

Developmental Disability (DD)/Mental Retardation (MR)

What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Mental retardation is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviors as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills” (AAMR, 2002). • “Mental retardation is diagnosed by looking at two main things. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ the ability of a person's brain to learn, think, solve problems, and make sense of the world (called IQ or intellectual functioning); and ○ whether the person has the skills he or she needs to live independently (called adaptive behavior, or adaptive functioning)” (Mental Retardation, NICHCY Dec 1, 2006).
Common Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Please note that these are generalizations. There is a great deal of individual variation” (Sass, 2001). • Language difficulty, often not able to communicate at age appropriate levels • Short attention span • May have poor muscle tone, coordination and balance below “normal” • Find it hard to remember things • Does not understand how to pay for things • Has trouble understanding social rules • Has trouble seeing the consequences of their actions • Has trouble solving problems • Has trouble thinking logically (NICHCY, 2004) • typically do not "look" different from their non-disabled peers • often have only mild or moderate developmental delays, except in academics, which is often the major area of deficit • typically attain 3rd- to 6th-grade academic achievement levels by the time they finish high school • as adults, many, though not all, with mild MR will be able to obtain independent employment • many will marry, have children, and blend rather indistinguishably into the community (Sass, 2001)
Strategies for working with person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down tasks into smaller steps • Demonstrate the steps; have the student do the steps, one at a time • Give immediate, specific feedback • Find ways to apply skills to other settings • Be as concrete as possible • Demonstrate what you mean rather than just giving verbal directions • Show a picture rather than just relating new information verbally • Provide hands-on materials and experiences and the opportunity to try things out rather than just showing a picture • Teach life skills such as daily living, social skills, and occupational awareness and exploration as appropriate • Regularly share information about how the student is doing in all settings with others who work with the student (NICHCY, 2004)

<p style="text-align: center;">For more information</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Corps Disability Website http://jcdisability.jobcorps.gov/html/common_cognitive.htm This site, operated by Humanitas, provides the Job Corps community with information and resources that will allow them to better support and meet the needs of applicants and students with disabilities. • The ARC of the United States www.thearc.org. Advocate for the rights and full participation of all children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. • American Association on Mental Retardation (AAMR). www.aamr.org. AAMR promotes progressive policies, sound research, effective practices, and human rights for persons with intellectual/developmental disabilities. • Division on Developmental Disabilities, the Council for Exceptional Children. www.dddcec.org. Enhance the abilities of persons working in the field, respond to and address emergent and critical issues in the field, and to advocate for individuals. • National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities. http://www.nichcy.org/ Provides information to the nation on: disabilities in children and youth, services for infants-children-youth, IDEA, No Child Left Behind, and researched based information on effective practices for children with disabilities.
<p style="text-align: center;">References</p>	<p>Joswick, Kittredge, McCowan, Woods (1986). <i>Aspects and answers</i>. CHEFF Center: Augusta, MI.</p> <p>National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (2004). NICHCY Disability Fact Sheet-No. 8. http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs8.pdf. Retrieved Dec. 1, 2006.</p> <p>Sass, E. (2001). <i>Mental Retardation: Typical Characteristics</i>. http://www.cloudnet.com/%7Eedrbsass/mrcharacteristics.htm. Retrieved Dec. 1, 2006.</p>

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