

Common Developmental Disabilities

Disability	Causes	Characteristics
Autism	<p>Undetermined, but researchers suggest the following combination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic predisposition and • Environmental trigger 	<p>Difficulties in verbal and nonverbal communication, social interactions, and leisure activities. Physical ailments may include allergies, asthma, seizures, digestive disorders, persistent viral infections, feeding and sleeping disorders, sensory integration dysfunction, etc.</p>
Cerebral Palsy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injury or abnormal brain development during pregnancy, birth, or infancy 	<p>Abnormal muscle tone, reflexes, or motor development and coordination, vision and hearing problems, seizures, communication disorders, sensory impairments, dental problems, urinary incontinence, and/or intellectual disability</p>
Down Syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic conditions 	<p>Physical features include: low muscle tone, small stature, and an upward slant to the eyes. Increased risk of certain medical conditions including heart disease, Alzheimer's disease, and leukemia.</p>
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol use during pregnancy 	<p>Difficulties with learning, attention, memory, and problem-solving.</p>
Fragile X Syndrome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic conditions 	<p>The spectrum ranges from learning disabilities to severe intellectual disabilities and autism. Physical features may include enlarged ears, long face with prominent chin, large testicles (post pubertal males), and a variety of connective tissue problems. Characteristics are often expressed to a lesser degree in females.</p>
Intellectual or Cognitive Disability (previously called Mental Retardation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic conditions • Problems during pregnancy • Problems at birth • Health problems 	<p>Characterized both by a significantly below-average score on a test of mental ability or intelligence (IQ = 70-75 or below) and by limitations in the ability to function in areas of daily life, such as communication, self-care, and getting along in social situations and school activities. Manifests during the developmental years (before age 18).</p>
Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genetic conditions 	<p>Low muscle tone, short stature, incomplete sexual development, cognitive disabilities, problem behaviors, and chronic feeling of hunger which may lead to over-eating and obesity.</p>
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falls • Violence • Sports injuries • Vehicle-related collisions • Explosive blasts and other combat injuries. 	<p>Altered consciousness, seizures, infections, nerve damage, cognitive problems, communication problems, behavioral changes, emotional changes, sensory problems, and/or degenerative brain diseases.</p>

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*Resources primarily include information from the Center for Disease Control and the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities.