FACTS AND FIGURES
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ISRAEL 2018
Over the past 10 years, there have been considerable advances in service development, legislation, and attitudes towards people with disabilities.

Along with ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), there have been substantial changes in accessibility to buildings, transport and services; programs to promote independent housing in the community and de-institutionalization; efforts to promote higher education and integrate people with disabilities into the IDF; and initiatives for full participation and integration of people with disabilities in every area of life.

Nevertheless, in order for people with disabilities to reach their potential and be able to live, work, study, love, belong, maintain and improve their health, and contribute to society like everyone else, many challenges require system wide action. We hope that the information and figures presented in this report will help to advance the status of people with disabilities and create a more diverse and better society.
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LEGISLATION

THE UN CRPD WAS DRAFTED IN 2006, SIGNED BY ISRAEL IN 2007 AND RATIFIED IN 2012.

The Convention sets international standards for equality, full participation, inclusion society, accessibility for people with disabilities and the right to make decisions about their lives. The Convention applies these standards to various aspects of life including work, education, housing in the community, etc. In order to implement the Convention, changes in legislation and new procedures are required regarding the right to independent living and housing in the community and other issues.12

KEY LEGISLATION PASSED IN RECENT YEARS

The National Insurance Law (NIL) (2017); Amendment to the Legal Competence and Guardianship Law (2016); Amendment to the Equality Law – Appropriate Representation in Public Bodies Law (2016); Public Bodies Employment (Appropriate Representation of People with Disabilities) Law (2016); Extension Order to Encourage and Bolster Employment of People with Disabilities (2014); Extension of the Regulations for the Disabled
109 to the National Insurance Law–2009); Rights of Children with Learning Disorders Law (2008); Rights of People with Disabilities Employed in Rehabilitation Programs Law (2007); Regulations on the State Participation in Adaptation of the Workplace (2006); Section on Accessibility in the Equal Rights for People with Disabilities (2005); Television Broadcast (Subtitles and Sign Language) Law (2005); Investigation and Witness Procedures (for People with Developmental or Mental Disabilities) Law (2005); Amendment 7 of the Special Education Law (2002); Regulations for Minimal Wage Adjusted for Employee with Disability and Reduced Ability to Work (2002); Rehabilitation in the Community of Individuals with Psychiatric Impairment (2000, 2001); Rehabilitation Daycare Centers Law (2000); Equality for Individuals with Disabilities Law (1998); Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992).

Child Allowance (2012); Accessibility Regulations (2009) and gradual implementation to 2022 (by 2017 regulations became effective in the areas of: educational facilities, construction, infrastructures, insurance, public places, service, communication, websites, public transportation, vocational training, civil defense, health services, higher education); the Laron Law for Inclusion in Employment (Amendment
ADULTS (AGE 18-67)
PERCENTAGE OF ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

- It is estimated that 704,300 people of working age (18-67) in Israel have a disability (defined as a health problem that interferes with daily activities).\(^8,15\)

- 6% of the working age population (260,000 individuals) have a severe disability (severely interferes with daily activities); 10% (430,000 individuals) have a moderate disability (somewhat interferes with daily activities).\(^8,15\)

- The percentage of men with disabilities is similar to that among women.\(^8,15\)

- The percentage of Arabs with disabilities (22%) is higher than among Jews (13%).\(^8,15\)

- The percentage of people with severe disabilities is almost three times higher among Arabs than among Jews (11% vs. 4%).\(^8,15\)

- The most prevalent types of disability among the working age population are physical disabilities (17.5%) and mental health disabilities (9.2%).\(^34\)
Figure 1: Percentages of Working Age People by Type of Disability, as Reported by Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical Disability</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Disability</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Disability</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sight Impairment</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing Impairment</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Disability/ADHD</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic Illness Only</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- Almost half of the people with disabilities (47%) have more than one type of disability.\(^{33}\)

- In most cases, service provision is based on the main disability. Therefore, people with multiple disabilities have difficulty receiving services suited to their needs.\(^{29,33}\)

