



# DISABILITY HANDBOOK

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**“Information taken from the DPI website”**

<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/uploads/60/GuidelineswithRTI.2.pdf>

# 1. SPEECH/LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENTS

**Definition** - A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

## **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Tend to emerge at a young age
- Stuttering impairments
- Articulation impairments
- Fluency impairments
- Language impairments

## **Strategies/Interventions -**

- A collaboration of a multidisciplinary team
  - General education teachers
  - Special education teachers
  - Speech-language pathologists
- Provide the student with immediate feedback
- Enhance communication effectiveness
- Help children who stutter to speak more fluently
- Help children with voice disorders to improve their voice quality
- Help children with articulation disorders to learn proper production of speech sounds
- Assistive technology
- Communication boards

## **Resources Out of School -**

- Beyond Boundaries Therapy Services
- Pediatric Therapy Partners
- First Words - computer software that has applications for those who are developing or acquiring language functions

**Number of Students** - December 2017 = 2883 students

## **Tips for Teachers -**

- **Early intervention.**
- **Take class time to teach about bullying.**
- **Find the student's strengths and interests and emphasize them.**
- **Find out if your state or school district has materials or services available.**
- **Communicate with the students' parents.**

## 2. SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES

**Definition** - A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Attention disorders
- Hyperactivity
- Memory difficulties
- Oral language difficulties
- Poor gross and fine motor skills
- Written language problems
- Psychological processing deficits
- Reading disorders
- Information-processing

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Capitalize on the student's strengths
- Provide clear expectations
- Use short sentences and simple vocabulary
- Allow flexibility in classroom procedures
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Provide immediate feedback without embarrassment

### **Resources Out of School -**

- 'I Can Problem Solve'- school-based program
- National Center for Learning Disabilities
- Learning Disabilities Association of America
- Nurtured Heart Approach
- Zones of Regulation

**Number of Students** - December 2017 = 4473 students

## **Tips for Teachers -**

- **Present material in small segments.**
- **Use prompts and cues to draw attention.**
  - **Written Cues → highlighting directions**
  - **Verbal Cues → use signal words**
  - **Instructional Cues → have student paraphrase directions**

### 3. EMOTIONAL/BEHAVIOR DISORDERS (EBD)

**Definition** – This refers to a condition in which behavior or emotional responses of an individual are so different from generally accepted norms, that they adversely affect that child's performance.

#### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Gets annoyed easily
- Often appearing angry
- Putting blame on others
- Refusing to follow rules or questioning authority
- Arguing and throwing temper tantrums
- Having difficulty handling frustration

#### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Nurtured Heart
- Zones of Regulation
- Trauma-Sensitive schools

#### **Resources Out of School -**

- Safe Bed
- Medication and therapy combination plan
- Training for teachers

**Number of Students -** December 2017 = 1071 students

#### **Tips for Teachers -**

- It's not about you, don't take things personally.
- Take time to decompress yourself.
- Find support.
- Seek additional training.

## 4. INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES / MENTAL RETARDATION

**Definition** - Mental retardation is “significantly subaverage intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.”

**Characteristics/Warning Signs** - This disability is a below-average cognitive ability that consists of main characteristics including:

- IQ below 70-75
- Limitations in adaptive behaviors (the ability to carry on everyday activities such as socializing, self-care, communication)
- Difficulties in learning
- Difficulties transferring and generalizing skills
- Deficits in social-personal skills
- Deficits in adaptive behavior skills
- Attention difficulties
- Memory deficits
- Speech and language delays
- May or may not be genetic.

**Strategies/Interventions** -

- Community-based instruction
- Transition planning
- Person-centered planning
- Use short sentences to ensure understanding
- Keep transitions and distractions to a minimum
- Do not overwhelm the student
- Involve families
- Use assistive technology

## **Resources Out of School -**

- **Gigi's Playhouse**
- **Easter Seals**
- **Parents Helping Parents**
- **The ARC**

**Number of Students - December 2017 = 772 students**

## **Tips for Teachers -**

- **Create a flexible classroom arrangement.**
- **Use natural environments.**
- **Location of materials**
- **Provide quiet areas.**
- **Provide areas for play and communication.**
- **Carrels, tables, desks**
- **Job skills areas**
- **Groupings**
  - **Cooperative learning**
  - **Peer tutoring**
  - **Whole group**
- **Have high expectations for success.**

## 5. OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENTS

**Definition** - ADHD, Diabetes, or any health condition that impacts their learning to the extent of needing services. Determined by limitations in strength, vitality, and alertness.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Inability to focus on a task (ADHD)
- Difficulty with organization
- Avoids activities that require concentration
- Easily distracted
- Forgetful
- Fidgets
- Talks excessively and interrupts others

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Notebooks and dividers for organizational help
- Distracting devices
- Let student choose goals

### **Resources Out of School -**

- American Diabetes Association
- Beyond Type 1

**Number of Students** - December 2017 = 2153 students

### **Tips for Teachers -**

- Allow extra time for transitions between activities.
- Teach organizational skills.
- Simplify steps for complex tasks.
- Reduce distraction by seating the student close to the front of the classroom or by the teacher.
- Create a schedule of the day for the student to have.

## 6. TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI)

**Definition** - Brain dysfunction caused by an outside source, usually a violent blow to the head.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Sensitivity to light
- Impulsivity
- Dilated pupils
- Amnesia
- Inability to speak or understand language
- Inability to create memories
- Difficulty concentrating
- Abnormal laughing or crying
- Aggression
- Slurred speech
- Stiffness of muscles
- Disorientation
- Headaches

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Structure the environment to fit the student's learning needs.
- Allow additional time to complete in-class assignments.
- Allow for additional or extended breaks.
- Avoid placing students in high-pressure situations.
- Provide both written and oral instructions.
- Allow the student to audio record lectures or instructions for later playback.
- Provide immediate feedback and error correction when necessary feedback should be positive and systematic.
- Use verbal praise and encouragement frequently.
- Allow the student to be exempt from reading in front of class due to impaired reading skills.

