



***The Arc***<sup>®</sup>  
*Palm Beach County*

Empowering children  
and adults with  
developmental disabilities.

1201 Australian Avenue ● Riviera Beach ● 33404  
arcpbc.org ● 561-842-3213

I'M A **PERSON**  
NOT A DISABILITY

# Intellectual disability

Deficits in cognitive functioning and learning styles  
May seem to remember information one day, and forget it the next  
May lack understanding of personal safety  
May need reminders about hygiene – washing hands  
Difficulty following rules and routines



Individuals . . .

- May need directions repeated
- May need to be redirected back to activities
- May need a visual example

- Adjust your method of communication as necessary depending on the individual's responses to you. Use simple, direct sentences or visual forms of communication, such as gestures, pictures or demonstrations.
- Use concrete, specific language. Use words that relate to things you both can see. Avoid using directional terms such as right, left, east, or west.
- Be prepared to repeat the same information more than once and if the individual isn't understanding repeat in a different way.
- When asking questions, phrase them without suggesting desired or preferred responses as some individuals with intellectual, cognitive or developmental disabilities may tell you what they think you want to hear.
- Give exact instructions. For example, "You will see Sean at 10:30," rather than "Sean will be back in 15 minutes."
- Do not pretend to understand if you do not. Ask the person to repeat what was said. Be patient, flexible, and supportive.
- Avoid giving too many directions at one time.
- Individuals may also benefit from watching a task demonstrated.



# Cerebral Palsy

The cause is damage to one or more specific areas of the brain, usually occurring during fetal development; before, during or shortly after birth; or during infancy.

- Intelligence is usually not affected



Individuals . . . .

- Will have variations of physical limitations and may require assistance
- May have difficulties with speech
- May use a manual or power wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, or other types of mobility devices

- Keep in mind that the personal space of an individual includes their wheelchair, scooter, crutches, walker, cane, or other mobility aid.
- Do not push or move a person's wheelchair or grab a person's arm to provide assistance without asking/telling them first.
- When speaking to a person seated in a wheelchair or scooter, sit so that you and the person are at the same eye level.
- Encourage/promote independence.



# Autism Spectrum Disorder

A neurological impairment

Difficulties relating to people

Repetitive behaviors such as spinning objects, rocking, or hand-flapping

Difficulty with changes to surrounding or routines

Repeats words instead of responding

Inappropriate attachment to objects

Individuals . . .

- May not make eye contact
- May have conversations about things off topic
- May have limited speech
- Might not want to participate because it's not a preferred activity
- May need directions repeated
- May have difficulties with transitions



- Try and keep similar daily schedule. If there is a change, try and give advance notice.
- Avoid use of sarcasm as individuals with ASD typically are very literal and do understand it.
- Encourage participation, even if for a short period of time.
- Prepare and allow for transition time.
- Incorporate visuals.
- Allow individuals to spin objects, rock or hand-flap.
- Don't force communication. Keep sentences short and concise.
- Respect individuals desire for personal space.





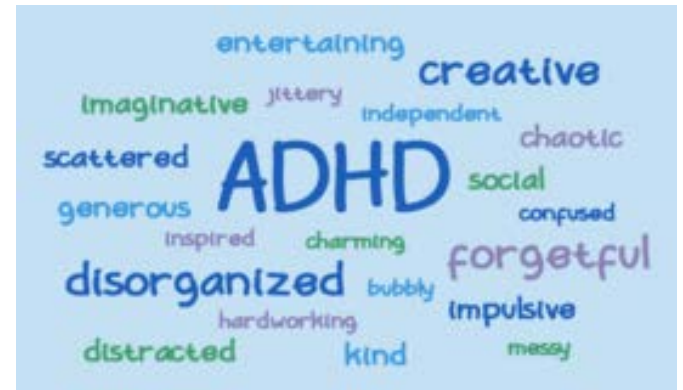
Short attention span  
Problems focusing on a task  
Trouble multitasking  
Difficulty organizing tasks  
Excessive activity or restlessness  
Low frustration tolerance



Individuals . . .

- May have difficulty waiting turn
- May have little or no sense of danger
- May act without thinking
- May be easily distracted
- May talk excessively

- Create structure. Make a routine and try and try to stick to it every day.
- Break tasks into manageable pieces.
- Limit distractions.
- Promote wait time.
- Encourage exercise.



SEE THE PERSON,  
*not the disability*



**The Arc provides services and programming  
to families and individuals of all ages with  
intellectual and developmental disabilities  
across all of Palm Beach County**

### For children ages 0 – 22

- Early Intervention Programs
  - Charter Schools
  - Respite Services
    - Camps

### For adults ages 18 and older

- Employment Services
  - Adult Day Training
  - Supported Employment
- Residential (group homes and supported living)

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