- The percentage of people with disabilities increases with age (from 7% at age 20-34; 13% at 35-44; 19% at 45-54; to 30% at age 55-64).\(^{8,14}\)

- Some 80% of people with disabilities in Israel acquired their disability between age 18 and 65.\(^{43}\)

- People with acquired disabilities encounter particular difficulties in exercising their rights and being recognized by the service system.\(^{29}\)
RECIPIENTS OF DISABILITY ALLOWANCES

In 2016, over 230,000 individuals received general disability allowances. They account for 5% of the working age population.\textsuperscript{18,19}

Over 311,000 adults of working age received some form of disability allowance from the NII.\textsuperscript{18} An additional 22,000 individuals in this age cohort received a disability allowance from the Ministry of Defense.\textsuperscript{27}

Table 1: Disability Allowance Recipients of Working Age, by Type of Allowance, 2016\textsuperscript{18,19,27}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Allowance</th>
<th>Approximate No. of Recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Defense*</td>
<td>22,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General disability allowance**</td>
<td>231,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NII disability allowance for individuals not receiving the general disability allowance</td>
<td>32,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent disability allowance for victims of work accidents</td>
<td>43,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilians injured by war or terrorism****</td>
<td>4,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* 20\%+ disability, age 18-67  
\** 40\%+ disability and loss of ability to work  
\*** Not receiving general disability allowance, but receiving at least one of the following: Mobility allowance, special services, polio, ringworm  
\**** 20\%+ disability
The most common primary disability among recipients of general disability allowances is mental health disability (34% of allowance recipients).  

Some 20% of disability recipients receive more than one of the following NII allowances every month: general disability, mobility, special services, ringworm, polio.  

Housing

The great majority of people with disabilities live in households in the community.  

Approximately 17,000 people with disabilities (adolescents and adults of working age) live in small residential facilities (group homes and supervised apartments) in the community.  

Approximately 10,500 people with disabilities (children, adolescents, and people of working age) live in institutions (large residential facilities). Of these, 2,000 are children and youth.  

Most of the people with disabilities living in residential facilities are people with psychiatric or intellectual developmental disabilities.
Figure 2: Estimated Number of People Living in Residential Facilities: Institutions, Group Homes and Supervised Apartments, by Funding Source$^{28,29,33}$
Most of the MOLSA budget designated for people with disabilities is allocated to residential facilities, but only a minority of all people with disabilities live in them.\textsuperscript{29}

Recent decades have seen a growing trend in many Western countries to close large institutions and transfer people living in them to small residential facilities in the community, e.g., to group homes or supervised apartments.\textsuperscript{21,33,44} Israel is gradually implementing a policy of transition from the institutional model to the community housing model, but the pace is slower than in the United States and leading countries in Europe.\textsuperscript{45}

Experts believe that there is a considerable lack of services supporting community and independent living for people with disabilities in Israel.\textsuperscript{33}

There are several housing assistance programs for wheelchair-bound individuals: Rent subsidies, eligibility for public housing, apartments purchased for use of the individual, exterior and interior adaptations for accessibility, etc. The monthly rent subsidy for a wheelchair-bound individual who is eligible for public housing and is waiting for a suitable apartment or for the purchase of an apartment ranges from NIS 3,100-3,900.\textsuperscript{5}

An individual with disabilities who is not wheelchair-bound is not eligible for public housing and can receive a rent subsidy only, in the amount of NIS 700-770 only. This is not enough to cover monthly rent on the free market.\textsuperscript{5}

National data show that as a rule, people with disabilities are less satisfied with their apartments and their surroundings than people without disabilities.\textsuperscript{7,8,15}
EMPLOYMENT

51% of people with disabilities of working age are employed, compared with 79% of people without disabilities.\(^8\)

Between 2013 and 2015, there was a decline in the employment rate of people with disabilities, from 57% to 51%, while the employment rate of people without disabilities remained stable.\(^8\)

Previously, between 2002 and 2013, there was a substantial increase in the employment rate of people with disabilities, from 40% to 57%. Concurrently, there was a more moderate increase in the employment rate of people without disabilities, from 68% to 78%.\(^8\)

