



London N. Breed  
Mayor

Nicole Bohn  
Director

## Tips for Communicating with People who have Intellectual Disabilities

Some common traits of people with intellectual disabilities are difficulty performing tasks, communicating at age level, may have problems with receptive and expressive language.

ASK the person what type of communication is most effective. Some people may use pictures, a communication device, etc. In some cases, asking a parent, friend or caregiver may be appropriate, as well.

- **Make your communication relevant to what the setting requires. Generally, people with intellectual disabilities have a hard time using what they have learned and applying it from one setting or situation to another.**
- **Speak clearly, use simple words and concrete concepts.**
- **Try to break down ideas/tasks into smaller parts.**
- **Some people may be anxious to please and may tell you what he/she thinks you want to hear. Try to phrase questions in a neutral way in order to elicit more accurate information.**