### **Resources Out of School -**

- Brain Injury Resource Network (Colorado Kids)
- In the Classroom: TBI Resources for Teachers

- **TBI Academic Accommodations to Minimize Frustration (CBIRT)**
- **TBI Accommodations & Modifications in the Classroom**
- **TBI Tips: Academic Accommodations**

**Number of Students - December 2017 = 55 students**

### **Tips for Teachers -**

- **Be patient and understand that they are trying.**
- **Allow for as many accommodations as possible to ensure that the student is learning.**
- **Make your classroom a positive environment.**
- **Seek supports.**

## 7. VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

**Definition** - A weakness in an individual's ability to understand and use visual information.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Sensitivity to light
- Frequent eye rubbing
- Eye discomfort, including itching and pain
- Clear squint, jerky eye movements, or eyes not moving together
- Visual discrimination - noticing and comparing visual features to distinguish one item from another
- Visual figure-ground discrimination - the ability to distinguish a shape or printed character from a background
- Visual sequencing - being able to see and distinguish the order of symbols, images, or words
- Visual memory - the short-term and long-term recall of visually received information
- Visual closure - the ability to recognize an object when not all of it is visible
- Spatial relationships - the ability to understand the positioning of objects in space

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Avoid computers
- Assistive technology
- Paper strategies - print, magnification, braille
- E-text strategies - auditory support
- Auditory strategies - readers, auditory books

### **Resources Out of School -**

- Mobility specialist
- Physical therapist
- Speech therapist
- Psychologist

**Number of Students** - December 2017 = 52 students

### **Tips for Teachers -**

- **Create a literacy-rich environment.**
- **Read aloud using stories that are interesting to the child.**
- **Arrange classroom furniture to reduce possible dangers.**
- **Use assistive technology.**

## 8. MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

**Definition** - Two or more disabilities so interwoven that none can be identified as the primary disability.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Weaknesses in general learning ability
- Most severe physical, cognitive, and communicative impairments
- A combination of conditions are present.
- Share deficits in:
  - Intellectual functioning
  - Adaptive skills
  - Motor skills
  - Sensory functioning
  - Communication skills
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- Cerebral palsy

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Peer tutoring
- Assistive technology
- Handheld personal computer
- Augmentative and alternative communication

### **Resources Out of School -**

- Perkins eLearning - resources for students with multiple disabilities
- Project IDEAL
- Education Corner

### **Tips for Teachers -**

- Familiarize yourself with the student's IEP.
- Make modifications.
- Learn about assistive technology.
- Inclusion into the general education classroom is important.
- Arrange classroom to support extra equipment.
- Encourage the student to be independent.

## 9. AUTISM (ASD)

**Definition -** A lifelong developmental disability that prevents individuals from properly understanding what they see, hear, and otherwise sense. It is a spectrum disorder - symptoms range from very mild to severe and can occur in different combinations from one individual to the next.

- 3 Primary Components Autism Affects: relationships, communication, and behavior

### **Diagnosis -**

- Usually apparent in the first 3 years of life.
- It does not prevent learning.
- There is no medical test for diagnosing autism. The diagnosis is made based on observations of the child's behavior, communication, and developmental levels by a multidisciplinary team.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Limited social interactions
- Problems sustaining simple conversations
- Odd verbal responses
- Preference for a set routine
- Difficulty with transitions
- Behavioral concerns of hyperactivity, inattentiveness, aggression, outbursts
- Appearing "in one's own world"
- Over focus on specific objects subjects
- Affects the way individuals eat, dress, and spend leisure time, work, and understand their world
- They want to make friends but don't know how to
- Learning difficulties due to poor attention and organizational skills
- Misunderstood by teachers & other students

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Age-appropriate social skills groups
- Role modeling
- Practicing interactions with student
- Showing examples of their behavior

- Incorporate their interests into the school day
- Work with speech-language pathologists
- Teaching social skills with social stories – By: Carol Gray

**Number of Students -** December 2017 = 1311 students

### **Resources Out of School -**

- ACEing Autism
- Autism Speaks
- National Autism Center
- North Dakota Autism Center
- Foundation for Autism Resources
- Autism Society of America

### **Tips for Teachers -**

- Keep a structured routine for a student with autism.
- For indoor recess allow them to sit in a resource room.
- Lunch can be difficult because of the sensory noises, give them options on where they want to eat.
- Watch how you communicate with students with autism.
- Don't use idioms or sarcasm - they won't understand it.
- Make sure they are engaging with their same-aged peers to the best of their abilities.

## 10. GIFTED AND TALENTED (G & T)

**Definition** - A child identified by the planning and placement team as possessing demonstrated or potential abilities that give evidence of very superior intellectual, creative or specific academic capability and needing differentiated instruction or services.

### **Characteristics/Warning Signs -**

- Learn more quickly and independently
- Well-developed vocabulary
- Advanced reading and writing skills
- Motivated during challenging tasks
- Child may become bored in class

### **Strategies/Interventions -**

- Acceleration - skipping a grade or teaching more material faster
- Enrichment - providing additional or different instruction
- Gifted and Talented program in the school

### **Resources Out of School -**

- National Association for Gifted Children
- OEDB - Open Educational Database (contains links for parents to use with their gifted learners)
- National Society for the Gifted and Talented

### **Tips for Teachers -**

- Familiarize yourself with the characteristics of the student.
- Let go of “normal” - provide opportunities for students that don’t necessarily fall under a certain course.
- Conduct informal assessments.
- Learn from the experience of others.