Figure 3: Employment Rate among People Aged 20-64, by Severity of Disability, in Selected Years\(^8\)
Employment among recipients of general disability allowances:

- 19% of recipients of general disability allowances are employed, most of them part-time, and with monthly wages below NIS 3,000.\textsuperscript{36}

- The Laron Law, which allows disability allowance recipients to earn up to a certain ceiling without losing their eligibility, was enacted in 2009 with the goal of increasing employment among allowance recipients. Three years after implementation of the amendment, only about 3% of the allowance recipients took advantage of the law and increased their income above the previous ceiling.\textsuperscript{36}

- The unemployment rate is 40% among individuals with an NII-approved disability of 20% or more.\textsuperscript{10}
27% of people with disabilities who work are employed part-time compared with 16% of people without disabilities.\(^8\)

The income of people with disabilities is lower than the income of people without disabilities. The overall income per standard capita of people with disabilities of working age is 75% of that of people without disabilities.\(^7\) In 2015, 71% of the people with disabilities earned net monthly wages of less than NIS 7,500 compared with 60% of people without disabilities.\(^8,14\) In 2009, the gross monthly wage of working people with disabilities was NIS 1,400 lower than that of working people without disabilities.\(^1\)

In 2014, only 2.2% of civil service employees were people with disabilities.\(^3\) However, according to the Amendment to the Equality Law stipulating the obligation for appropriate representation of people with disabilities in the civil service, the requirement is for 5% of all civil servants to be people with disabilities.

26% of people with disabilities reported frequently feeling poor, compared with 11% of people without disabilities.\(^8\)
EDUCATION

The level of education among people with disabilities is lower than among the general population of Israel: 46% of them do not have a matriculation certificate, compared with 27% of people without disabilities. Nineteen percent of people with disabilities have a college education, compared with 33% of people without disabilities.\(^8\)

The level of education of people with disabilities in the Israeli Arab population is considerably lower than that of people with disabilities in the Jewish population. For example, 68% of the people with disabilities in the Arab population do not have a matriculation certificate, compared with 37% of Jewish Israelis with disabilities; 9% of the people with disabilities in the Arab population have a college education, compared with 23% of Jewish Israelis.\(^8\)

42% of students with disabilities at institutions of higher education reported that they do not receive all the academic accommodations that they need and 33% had considered giving up their studies because of the lack of accessibility and/or the accommodations they needed.\(^40\)
COMPUTER AND INTERNET USE

- A smaller percentage of people with disabilities use computers than those without disabilities (59% vs. 80%, respectively).\textsuperscript{16}

- 74% of people with disabilities use the internet on their computer or cell phone compared with 87% of people without disabilities.\textsuperscript{16}

- People with disabilities use the internet less frequently than people without disabilities: 65% of people with disabilities use the internet every day, compared with 82% of people without disabilities.\textsuperscript{16}
SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES
People with disabilities spend less time on cultural activities.\textsuperscript{8}

Table 2: People with/without Disabilities Aged 20-64, Living in the Community, who did Not Participate in Social Activity in the Previous 12 Months (Percent)\textsuperscript{8}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Participation</th>
<th>People with Disabilities</th>
<th>People without Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group activity</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group games</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to an event</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visiting and hosting guests</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside recreation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17% of people with disabilities reported that they do not meet friends or speak to them on the telephone, compared with only 7% of people without disabilities.\textsuperscript{8}

13% of people with disabilities frequently feel lonely, compared with 3% of people without disabilities.\textsuperscript{8}
In the Jewish population, 40% of the people with disabilities performed military or civil national service, compared with 61% of people without disabilities.  

In 2015, 762 young adults with disabilities requested to volunteer to the Israel Defense Forces. Of these, 476 (62%) were accepted.  

