

# CATEGORIES, DEFINITIONS AND TIPS FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

DISABILITY	DEFINITION	TIPS FOR WORKING WITH THE CHILD
<b>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)</b>	<p>Any of a range of behavioral disorders and resultant academic challenges of students who may exhibit the following inattentiveness: inability to pay attention to details or a tendency to make careless errors in schoolwork or other activities; difficulty with sustained attention in tasks or play activities; apparent listening problems; difficulty following instructions; problems organizing tasks that require mental effort; tendency to lose things such as: toys, notebooks, or homework; distractibility; forgetfulness in daily activities. A person can be predominantly inattentive (often referred to as ADD), predominantly hyperactive-impulsive, or a combination of these two.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Provide an outline to ADHD students with key concepts or vocabulary prior to lesson presentation.</li> <li>♦ ADHD kids are easily bored. Try to increase the pace of lesson presentation. Include a variety of activities during each lesson appropriate to the child's age.</li> <li>♦ Use multisensory presentations, but be careful with audio-visual aids to be sure that distractions are kept to a minimum. For example, be sure interesting pictures and or sounds relate directly to the material to be learned.</li> <li>♦ Make lessons brief or break longer presentations into discrete segments.</li> <li>♦ Actively involve the attention deficit student during the lesson presentation. For example, have the ADHD student be the instructional aide who is to write key words or ideas on the board.</li> <li>♦ Encourage the ADD/ADHD students to develop mental images of the concepts of information being presented. Ask them about their images to be sure they are visualizing the key material to be learned.</li> <li>♦ Allow your students to make frequent responses throughout the lesson by using choral responding, frequently calling on many individuals, having the class respond with hand signals.</li> <li>♦ Try role-playing activities to act out key concepts, historical events, etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Autism Spectrum Disorder</b>	<p>A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three. Characteristics generally associated with autism are: lack of or delay in spoken language; repetitive use of language and/or motor mannerisms (e.g. hand-flapping, twirling objects); little or no eye contact; lack of interest in peer relationships; lack of spontaneous or make-believe play; persistent fixation on parts of objects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Choose meaningful content – choose content that is motivating and use special interests and areas of expertise as teaching tools.</li> <li>♦ Use flexible groupings – at different times and for different lessons group or pair students based on interests, needs or skills.</li> <li>♦ Experiment with different materials – type instead of write, posters instead of textbooks – giving students choices of using different types of materials.</li> <li>♦ Vary lesson formats and structures – decrease reliance on whole-class discussions and lectures and do more hands-on activities such as cooperative learning groups, centers and stations and projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD)</b>	<p>A disorder that occurs when the ear and the brain do not coordinate fully. A CAPD is a physical hearing impairment, but one which does not show up as a hearing loss on routine screenings or an audiogram. Instead, it affects the hearing system beyond the year, whose job it is to separate a meaningful message from non-essential background sound and deliver that information with good clarity to the intellectual centers of the brain (the central nervous system).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Show rather than explain.</li> <li>♦ Supplement with more intact senses (use visual cues, signals, handouts, manipulatives).</li> <li>♦ Reduce or space directions, give cues such as “ready?”</li> <li>♦ Reword or help decipher confusing oral and/or written directions.</li> <li>♦ Teach abstract vocabulary, word roots, synonyms/ antonyms.</li> <li>♦ Vary pitch and tone of voice, alter pace, stress key words.</li> <li>♦ Ask specific questions as you teach to find out if they do understand.</li> <li>♦ Allow them 5-6 seconds to respond (“think time”).</li> <li>♦ Have the student constantly verbalize concepts, vocabulary words, rules, etc.</li> <li>♦ Avoid asking the child to listen and write at the same time.</li> </ul>

