



## People with Disabilities in Israel: Progress and Challenges

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Recent studies from the Myers-JDC-Brookdale Institute, and from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, provide a much better understanding of where we are in terms of the integration of people with disabilities into Israeli society. Below are some highlights of these surveys.

The data relate to the full range and severity of disabilities, including visual, auditory, mental, physical, cognitive, and diagnosed learning disabilities/Attention-Deficit Disorders, as well as chronic illnesses that limit one's ability to work.

### *A very significant percent of the population live with disabilities*

- ◆ About 1 million Israelis, or 25% of the working-age population, have at least one disability, and almost half have more than one disability. The rates of disability are much higher for Arab-Israelis and Ethiopian-Israelis.
- ◆ 19% of the working-age population have a moderate-to-severe disability and 6% a mild disability.
- ◆ Over 260,000 individuals receive some type of disability pension from the Social Security Institute, and the numbers have been growing rapidly. Another 50,000 people receive disability allowances from the Israel Defense Forces. 200,000 receive other forms of on-going income support.
- ◆ Disabilities are associated with complex health challenges: Diabetes is 3 times greater and high blood pressure is 2 times greater among working-age adults with disabilities than among the general population.
- ◆ About 40% of working-age adults with disabilities have children under age 18, and 20% have children under age 10.

### *About 200,000 children (8% of all children) have a disability, and 40% of these have multiple disabilities*

- ◆ About 18% of families have a child with a disability.
- ◆ Children with disabilities are over-represented among children at risk. One-third of all children identified by programs for children at risk have some type of disability.
- ◆ More than 154,000 children with recognized disabilities are in the education system (from pre-school to high school). 85% attend regular schools, expanding opportunities for students but presenting challenges for the schools.

### *There is a growing recognition of need to focus attention on young adults with disabilities*

- ◆ 11% of young adults ages 23-26 have a disability.
- ◆ Almost 40% of young adults who are not working or studying have a disability.

### *Independent living in the community*

- ◆ About 30% live with relatives or in out-of-home settings, and the remaining 70% live with a spouse (55%) or alone (15%) and are in particular need of additional supports to manage their households.
- ◆ A very small percentage (about 14,000 people) live in institutional or sheltered settings. The rest live in the community without adequate support services.

### *Many with social networks, but overall higher rates of isolation*

- ◆ 14% of all working-age adults with disabilities and 25% of those with severe disabilities report frequent feelings of loneliness, compared with only 4% of people without disabilities.
- ◆ 26% of people with severe disabilities report having no friends, compared with 7% of people without disabilities.

### *Many have achieved higher education, but at lower rates than adults without disabilities*

- ◆ 46% of all working-age adults with disabilities, and 34% of working-age adults with severe disabilities, have received a high-school matriculation certificate, compared with 64% of adults without disabilities.
- ◆ Only 20% of adults with severe disabilities have post-secondary education, compared with 38% of adults without disabilities.

### **About half of working-age adults with disabilities work, but many more want to**

- ◆ 52% of working-age adults with disabilities and 32% of people with severe disabilities are employed, compared with 74% in the general working-age adult population.
- ◆ Of those working-age adults with disabilities who are not working, 45% are looking for work or are ready to begin work immediately if they were offered a job.
- ◆ Satisfaction is high with the type of work and with work colleagues, but far less so with wages and prospects for advancement.

### **Significantly greater economic hardships**

- ◆ Adults with disabilities who work earn an average gross monthly wage of NIS 6,361, and adults with severe disabilities earn a monthly average of NIS 5,000. This is compared with NIS 8,201 for people with no disabilities.
- ◆ Only 34% of working-age adults with severe disabilities report being able to meet monthly household expenses, compared with 64% of adults without disabilities.
- ◆ 24% of working-age adults with disabilities did not buy necessary medicine because of the cost, compared with 10% of adults without disabilities.

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## **Key Milestones in MJB's Applied Research and Evaluation on Disabilities**

- 1999** Establishment of MJB's Mandell Berman Fund for Research on Children with Disabilities to enhance and promote the educational, health, and social well-being of children with special needs and their families
- 1999** First National Study of Children with Disabilities, leading to significant expansion in financial aid and services for children with disabilities and much greater attention to the needs of Arab-Israeli children
- 2005** Professional consultant to Israel's Laron Commission on integrating people with disabilities into the workforce, leading to major reform in national support for employment of people with disabilities
- 2005** Strategic planning for JDC-TEVET's first 3-year plan on programs for employment of the disabled
- 2007** National evaluation of the Ministry of Education's implementation of Israel's Special Education and Inclusion Law for children with disabilities, leading to significant improvements in implementation
- 2008** Strategic planning for JDC-TEVET's second 3-year plan on programs for employment of the disabled and for JDC-Ashalim's third plan for programs for children with disabilities
- 2009** Strategic planning for Israel Unlimited, the new partnership among JDC, the Government of Israel, and the Ruderman Family Foundation to advance independent living and integration of Israelis with disabilities
- 2009** First national study of the rehabilitation of people with severe mental disorders, leading to a significant expansion of opportunities for this group
- 2011** National evaluation of the implementation of the Laron Commission recommendations, including the first national study of working-age adults with disabilities, identifying necessary improvements in implementation
- 2012** First national study of the transition to adulthood among young adults with disabilities, already contributing to new programmatic initiatives

For a complete review of new developments in Israel's national disability policy in the past three years, see the report to the OECD, prepared with the assistance of the Institute, at [www.jdc.org.il/brookdale](http://www.jdc.org.il/brookdale).

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