

IDENTIFYING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Tazewell County Public Schools provides a Free and Appropriate Public Education for all identified eligible students with disabilities, ages two to 21, inclusive, residing in Tazewell County. Disabled children are those children who manifest one or more of the following impairments, and who, because of those impairments, need special education. The State of Virginia uses the following definitions:

1. **Autism** means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age 3, that 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, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.
2. **Deaf-Blindness** means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for deaf or blind children.
3. **Deafness** means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects the child's educational performance.
4. **Developmental delay** means a disability affecting a child ages two through six:
 - a. Who is experiencing developmental delays, 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; or who has an established physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay;
 - b. The delay is not primarily a result of cultural factors, environmental or economic disadvantaged, or limited English proficiency; and
 - c. The presence of one or more documented characteristics of the delay has an adverse affect on educational performance and makes it necessary for the student to have specifically designed instruction to access and make progress in the general educational activities for the age group.
5. **Emotional disability** means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

- a. an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors
- b. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers
- c. inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances
- d. a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression
- e. a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

6. Hearing impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but which is not included under the definition of "deafness".

7. Intellectual disability means a significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

8. Multiple disabilities mean two or more impairments at the same time (for example, mental retardation, blindness, learning disability - orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

9. Orthopedic impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g., club foot, absence of some member, etc.), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.) and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures or burns that cause contracture).

10. Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that (1) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, arthritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and diabetes; and, (ii) adversely affects a child's educational performance.

11. Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language,

spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems, which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Dyslexia is distinguished from other learning disabilities due to its weakness occurring at the phonological level. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

12. Speech or language impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.

13. Traumatic brain injury means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory; perceptual and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

14. 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.

Tazewell County Public Schools has an interagency agreement that covers infants 0 to school age. Early intervention is very important with disabled children. Additional information concerning the Early Childhood Special Education Program and services for preschool children is available from Special Education personnel. School-aged children who may have a disability may be referred to the Child Study Committee at each school or by contacting the Special Education Department at (276) 988-5511 ext.2480, or 2490. If a school-aged child attending a private or parochial school is suspected of having a disability, that child may be referred to the Child Study Committee at the appropriate public school in that child's attendance area or by contacting the Supervisor of Special Programs (988-5511 ext.2480).

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