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<b>Cognitive Disability (CD)</b>	Significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the development period that adversely affects a child's educational performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Make the environment as consistent and predictable as possible.</li> <li>♦ Present information both orally and visually.</li> <li>♦ Adapt the environment to the child's needs.</li> <li>♦ Keep the child close to the teacher or paired with another child.</li> </ul>
<b>Deafness and Hearing Impairment</b>	Having a hearing loss of greater than 75 to 80 decibels and an inability to understand speech through the ear; vision is the primary means of input. An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating but not included in the definition of deafness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Use a sign language interpreter (if needed).</li> <li>♦ Use captioned video, etc.</li> <li>♦ Use a sound amplification system (if needed).</li> <li>♦ Give preferential seating for optimal listening or lip reading.</li> <li>♦ Provide essential course information in written format (e.g. on the board, email, handout).</li> </ul>
<b>Down Syndrome</b>	A condition in which extra genetic material causes delays in the way a child develops, both physically and mentally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Use hands-on materials.</li> <li>♦ Use visual aids.</li> <li>♦ Use step-by-step process with review and repetition.</li> <li>♦ Break large tasks into smaller parts.</li> <li>♦ Ask simple questions.</li> </ul>
<b>Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD)</b>	Social, emotional or behavioral functioning that so departs from generally accepted, age appropriate ethnic or cultural norms that it adversely affects a child's academic progress, social relationships, personal adjustments, classroom adjustments, self-care or vocational skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Provide supports to help students use appropriate behavior such as other personnel, peers or family members.</li> <li>♦ Replace problem behaviors with appropriate behaviors that serve the same (or similar) function as inappropriate ones.</li> <li>♦ Make changes to the environment that eliminates the possibility of engaging in inappropriate behavior.</li> <li>♦ Define expectations.</li> <li>♦ Set rules.</li> <li>♦ Use preventive discipline which consists of 1) informing pupils of what is expected of them, 2) establishing a positive learning climate, 3) providing a meaningful learning experience, 4) avoiding threats, 5) demonstrating fairness, 6) building and exhibiting self-confidence, 7) recognizing positive student attributes, 8) timing the recognition of student attributes, 9) using positive modeling and 10) structuring the curriculum and classroom environment.</li> <li>♦ Consider (a) the seating arrangement and traffic rules, (b) grouping, (c) involving the student in class activities, (d) using non-verbal cues, (e) time management, and (f) cooperative learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Gifted</b>	Those children identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Expose the student to new and challenging information.</li> <li>♦ Allow the student to pursue ideas as far as their interests take them.</li> <li>♦ Use increasingly difficult vocabulary and concepts.</li> <li>♦ Expose the students to ideas at rates appropriate to the individual's pace of learning.</li> <li>♦ Allow student to pursue inquiries beyond allotted time spans.</li> <li>♦ Make challenging materials available.</li> <li>♦ Use analogies.</li> <li>♦ Eliminate any unnecessary repetition in instructions.</li> <li>♦ Have student do independent projects.</li> </ul>

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<b>Intellectual Disability</b>	Certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself and social skills. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ When independent work is presented, try to give it to the student in small segments.</li> <li>◆ Allow extra time (within reasonable limits).</li> <li>◆ In your lesson plans, note in italics (or mark with a highlighter) the objective you want the student to master. His or her objectives do not need to always be the same as the rest of the class.</li> <li>◆ Present information visually (projector, posters, pocket charts, white board) and auditorally.</li> <li>◆ Have students do simple exercises before writing (pushing pals of hands together, pushing down hard on desktop, squeezing and relaxing fists).</li> <li>◆ If a student cannot do what everyone else in the class is doing, modify the assignment.</li> <li>◆ Use story maps and other graphic organizers to assist students with writing tasks.</li> </ul>
<b>Language Learning Disability (LLD)</b>	A disorder that may affect the comprehension and use of spoken or written language as well as nonverbal language, such as eye contact and tone of speech, in both adults and children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Speak slowly and clearly and use simple sentences to convey information.</li> <li>◆ Refer to a speech pathologist.</li> <li>◆ Allow audio recorder for note taking.</li> <li>◆ Write main concepts on board.</li> <li>◆ Provide support person or peer tutor.</li> <li>◆ Use visualization techniques to enhance listening and comprehension.</li> <li>◆ Use of graphic organizers for note taking from lectures or books.</li> <li>◆ Use story starters for creative writing assignments.</li> <li>◆ Practice story mapping.</li> <li>◆ Draw out details with questions and visualization strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Orthopedic Impairment</b>	Severe impairment caused by a congenital anomaly, disease or other cause. Students may need specialized supports to demonstrate their intellectual ability. Examples: bone disease, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy, scoliosis, spinal injury, brachial plexus, hydrocephalus, poliomyelitis, spina bifida, spinal muscular atrophies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Provide special seating arrangements to develop useful posture and movements.</li> <li>◆ Provide instruction focused on development of gross and fine motor skills.</li> <li>◆ Secure suitable augmentative communication and other assistive devices if needed.</li> <li>◆ Be aware of medical condition and its effect on the student (such as getting tire quickly).</li> </ul>
<b>Other Health Impairments</b>	Limited strength, vitality or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems. The term includes but is not limited to a heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sick cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia, diabetes, or acquired injuries to the brain caused by internal occurrences or degenerative conditions, which adversely affects a child's educational performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use flexible time limits.</li> <li>◆ Allow students to use bathroom or drinking fountain as needed.</li> <li>◆ Give child frequent breaks.</li> <li>◆ Communicate often with parents.</li> <li>◆ Decrease distractions.</li> <li>◆ Use flexible seating.</li> <li>◆ Build a caring, nurturing classroom environment.</li> <li>◆ Teach other students about the health impairments.</li> <li>◆ Help the child build on his strengths and be successful.</li> </ul>
<b>Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD)</b>	A group of five disorders characterized by delays in the development of multiple basic functions including socialization and communication that have traditionally been referred to as Autism. It is not a diagnostic label. This category includes the autism spectrum disorders plus Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Rett syndrome.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Use materials that are age-appropriate, positive and relevant to student's lives.</li> <li>◆ Maintain a consistent classroom routine. Objects, pictures or words can be used as appropriate to make sequences clear and help students learn independence.</li> <li>◆ Avoid long strings of verbal instruction. Use written checklists, picture charts or object schedules instead.</li> <li>◆ Minimize visual and auditory distractions.</li> <li>◆ Encourage drawing, art, and computer use.</li> <li>◆ If the student avoids eye contact allow them to use peripheral vision.</li> </ul>