The number of young adults with disabilities who volunteer for National Service has increased in recent years. In January 2018, 1,105 young adults with disabilities were serving, compared with 458 in January 2014.
LEGAL CAPACITY

According to data from the Custodian General, 51,000 people had a legal guardian in July 2015. ⁴²

In 2015, about half of the people (51%) who had been appointed a legal guardian were aged 18–64; 46% were aged 65+, and 3% were minors. ⁴²

The Custodian General is responsible for supervising the guardians to ensure that they fulfill their role and do not neglect or take advantage of their wards. In fact, until now, the supervision has focused on property and finances. Following years of criticism, a system is being put in place to supervise the guardians’ work in personal matters as well. ⁴²
The guardianship rate in Israel has greatly increased in recent years. In 2009, 37,000 people had legal guardians, compared with 51,000 in 2015. The rate has increased greatly compared with other countries.\(^{25}\)

In 85% of the cases the legal guardian was a relative while 15% had a professional guardian.\(^{42}\)

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Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities affirms that: "States Parties shall recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life." The article goes on to specify that: "States Parties shall take appropriate measures to provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity." The implication of this article is that people with disabilities have the right to make decisions about their lives and should they require assistance in making decisions, this support should be provided (supported decision-making).\(^{12}\) As of now, there is still no official supported decision-making service offered as a replacement to legal guardianship.

Israel ratified the Convention regarding equal rights for people with disabilities in 2012. One of the changes required to adapt Israeli law to the Convention was to amend the laws governing legal guardianship. In March 2016, Amendment 18 to the Legal Competence and Guardianship Law was passed.
ATTITUDES TOWARDS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

- Negative attitudes and stigmas against people with disabilities interfere with their inclusion in society – at school, the workplace, and the wider community.\textsuperscript{13,35}

- Stigma is detrimental to the quality of life of people with disabilities and is reflected in discrimination in housing, education, and employment, in exclusion from the social public space, and sometimes even in deficient medical treatment or violence against them.\textsuperscript{13,43}

- Fear of stigma, often causes people with disabilities, particularly psychiatric disability, to conceal their disability.\textsuperscript{3,24,30}

- In 2017, attitudes towards people with intellectual disabilities were examined: \textsuperscript{4}

  - 15% of the people in Israel believe that people with intellectual disabilities are liable to be aggressive towards them and 13% that they could be dangerous to others.

  - 26% of the public believe that people with intellectual disabilities need separate facilities and 11% that they need to be in a secluded, closed institution.
Most of the public showed openness and willingness to live near persons with physical disabilities (86%) or to rent them an apartment (82%). In contrast, there was far lower willingness to live near to a person with a psychiatric or intellectual disability or autism or to rent them an apartment (53% and 39%, respectively).\textsuperscript{11}

Between 2006 and 2011, MOLSA opened 105 out-of-home housing frameworks for people with disabilities. Twenty of these met with active opposition from residents, and 3 more were not opened due to opposition.\textsuperscript{41}

**COUPLE RELATIONS AND PARENTHOOD**

The right of people with disabilities to a family life is officially recognized in the UN CRPD, adopted by the United Nations in 2006 and ratified in Israel in 2012.\textsuperscript{12}

Approximately 341,000 people with disabilities – 32% of all people with disabilities – are parents of children under age 18; 115,000 of them have severe disabilities.\textsuperscript{16}

50% of the public would not want to marry or be in a couple relationship with a person with a disability.\textsuperscript{13}
**HEALTH**

People with disabilities use more health services than people without disabilities.⁹

Table 3: Consumption of Health Services by People with/without Disabilities Aged 22-65 (Percent)⁹

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Service</th>
<th>Consumption Rate among People with Disabilities</th>
<th>Consumption Rate among People without Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visited family physician in previous year</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited specialist in previous 3 months</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited emergency room in previous year</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitalized in previous 2 years</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Underwent surgery in previous 2 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Took prescription medication every day consecutively for at least a month in previous year</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
More people with disabilities go without health services due to the cost than people without disabilities. Thirty-six percent went without dental care (for themselves or a family member) compared with 17% of people without disabilities. Eighteen percent went without medication prescribed by the physician (for them or a family member) compared with 3% of people without disabilities. Forty-one percent of people with disabilities have private health insurance compared with 61% of people without disabilities.⁹

