

Q. What is a moderate general learning disability?

A. The World Health Organisation classifies general learning disabilities into mild, moderate, severe and profound. The definitions of the degrees of disability are usually expressed in terms of IQ, behavioural competence and/or the need for special services. Children with a moderate general learning disability have impaired development and learning ability in respect of language and communication, social and personal development, motor co-ordination, and basic literacy and numeracy, as well as independent living skills. They typically have verbal and performance IQ scores in the 35-50 range. They may also have additional or multiple disabilities, such as physical impairment, hearing impairment, visual impairment, cerebral palsy, autistic tendencies, emotional disturbance, sensory losses or behavioural problems.

Q. What are some characteristics of moderate general learning disability?

A. A wide range of characteristics, depending on the combination and severity of disabilities and the person's age, may be exhibited in individuals with a moderate general learning disability. These may include:

- A delay in reaching developmental milestones
- Speech or communication problems
- Poor co-ordination/mobility
- Low cognitive ability
- Poor attention span
- Poor perception and memory
- Poor social skills

Q. What can be done to help someone with moderate general learning disability?

A. Parents should be encouraged to work with their child in the areas of language, cognitive development, self-help and social skills. Activities to develop gross and fine motor skills should also be encouraged at home as research has shown that stimulation during early developmental stages helps the child to develop to their full potential. An individualised education plan is essential for a student with a moderate general learning disability. This allows the student to follow a pace and learning style that suits their needs and particular abilities. Language development, social and

personal skills development and functional skills development (i.e., self-help skills) as well as leisure and vocational skills should all be part of the curriculum. As the student may be receiving services from a multi-disciplinary team, it is important that all members of the team, as well as the student's parents, work together to plan and co-ordinate the necessary services. Two-way communication between the home and school is vital to ensure that the best possible programme is always in place for the student. Adaptive aids and equipment enable individuals to increase their range of functioning. Assistive technology, such as computers and augmentative/alternative communication devices, may provide valuable instructional assistance for students with moderate disabilities. Many schools now use work experience programmes, which incorporate job placement in integrated, competitive settings as well as sheltered employment and day activity centres. Greater awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities along with increased opportunities to live and work independently in the community have extended the possibilities for those with a moderate general learning disability.

Related Links

[National Association for the Mentally Handicapped of Ireland \(NAMHI\)](#)

[Mencap](#) (UK)

[The ARC](#) (US)

[Down's Syndrome Association](#) (UK)

[Down Syndrome Information Network](#) (US)