

Information Regarding Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for special education services, the child must be eligible under one of the following conditions and the disability must adversely affect a child's educational performance. Modifications and services in general education must have been utilized and documented to ensure that all other means of instruction cannot meet the child's needs without special education.

IDEA (Sec 300.8) categories are limited to the following:

Autism (AUT): A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three. Characteristics of autism include irregularities and impairments in communication, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term does not include children with characteristics of the disability ED (Emotionally Disturbed).

Deaf (DEAF): A hearing impairment that is so severe that the student is impaired in processing linguistic information through learning, with or without amplification
Deaf-Blindness (DB): Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication, developmental, and educational problems.

Emotionally Disturbed (ED): A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a period of time and to a marked degree. An inability to learn which intellectual, sensory, or health factors cannot explain:

1. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
2. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
3. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
4. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term ED includes students who are schizophrenic. The term does not include students who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they exhibit one or more of the characteristics listed above.

Established Medical Disability (EMD) - ages 3-5 only: A disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome that the IEP team determines has a high predictability of requiring special education and services

Hard of Hearing (HH): A hearing impairment, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects a student's educational performance, but which is not included under the definition of "Deaf" in this section

Mental Retardation (MR): Student has significantly below average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior manifested during the developmental period

Multiple Disabilities (MD): Concomitant impairments (e.g., mentally retarded-blind, mentally retarded-orthopedically impaired, etc.), the combination of which causes severe educational problems. The term does not include deaf-blind students.

Orthopedic Impairment (OI): A severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital abnormalities, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, etc.)

Other Health Impairment (OHI): Student has limited strength, vitality, or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems (e.g., heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, AIDS, asthma, ADD/ADHD, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, or diabetes, etc.) based on medical professionals documentations.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD): A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, expressive or receptive language, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

In determining whether a student has a specific learning disability, a Local Educational Agency (LEA) may use a process that determines if the student responds to scientific, research-based intervention a part of the assessment procedures.

When standardized tests are considered to be invalid for a specific student, the discrepancy shall be measured by alternative means as specified on the assessment plan. If the standardized tests do not reveal a severe discrepancy, the IEP team may find that a severe discrepancy does exist; provided that the team documents that the severe discrepancy between ability and achievement exists as a result of a disorder in one or more basic psychological processes. The area, degree, basis, and method used in determining the discrepancy must be clearly stated. The team should consider:

1. Data obtained from standardized assessment instruments
2. Information provided by the parent
3. Information provided by the student's present teacher(s)
4. Evidence of the student's performance in the general and/or special education classroom obtained from observations, work samples, and test scores
5. Consideration of the student's age, particularly for young children
6. Any additional relevant information (i.e., primary language)

Speech or Language Impairment (SLI): A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment which adversely affects a student's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI): An injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by an internal occurrence, such as a stroke or aneurysm, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial maladjustment that adversely affects educational performance. The term includes open or closed head injuries resulting in mild, moderate, or severe impairments in one or more areas, including cognition, language memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem-solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, information processing, and speech. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Visually Impaired (VI): A visual impairment which, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partially seeing and blind students.

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