- People with disabilities suffer emotional distress more than people without disabilities. Thirty-five percent reported feeling emotional distress in the previous year, compared with 10% of people without disabilities. Forty-six percent of the people with disabilities who felt emotional distress were treated by a qualified professional compared with 32% of people without disabilities.⁹

- The percentage of people with disabilities who do physical exercise is lower than that of people without disabilities. Sixteen percent of people with severe disabilities and 22% of people with moderate disabilities exercise at least 3 times a week, compared with 30% of people without disabilities.⁴⁴

- People with disabilities have a higher obesity rate. Twenty-six percent of people with severe disabilities and 24% of people with moderate disabilities have a BMI greater than 30, compared with 13% of people without disabilities.⁴⁴
An estimated 246,000 children in Israel have disabilities (approximately 9%).\(^{20,32}\)

Over half of the 246,000 children have a learning or behavioral disorder.\(^{19,31}\)

In 2016, some 50,000 children (about 20% of all children with disabilities) received a child disability allowance.\(^{18}\)

Over recent years, the number of recipients of child disability allowances increased following a broadening of the eligibility criteria (the Or-Noy 2 Regulations). For example, in 2012, 32,000 children received the allowance, compared with 50,000 in 2016.\(^{18}\)
In the 2014/15 academic year there were 205,000 students eligible for special education services in the education system in Israeli preschools, elementary, and secondary schools. They constituted 9% of all students in the system that year. Of these, 41,000 were in special-education schools or preschools (20%), a further 41,000 were in special education classes in regular schools (20%) and 123,000 were in regular classes (60%).

In 2007, the Dorner Committee was appointed to examine the process of integrating special needs children into the education system and the care provided to them. The committee's two main recommendations were: to allow parents to decide what type of school their child would attend, and to set a budget for each child depending on the type of disability and level of required support. This budget would be provided to the child regardless of the type of school attended (personal budget package). The Ministry of Education has begun to gradually implement the Dorner Committee's recommendations.

Children with disabilities were found to be at risk from neglect and abuse at a rate three times higher than children without disabilities.
Parents of children with disabilities have unmet needs, from emotional and social support and information through financial and employment needs. The principal need among parents in Israel is assistance with payment for treatment for the child. In recent years a network of Family Centers for children with disabilities was established to provide support to parents and families. By 2017, some 30 family centers were opened throughout the country.

Table 4: Needs for Assistance among Parents of Children with Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Percentage of Parents Reporting the Need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with payment for treatments</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase number of leave days from work to care for the child</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased disability allowance</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incentives to employers to allow absences from work</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal parenting counseling</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support group</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance returning to the job market and adjusting work hours</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

* The sources are listed here in original Hebrew alphabetical order (all Hebrew, except source # 45).


4. AKIM (2017). Fifth Inclusion Measure of People with Intellectual Disability in Israeli Society. Tel Aviv: AKIM Israel.


MYERS-JDC-BROOKDALE INSTITUTE
DIVISION FOR DISABILITIES

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, to enhance the well-being of its most vulnerable members, and increase opportunities for them. 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.
Israel Unlimited is a strategic partnership of JDC-Israel, the Government of Israel and the Ruderman Family Foundation. Remaining committed to our mission, we continue to initiate and develop a range of programs designed to increase the participation and integration of people with disabilities in all areas of Israeli life: from defining problems and formulating solutions; via developing models through testing, evaluation, and making changes according to results; to system-wide implementation and wide-scale dissemination.

Our commitment to leading significant change in the realities faced by people with disabilities in Israel leads us to investigate, design, execute, and widely implement an array of social services, both new and existing. We focus on individuals, with their particular aspirations and needs; on the community around them; and on the cultures to which they belong. We are guided in this by up-to-date knowledge and best practices, which we glean from local and international networking.
To comment or request further details or copies of this booklet, please contact Israel Unlimited, JDC Israel

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