

**C**HILDREN with an intellectual disability have challenges in thinking and learning, and have difficulty with daily activities.

They are generally slower than other children in developing motor skills and speech and language skills.

A child with an intellectual disability may also be said to have special needs, a developmental disability, or a global developmental delay. In the past, children with this type of problem were referred to as mentally challenged, mentally handicapped, or mentally retarded.

Intellectual disability may be caused by many factors, such as genetics or a brain infection. No specific medical cause can be found in about half of the children who have an intellectual disability.

About 1 to 3% of children have an intellectual disability. There are different levels of severity of intellectual disability, referred to as mild, moderate, severe or profound.

Children who are diagnosed with an intellectual disability continue to develop and acquire new skills over the years. However, they rarely 'catch up' with their peers. Children with an intellectual disability generally require supports and services both in the school years and in adult life.

## Resources For Families

### Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) – Community Living Services

The provincial government is restructuring services for children with special needs. Presently, services fall within an MCFD division called Community Living Services (CLS). MCFD-CLS provides funding for programs to address a variety of needs, such as behaviour concerns and respite. Given your child's special needs, he or she should qualify for these services. MCFD-CLS services are voluntary, so you will need to call your local MCFD-CLS office to request that a file be opened. There are waiting lists for most services, so you are encouraged to call as soon as possible.

### Inclusion BC

604-777-9100; Toll-Free 1-800-618-1119

[www.bcacl.org](http://www.bcacl.org)

Inclusion BC is “a federation that advocates for children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities and their families to ensure justice, rights and opportunities in all areas of their lives.”

### Family Support Institute

604-540-8374 ext. 523; Toll-Free 1-800-441-

5403; [www.familysupportbc.com](http://www.familysupportbc.com)

The Family Support Institute is “an organization whose purpose is to support and strengthen families faced with the extraordinary circumstances that come with having a family member who has a disability.” The Institute publishes a newsletter, provides workshops, maintains a resource library and coordinates a province-wide parent network.

### Sunny Hill Education Resource Centre

604-453-8335 ext. 2; Toll-Free 1-800-331-1533 ext. 2; [www.bcchildrens.ca/sherc](http://www.bcchildrens.ca/sherc)

The Sunny Hill Education Resource Centre has books, videos and other materials to support families and children with disabilities. The Centre has information for teaching young children social skills, “good touch” and “bad touch”, stranger danger, and how bodies change and mature.

### Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)

604-439-9566; [www.plan.ca](http://www.plan.ca)

Plan is an organization developed to assist families in making long term plans for their relatives with disabilities. Plan's web page may be of particular interest to younger families.



HEALTH CENTRE  
FOR CHILDREN

An agency of the Provincial  
Health Services Authority

## The ARC

[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

The ARC is a US-based organization that “works to include all children and adults with cognitive, intellectual and developmental disabilities in every community.” The website has a list of publications that can be downloaded free and links to message boards for parents.

## Autism Society of British Columbia

604-434-0880; [www.autismbc.ca](http://www.autismbc.ca)

The Autism Society supports families through parent education and training, a resource library, support groups and networks, crisis support and referral, summer program reimbursement, a newsletter and a volunteer buddy program.

## Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorders (C.H.A.D.D.)

[www.chaddcanada.org](http://www.chaddcanada.org)

C.H.A.D.D. is a family based organization “formed to better the lives of individuals with Attention Deficit Disorders and those who care for them.” There are several local chapters in the Lower Mainland. The Vancouver C.H.A.D.D. chapter offers monthly educational programs which are open to non-members for a \$5 fee.

## Down Syndrome Research Foundation

604-444-3773; Toll Free: 1-888-464-DSRF

[www.dsrf.org](http://www.dsrf.org)

The mandate of the Down Syndrome Research Foundation is “to empower people with Down Syndrome to achieve their potential, lead independent and fulfilled lives, and participate fully in the communities in which they live.” The Foundation has a resource library and publishes a newsletter and other materials. The Foundation also provides a support group, conducts social activities for families, and offers education and training opportunities.

## Books

Baker, B.L., and Brightman, A.J. (2004). **Steps to Independence: Teaching Everyday Skills to Children with Special Needs**. Baltimore, Maryland: Brookes Publishing Company.

Lear, R. (1996). **Play Helps: Toys and Activities for Children with Special Needs**. Oxford, {England}: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Sullivan, T. (1995). **Special parent, special child: Parents of children with disabilities share their trials, triumphs, and hard-won wisdom**. New York: G.P. Putnam’s Son

Marsh, J.D.B. (1994). **From the Heart: On Being the Mother of a Child with Special Needs**. Bethesda, Maryland: Woodbine House.

Meyer, D.J. (Ed). (1995). **Uncommon Fathers: Reflections on Raising a Child with a Disability**. Bethesda, Maryland: Woodbine House.

Miller, N.B. (1994). **Nobody’s Perfect: Living and Growing with Children Who Have Special Needs**. Baltimore, Maryland: Brookes Publishing Company.

Greenspan, S. (1998). **Child with special needs: Encouraging intellectual and emotional growth**. Reading, Massachusetts: Perseus Publishing.

Sunny Hill Health Centre For Children  
3644 Slocan Street, Vancouver, BC V5M 3E8  
Phone: (604) 453-8300  
Toll free: 1-888-300-3088  
Fax: (604) 453-8301  
[www.bcchildrens.ca/sunnyhill](http://www.bcchildrens.ca/sunnyhill)

*Promoting Better Health for Children with Disabilities  
through Clinical Services, Education and Research*

