age-appropriate ability to adapt and carry on everyday life activities such as self-care, socializing, communicating, etc.)
- ⇒ The onset of the disability occurs before age 18.

## What is a Developmental Disability (DD)?

A developmental disability is a life-long disability that occurs before age 22 *and* causes three or more limitations in the following areas of life activity:

1. self care
2. language
3. learning
4. mobility
5. self-direction
6. capacity for independent living
7. economic self-sufficiency

## What is the Difference Between an Intellectual and a Developmental Disability?

Sometimes intellectual disability is also referred to as developmental disability, which is a broader term that includes autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, developmental delay, fetal alcohol syndrome and other disorders that occur during the developmental period (birth to age 18). The major differences between an intellectual and a developmental disability are:

- ⇒ age of onset
- ⇒ severity of limitations
- ⇒ the DD definition does not refer to an IQ requirement

While some people may have both an intellectual and developmental disability, it is important to recognize that these two diagnoses are not the same and have different diagnostic criteria. A person may have one or both disabilities.

## How Many People Have an Intellectual and Developmental Disability?

Studies show that somewhere between one (1) percent and three (3) percent of Americans have intellectual disability. There are many causes of intellectual disability, including physical, genetic and/or social.

**In New Jersey, it is estimated that 133,000 children and adults have an intellectual and developmental disability.**

