

# PRACTICE GUIDE

## DISABILITY TYPES, DIAGNOSIS AND IMPAIRMENT

Impairment cluster	Signs to look for	Who to see
Intellectual (example diagnoses include Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Acquired brain injury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty understanding concepts or instructions.</li> <li>• Difficulty learning new skills.</li> <li>• Difficulty problem solving.</li> <li>• Difficulty putting tasks or events in order as applicable to their age.</li> <li>• Challenging behaviours</li> </ul>	Paediatrician Clinical psychologist Neurologist Psychiatrist General Practitioner (rural, remote area)
Psychiatric (example diagnoses include Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden drop in school performance.</li> <li>• Severe anxiety.</li> <li>• Severe phobias.</li> <li>• Disorganised / erratic speech.</li> <li>• Self-harming.</li> <li>• Obsessive thoughts or behaviours.</li> <li>• Difficulty sleeping.</li> <li>• A feeling that they must do a particular action or something bad will happen.</li> <li>• Suicidal thoughts or behaviours.</li> <li>• Delusions/hallucinations.</li> </ul>	Psychiatrist
Cognitive (example diagnoses include Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD))	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty recognising and interpreting others' emotions or body language</li> <li>• Difficulty maintaining focus or paying attention.</li> <li>• Difficulty processing meaning from written text, even when able to read well.</li> <li>• Challenging behaviours.</li> <li>• Limited short term memory.</li> </ul>	Paediatrician Neurologist Neuropsychologist Clinical psychologist Psychiatrist

Neurological (example diagnoses include Epilepsy, Tourettes and Multiple Sclerosis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Severe fatigue or physical weakness.</li> <li>• Tremors.</li> <li>• Speech difficulties.</li> <li>• Poor motor skills.</li> <li>• Seizures.</li> <li>• Involuntary repetitive movements or vocalisations.</li> </ul>	Paediatrician Neurologist Neuropsychologist Psychiatrist
Sensory (example diagnoses include blindness and hearing impairment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doesn't react to lights going on or off.</li> <li>• Doesn't respond when called.</li> <li>• Limited speech and language skills for their age</li> <li>• Appears cross eyed.</li> <li>• Stands very close to the TV.</li> <li>• Seems clumsy.</li> </ul>	GP Paediatrician Ophthalmologist Optometrist Audiologist Otolaryngologist Otologist
Physical (example diagnoses include Cerebral Palsy, Spinal Cord Injury, Muscular Dystrophy/Atrophy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exaggerated reflexes.</li> <li>• Rigidity of limbs.</li> <li>• Muscular weakness or 'floppiness'.</li> <li>• Delays reaching milestones like rolling, grabbing and releasing, walking, running, jumping.</li> <li>• Hunched posture.</li> </ul>	GP Paediatrician Physiotherapist Occupational Therapist Speech Pathologist (if applicable)

---

## Version history

**Published on:** 08 October 2018

**Last reviewed:** 08 October 2018