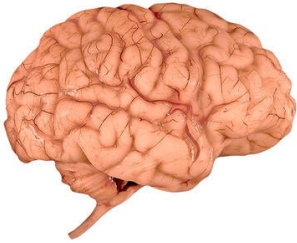


What is a learning disability?



A learning disability is to do with the way someone's brain works.

It makes it harder for someone to learn, understand or do things like making friends, managing money or doing jobs around the house.



People with a learning disability can take longer to learn and may need support to develop new skills, understand difficult information and talk to other people.



With the right support, a lot of people with a learning disability in the UK can lead their own lives.



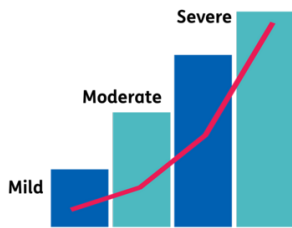
People with some conditions can have a learning disability, like people with Down syndrome and some people with autism .



Some people get mixed up about the difference between having a learning disability and having a learning difficulty like dyslexia .

Mencap think dyslexia is a learning difficulty because it does not change how much someone can learn or do.

You can [find out more about learning difficulties on our website.](#)



There are different types of learning disability:

- mild
- moderate
- severe or profound.

Mild means just a little.

Moderate means quite a bit.

Severe or **profound** means a lot.



The amount of support someone should get depends on the person's needs.

Someone with a mild learning disability may only need a bit of support like getting a job.

Someone with a severe learning disability would need a lot more care and support with everything they do.

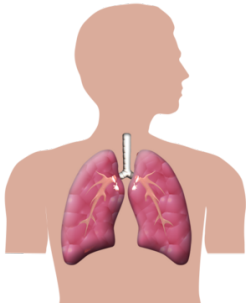


A learning disability can happen when the brain is still growing before someone is born, or soon after they are born.



A learning disability can happen before birth if the mother has an accident or illness, or if the unborn baby has certain **genes**.

Genes are chemicals in the body that hold information like what we will look like.



A person can be born with a learning disability if they do not get enough oxygen as they are being born, damages their head, or is born too early.



After being born, a learning disability can be caused by child illnesses, an accident or fits.



A learning disability can be **diagnosed** at any time.

Diagnosed is when you are told you have a condition or illness by a doctor.

For some people it can take years before they are diagnosed with a learning disability.



Find out more about [a learning disability diagnosis](#) on our website .



If you want help or support about learning disability you can [contact our Learning Disability Helpline](#).



[Find out more about learning disabilities and conditions.](#)

This Easy Read was first published 03/09/2024.