

Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to provide special education and related services to eligible students. But not every child with learning or attention issues qualifies. To be covered, a child's school performance must be "adversely affected" by one of the 13 conditions below. For kids with learning and attention issues, two of these conditions are the most relevant. They are "specific learning disability" and "other health impairment."

Source: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/special-education-basics/conditions-covered-under-idea>

Special education and related services

1. Specific learning disability (SLD)

The umbrella term "SLD" covers a specific group of learning issues. The conditions in this group affect a child's ability to read, write, listen, speak, reason or do math. Here are some of the issues that could fall in this group:

- Dyslexia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyscalculia
- Auditory processing disorder
- Nonverbal learning disability

2. Other health impairment

The umbrella term "other health impairment" covers conditions that limit a child's strength, energy or alertness. One example is an attention issue like ADHD.

3. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)

ASD is a developmental disability. It covers a wide range of symptoms and skills, but mainly affects a child's social and communication skills. It can also impact behavior.

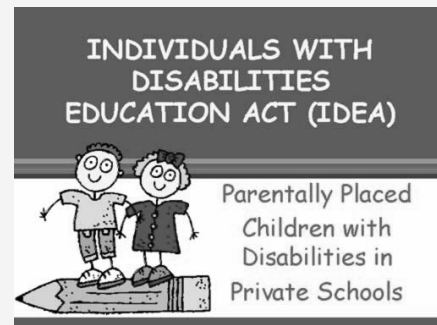
4. Emotional disturbance

Children covered under the term "emotional disturbance" can have a number of mental disorders. They include anxiety disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression.

5. Speech or language impairment

The umbrella term "speech or language impairment" covers a number of communication problems. Those include stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or voice impairment.

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6. Visual impairment, including blindness

A child who has vision problems is considered to have a visual impairment. This condition includes both partial sight and blindness. If eyewear can correct a vision problem, then it doesn't qualify.

7. Deafness

Children with a diagnosis of deafness have a severe hearing impairment. They aren't able to process language through hearing.

8. Hearing impairment

The term "hearing impairment" refers to a hearing loss not covered by the definition of deafness. This type of loss can change or fluctuate over time. Remember that being hard of hearing is not the same thing as having auditory processing disorder.

9. Deaf-blindness

Children with a diagnosis of deaf-blindness have both hearing and visual impairments. Their communication and other needs are so great that programs for the deaf or blind can't meet them.

10. Orthopedic impairment

Any impairment to a child's body, no matter what the cause, is considered an orthopedic impairment. One example is cerebral palsy. This condition is caused by damage to areas of the brain that control the body.

11. Intellectual disability

Children with this type of disability have below-average intellectual ability. They may also have poor communication, self-care and social skills. Down syndrome is one example of an intellectual disability.

12. Traumatic brain injury

This is a brain injury is caused by an accident or some kind of physical force.

13. Multiple disabilities

A child with multiple disabilities has more than one condition covered by IDEA. Having multiple issues creates educational needs that can't be met in a program for any one condition.