



Do you have concerns about your child's development?

~For parents raising children in Japan~



National Rehabilitation Center for Persons with Disabilities
Information and Support Center for Persons
with Developmental Disorders

<http://www.rehab.go.jp/ddis/>



Introduction

Japan has been seeing an increase in the number of foreign people living and raising their children in the country. This brochure is aimed at parents with foreign background who are:

- Struggling with parenting in a country with a different culture and lifestyle
- Concerned about their child's development
- Having difficulty in finding the information they need for their child because of a language barrier
- In need of child-rearing support

If you are currently worried about your child's development, you may feel lost, not knowing where to go or whom to ask for help. Japan does have institutions around the country that provide support for parents who are concerned about their child's development. We hope this brochure helps you connect to information and support that you may need.

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Table of contents

To learn about your child's development	3
You may notice that your child...	3
From birth to 3 years old	3
From 3 to 6 years old (school age)	4
Utilize the Health Checkup	5
Infant checkup	5
Eighteen-month checkup	5
Three-year checkup	6
Health checkup on admission to school	7
School entry	7
Schooling options for children with special needs	8
To consult about your child's development	9
Utilize consultation services	9
Consultation options where you live	10
What are developmental disorders?	11
The Act on Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities	12
Support Centers for Persons with Developmental Disabilities	12
To see a doctor	13
Seeing a doctor, Assessment and therapy	13
If your child is diagnosed with a DD...	13
Using medication	14
To learn about disability certificates	15
Examples of benefits	15
Intellectual Disability Certificate	16
Mental Disability Certificate	16
Additional information	17
Consultation in foreign languages	17
Translation apps	18
Information on school education / Information on Developmental Disorders	19
English-Japanese glossary	20

You may notice that your child...

From birth to 3 years old

- Shows delay in language development
- Has stopped using words s/he was using
- Is difficult to communicate with, or communicates one-way
- Always engages in the same play



- Does not or rarely make eye contact
- Does not like to be held
- Does not show much change in facial expression
- Does not respond to name



- Shows strong aversion to a specific thing or place
- Sticks to the “sameness” (same things, same routines, etc.)

- Slow in motor development such as holding up his/her head, sitting, and walking
- Has soft muscles, and/or difficulty in maintaining posture



- Is very restless
- Always moves around and needs constant attention
- Is distracted very easily

- Often has major tantrums that last a long time
- Repeats self-harming behaviors (hitting his/her head, biting his/her arm, etc.)



- Cries terribly at night for months
- Does not take a nap and/or has difficulty falling asleep
- Picky about food and/or drink

- Does not respond to sounds
- Is very sensitive to sounds (covers the ears)



From 3 to 6 years old (school age)



- Not interested in other children and/or does not play with other children
- Has limited interests (in certain colors, trademarks, symbols, letters, numbers, etc.)
- Repeats the same questions or same topics
- Often spends time alone



- Does not care about rules or promises
- Starts one-sided conversation and stops when s/he is done
- Not good at playing with friends and/or gets violent with them
- Is restless and is in constant motion
- Wanders off on his/her own
- Does not listen to directions/explanations till the end

- Is often not aware of others talking to him/her
- Does not understand letters or numbers well
- Has something s/he is very good at, and something very bad at



- Does not act like other children in a group activity
- Takes a lot of time preparing or tidying up
- Not good at drawing and/or using scissors
- Does not like being touched
- Is delayed in learning self-care activities such as toileting and changing clothes

A child's behaviors and tendencies like these can be a source of parental concerns

You and your family may be frustrated and think of him/her troublesome, or feel anxious wondering that your parenting might be going wrong.

While such behaviors can be temporary, it is also possible that your child has developmental problems or a developmental disorder.

Utilize the Health Checkup



Every local government provides complimentary baby health checkups. Please make use of the checkup because it is an important opportunity to learn about your child's health and development.

For the details of the checkup schedule, please contact your local government as each area follows different schedules.

Infant checkup

When to get?

When your child is 3 to 4 months old

What to expect?

- Examination by a doctor
- Height and weight check
- Consultation with a public health nurse if you have any concerns
- Nutritionist's recommendations



18-month checkup

When to get?

After your child has turned 18 months and before turning 24 months

What to expect?

