

E.2 Intellectual Disabilities

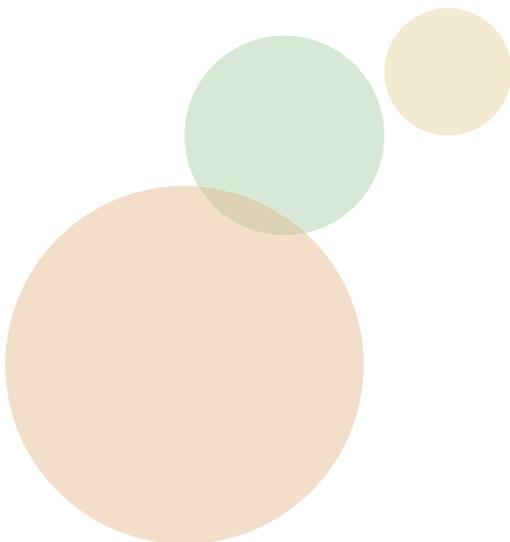
Definition

Students with intellectual disabilities have general intellectual functioning significantly below the mean, as well as significant limitations in adaptive functioning in at least two of the following skill areas as appropriate to the student's age: communication, self-care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self-direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health and safety. Students can experience intellectual disabilities across a range: mild to profound.

A diagnosis of intellectual disability should only be made when a student has significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive functioning.

To be reported to the Ministry as having an intellectual disability the following conditions must be met:

- The student meets the following eligibility criteria:
 - A student **with a mild intellectual disability** has intellectual functioning that is 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning, and has limitations of similar degree in adaptive functioning in at least two skill areas appropriate to the student's age.
 - A student **with a moderate to profound intellectual disability** has intellectual functioning that is 3 or more standard deviations below the mean on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning, and has limitations of similar degree in adaptive functioning in at least two skill areas appropriate to the student's age.
- A current IEP is in place that includes:
 - individualized goals,
 - adaptations and/or modifications where appropriate,
 - the strategies to meet these goals, and
 - measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the goals
- Ongoing inclusive education service(s) must be provided.
- The services being provided are beyond those offered to the general student population and are proportionate to level of need.
- The inclusive education services are outlined in the IEP and directly relate to the student's identified disabilities or diverse abilities.
- Reduction in class size is not by itself a sufficient service to meet the definition.



Identification and Assessment

A student with an intellectual disability will often be identified before entering the school system. For students with a mild intellectual disability, however, difficulties with adaptive behaviour may not have been previously documented. **The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**, defines adaptive behaviour as three types of skills:

- Conceptual skills, language and literacy; money, time, and number concepts; and self-direction
- Social skills, interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, gullibility, naiveté (i.e., wariness), social problem solving, and the ability to follow rules, obey laws, and avoid being victimized
- Practical skills, activities of daily living (personal care), occupational skills, healthcare, travel/transportation, schedules/routines, safety, use of money, use of the telephone.

A psycho-educational assessment will be used to determine a student's level of functioning and should be based on a variety of measures of intellectual ability and adaptive behaviour, as well as information from the family and, where available, other service providers. Instruments such as the most current revision of the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, The Scales of Independent Behaviour, or the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System should be used in the assessment of an individual's adaptive behaviour. The most frequently used tests in assessing intellectual ability are the most current revisions of the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence scales.

It should be noted that every instrument has measurement error of approximately 5 points, so a student may be identified with a mild intellectual disability with an overall cognitive score as high as 75 when there are significant deficits in adaptive functioning. Similarly, a student with a cognitive score below 70 but no significant impairments in two or more adaptive skill areas (appropriate to the student's age) would not be identified in this category. A student may be identified with a moderate intellectual disability with an overall cognitive score as high as 59 when there are significant impairments in adaptive functioning, but would not be identified with a moderate intellectual disability if scores in two or more adaptive skill areas (appropriate to the student's age) are not at a similar level.

Some students may be eligible for adult services through Community Living British Columbia (CLBC). Eligibility criteria for CLBC services include confirmation of a developmental disability by a psychologist or school psychologist registered with the College of Psychologists of BC (CPBC) (for more information see CLBC at <https://www.communitylivingbc.ca/>).

Planning and Implementation for Students with Mild Intellectual Disability

Most students with mild intellectual disabilities benefit from and may learn best from being with same-age peers, but generally also require additional intervention. As they proceed through elementary school, their IEPs should specify any modifications or adaptations to subject areas or courses, use of special materials, and the measures of progress. The emphasis is on designing and delivering support tailored to helping students reach their personal goals and their highest level of functioning. Parents must be given the opportunity to participate in the planning process, and to the extent that they are able, students should also participate.

While individual needs may differ, many students with mild intellectual disabilities will require specific instruction for the acquisition of academic skills, personal independence, social responsibility and life skills, as well as with reasoning skills, memory, problem solving and conceptualizing skills.

The older the student, the greater the need for concrete educational objectives. At the secondary level, a student with a mild intellectual disability should have the opportunity and option to access a variety of educational and social experiences both within the school and in the community. For many students, continued participation in academic areas, with adaptations and support where needed, is both reasonable and desirable. For other students, increasing community integration and work experience/work placement opportunities are most enabling (see Appendix H.18 Career Programs).

Planning for Students with Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities

Students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities have particular learning characteristics. They require support in the development of academic skills, communication skills, cognitive skills, fine and gross motor skills, self-care, life skills and socialization skills. Generally, a student with this level of intellectual functioning is also significantly delayed in social-emotional development. There may also be accompanying sensory, physical and health disabilities.

