

I.M. CLASS

Definition:

Many of the characteristics of Mild Intellectual Disability correspond to those of Learning Disabilities. The intellectual development will be slower, however, these students have the potential to learn if given appropriate modifications and/or accommodations. Some students will require greater support and/or withdrawal than others will. The students, like all students demonstrate their own strengths and areas for development. Depending on the student, they will be functioning approximately 2-4 years behind or 2-3 standard deviations below the norm.

How are these Students Identified?

In NSW, generally, a combination of assessment methods are used to identify mild intellectual disabilities. Methods may or may not include IQ scores or percentiles, adaptive skills cognitive tests in various areas, skills-based assessments, and levels of academic achievement.

Academic Implications

Students may demonstrate some, all or a combination of the following characteristics:

- 2-4 years behind in cognitive development which could include math, language, short attention spans, memory difficulties and delays in speech development.
- Social Relationships are often impacted. The student may exhibit behaviour problems, be immature, display some obsessive/compulsive behaviours and lack the understanding of verbal/non verbal cues and will often have difficulty following rules and routines.
- Adaptive Skill Implications. (Everyday skills for functioning) These children may be accident prone, use simple language with short sentences, have minimal organization skills and will need reminders about hygiene - washing hands, brushing teeth (life skills). etc.
- Lack of confidence is often demonstrated by these students. These students are easily frustrated and require opportunities to improve self esteem. Lots of support will be needed to ensure they try new things and take risks in learning.
- Concrete to Abstract thought is often delayed. This includes the inability to understand the difference between figurative and literal language.

Best Practices

- Use simple, short, uncomplicated sentences to ensure maximum understanding.
- Repeat instructions or directions frequently and ask the student if further clarification is necessary.
- Keep distractions and transitions to a minimum.
- Teach specific skills whenever necessary.
- Provide an encouraging, supportive learning environment that will capitalize on student success and self esteem.
- Use appropriate program interventions in all areas where necessary to maximize success.
- Use alternative instructional strategies and alternative assessment methods.
- Help the student develop appropriate social skills to support friend and peer relationships.
- Teach organizational skills.
- Use behaviour contracts and reinforce positive behaviour if necessary.
- Ensure that your routines and rules are consistent. Keep conversations as normal as possible to maximize inclusion with peers. Teach the difference between literal/figurative language.
- Be patient! Assist with coping strategies.