

# People with Disabilities in Israel

## Facts & Figures

The State of Israel provides services to children and adults with physical, sensory, mental health and intellectual disabilities. In recent years, Israel ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and legislation has been passed to promote the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community. However, despite these developments, much still needs to be done in order to better integrate people with disabilities into all aspects of Israeli life and to help them realize their full potential. Our hope is that the information presented here will help to clarify and focus attention on the remaining challenges and assist in the efforts to address them.

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# Legislation

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The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities was adopted by the UN in 2006, signed by the State of Israel in 2007 and ratified by it in 2012. The Convention sets international standards for equality, full participation, inclusion and integration in society, accessibility and autonomy of people with disabilities. The Convention applies these standards to various spheres of life such as employment, education and housing. The Convention's implementation requires changes in the legislation and regulations regarding guardianship for people with disabilities and their right to independent living and independent housing in the community.<sup>29</sup>

## Key Legislation and Regulations in Recent Years

Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Law (1998);  
Rehabilitative Day Care Centers for Infants with Disabilities Law (2000);  
Rehabilitation of People with Mental Health Disabilities in the Community Law (2000, 2001);  
Inclusion Law (Amendment 7 to Special Education Law, 2002);  
Regulations Regarding Adjusted Minimum Wage for Employees with Disabilities with Reduced Employment Capacity (2002);  
Investigation and Testimony Procedural Act (For People with Developmental or Mental Health Disabilities, 2005);  
Accessibility Section of Equal Rights for People with Disabilities Law (2005);  
Television Broadcast, Subtitles and Sign Language Law (2005);  
Regulations Regarding the State's Participation in Adaptation of the Workplace (2006);  
Rights of People with Disabilities Employed as Rehabilitation Clients Law (2007);  
Rights of Pupils with Learning Disabilities Law (2008);  
"Laron Law" for Employment Integration (Amendment 109 to National Insurance Law, 2009);  
Accessibility Regulations (2009) and gradual application by 2022 (by 2013, regulations regarding education, construction, infrastructure, insurance, public places, service, communications, sites and transportation were in effect);  
Expansion of Regulations for Children's Disability Allowances (2012).

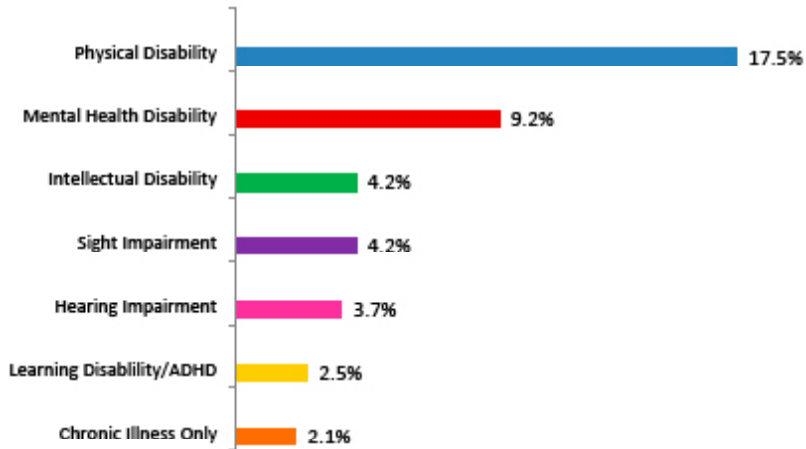
# Adults (ages 18 to 67)

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## Percentage of Adults with Disabilities

- Various surveys indicate that between 800,000 and 1 million people in Israel of working age have a disability, defined as a health problem that interferes with their daily activities.<sup>4, 9, 24, 26</sup>
- Some 5% of the working age population (about 220,000 people) has severe disabilities (significantly interfering with their daily activities), some 11% (about 470,000 people) has moderate disabilities (interfering with their daily activities) and some 5% (about 220,000) has mild disabilities (that do not significantly interfere with their daily activities).<sup>9</sup>
- The percentages of women and men with disabilities are similar.<sup>9</sup>
- The percentage of people with disabilities in the Arab sector (24%) is slightly higher than in the Jewish sector (21%).<sup>9</sup>
- The percentage of people with severe disabilities is almost twice as high in the Arab sector as in the Jewish sector (8.8% compared to 4.5% respectively).<sup>9</sup>
- The most prevalent disability types are physical (17.5%) and mental health (9.2%).<sup>24</sup> See the percentages of different disability types in Diagram 1.