- Examination by a doctor
- Examination by a dentist
- Height and weight check
- Consultation with a public health nurse if you have any concerns



3-year checkup

When to get? After your child has turned 3 and before turning 4

What to expect?

- Examination by a doctor
- Examination by a dentist
- Height and weight check
- Urinary test
- Vision and auditory tests
- Consultation with a public health nurse, a nutritionist, or a psychologist if you have any concerns



- **Vision test**

Eyesight continues to develop until about age six. Early detection and treatment of eyesight problems or squints can improve the prognosis.

- **Auditory test**

This test examines whether your child has hearing problems and/or ear diseases. Early detection is important because hearing affects language development.

- Each checkup is only available when your child is within the specified age range.
- Every checkup is free of charge; there are no additional fees for consultation.
- Please contact your local government office if you missed the assigned checkup dates.



Health checkup on admission to school

When to get?

You will be notified by the local board of education around September of the year before starting school, as children enter school in the April following their 6th birthday. (Please note that an application needs to be submitted to the local board to enter a Japanese elementary school, if the child is stateless or of foreign nationality.)

What to expect?



- Held at the elementary school your child is entering
- Examination by a doctor
- Examination by a dentist
- Height and weight check
- Vision and auditory tests
- Brief intelligence test

School entry

The local board of education or education center offers consultations for children with disabilities or concerns about elementary school life. Teachers of your preschool or kindergarten may also recommend you consult with the board.

School entry consultation is by appointment only. Please contact your local board of education for an appointment.

● Education for children with disabilities

The board of education decides what type of schooling is best suited for a child while respecting the parents' and child's wishes as much as possible.

Elementary schools have “**special classes**” for children with various educational needs and/or “**resource rooms**” where children receive special instructions while enrolling in regular classes. There are also “**schools for special needs education**” for children with severe disabilities.

You can take a tour of the special class or the school for special needs education. Please contact your local board of education for more information.

Schooling options for children with special needs

Elementary and Junior High Schools

Regular classroom

Children with special needs receive extra attention and support in a mainstream setting.

Resource room for special instructions

Special instructions are provided a few times a week or month in the resource room while rest of the curriculums are provided in regular classrooms.

Children can take individual lessons to work on academic or daily life skills for everyday life.

Special classes

The class sizes are small.

There are six types of special classrooms based on the type of disability: low vision, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, physical disability, health impairment, autism and emotional disturbance. The types and number of classrooms differ among schools.

Note: Not every school has the resource room system or special needs classrooms.

Schools for Special Needs Education

These are schools for children with visual impairments, auditory impairments, physical disabilities, health impairments, or intellectual disabilities. Schools for intellectual disabilities also accommodate children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) who have comorbid intellectual disabilities.

The class sizes are small, and the curriculum is designed for each disability.





Utilize consultation services

Personality traits and developmental trajectories differ from child to child. It is important to consult early when you have any concerns so that you can address them appropriately.

- For concerns related to parenting and/or development of your child, consult a public health nurse working for the local government.
- If your child attends preschool or kindergarten, discuss with the teachers on regular basis how s/he is doing in classroom.
- Your local government may offer individual consultations or on-site consultations at your child's preschool or kindergarten by dispatching development counselors.
- Your local government may offer group workshops for parents and their children to learn how to interact with your child in a way appropriate for the child's developmental stage.

Other consultation options

- Public health institute, public health center
- Support Center for Child Development
- Parenting support center, children & parents gathering (tsudo-no hiroba)



Note: Details of consultation services vary among local governments. Please contact a public health nurse at your local public health institute/center for more information.

