

## DISABILITY DEFINITIONS

1. Autism: a developmental disability *significantly* affecting:
  - Verbal and nonverbal communication
  - Social interactionThe disability is generally evident prior to age 3 and adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are:
  - Engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements
  - Resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines
  - Unusual responses to sensory experiences*The term does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance.*
  
2. Communication Impairment: The capacity to use expressive and/or receptive language is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas:
  - Speech, such as articulation and/or voice
  - Conveying, understanding, or using spoken, written, or symbolic languageThe term may include a student with impaired articulation, stuttering, language impairment, or voice *impairment if such impairment adversely affects the student's education performance.*
  
3. Developmental Delay: The learning capacity of a young child (**3–9 years old**) is *significantly* limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas:
  - Receptive and/or expressive language
  - Cognitive abilities
  - Physical functioning
  - Social/emotional, or adaptive functioning
  - Self-help skills
  
4. Emotional Impairment: The student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance:
  - An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
  - An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
  - Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
  - General pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
  - Tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems*The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the Team determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.*
  
4. Health Impairment: A chronic or acute health problem such that the physiological capacity to function is significantly limited or impaired and results in one or more of the following:

- Limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli resulting in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment. The term shall include health impairments due to:
  - Asthma
  - Attention deficit disorder with or without hyperactivity
  - Diabetes
  - Epilepsy
  - A heart condition
  - Hemophilia
  - Lead poisoning
  - Leukemia
  - Nephritis
  - Rheumatic fever
  - Sickle cell anemia

*if such health impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.*

5. Intellectual Impairment: The permanent capacity for performing cognitive tasks, functions, or problem solving is significantly limited or impaired and is exhibited by more than one of the following:

- A slower rate of learning
  - Disorganized patterns of learning
  - Difficulty with adaptive behavior
  - And/or difficulty understanding abstract concepts.
- Such term *can* include students with mental retardation.

6. Multiple Disabilities: This label is reserved for students with multiple, severe disabilities, and usually includes physical impairments.

7. Neurological Impairment: The capacity of the nervous system is limited or impaired with difficulties exhibited in one or more of the following areas:

- The use of memory
- The control and use of cognitive functioning
- Sensory and motor skills
- Speech
- Language
- Organizational skills
- Information processing
- Affect
- Social skills
- Basic life functions

*The term includes students who have received a traumatic brain injury.*

*\*\*We will not be giving this diagnosis without a Neurological Assessment. Requests for this outside assessment will only be given with the recommendation of one of our school psychologists.*

8. Physical Impairment: The physical capacity to move, coordinate actions, or perform physical activities is significantly limited, impaired, or delayed and is exhibited by difficulties in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical and motor tasks

- Independent movement
- Performing basic life functions

The term shall include severe orthopedic impairments or impairments caused by congenital anomaly, cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures *if such impairment adversely affects a student's educational performance.*

9. Sensory Impairment – Hearing: The capacity to hear, with amplification, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following:

- Reduced performance in hearing acuity tasks
- Difficulty with oral communication
- And/or difficulty in understanding auditorally-presented information in the education environment.

*The term includes students who are deaf and students who are hard-of-hearing.*

10. Sensory Impairment – Vision: The capacity to see, after correction, is limited, impaired, or absent and results in one or more of the following:

- Reduced performance in visual acuity tasks
- Difficulty with written communication
- And/or difficulty with understanding information presented visually in the education environment

*The term includes students who are blind and students with limited vision.*

11. Sensory Impairment – Deaf-Blind: Concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs.

12. Specific Learning Disability: The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The areas for a specific learning disability are:

- Oral Expression
- Written Expression
- Basic Reading Skills
- Reading Comprehension
- Reading Fluency
- Listening Comprehension
- Math Problem-Solving
- Math Calculation

In order to be given the diagnosis:

- The student must have been provided with learning experiences appropriate for the child's age and ability levels.
- The student's lack of progress cannot primarily be the result of:
  - a visual, hearing, or motor impairment; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage; limited English proficiency