

# Facts About Developmental Disabilities

[Spanish](#)

Developmental disabilities are a group of conditions due to an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas. These conditions begin during the developmental period, may impact day-to-day functioning, and usually last throughout a person's lifetime.<sup>1</sup>

## Developmental Milestones

Skills such as taking a first step, smiling for the first time, and waving "bye-bye" are called developmental milestones. Children reach milestones in how they play, learn, speak, behave, and move (for example, crawling and walking).

## Causes and Risk Factors

Developmental disabilities begin anytime during the developmental period and usually last throughout a person's lifetime. Most developmental disabilities begin before a baby is born, but some can happen after birth because of injury, infection, or other factors.

Most developmental disabilities are thought to be caused by a complex mix of factors. These factors include genetics; parental health and behaviors (such as smoking and drinking) during pregnancy; complications during birth; infections the mother might have during pregnancy or the baby might have very early in life; and exposure of the mother or child to high levels of environmental toxins, such as lead. For some developmental disabilities, such as fetal alcohol syndrome, which is caused by drinking alcohol during pregnancy, we know the cause. But for most, we don't.

## Specific Types Developmental Disabilities

- [Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
- [Cerebral Palsy](#)
- [Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders](#)
- [Fragile X Syndrome](#)
- [Hearing Loss](#)
- [Intellectual Disability](#)
- [Kernicterus](#)
- [Language and Speech Disorders](#)
- [Learning Disorders](#)
- [Muscular Dystrophy](#)
- [Tourette Syndrome](#)
- [Vision Impairment](#)