

What is developmental delay?

The term developmental delay is used when a child is developing skills more slowly than other children in the same age group. When more than one area of development is significantly affected, the term global developmental delay may be used.

The different areas of development that may be delayed include:

- ❖ Gross motor skills: This refers to how children move, eg children may have low muscle tone, may bump into things or fall down frequently, may tire easily.
- ❖ Fine motor skills: This refers to how children manipulate objects and use their hands, eg children may have difficulty doing up buttons or using a pencil
- ❖ Speech and language development: This refers to difficulty using and understanding verbal language, eg making choices
- ❖ Cognitive development: This refers to how children understand, think and learn, eg children may have difficulty learning new tasks, understanding directions
- ❖ Social and emotional development: This refers to how children relate to others and develop increasing independence, eg making friends, turn taking.

The terms 'developmental Delay' and 'global developmental delay' are often used until the exact nature and cause of the delay is known.

Developmental delays can be transient (temporary) or persistent (permanent). Transient delays may be caused by premature delivery, physical illness, prolonged hospitalisation or other environmental factors. Persistent developmental delays, sometimes called 'developmental disabilities' may indicate underlying disabilities, for example cerebral palsy, autism, intellectual disability.

Children with developmental delay continue to learn and develop - they may just take longer to acquire new skills and may learn in slightly different ways.

(Raising Children Network)



The most important influence on a child's early development is daily interaction and activities within the family environment. Individualised early intervention programs can also support children and families to access opportunities and to achieve their potential.

For further information:

<http://www.directory.byronearlyintervention.org.au/>

http://www.raisingchildren.net.au/articles/developmental_delay_d.html



Shaping Outcomes

early childhood intervention service

> because we can