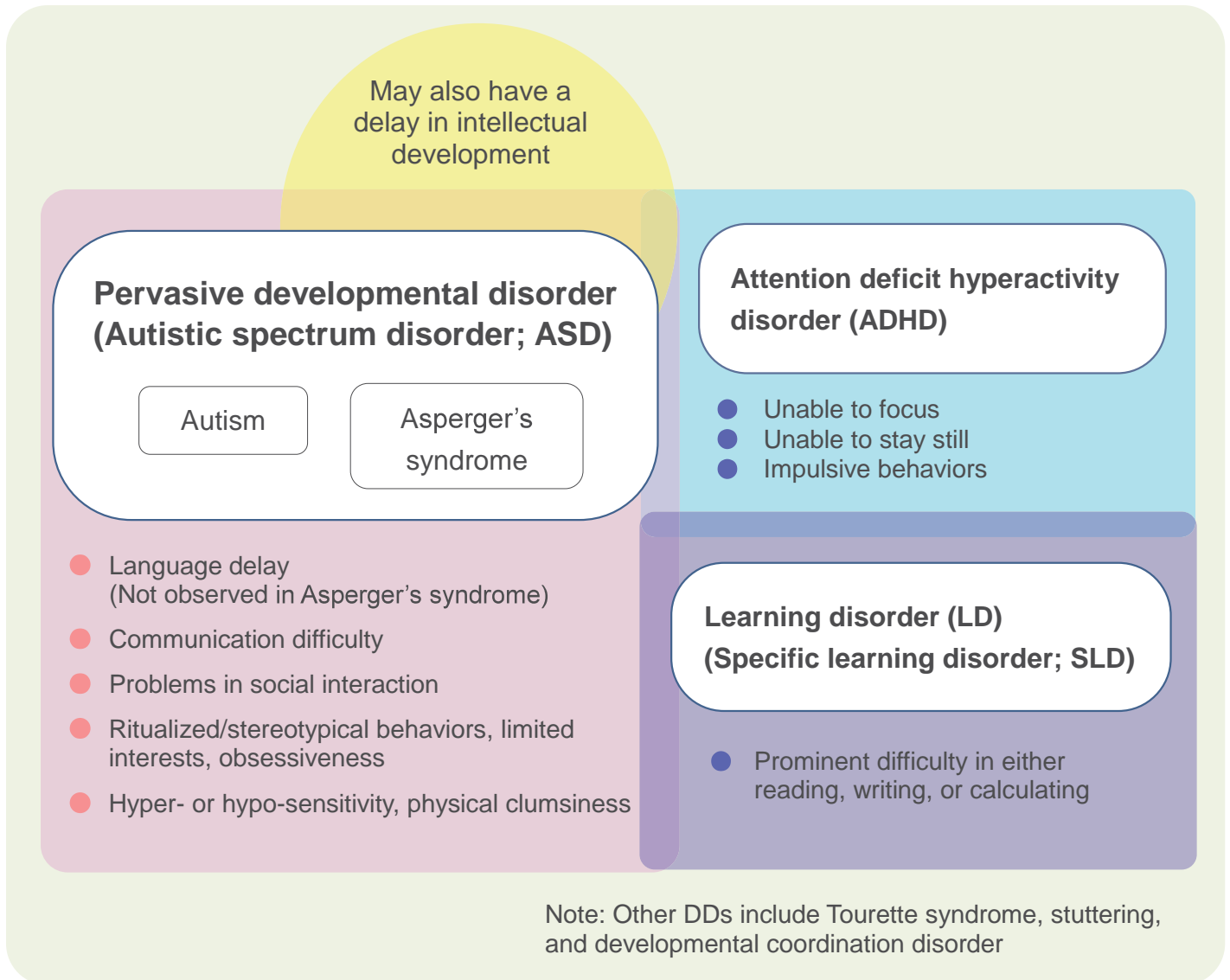
Consultation options where you live

Each local government has various options for consultation.
Please make use of those services if you have any concerns about your child.

Institution	Intended consultee	Opening hours	Phone	Translator
Areas of consultation				
[Example] XYZ City Child Development Center	Children under 18 and parents	Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm. Closed on public holidays	(04) 000-000	△ Partially available (Languages)
	E.g., Child development, developmental assessments, pregnancy, childbirth, parenting			

What are developmental disorders?

Developmental disorders (DDs) are characterized by deficits in the development of brain functions and are congenital in many cases. There are different types of DDs as shown below. Even people with the same disorder show different manifestations. It is also possible to have more than one type of DD.



Definition of developmental disorders in the Act on Support for Persons with Developmental Disabilities:

“Developmental disorders include deficits in brain functions, such as autism, Asperger’s syndrome, and other pervasive developmental disorders, learning disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, onset of which is at an early age”. The persons with DDs are those “who are subject to limitations due to DDs and social barriers in their daily or social lives”.

Note: Another way to define DDs is the disorders numbered as F80-98 in ICD-10.