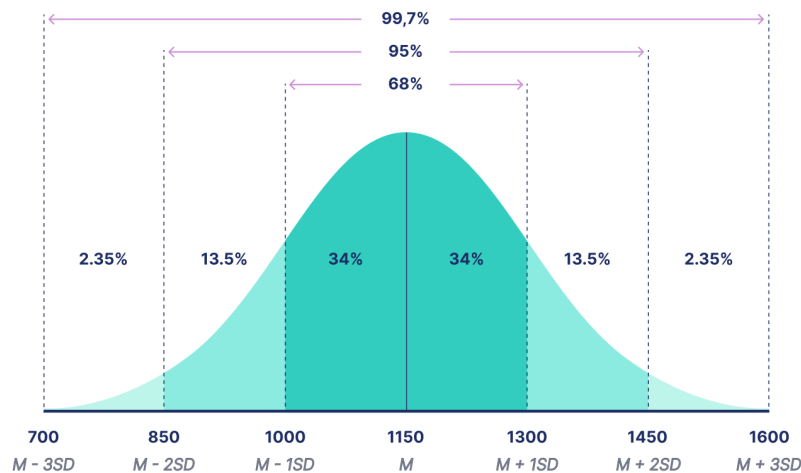


WHAT IS INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY?



Intellectual Developmental Disorder, otherwise known as Intellectual Disability, occurs when an individual's cognitive functioning as measured by formal testing as well as everyday living skills and communication fall in the bottom 2.35% of the normal distribution of skills and abilities.

The curve above presents the normal curve, in that Intellectual Disability is a normal part of society and neurodiversity. Being more than 2 standard deviations from the mean away generally means that your child will take an increased number of repetitions to learn something. This however, is likely to fluctuate based on how interested they are in learning something.

Needing increased repetitions to learn with the same amount of time means that typical developmental trajectories will not apply to your child, as these generally assume linear progress.

What is most helpful is looking at your child's skills for where they are, focusing on what important skills to learn are vs which skills need support and scaffolding for now. This will help us note the skills that may be typical for someone of their age, but are the skills that our child still needs help with, and that's okay.

If you need, ask questions during your assessment process for your assessing clinician to help guide you. It may also be helpful to get support from a psychologist in an ongoing capacity to help you work through supports and strategies in raising a neurodivergent child, as well as the space to unpack any complicated feelings that may arise from social conflicts of how they 'should' be achieving vs embracing their natural timeline.

WHAT CAN HELP?



Find out how your child best learns. Most individuals with ID are concrete rather than abstract learners. This means they are likely to learn best when you do it with them rather than tell them how to. Visuals such as videos and pictures and concrete materials to play with and engage are likely to be helpful.



It can be easy to focus on all the things that your child can't do when they're on a trajectory that feels 'behind'. Remember to look at your child's interests and celebrate that. When studying factors for a good life for children, researchers found finding their joy and engaging in activities that light them up essential to their wellbeing. It **might** lead to a career in it, but also, having joy for joy's sake is important to find, invite and celebrate.



Look for supports available in your area. A diagnosis may attract additional funding through government support, educational aid or in-home support to help you access social and community spaces. Your assessing clinician can walk you through what kind of supports are available. In Australia, you can look up applying for the NDIS, Carers Allowance in Centrelink and the Programme for Students with Disability at school.



Decide which school would be best suited to your child's educational needs. Remember, that whilst you are entitled to go to your local mainstream school and request appropriate supports and accommodations for your child, you also have the additional option of exploring special schools or special developmental schools and deciding which suits your child's needs best.



Join social groups to find people on a similar journey. These will likely form an informal support network of people who 'just get it'. Options could be Facebook groups in your area, or MyTime programmes.