

Symptoms of an Intellectual Disability

- Symptoms of intellectual disability will typically start to surface in early childhood. In some cases, these signs might be physical. You might notice your child has an unusually large or small head, abnormalities with their hands or feet, or other physical differences. However, this isn't always the case.
- Children who appear physically healthy and normal could also have an intellectual disability. Children who have severe intellectual disability might begin to exhibit symptoms at an earlier age than those with a milder form. If you are worried your child might have an intellectual disability, here are some of the early signs to look out for -

- Difficulty speaking
- Beginning to move around later than other children
- Trouble following simple instruction
- Struggling to develop social skills
- Seizures
- Temper tantrums
- Aggressive behavior
- Struggling to remember things
- Difficulty problem solving
- Difficulty developing social skills
- Difficulty expressing emotions
- Being unable to carry out personal care like getting dressed or taking a bath

Identifying an Intellectual Disability

- To diagnose an intellectual disability, the following criteria must be met

Limited intellectual functioning: This is typically measured with an IQ test. A test score lower than 70 is usually indicative of limited intellectual functioning.

- **Limited adaptive skills:** Here, a person with an intellectual disability will struggle with social and practical skills needed for daily functioning. These include conceptual skills like reading or writing, social skills like communication or problem solving, and practical skills like eating, walking, or getting dressed.

The onset of symptoms before the age of 18: This condition typically develops in childhood. While it ranges in severity, some early signs delayed motor skills, struggle with problem-solving, difficulty remembering things, and delayed speech.

- In determining child's diagnosis, several tests might be ordered by healthcare provider and the team of specialists taking care of child. These tests include:
 - Neurological tests such as an electroencephalogram (EEG) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to determine if there are any abnormalities in the brain.
 - Genetic tests to help identify if there is an inherited disorder like Fragile X syndrome that could cause intellectual disability

- General medical tests depending on the symptoms your child is exhibiting.
- Special education tests .
- Developmental screening tests to determine your child's level of intellectual and social functioning.
- Prenatal screening to determine if there are any developmental challenges while a parent is still pregnant.
- A hearing evaluation in case a hearing problem is responsible for the impaired intellectual functioning and not an intellectual disability.