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# Disability grouping

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**Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>**

## *Identifying and Definitional Attributes*

Data Dictionary:	NCSDD	
Knowledgebase ID:	000563	Version number: 2
Metadata type:	DATA ELEMENT	
Registration Authority:	NCSIMG	Admin status: SUPERSEDED
		Effective date: 01-MAR-05
Definition:	Disability groupings constitute a broad categorisation of disabilities in terms of the underlying health condition, impairment, activity limitations, participation restrictions, environmental factors and support needs. The grouping that most clearly expresses the experience of disability of a person.	
Context:	<p>Disability is the umbrella term for any or all of: an impairment of body structure or function, a limitation in activities, or a restriction in participation. Disability is defined in terms of three components - 'Body functions and structures', 'Activities and Participation' and 'Environmental factors'.</p> <p>This data element may be used as a basis for the broad description of groups of people with similar experiences of disability and patterns of impairments, activity limitations, participation restrictions and support needs. 'Disability group' is not a diagnostic grouping, and there is not a one-to-one correspondence between a health condition and a disability group. Where a precise diagnosis is to be recorded, 'Principal diagnosis' and 'Additional diagnosis' from the National Health Data Dictionary Version 12 (NHDC 2003) may be used. The collection of data on disability-related data elements and diagnosis, together, allows the relationship of the components of disability and related health conditions to be more thoroughly explored.</p> <p>Consumer groups, service providers and governments may use these groupings to make national and international comparisons. The higher level grouping below, represented by the four terms - 'intellectual', 'psychiatric', 'sensory' and 'physical' - is used in many of the international categorisations of disability, for instance the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities endorsed by the United Nations in 1994. The more detailed grouping below reflects terms used nationally in Australia by peak bodies, people with disabilities and by disability administrations. It is used in the main administrative data collection</p>	

in the Australian disability services sector (the Commonwealth-State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set (CSTDA NMDS)). The two levels of grouping are included in this data element to facilitate national and international comparisons.

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### *Relational and Representational Attributes*

Datatype:	Numeric
Representational form:	CODE
Representation layout:	N(N)
Minimum Size:	1
Maximum Size:	2
Data Domain:	1 Intellectual/learning 11 Developmental delay 12 Intellectual 13 Specific learning/ADD 14 Autism 2 Psychiatric 21 Psychiatric 3 Sensory/speech 31 Deafblind (dual sensory) 32 Vision (sensory) 33 Hearing (sensory) 34 Speech 4 Physical/diverse 41 Physical 42 Acquired brain injury 43 Neurological 9 Disability group not yet classified 99 Disability group not yet classified

Guide For Use: The experience of disability is complex and multi-dimensional. It can be described using impairments of structure and/or function, patterns of activity limitation, participation restrictions, environmental factors and support needs. Each of these dimensions can inform the decision of which group to use.

Intellectual/learning disability is associated with impairment of intellectual functions with limitations in a range of daily activities and restriction in participation in a range of life areas. Supports may be needed throughout life, the level of support tends to be consistent over a period of time but may change in association with changes in life circumstances.

This grouping includes:

Developmental delay is applicable to children aged 0-5 only. Conditions appearing in the early developmental period, with no specific diagnosis.

Intellectual disability applies to conditions appearing in the developmental period (age 0-18) associated with impairment of mental functions, difficulties in learning and performing certain daily life skills and limitation of adaptive skills in the context of community environments compared to others of the same age. Intellectual disability may be associated with Down Syndrome, tuberous sclerosis, cri-du-chat syndrome etc.

Specific learning is a general term referring to a group of disorders, presumed due to central nervous system dysfunction rather than an intellectual disability, covering significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical skills. Specific learning may be associated with Attention Deficit Disorder. Autism is used to describe pervasive developmental disorder involving disturbances in cognition, interpersonal communication, social interactions and behaviour (in particular obsessional, ritualistic, stereotyped and rigid behaviours).