If a student with a severe to profound intellectual disability has a sensory impairment, physical disability or medical/health needs, support services from a teacher's assistant as well as the expertise of an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist, a speech-language pathologist, or an itinerant specialist may be required. These other professionals should work with the school-based team so that joint planning can take place and information can be shared.

Students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities can usually learn many appropriate skills and behaviours, and can benefit from being with students who do not have disabilities. However, they require additional intervention beyond integration and socialization. In preparation for an IEP, teachers may want to consider implementing a planning mechanism such as the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS), or Planning for Alternative Tomorrow with Hope (PATH). These procedures are effective in identifying the student's strengths and needs and in eliciting involvement and commitment from peers and those involved in supporting the student in setting and achieving goals.

The older the student or the more severe the disability, the greater is the need for functional educational objectives. Since the skills taught should be those that afford many opportunities for practice, and since teaching should be in preparation for adult life in the community, the student will need an increasing degree of educational instruction in community environments.

Evaluation and Reporting

The **K-12 Student Reporting Policy** pertains to all learners in the B.C. education system. A student with who has a disability or diverse ability should receive regular communications of student learning in the same way as their peers in any other program and at the same time as the school and/or districts' regular reporting periods.

Some students with intellectual disabilities may be able to achieve the Learning Standards for their subjects or course with adaptations. As outlined in the Inclusive Education section of the **K-12 Student Reporting Policy**, regular reporting procedures are used to communicate student learning for students who used adaptations to access and show their learning.

There will be rare occasions where students with moderate to profound intellectual disabilities or diverse abilities are assessed and evaluated only on individualized learning goals as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP), and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade they are enrolled. In these instances:

- Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning do not need to include a scale indicator or letter grade and percentage
- Written feedback is required that clearly explains the student's progress made towards their individualized learning goals and areas for further growth
- If a scale indicator or a letter grade and percentage are used on Written Learning Updates and the Summary of Learning, it must be noted that the student is being evaluated in relation to their individualized learning goals as outlined in their IEP and not the Learning Standards of the curriculum for the course or grade for which they are enrolled.

For more information, see the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Information for Educators and School Leaders at <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/reporting/information-for-educators-and-school-leaders>, and the K-12 Student Reporting Policy Communicating Student Learning Guidelines at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/k-12-student-reporting-policy-communicating-student-learning-guidelines.pdf>

Personnel

Teachers

With sufficient training and experience, classroom teachers will be capable of including students with intellectual disabilities and providing programs in which they can be successful, provided that specialized support is available when needed. In-service training opportunities and a collaborative team approach are recommended to support and encourage the development of the necessary skills and understandings which the classroom teacher may require.

Specialist teachers with responsibilities for supporting students with intellectual disabilities should fulfill the qualifications described for Learning Assistance (see section D: Learning Assistance Services).

In addition, they should have advanced coursework in:

- the characteristics and needs of students with intellectual disabilities;
- specialized instructional methodologies and technologies;
- adaptations and modifications for students with intellectual disabilities; and
- functional life skills and career development.

Recent and ongoing technological advances in adaptive devices related to computer access, environmental controls and augmented communication have greatly enhanced learning opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities. Specialist staff should stay informed about current developments and introduce new technologies as appropriate and as resources permit.

Education assistants

Education assistants who work in classrooms with students with intellectual disabilities should have sufficient skills and training for the duties they are assigned.

It should be noted that education assistants work under the direction of a teacher and the general supervision of a school principal. In-service training should include opportunities to further develop skills in these and related areas.

Students with Intellectual Disabilities: Quick Guide

Category	Mild Intellectual Disabilities	Moderate to Profound Intellectual Disabilities (Inclusive Education Funding Category)
Assessment Criteria Related to Student	<p>Demonstrate intellectual functioning that is 2 or more standard deviations below the mean on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning.</p> <p>Demonstrate significant limitations* in 2 or more adaptive skill areas (appropriate to the student's age) on a norm referenced measure of adaptive behaviour using instruments such as the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales- Second Edition (Vineland-11), The Scales of Independent Behaviour-Revised (SIB-R/ICA), or the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System, Second Edition (ABAS-11).</p> <p>* The definition of "significant limitations" refers to performances that are 2 or more standard deviations below the mean.</p>	<p>Demonstrate intellectual functioning that is 3 or more standard deviations below the mean on an individually administered Level C assessment instrument of intellectual functioning.</p> <p>Demonstrate significant limitations* in 2 or more adaptive skill areas (appropriate to the student's age) on a norm referenced measure of adaptive behaviour using instruments such as the Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scales- Second Edition (Vineland-11), The Scales of Independent Behaviour-Revised (SIB-R/ICA), or the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System, Second Edition (ABAS-11).</p> <p>* The definition of "significant limitations" refers to performances that are approximately 3 or more standard deviations below the mean.</p>
Criteria for Planning and Service	<p>IEP that addresses the student's needs, and includes any adaptations and modifications and services for the student.</p> <p>IEP outlines individualized goals and documents plans for interventions and measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the IEP goals.</p> <p>The student is receiving the services outlined in the IEP.</p>	<p>IEP that addresses the student's needs, and includes any adaptations and modifications and services for the student.</p> <p>IEP outlines individualized goals and documents plans for interventions and measures for tracking student achievement in relation to the IP goals. The student is receiving the services outlined in the IEP.</p>