**Diagram 1: Percentages of Working Age People by Type of Disability, as Reported by Survey Respondents\*<sup>24</sup>**



\*Individuals with multiple disability types are counted in more than one category

- Nearly half of people with disabilities (47%) have more than one type of disability.<sup>24</sup>
- The most prevalent combination of disabilities is physical and mental health (14% of working age people with disabilities).<sup>24</sup>
- People with multiple disabilities have difficulty attaining services adapted to their needs, because services are generally provided for the primary disability.<sup>20, 25</sup>
- The percentage of people with disabilities increases with age (from 12% at ages 20 to 34, to 21% at ages 35 to 49, and to 37% at ages 50 to 64).<sup>9</sup>
- About 80% of people with disabilities acquired their disabilities as adults (ages 18 to 65).<sup>31</sup>
- People with acquired disabilities have specific difficulties in receiving services they are eligible for and being recognized by the service systems.<sup>25</sup>

- There are about 60,000 young adults with disabilities (ages 23 to 26), representing about 14% of the overall population of this age group. They comprise approximately 38% of the young adults who are neither working nor studying.<sup>21</sup>
- Young adults with disabilities have special needs regarding their ability to live independently in the community, to transfer from school to the workplace, to choose an occupation (study, work, army service, etc.), to integrate in society, to organize their own recreational activity and to form couple relationships.<sup>6, 21</sup>
- Only 10% of young adults with disabilities participated in work preparedness programs.<sup>21</sup>

## Disability Allowance Recipients

- In 2012, about 220,000 people received general disability allowances from the National Insurance Institute (NII), representing some 5% of the working age population.<sup>12</sup>
- The most prevalent disability among disability allowance recipients is mental health disability (33% of disability allowance recipients).<sup>12</sup>
- In 2012, over 260,000 working age adults received disability allowances of some kind from the National Insurance Institute.<sup>12</sup> About 23,000 additional people of working age received disability allowances from the Ministry of Defense.<sup>16</sup> See the breakdown of disability allowance recipients in Chart 1.



**Chart 1: The Number of Working Age Disability Allowance Recipients According to Allowance Type in 2012<sup>12, 13, 16</sup>**

Allowance type	Estimated Number of Working Age People Receiving Allowance
Defense Ministry Allowance Recipients *	23,000
NII General Disability Allowance Recipients **	220,000
NII Disability Allowance Recipients Not Receiving General Disability Allowances ***	5,000
Permanent Work Injury Disability Allowance ****	35,000
Hostile Attack Injury ****	3,300

\* 20% disability or more as determined by NII, ages 18 to 69. About 22,000 additional people in this age category with 10% to 19% disability received one-time grants from the Ministry of Defense

\*\* 40% or more loss of ability to work

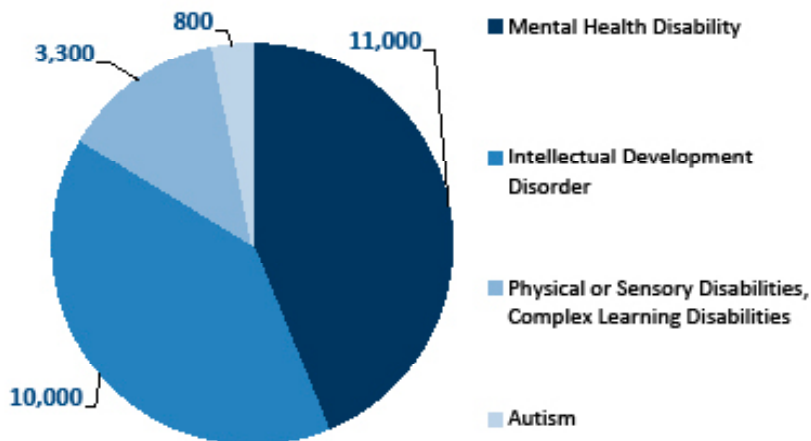
\*\*\* Not receiving general disability allowance but receiving at least one of the following allowances: mobility allowance, special services, polio, scalp ringworm

\*\*\*\* 20% disability or more

## Housing

- The vast majority of people with disabilities live in households in the community.<sup>4, 17, 18, 23</sup>
- About 8,500 working age people with disabilities and some 2,000 children live in institutions (boarding facilities).<sup>17, 18, 23</sup>
- About 15,000 people with disabilities (youths and working age adults) live in group homes and in supervised apartments.<sup>17, 18, 23</sup>
- Most of the people with disabilities residing in institutions, group homes and supervised apartments have mental health disabilities or intellectual developmental disabilities. See Diagram 2.<sup>17, 18, 23</sup>

**Diagram 2: Estimated Number of People with Disabilities Living in Institutions, Group Homes and Supervised Apartments by Type of Disability**<sup>\*17, 18, 23</sup>