Psychiatric disability is associated with clinically recognisable symptoms and behaviour patterns frequently associated with distress that may impair personal functioning in normal social activity. Impairments of global or specific mental functions may be experienced, with associated activity limitations and participation restrictions in a range of areas. Supports needed may vary in range, and may be required with intermittent intensity during the course of the condition. Change in level of supports tends to be related to changes in the extent of impairment and the environment. Psychiatric disability may be associated with schizophrenias, affective disorders, anxiety disorders, addictive behaviours personality disorders, stress, psychosis, depression and adjustment disorders.

Sensory/speech disability is associated with impairment of the eye, ear and related structures and of speech, structures and functions. Extent of impairment, and activity limitation may remain consistent for long periods. Activity limitations may occur in a range of areas, for instance communication and mobility. Availability of a specific range of environmental factors will affect the level of disability experienced by people in this grouping. Once in place, the level of support tends to be relatively consistent.

Sensory/speech disability includes:

Deafblind: is used to describe dual sensory impairments causing severe restrictions in communication, and in the ability to participate in community life.

Vision disability encompasses blindness and vision impairment (not corrected by glasses or contact lenses), which can cause severe restrictions in communication, and in the ability to participate in community life.

Hearing disability encompasses deafness, hearing impairment, and hearing loss, which can cause severe restrictions in communication, and in the ability to participate in community life.

Speech disability encompasses speech loss, impairment and/or difficulty in communication which can cause severe restrictions in communication, and in the ability to participate in community life.

Physical/diverse disability is associated with the presence of an impairment, which may have diverse effects within and among individuals, including effects on physical activities such as mobility. The range and extent of activity limitation and participation restriction will vary with the extent of impairment and the environment. Environmental factors and support needs are related to areas of activity limitation and participation restriction, and may be required for long periods. Level of supports may vary with both life changes and extent of impairment.

Physical/diverse disability includes:

Physical disability is used to describe conditions that are attributable to a physical cause or impact on the ability to perform physical activities, such as mobility. Physical disability includes paraplegia, quadriplegia, muscular dystrophy, motor neurone disease, neuromuscular disorders, cerebral palsy, absence or deformities of limbs, spina bifida, arthritis, back disorders, ataxia, bone formation or degeneration, scoliosis etc. Impairments may affect internal organs such as lung or liver.

Acquired brain injury is used to describe multiple disabilities arising from damage to the brain acquired after birth. It can occur as a result of accidents, stroke, brain tumours, infection, poisoning, lack of oxygen, degenerative neurological disease etc. Effects include deterioration in cognitive, physical, emotional or independent functioning.

Neurological disability applies to impairments of the nervous system occurring after birth, and may be associated with such conditions as epilepsy, organic dementias (eg. Alzheimer's disease), multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's disease.

Collection Methods: Data collections may collect at a higher level of detail or the lower level of detail. However, it is important that the two levels of classification can be mapped to each other.  
Specific collections may require information on all disabilities of a person, on only one primary disability or on both. The definition of 'primary disability group' used in the CSTDA NMDS is 'the disability group causing the most overall difficulty to the person in their daily life'.

Related metadata: supersedes previous data element Disability grouping - Australian national version 1  
supersedes previous data element Disability grouping - International version 1  
relates to the data element concept Disability version 2  
relates to the data element concept Functioning version 1  
relates to the data element concept Activity - functioning, disability and health version 1  
relates to the data element concept Participation - functioning, disability and health version 1  
relates to the data element concept Assistance with activities and participation version 1

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### *Administrative Attributes*

Source Document: AIHW 2002. Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set collection. Data guide: data items and definitions 2002-03. Canberra: AIHW. Reference through: <[http:// www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)>.  
AIHW 2002. Commonwealth State/Territory Disability Agreement National Minimum Data Set Data Dictionary Version 1.0. Canberra: AIHW. Reference through: <[http:// www.aihw.gov.au](http://www.aihw.gov.au)>.

Source Organisation: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare

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### *Data Element Links*

*Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element*

NCSIM    Disability characteristic

*Data Agreements which include this Data Element*

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