

Criteria for eligibility according to IDEA

The term 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 that 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

Children with emotional and/or behavioral disorders are composed of a diverse group whose difficulties exist along a continuum of intensity, duration, and frequency of occurrence... The impact of the behavior on the student's education progress must be the guiding principle for identification.

While there are no known CAUSES of Emotional Disability- there are common factors:

Biological Factors Include

- Heredity
- Pre-natal drug and alcohol exposure

Psychological Factors Include

- Inherent mental health disorders
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Environmental Factors Include:

- Family Violence
- Abuse
- Neglect
- War/ Environmental trauma

Symptoms of Emotional Disability (ED)

- Unable to comply with rules and is needy, child has difficulty asking for help
- School is confusing, and brings anxiety- child does well with structure
- Developmental level seems immature and even can regress
- Hurts self and others as an end- a response to something that is not usually intentional
- More self-critical, tense, fearful- child's emotion does not always fit the situation
- Poor self-concept, mood swings, distorted reality
- Difficulty making and keeping friends, rejected by peers
- Achievement influenced by levels of anxiety, confidence, irregular emotions

Least Restrictive Environment:

Children with ED can receive instruction in any classroom environment that meets their needs at any given time and also maintains safety for staff and all students.

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS)

Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) are very important for all students – ESPECIALLY true for students with emotional and behavioral issues. Positive interventions and supports should occur at every level of the LRE continuum.

- Schools that implement PBIS effectively have *less behavior referrals*
- Students on IEPs for Emotional Disability spend *less time* in classrooms designed for *behavior intervention/self-contained*
- Students with disabilities have the *opportunity* to move through the *intervention tiers*
- Teachers trained in PBIS interventions naturally incorporate behavioral strategies which creates consistency throughout the building

Students with Emotional & Behavioral issues often have delayed **Social Skills**

Students with Emotional Disability often demonstrate *erratic, inconsistent emotional responses...*

- The brain releases a hormone called Cortisol- this is sometimes called the STRESS hormone and causes a reaction called Fight, Flight or Freeze.
- *Attempt to **EMPOWER** student to make small choices that help him/her regain control.*
- It is always important to problem solve and discuss the trigger and student's response *after some time has passed.*

Important when interacting with your child or students with Emotional Disability

- *Never* meet the student with the same level of responsiveness
- Lower voice volume & tone- *take step back*
- *Coping skills* must be taught over and over- they need to become automatic or a habit
- If it took *100 times to teach* the inappropriate behavior, it will take *200 times re-teaching* the right skill

More information on IEPs and parent rights under the Individuals with Disability Education Act can be found on our website at www.wpic.org.

Tips for Parents of Children with Emotional Disability

1. Teach the teachers what your child's emotional triggers are, because YOU know your child best!
2. Document everything: keeping a 'home to school' daily notebook is a very good idea.
3. Keep tabs on the Behavior Intervention Plan that is developed by yourself with the IEP team. Ask questions when you don't feel it is being followed and offer useful suggestions for change.

4. When there has been a hard day/weekend at home, communicate this to your child's teacher.
5. Demonstrate emotional control at home so your child can learn this by your example.
6. If you feel like something is wrong at school, talk to the teacher or principal about your concerns. You have the right to reconvene the IEP if progress is not occurring.
7. Remember, you have a say in where and how your child is educated. If you need to bring a supportive friend or advocate to the IEP with you, this is your right as a parent.
8. Ask for help in handling your child's behaviors at home. Schools can be great resources, or they can refer you to someone that can help.
9. If your child has a mental health diagnosis, involve a mental health professional in the planning of your child's IEP. Often students with ED benefit from both individual and family counseling outside of school.
10. Structure and consistency are important at both school and home.
11. Take care of yourself- schedule a respite for you and your other children. Parenting a child with emotional problems can be emotionally draining on everyone.
12. Focus on your child's strengths- share these strengths with those working with your child.
13. Celebrate the little things- they add up to a lot of success over time!

For more information about EMOTIONAL DISABILITIES

CONTACT:



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The contents of this brochure were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and endorsement by the Federal Government should not be assumed.

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Disability Brochure #24



Relating to the Child with an Emotional Disability

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A project of
Parents Helping Parents
of Wyoming, Inc.