

Emotional Disability

State Definition

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: (includes schizophrenia but does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance)

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- A general pervasive mood of anxiety or unhappiness or depression; or
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

District Eligibility Criteria

A history of marked impairment over a significant period of time and documentation will indicate the frequency, severity, intensity, and duration of the problem(s).

This information will be gathered through best practices, including but not limited to a Functional Behavioral Assessment that reflects the issues referenced in the referral questions, and implemented intervention efforts have been implemented in the regular school program. The interventions have been documented as proving unsuccessful in sufficiently modifying the student's behaviors and demonstrate the chronic and pervasive nature of the student's difficulties.

One or more of the following characteristics must be identified:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory, interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of anxiety or unhappiness or depression
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The impact of the behavior on the student's educational progress must be the guiding principle for identification.

The following is adapted from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) Position Statement of Students with Emotional and Behavior Disorders (July 2005):

- Emotional Disability (ED) refers to a condition in which emotional responses of an individual in school are so different from his/her generally accepted, age appropriate, ethnic or cultural norms that they adversely affect performance in such areas as self-care, social relationships, personal adjustment, academic progress, classroom behavior, or work adjustment.
- ED is more than a transient, expected response to stressors in the child's or youth's environment and would persist even with individualized interventions, such as feedback to the individual, consultation with parents or families, and/or modification of the educational environment.
- The identification of ED must be based on multiple sources of data about the

individual's emotional functioning. ED must be exhibited in at least TWO different settings, at least one of which is school related.

- ED can co-exist with other disabilities.

Adverse Education Affect

The impairment must have a direct and adverse effect on the child's ability to make adequate educational progress without special education and related services.

Exclusionary Criteria

- The student's evaluation results can best be explained by another eligibility category (e.g. Autism, Multiple Disabilities, etc.).
 - While these factors may influence the disability, they cannot represent the primary cause of the student's disability
- A diagnosis of social maladjustment, including deviant behavior and conflicts primarily between the individual and society unless the student also has an emotional disability.
- Substance Abuse
- The child's functional levels can best be explained by environmental, cultural or economic influences, or a lack of programming or history of inconsistent programming.
- The disability does not adversely affect educational performance.

Exit Criteria

- The student no longer meets the district criteria.
- The severity, frequency, and duration of the interfering behaviors no longer significantly impede the educational progress of the student.
- The student has demonstrated adequate functioning over a period of time (nine weeks) in a general education classroom with minimally invasive (monitor and/or consult) special education services.
- The student has demonstrated adequate functioning with general education supports only.
- The student's disability no longer demonstrates an adverse effect on educational performance.

Operational Definitions

“social maladjustment”: a socially maladjusted student is a student who manifests a persistent and repetitive pattern of behavior that is aggressive, defiant, disobedient, and/or hostile toward staff and students without concomitant evidence of an emotional disability.

“adversely affects educational performance”: There is a direct correlation between the student's behaviors/feelings as identified above and negative educational performance. The student may fail to perform on in-school tasks at a quality level equal to that of his/her peers. He/she may be failing to progress academically as expected. Educational performance can include level of achievement, productivity, quality of work, organizational skills, use of resources, and classroom participation.

“in at least TWO different settings”: the behavior is consistently demonstrated in two or more different settings, at least one of which is school related. To clarify, school is one setting (but different classrooms or areas at school are **NOT** different settings), home is another setting, community is a third setting, etc.

“inability to learn”: achievement and/or performance is lower than expected for ability level

and cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, health, cultural, or linguistic factors.

“over an extended period of time”: a minimum of six months of documented intervention.

Exception 1: If a transfer student is brought to the attention of the Building Support Team because of suspected emotional problems, record review, and consultation with the student’s former teacher may provide evidence of a pre-existing condition for which there is a history of documented intervention efforts.

Exception 2: Some emotional disabilities may occasionally involve relatively intense onset or sudden decline in overall functioning which may require more immediate care and treatment through the special education program. Consideration for this exception must be reviewed in collaboration with the designated special education administrator.

“to a marked degree”: the student’s behaviors/feelings occur on a regular basis (i.e., not less than one time per week). Behaviors/feelings are so intense that they interfere with the student’s overall functioning. Behaviors/feelings are not mild, intermittent, and situational-based episodes. Behaviors/feelings are demonstrated regardless of the environment the child is in, though their severity may be lessened in some environments. Two or more professionals should concur that the data presents as extreme in frequency, intensity, and duration.

“inappropriate behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances stemming from an emotional component”: the student may not conform to expected patterns of behavior in the educational setting. The student may exhibit bizarre (e.g., obsessions, elective mutism, disordered thoughts, self-mutilation, etc.) The student may respond to naturally occurring situations with unusual/extreme behavior or affect. The student may demonstrate sudden or dramatic mood changes. The student may be unable to modify behavior in different situations. The range of behaviors can range from passivity to aggressiveness. The inappropriate behavior stems from an emotional component (e.g., anger, depression, anxiety, etc.) and is not simply a display of delinquent behavior.

“an inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and/or adults”: the student demonstrates a negative attitude toward authority or significant difficulty coping with conflict. The student tries to interact with other students or adults but is unsuccessful, avoids interactions with others, or demonstrates inappropriate responses or reactions to others’ interaction attempts. The inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships has an emotional component such as the student is angry with others, experiences extreme anxiety in social situations, or avoids interaction due to a depressed mental state.

“a general pervasive mood of anxiety, unhappiness, or depression”: the student demonstrates or expresses significant feelings of dissatisfaction with school, home, self, or relationships. The student displays flat affect or is emotionally unresponsive. The student demonstrates marked symptomology of anxiety or depression. Such emotions impair ability to complete normal daily activities at home and school. The depression is not due to any situational stressors.

“a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems”: the student displays observable physical symptoms, chronic complaints, or reported fears or phobias. These symptoms are not attributed to a medical problem, but rather are in response to personal or school problems the student is facing.