

**Characteristics of an individual  
with developmental disabilities**

May not communicate at age level

- Limited vocabulary
- Difficulty understanding or answering questions
- Inability to read or write
- Mimics responses or answers

May not behave at age level

- Prefers young persons (children) for friends
- Inappropriate interactions with peers of opposite sex
- Easily influenced by and anxious to please others
- Difficulty in making change, using telephone, telling time, etc.
- Low frustration tolerance

May not behave appropriately in criminal justice situations

- May not understand rights
- May be overly willing to confess
- Difficulty recalling facts or details of offense
- Tendency to be overwhelmed by police authority
- May not want disability noticed
- Says what he/she thinks others want to hear

For more information or help contact:  
Service and Support Administration  
(419) 380-4000 or after hours (419) 380-5100

**Helpful Hints on How to Deal  
with a Suspect, Victim, or Witness  
with Developmental Disabilities**

- Use simple language: speak slowly and clearly
- Use concrete terms and ideas.
- Avoid questions that tell the person the answer you expect
- Phrase questions to avoid “yes” or “no” answers
- When giving Miranda warnings, ask the person to explain rather than answer “yes” or “no”
- Repeat questions from a slightly different perspective
- Ask for concrete descriptions, colors, clothing, etc.
- Proceed slowly and give praise and encouragement
- Avoid frustrating questions about time, complex sequences, or reasons for behavior.
- Never make fun of the person; he/she will sense it and become less cooperative.

If you think you are dealing with a person who has developmental disabilities, free consultation is available by contacting:  
Service and Support Administration  
Lucas County Board of Developmental Disabilities  
1155 Larc Lane, Toledo, OH 43614  
(419) 380-4000  
or (419) 380-5100 after regular business hours  
[www.lucasdd.org](http://www.lucasdd.org)