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<b>Specific Learning Disability (SLD)</b>	The official term used in federal legislation to refer to difficulty in certain areas of learning, rather than in all areas of learning. It is synonymous with the term learning disabilities. It encompasses disorders of the basic psychological processes that affect the way a student learns. Many students with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence. Learning disabilities may cause difficulties in listening, hearing, talking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. Excluded are learning difficulties caused by visual, hearing or motor impairments, intellectual disabilities, emotional disturbances or environmental disadvantages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Provide an audio recording.</li> <li>♦ Provide large print.</li> <li>♦ Reduce the number of items per page or line.</li> <li>♦ Provide a designated reader.</li> <li>♦ Present instructions orally.</li> <li>♦ Allow for verbal responses.</li> <li>♦ Allow for answers to be dictated to a scribe.</li> <li>♦ Allow the use of an audio recorder to capture responses.</li> <li>♦ Permit responses to be given via computer.</li> <li>♦ Allow frequent breaks.</li> <li>♦ Provide preferential seating.</li> <li>♦ Provide special lighting or acoustics.</li> <li>♦ Provide a space with minimal distractions.</li> <li>♦ Provide on-task/focusing prompts.</li> <li>♦ Provide any reasonable accommodation that a student needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Speech and Language Impairment</b>	A communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ If the student speaks slowly, give him/her time to express thoughts.</li> <li>♦ Do not interrupt or compete sentences for the student.</li> <li>♦ It is appropriate to ask the student to repeat a statement.</li> <li>♦ Summarize the message to help the student to check for accuracy of understanding.</li> <li>♦ If an oral presentation is required, discuss alternatives with the student.</li> </ul>
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability 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 function; information processing, and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Minimize extraneous auditory and visual stimulation.</li> <li>♦ Provide preferential seating.</li> <li>♦ Arrange seating to allow for more space between students.</li> <li>♦ Provide small group instruction.</li> <li>♦ Structure student's activities and schedule to limit number of changes and reduce unstructured time.</li> <li>♦ Limit number of persons that the student deals with each day.</li> <li>♦ Provide the student with a written schedule and keep the schedule as consistent as possible.</li> <li>♦ Provide area to keep supplies, books, etc. Away from student's work area.</li> <li>♦ Select a classroom buddy.</li> <li>♦ Gain the student's attention before speaking.</li> <li>♦ Break complex tasks down into component part and complete each part before trying to combine the components.</li> <li>♦ Provide frequent repetition of important tasks.</li> <li>♦ Utilize the child's best sensory modality.</li> <li>♦ Question student to be sure the information was received and interpreted clearly and provide feedback as necessary.</li> <li>♦ Provide cueing systems in the form of assignment books, placing task cues on student's desk, etc.</li> <li>♦ Provide verbal and written instruction.</li> <li>♦ Shorten assignment and/or divide assignments into parts.</li> <li>♦ Structure thinking processes graphically through outlines, graphs, flow charts and models.</li> <li>♦ Develop a system of maintain organization.</li> <li>♦ Facilitate note taking by providing outlines with major headings.</li> </ul>

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Visual Impairment	Impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance (includes both partial sight and blindness).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Call on student by name to have them participate in discussion.</li> <li>♦ Make sure everything that is visually displayed is verbally described.</li> <li>♦ Have materials enlarged to appropriate size or converted to Braille for the student.</li> <li>♦ Scan materials and allow student to use text-to-speech software.</li> <li>♦ Allow students to work in pairs to complete worksheets.</li> <li>♦ Provide a supportive peer assistant.</li> <li>♦ Identify yourself and other group members before beginning a conversation.</li> <li>♦ Use audio books whenever possible.</li> <li>♦ Make sure all areas the student will use are kept uncluttered.</li> <li>♦ Review direction with the student.</li> <li>♦ Use tactile or auditory signals when appropriate.</li> <li>♦ Maximize availability of visual media and/or models.</li> <li>♦ Clearly label items or equipment.</li> <li>♦ Allow for direct manipulations of material when appropriate.</li> </ul>

Resources:

Archdiocese of Chicago-Office of Schools, Resource Handbook for Teaching Students with Differing Learning Needs, 2009.

Autism Society, <http://www.autism-society.org/>.

Boyle, Michael J., PhD., Response to Intervention: A Blueprint for Catholic Schools, NCEA, 2010.

Dudek, Antoinette, OSF, EdD, Is there Room for Me?, NCEA, 1998.

Learning Disabilities Association of America, <https://ldaamerica.org/>.

MentoringMinds.com, Response to Intervention Implementation Guide: Team Meber Notebook, 2008.

National Association of Special Education Teachers, <http://www.naset.org/>.

Taymans, Juliana M., PhD and Michael Termini, PsyD, Inclusive Catholic Schools: A Matter of Possibilities, NCEA, 2010.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, "Frequently Used Educational Acronyms/Terms in Special Education," <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/about/acronyms>.