

Intellectual and Developmental Disability Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

For more information, visit www.disabilityawarenessnj.org

What are the causes and risk factors?

Most developmental disabilities are thought to be caused by a complex mix of factors including genetics and parental health. For some developmental disabilities such as fetal alcohol syndrome, which is caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy, we know the cause. But for most, we don't.

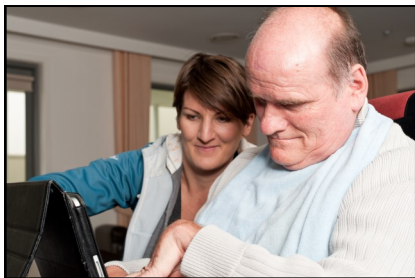
Why do some states still use the term "mental retardation"?

Beginning in 2010, with the passage of Rosa's Law (PUBLIC LAW 111-256), many states began the process of replacing all mentions of "mental retardation" with intellectual disability. However, the legislative process of changing terminology takes time.

How does having a disability affect someone's life?

The effects of a developmental disability vary among individuals, just as the range of abilities varies among all people. Some may just need help maintaining a budget, while others may need significant supports throughout their lives.

What are supports and how can they help?



Supports include the resources and individual strategies necessary to promote the development, education, interests, and well-being of a person. Supports can come from family, friends and community or from a service system. Supports are provided in many settings, and a "setting" or location by itself is not a support.

With help from family, friends and agencies like The Arc, children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities can live independent, productive lives in the community.

What is people first language?

People First Language emphasizes the person, not the disability. People with disabilities are – first and foremost – people. They are moms, dads, sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic, but one of several aspects of the whole person.

Say This	Not This
Person with a disability	Disabled person
Betty has an intellectual disability.	Betty is intellectually disabled.
Sam uses a wheelchair.	Sam is confined to a wheelchair.

SPREAD THE WORD TO END THE "R" WORD

Often unwittingly, the word is used to denote behavior that is clumsy, hapless, and even hopeless. But whether intentional or not, the word conjures up painful stereotype of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It hurts. Even if you don't mean it that way.

Using the R-word doesn't just hurt people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, it also hurts their family and friends.