



Best Buddies Canada

Peer Buddy Guide

What is an Intellectual Disability?

An intellectual disability, also referred to as a developmental disability, is a term used to describe any condition that includes a lifelong impairment to a person's ability to learn or adapt to their environment.

An intellectual disability is not the same as a mental illness, psychological disability, learning disability, or psychiatric condition. People with intellectual disabilities do not necessarily have a recognizable condition. The degree of disability can vary greatly from person to person.

Some examples of intellectual disabilities include Down Syndrome and William's Syndrome.

Things to Remember as a Peer Buddy...



Do not assume anything. If you have a question about what to do, how to do it, what language to use, or what assistance to offer, ask your Buddy.

You have a right to set limits on what you can and cannot do. Your relationship with your Buddy should be like any other relationship, a reciprocal one.

Take time to explore your mutual interests. Your Buddy probably has more in common with you than you think.

Appreciate what your Buddy can do, rather than what they may not be able to do.

Be considerate of the extra time it might take for your Buddy to get things said or done.

Never start to push a wheelchair without first asking the occupant if you may do so.

Do not pretend to understand a person with a speech difference when you do not. Be patient not only with your Buddy but also with yourself.

Speak calmly, slowly, and distinctly to a person who has a hearing problem or other difficulty understanding. If communication is still difficult, try writing notes.

It is a good idea to introduce yourself to your Buddy's family and give them your contact information, it will help when making plans together.

Include your Buddy in your everyday life! Introduce him/her to your friends/family, share your hobbies with them, and invite them to join in on your plans.

It is important to set boundaries. It might be helpful to schedule specific times to talk on the phone or dates for weekly hang outs. This ensures you and your Buddy are committed.

Best Buddies is all about being a friend.

While it is important for you to be aware of your Buddies abilities, it is not a care giving or mentoring program.

If you have any questions or concerns about your friendship, talk to your Staff Advisor or Chapter President.



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