

Eligibility Definitions

According to the Arizona Department of Education, the following is a definition of categories of disabilities:

Autistic (A)

Autism refers to a child with a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, that is generally evident before the age of three and that adversely affects educational performance. (ARS)§150762 (1).

Autism is characterized by severe communication disturbances, marked impairments of social relatedness, and gross distortions of the capacity to appropriately relate to people and the environment. It includes gross distortions of nonverbal communication, language, cognition, and speech, and gross distortions of developmental rates and sequences.

Emotional Disability (ED)

According to Arizona Revised Statutes, (ARS) §15-761(5), an emotional disability means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects educational performance:

- An inability to learn which 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 unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

The term includes children who are schizophrenic but does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed.

Hearing Impairment (HI)

“Deaf” means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, which adversely affects educational performance.

Other Health Impairments (OHI)

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §15-761(9) states:

“Other health impairments means limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems which adversely affect a pupil’s educational performance.”

This can include:

- Heart condition
- Tuberculosis
- Rheumatic fever

- Nephritis
- Asthma
- Sickle cell anemia
- Hemophilia
- Epilepsy
- Lead poisoning
- Leukemia
- Diabetes
- Any other chronic or acute health problem

If a child with a health problem is not eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, he/she may still qualify under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

If the child is not eligible under either circumstance he/she may be eligible under the district's chronic illness policy.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

A Specific Learning Disability is a disorder in one 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 do mathematical calculations.

The term includes such conditions as:

- Perceptual handicaps
- Brain injury
- Minimal brain dysfunction
- Dyslexia
- Developmental aphasia

The term does not include children who have learning problems as the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, mental retardation, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage. (ARS)§15-761(32).

Mental Retardation (MIMR, MOMR, SMR)

Mild Mental Retardation (MIMR) means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between two and three standard deviations below the mean for children the same age.

Moderate Mental Retardation (MOMR) means a performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior between three and four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age.

Severe Mental Retardation (SMR) means performance on standard measures of intellectual and adaptive behavior measures at least four standard deviations below the mean for children of the same age. (ARS)§15-761(12).

Multiple Disabilities (MD)

Multiple Disabilities means learning and development problems resulting from multiple disabilities as determined by evaluation pursuant to (ARS)§ 15-766) that cannot be provided for adequately in a program designed to meet the needs of children with less complex disabilities.

Multiple disabilities include any of the following conditions that require provision of special education and related services:

- Two or more of the following conditions: Hearing Impairment, Orthopedic Impairment, Moderate Mental Retardation, and Visual Impairment
- A child with a disability listed in subdivision (a) of this paragraph existing concurrently with a condition of mild mental retardation, emotional disability or specific learning disability.

In addition, the Arizona Revised Statutes Article 4, Section 15-761 states that multiple disabilities with severe sensory impairment means multiple disabilities that include at least one of the following:

- Severe visual impairment or severe hearing impairment in combination with another severe disability.
- Severe visual impairment and severe hearing impairment.

Orthopedic Impairment (OI)

An Orthopedic Impairment includes those impairments that are caused by congenital anomaly, disease, and other causes, such as amputation or cerebral palsy, and that adversely affects a child's performance in the educational environment.

Preschool Moderate Delay (PMD)

Performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures at least one and one-half but not more than three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in two or more of the following areas:

- Cognitive development
- Physical development
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development
- Adaptive development

The results of the tests must be supported by information from a comprehensive developmental assessment and from parental input.

Preschool Severe Delay (PSD)

Performance by a preschool child on a norm-referenced test that measures more than three standard deviations below the mean for children of the same chronological age in one or more of the following:

- Cognitive development
- Physical development
- Communication development
- Social or emotional development
- Adaptive development

Speech/Language Impairment (SLI)

Speech/ Language Impairment means a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment or voice impairment which adversely affect a child's educational performance.

Arizona Revised Statutes §15-761(33) considers a child to have a speech/language impairment when the child's language is affected "to the extent that it calls attention to itself, it interferes with communication or causes the child to be maladjusted."

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

Traumatic Brain Injury means an acquired injury to the brain that is caused by an external physical force and that results in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects the educational performance.

The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in mild, moderate or severe impairments in one or more areas including cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, problem solving, sensory, perceptual, physical functions, information processing and speech.

The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or brain injuries induced by birth trauma. (ARS)§15-761(36).

Visual Impairment (VI)

The educational definition of visual impairment is contained in Arizona Revised Statutes §150761(37), which states:

"Visual impairment means a visual impairment that interferes with the child's performance in the educational environment"