

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month

We Can, Just Like You

Developmental Disability FAQ

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.

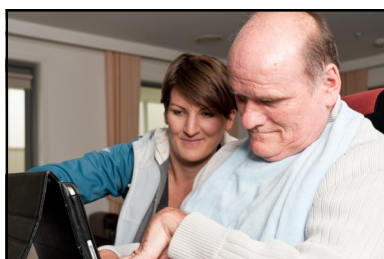
What are supports and how can they help?

Supports include the resources necessary to promote the development, education, interests, and well-being of a person. With help from family, friends and agencies like The Arc, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are provided appropriate personalized supports 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.