

Educational Disabilities In New York State

Description of Special Education Classifications **School Age Classifications**

Autistic

Autism is a behaviorally defined syndrome, which may occur in children of all levels of intelligence. There is usually difficulty in responding to people, events and objects. Responses to sensations of light, sound and feeling may be exaggerated and delayed speech and language skills may be demonstrated. These difficulties are usually observed before two and one-half years of age.

Deaf

A student who is deaf has a loss of hearing so severe that it prevents processing linguistic information through hearing. The severity of this hearing loss usually necessitates the use of specialized training, through an alternative means of communication or use of speech sounds.

Emotionally Disturbed

Such students have difficulties in school that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors. Over a long period of time, the student is usually unable to build satisfactory relationships, may be generally unhappy, may develop physical symptoms or have fears associated with his or her school experience, or have inappropriate behaviors or feelings.

Hard of Hearing

A student in this category has a hearing impairment, which adversely affects his or her educational performance. The hearing loss may or may not be permanent. He or she may have difficulty following instructions or have difficulty in other areas relating to the hearing loss; they may have problems discriminating speech, sounds, or have speech and/or language difficulties, as well as frequent middle ear infections.

Deaf-blindness

A student with both a hearing and visual impairment, which causes educational issues that can't be accommodated in programs solely for students who are deaf or blind.

Learning Disabled

These students have a psychological processing disorder that causes them to have a problem in understanding or using language. A child who is learning disabled has difficulty listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, or doing arithmetic. This child is learning at only about half or less than half of the level expected for him or her in that subject or skill area. A learning disability is not primarily due to a physical, mental or emotional disability or to environmental, cultural or economic reasons.

Intellectual Disability

These students have a general intellectual functioning level that is 1.5 or more standard deviations below the general population. This is determined by a comprehensive evaluation, which must include an individual psychological evaluation.

Multiply Disabled

A student with two or more disabilities that result in sensory problems (e.g., vision and hearing) and motor problems and/or significant developmental lags. Students in this category need a special education program that is different than any one disability would require.

Orthopedically Impaired

Students in this classification are physically disabled and have a severe orthopedic impairment which adversely affects their educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by disease and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputation, and fractures or burns which cause contractures).

Other Health Impaired

Such students have limited strength, alertness or vitality due to health problems that impact on the ability to learn. This can include (but is not limited to) heart conditions, asthma, sickle cell anemia, diabetes and leukemia.

Speech Impaired

These students have a communication disorder such as stuttering, an inability to correctly produce speech sounds, language impairment, or a voice disorder.

Traumatic Brain Injured

A student who has had injuries caused by medical conditions (i.e., stroke or brain tumors), or physical force, which results in impairments affecting educational performance. This term does not include injuries that are congenital or caused by birth trauma.

Visually Impaired

Such students may be partially sighted or blind. The visual disability, even with correction, adversely affects their education.

Note: if you don't understand these definitions or have questions about your child's classification, ask the school psychologist, the chairperson at the CSE meeting or your preschool staff.