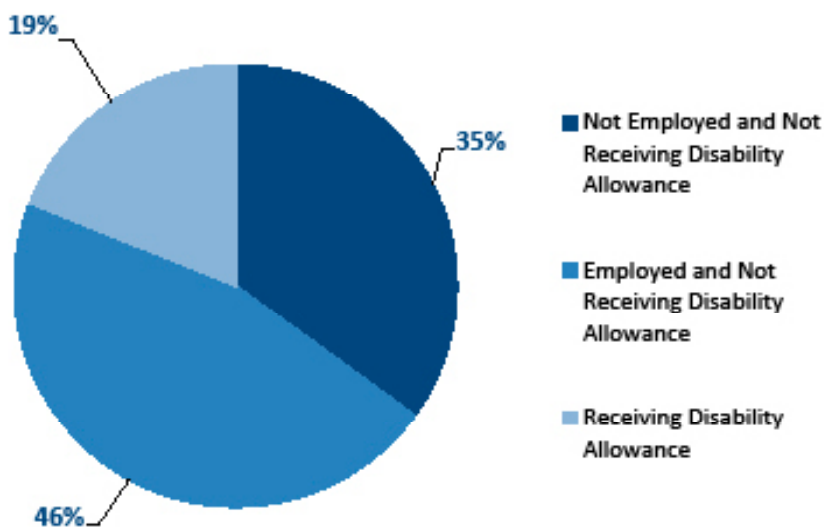
\* Based on data from Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Services and Social Affairs (Division for People with IDD, Rehabilitation Division, Service for People with Autism)

- In many Western countries over the past three decades, there is a growing trend toward closing large residential institutions and transferring their residents to more independent community frameworks, such as group homes and supervised apartments.<sup>32, 25</sup>
- Experts are of the opinion that there is a significant shortage of services supporting independent living in the community in Israel.<sup>25</sup>
- The bulk of the Ministry of Social Services budget for people with disabilities goes to residential institutions, which are used by only a minority of people with disabilities.<sup>18</sup>
- People with disabilities are less satisfied with their housing, their neighbors and their neighborhood than people without disabilities.<sup>4, 9</sup>

## Employment & Income

- 50% of working age people with disabilities are employed, compared to 72% of people without disabilities.<sup>24</sup>
- The Laron Law passed in 2009 enables disability allowance recipients to earn wages up to a certain amount without forfeiting their disability allowance. The goal of the law is to increase the employment of people receiving disability allowance. Three years after the law went into effect, only about 1% of disability allowance recipients had increased their income beyond the previous cut-off point.<sup>4,12,24</sup>
- Average income from employment of people with disabilities is some 1,400 NIS lower than that of people without disabilities.<sup>2</sup>
- 61% of people with disabilities are unhappy with their financial situation, compared to 41% of people without disabilities.<sup>9</sup>
- 54% of people with disabilities report that they are not able to cover their monthly household expenses, compared to 36% of people without disabilities.<sup>9</sup>
- 22% of working age people with disabilities are not employed and are interested in working. This group represents 44% of working age people with disabilities who are not employed. There are more than 200,000 people in this category.<sup>24</sup>
- Only 5.4% of employers report that they employ people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>
- 35% of people with disabilities are not eligible for general disability allowances and are not working (see Diagram 3). This percentage is particularly high among women, people ages 55 to 67 and Arabs.<sup>24</sup>

Diagram 3: Breakdown of People with Disabilities by Employment Status and General Disability Allowance<sup>24</sup>



- 45% of young adults ages 23 to 26 with physical, intellectual sensory or mental health disabilities are not employed and are not studying. Among young adults with learning disabilities and/or behavioral disorders, this percentage is 18%.<sup>21</sup>
- The employment rate of Jewish men with disabilities is twice that of Arab men with disabilities.<sup>24</sup>

## Education

- People with disabilities tend to be less educated than the general population in Israel. 54% do not have high school matriculation certification, compared to 36% of the general population. The percentage of people with disabilities with post high school education (academic and non-academic) is 29%, compared to 38% in the general population.<sup>24</sup>
- The percentage of people with disabilities who use a computer is lower than among people without disabilities (58% compared to 83%, respectively).<sup>26</sup>
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- Knowledge of English is less among people with disabilities than among those without disabilities (46% of people with disabilities do not know English at all, compared to 21% of people without disabilities).<sup>26</sup>
- The average number of years of education among Arabs with disabilities is 7.9 years, compared to 11 years among Arabs without disabilities and 12 years among Jews with disabilities.<sup>19</sup>

## Social Participation & Isolation

- The percentage of people with disabilities who live alone is high (14%), compared to that of the general population (6%).<sup>24</sup>
- People with disabilities spend less time engaging in activities outside the home such as work and leisure activities (average of 5.9 hours per day), compared to people without disabilities (average of 7.2 hours per day).<sup>3</sup>
- 48% of people with severe disabilities and 35% of those with mild disabilities report feeling lonely compared to 20% of people without disabilities.<sup>28</sup>
- People with disabilities feel they are less involved socially, compared to people without disabilities.<sup>3</sup> See the breakdown in Chart 2.

