

Disability Categories

(from federal regulations in IDEA, 1992, 1997, 2004)

SDE Policies & Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma

- **Autism:** developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before the age of three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotypical movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
- **Deaf-Blindness:** concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and education needs.
- **Hearing Impairment, Including Deafness:** a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.
- **Intellectually Disabled:** significantly below average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with significant deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period.
- **Multiple Disabilities:** concomitant impairments, the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education solely for one of the impairments.
- **Orthopedic Impairment:** a severe impairment caused by congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease, and impairments from other causes.
- **Other Health Impairments:** having limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, diabetes, leukemia, etc.
- **Emotional Disturbance:** a condition exhibiting one or more of the following:
 - inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors;
 - inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers or teachers;
 - inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
 - a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression;
 - a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
- **Specific Learning Disability:** 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 or write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.
- **Speech or Language Impairment:** a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment.
- **Traumatic Brain Injury:** an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both. It applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas. It does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.
- **Visual Impairment Including Blindness:** an impairment in vision that even with correction, adversely affects educational performance, either partial sight or blindness.
- **Development Delay:** a significant delay in one or more of the cognitive, physical, communication, social/emotional, or adaptive domains, exhibited by a preschool child, 3-9 years of age.

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For questions regarding Special Education, please contact [Julie Crutchfield](#), Director of Special Services.