



Advice and facts for mothers and expecting mothers with intellectual disabilities

Some mothers have intellectual disabilities. Having an intellectual disability means it is harder to learn and understand things. But everyone can still learn new things. Sometimes it just takes longer. Having an intellectual disability can also mean it is hard to do some things by yourself, so you may need extra help. Mothers with intellectual disabilities can still be good parents and raise their children.

Here are some facts about parents with intellectual disabilities.

- Just because you have an intellectual disability does not mean your child will have a disability.
- Having an intellectual disability does not mean you are a bad parent. You can be a good parent.
- Parents with intellectual disabilities sometimes have a hard time getting healthy food. They may also deal with stress and worry.
- Raising children without help can be hard. So it is important to look for help at the beginning, even before your baby is born.
- Sometimes doctors do not know how to help parents with intellectual disabilities.
- People with intellectual disabilities may need help understanding pregnancy and childbirth.

Here is some advice about pregnancy and childbirth. Get as much help as you can at the beginning so that you know what to expect once your child is born.

It's important to ask for help. Everybody needs help when they are getting ready to have children. There are some kinds of help you can ask for while you are pregnant:

- **Extra time** when you are visiting the doctor. Having more time will help the doctor explain things to you about your pregnancy. Ask your doctor lots of questions, and ask them again until you understand the answers!

- **Advice in clear, plain language** to help you understand what it is like to give birth to or raise a child. It can be helpful to have information broken down to make it easier to learn.
- **Tools to make parenting and childbirth easy.** An example might be an app for your phone to track your pregnancy. You can share information from the app with your doctor.
- **Community support.** Reach out to other parents with intellectual disabilities to see what they did when they were pregnant or raising children.

There are some kinds of help you can ask for while you are raising your children, too.

- **If you are having a hard time helping your children with homework, ask your child's school for tutors.** You can also ask your partner or friends for help.
- **You can talk to other people about how to make rules for your children.** Lots of parents – with and without disabilities – have a hard time making rules for their kids.
- **Talk to other parents with and without disabilities to see what they have done well to raise their children.** You can find parenting groups in person or connect to people online.

It is important to know your rights. Sometimes Child Welfare will try to take your child away from you just because you have an intellectual disability. There are some states that will protect parents with disabilities. Every state has its own laws about parenting with a disability. You can find out more or talk to somebody else to help you find information. We have some information about knowing your rights on [this webpage](#).

References

- <https://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk/parents-with-learning-disabilities>
- <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/service-array/services-to-children-and-youth-with-disabilities/youth/disabilities/>
- <http://www.superu.govt.nz/sites/default/files/disabled-parents.pdf>
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