

# DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

## FACT SHEET

If a child is said to have a developmental delay, the child's development is below the average for that child's chronological age. This means that although the child may be chronologically 2 years of age, his/her development may range from 6 months in some areas to 1 year in others. The term *Developmental Delay* is used for children who have had some type of intellectual disability and the onset was before the age of 5 years. When the child is older than 12 years, the term used is generally *Intellectual Disability*.

A child who is said to be *Developmentally Delayed* may either be too young to be tested for other more common disabilities, or have no discernible cause for the delay in development. In some cases, tests may have been done that show some brain damage. Tests may also indicate that Encephalitis, Meningitis or difficulties at birth resulted in delayed development. It can also be that the delay has no known cause.

The delay may be global (in all areas of development) or partial (in one or two specific areas). A child with a developmental delay may also have delayed speech.

To set realistic developmental goals, it is important to look at the child's next stage of development. For example, if the child is rocking on hands and knees, his/her next step may be to crawl. In order to crawl, the child must want to move, so toys or other interesting objects may be placed just out of reach. This will encourage forward movement. Praise and encourage the child's efforts to move. Such a developmental step for most children may only take weeks but

for a child with a development delay, it may take months. **It is important that tasks are achievable and enable the child to experience success.**

Working in conjunction with parents is important, as children will learn much quicker if the same teaching and learning techniques are used at home and in the care environment.

For further information and advice, contact CHILD Australia.

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