

## Glossary of Disorders

### **Asperger's Syndrome**<sup>35</sup>

A developmental disorder on the autism spectrum that is defined by communication and social development impairments and narrow interests and repetitive or stereotypic behaviours. Children with Asperger's Syndrome display no significant delays in cognitive or language development.

### **Autism Savant Syndrome**<sup>35</sup>

A child with autism who displays incredible ability for one or two specific skills, such as musical or artistic ability.

### **Autistic spectrum disorders**<sup>35</sup>

This term encompasses autism and related disorders, specifically, five disorders listed in the DSM-IV: Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder - not otherwise specified, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Retts Disorder.

### **Cerebral Palsy**<sup>34</sup>

A medical condition that is caused by a brain injury before, during, or shortly after birth that affects the control of one's muscles or joints in the body. Cerebral Palsy covers a spectrum of symptoms that vary in severity. Difficulties might exist in fine and gross motor skills and the child may be affected by involuntary movements. Symptoms differ from child to child and may change over time.

### **Childhood Disintegrative Disorder**<sup>35</sup>

A condition that occurs in three and four year-olds characterized by a deterioration of social, intellectual and language functioning from previously typical functioning. Children develop typically for a prolonged period of time followed by a subsequent loss of social skills, play behaviour, bowel and bladder control, receptive and expressive language abilities, motor skills, and nonverbal communication skills.

### **Developmental Disabilities**<sup>36</sup>

Developmental Disabilities refer to syndromes that have significant impact on an individual's level of intellectual functioning. Persons with developmental disabilities can learn, but at a slower rate and to a different capacity than peers with average intelligence.

### **Developmental language disorder**<sup>35</sup>

Children that have problems expressing their thoughts or understanding verbal or written material. The problems are expressed as the child develops and not as the result of an injury.

### **Downs Syndrome**<sup>34</sup>

Down syndrome is the most frequent genetic cause of mild to moderate mental retardation. It is a chromosomal disorder that is caused by an error in cell division resulting in an additional third chromosome 21 or "trisomy 21." This disorder includes a

combination of birth defects including some degree of mental retardation, characteristic facial features and often increased infections, heart defects, vision or hearing problems and other health problems.

### **Dyslexia**<sup>34</sup>

Dyslexia is a developmental condition that impairs one's ability to read. It arises from a weakness in the processing of language-based information that causes the brain to interpret and process information differently. It is a biological condition that affects a wide range of people, producing varying degrees of severity and differing symptoms.

### **Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**<sup>37</sup>

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome is a congenital syndrome caused by exposure to alcohol in utero. It is characterized by mental retardation and specific physical traits.

### **Fragile X Syndrome**<sup>34</sup>

Fragile X Syndrome is a genetic defect in which the absence of a functional fragile X gene (FMR1) shuts down the production of a protein in the brain that is required for normal cognitive development. Children with this hereditary disorder can display a wide range of mental impairment, from mild learning disabilities to severe mental retardation. This is the leading hereditary cause of developmental disabilities.

### **Language and Speech Disorders**<sup>37</sup>

Children with abnormal or delayed development of language and speech, including problems with the development of receptive and expressive language and/or speech and articulation.

### **Mental Retardation**<sup>37</sup>

A condition in which a person's ability to function and learn is more limited than others of the same chronological age. Delays in language and motor abilities are apparent during infancy and the toddler years, although the child may be considered only a bit slow. A diagnosis of mental retardation, however, is often not made until elementary school when difficulties mastering academic skills become apparent.

### **Pervasive Developmental Disorder**<sup>35</sup>

A group of developmental disabilities that are neurological disorders of an unknown cause. Symptoms include diminished ability to communicate and interact with others and to understand language. Children with this disorder usually engage in repetitive activities and have limited interests. Sensory problems related to perception of sound (hypersensitivity or lowered response) may also be present.

### **Pervasive Developmental Disorder, not otherwise specified**<sup>35</sup>

This diagnosis is used when there is severe impairment in verbal and nonverbal communication skills and social interaction, or when stereotyped activities, interests and behavior are present, but symptoms don't meet criteria for other autistic disorders.

### **Rett Syndrome**<sup>34</sup>

Rett Syndrome is a neurological disorder that is genetic in origin, mainly found in girls and present at birth. The disorder becomes more apparent during the second year of life and is the second most common cause of severe and profound learning disability in girls. Children typically show an early period of typical development until 6-18 months, followed by a period of temporary regression in which the child loses purposeful use of the hands and communication skills. Shortly after, stereotypic hand movements occur and rate of head growth slows. Children may have seizures, respiratory problems, gross motor dysfunction and difficulties with language articulation. Due to limited communication skills, an accurate evaluation of IQ may be complicated.

### **Tourette's Syndrome**<sup>35</sup>

Children with Tourette's Syndrome have multiple motor and one or more vocal tics which occur many times a day, almost every day, over a period of more than one year. The onset occurs before age 18 and is not due to direct physiological effects of a general medical condition or substance. Tourette's Syndrome causes marked distress or significant impairment in occupational, social or other important areas of functioning.