

# MINISTRY TO PEOPLE with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities



## Developmental Disability:

A severe, chronic disability of an individual 5 years of age or older, which is manifested before the age of 22, that is likely to continue indefinitely and results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity:

1. Self-care
2. Receptive and expressive language
3. Learning
4. Mobility
5. Self-direction
6. Capacity of independent living
7. Economic self-sufficiency

Developmental disabilities can include autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy and intellectual disabilities. All people with an intellectual disability have a developmental disability; however, not all people with a developmental disability have an intellectual disability.

## Developmental Disability:

A disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior, including conceptual (e.g., reading, writing), social and practical skills. This disability originates before age 18. Some people who have an intellectual disability may have other conditions as well, such as cerebral palsy, seizure disorders, impaired vision, hearing loss or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, commonly known as ADHD. Not all ADHD constitutes a developmental disability in children. ADHD may be considered a developmental disability for a child, but it may not continue as a disability into adulthood.

1. Limitations are considered within the typical environments of the person's peers and culture.
2. Assessments consider cultural and linguistic diversity as well as differences in communication, sensory, motor and behavioral factors.
3. Within an individual, limitations often coexist with strengths.
4. The purpose of describing limitations is to develop a profile of needed supports.
5. With appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of a person with mental retardation generally will improve.



## How Prevalent Are Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in the United States?

Most dependable sources, such as The Arc of the U.S. or the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), tend to agree on a small range of percentages — roughly 1.5 to 2.5 percent — of the total general population. However, numbers both above and below that range are reported by a host of organizations, each with its own particular area of interest and expertise.

Given the population as reported by the most recent census (approximately 311 million), the 1.5 to 2.5 percent range calculates to approximately 4.6 to 7.7 million people with developmental disabilities. The number of those who specifically have an intellectual disability is fewer.



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in the United States with  
developmental disabilities

## Resources

- › “**Confronting a Culture of Disrespect**” in *The Lutheran Witness*, May 2010, by the Rev. Charles Werth, vice-president of Religious Life and Church Relations, Bethesda Lutheran Communities  
<http://witness.lcms.org>
- › “Intellectual Disability,” a 15-minute video produced by Bethesda Institute  
<http://store.shopbethesda.org>
- › Transcript also available from Bethesda Institute:  
<http://bethesdainstitute.org>  
Email: [orders@mailblc.org](mailto:orders@mailblc.org)
- › **Faith resources** — awareness; prayer; curricula for Bible studies, first communion and confirmation; pastoral care (First Conversations); grief support and interactions with people with disabilities  
<http://store.shopbethesda.org>
- › *Face 2 Face* is the first series of free disability awareness materials. It is an invitation for your congregation, school or other ministry to become more inclusive of all people, including those with intellectual and developmental disabilities. There are two tracks in the curriculum. The first will introduce the concept of *Face 2 Face* to your congregation through many avenues, from youth Bible studies to sermon notes, from adult Bible studies to bulletins. The second track will mirror the first in regard to the types of materials, but it also is intended as a follow-up to your pledge to begin or enhance your disability ministry.
- › *Meant to Be* is a free resource that includes sermon notes, devotions, chapel talks and Bible studies for all ages, from early childhood through adulthood. For the first time, *Meant to Be* offers a four-part Bible study series for those who would like to dive deeper into God’s Word, reflecting on Christ’s healing and compassion.
- › *Feeling Comfortable with People Who Have Disabilities*  
<http://store.shopbethesda.org>