



SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

Over a billion people live with some form of disability. Information about the different disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth can be complicated. We offer information on the full spectrum of disabilities in children, including developmental delays, learning disabilities and disorders. While this is not a comprehensive list of all disabilities, we want to highlight some of the more common disabilities.

Anxiety

Anxiety disorders are a group of mental illnesses that cause people to feel excessively frightened, distressed, or uneasy during situations in which most other people would not experience these same feelings.

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

A condition that can make it hard for a person to sit still, control behavior and focus.

Autism

Autism is a neurological disorder that affects a child's ability to communicate, understand language, play and relate to others.

Bi-Polar Disorder

Bipolar disorder is a chronic illness with recurring episodes of mania and depression that can last from one day to months. This mental illness causes unusual and dramatic shifts in mood, energy and the ability to think clearly.

Blindness/ Visual Impairment

Vision is one of our five senses. The term "visual impairment" may be used to describe generally the consequence of an eye condition or disorder.

Central Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD)

Central auditory processing disorders affect how the brain perceives and processes what the ear hears, adversely affecting the way the brain recognizes and interprets sounds, most notably the sounds composing speech.

Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral palsy, also known as CP, is a condition caused by injury to the parts of the brain that control our ability to use our muscles and bodies.

Deaf-Blindness

The word "deaf-blindness" may seem as if a person cannot hear or see at all. The term actually describes a person who has some degree of loss in both vision and hearing.

Deafness and Hearing Loss

Hearing is one of our five senses. Hearing loss is generally described as slight, mild, moderate, severe, or profound, depending upon how well a person can hear the intensities or frequencies most strongly associated with speech.

Depression

Major depression is a mood state that goes well beyond temporarily feeling sad or blue. It is a serious medical illness that affects one's thoughts, feelings, behavior, mood and physical health.

Developmental Delay

Developmental delays as defined by the State and as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.



SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

Down syndrome

Down syndrome is the most common and readily identifiable chromosomal condition associated with intellectual disabilities. It is caused by a chromosomal abnormality: for some unknown reason, an accident in cell development results in 47 instead of the usual 46 chromosomes.

Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a seizure disorder. A seizure happens when a brief, strong surge of electrical activity affects part or all of the brain.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

“Fetal alcohol spectrum disorders” (FASD) is an umbrella term used to describe a variety of conditions resulting from prenatal exposure to alcohol including Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder and Alcohol-Related Birth Defects.

Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself and social skills.

Learning Disabilities

Includes dyslexia, dyscalcula, and dysgraphia. Learning disability is a general term that describes specific kinds of learning problems. The skills most often affected are: reading, writing, listening, speaking, reasoning and doing math.

Neurological Impairment

A neurological disorder is any disorder of the body’s nervous system. Structural, biochemical or electrical abnormalities in the brain, spinal cord or other nerves can result in a range of symptoms.

Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD)

Sensory Processing Disorder is a neurological condition that exists when sensory signals don’t get organized into appropriate responses and prevents certain parts of the brain from receiving the information needed to interpret sensory information correctly.

Spina Bifida

Spina bifida is one of the most common birth defects in the United States, that happens during the first month or so of pregnancy and means that the baby’s spine did not close completely. Damage to the nerves and the spinal cord may result.

Tourette Syndrome

Tourette syndrome is a neurobiological disorder characterized by tics (involuntary, rapid, sudden movements) and/or vocal outbursts that occur repeatedly.

Traumatic Brain Injury

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an injury to the brain caused by the head being hit by something or shaken violently.

Visual Impairment, Including Blindness

Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.



The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H325160003. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Carmen Sanchez.