



Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD)

What is their disability?

Moderate Learning Difficulties (MLD) may also be known as Global Learning Delay / Difficulty (GLD). As the name suggests this is quite generic and is a general delay in learning, rather than being a specific difficulty. For that reason, it can affect you team member may be affected in many different ways.

It is not a medical diagnosis, but they can complete some assessment to determine whether a difficulty is present, and what it relates to i.e. Numeracy / literacy, psychometric testing or IQ tests.

Due to this, it can be very difficult to identify someone with MLD as the resulting behaviour and symptoms can be confused with bad behaviour or more specific learning difficulties. Team members with other learning difficulties may also have an MLD.

How may it affect your team member?

Your team member with MLD may have some of the following;

- » Basic understanding of words and sentences and may have slow speech or poor vocabulary
- » Therefore, may find it easier to show rather than tell
- » Poor understanding of words, pictures and word association
- » Low self-esteem and confidence and may have been / are involved in bullying
- » Heightened phobias or anxieties
- » May appear immature for age, present immature social skills, and lack appropriate social skills or the opposite
- » May experience challenges with cognitive processes – including memory, maintaining focus and attention, decision making, organisation and understanding language
- » Have a lack of understanding of levels of seriousness, consequence or not respond well to instructions

How can you help?

- » Speak to them and find out their needs – they will likely have their own strategies that you can support with
- » Always encourage independence and try and avoid overdependence on support
- » Praise effort and reassure
- » Give full explanations using simple language
- » Break tasks down into manageable sections, giving only a couple of instructions at a time
- » Allow extra time for tasks / assessments , and ensure plenty of time is given to revisit and recap any prior learning, with regular opportunities to reinforce
- » When considering resources, provide handouts, including when giving instructions so they can absorb them in their own time