**Chart 2: The Social Involvement of People with Disabilities and People without Disabilities ages 18 to 65 Living in the Community (in percentages)<sup>3</sup>**

Indicator	People with Disabilities	People without Disabilities
Do not leave the home for any activity	34	19
Not at all involved in the community	45	27
Not at all satisfied by the extent of social involvement	35	13
Interested in becoming more involved in the community	65	58

## Attitudes toward People with Disabilities

- Negative attitudes, stigmas and prejudices hinder the inclusion of people with disabilities in society – in the education system, at places of employment and in the community at large.<sup>25</sup>
- Negative attitudes decrease the quality of life of people with disabilities and are apparent in discrimination in housing and employment, social distancing and even in deficient medical treatment.<sup>30</sup>
- Due to prejudice, many people with disabilities prefer to conceal their disability, particularly people with mental health disabilities and other non-apparent disabilities.<sup>1,15,21</sup>
- 18% of the public is of the opinion that people with disabilities are an annoyance and danger to society.<sup>7</sup>
- Most of the public displays a high level of openness and willingness to reside in the same neighborhood (86%) as a person with physical disabilities or to rent an apartment to him or her (82%). In contrast, the extent of willingness to reside in the same neighborhood as a person with mental health disability, intellectual disability or autism, or to rent an apartment to him or her is much lower (53% and 39% respectively).<sup>7</sup>
- The Ministry of Social Services opened 105 group homes for people with disabilities during 2006-2011. Neighbors actively opposed 20 of them and an additional 3 group homes did not open at all due to such opposition.<sup>27</sup>

# Children (ages 0 to 18)

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## Percentage of Children with Disabilities

- The number of children with disabilities in Israel is estimated at about 220,000 (about 8.5%).<sup>14, 22</sup>
- More than half of the 220,000 children with disabilities have learning disabilities or behavioral disorders.<sup>14, 22</sup>
- In 2012, some 33,500 children (about 15% of all children with disabilities) received allowances for children with disabilities.<sup>12</sup>
- The number of children who received disability allowances increased in comparison to previous years as a result of expanded eligibility for the allowance. The number of children receiving allowances for children with disabilities increased by 10% from 2011 to 2012.<sup>12</sup>
- During the 2011-2012 school year, about 182,000 children with disabilities were enrolled in the education system in Israel (kindergarten, elementary and high school), representing some 9% of all schoolchildren that year. About 35,000 (19%) of those children were enrolled in special education schools or kindergartens, about 36,000 (20%) in special education classes and about 112,000 (61%) were included in regular classes.<sup>11</sup>





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# Israel Unlimited

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Israel Unlimited is a strategic partnership between JDC Israel, the Government of Israel and the Ruderman Family Foundation for development of services to promote independent living and integration of adults with disabilities into the community.

## Israel Unlimited Activities

- Developing an array of services supporting independent housing in the community, such as Supported Housing and Supportive Communities
- Developing community infrastructures advancing independent living skills, social change and integration, such as Centers for Independent Living, Accessible Communities, Pathways to the Community and Integrating Young Adults with Disabilities in Centers for Young Adults
- Responding to the needs of at-risk populations falling between the cracks, such as people with multiple disabilities and people with newly acquired disabilities

All Israel Unlimited programs are directed at furthering integration in the community in all spheres of life, following a person-centered multi-disability approach. The programs, when proven successful, are intended for broad implementation and distribution.

# Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute

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## Disabilities Research Center

Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute is Israel's leading center for applied research on social policy and services, serving Israel, the Jewish world and the international community.

Its mission is to increase Israeli society's effectiveness at addressing critical challenges, and to enhance the well-being of, and increase opportunities for, its most vulnerable members. Since 1974, MJB has been involved in Israel's most important national social initiatives, using cutting-edge research to contribute toward many significant social policy and program reforms in Israel.

The Institute's research on disabilities focuses on national and local planning efforts and their efficient implementation, and aims to bolster the independence and integration of people with disabilities by improving the service systems and through attention to services promoting the integration of people with disabilities in society.