

Serious Emotional Disturbance

Federal Definition (Including IDEA) and other commonly used definitions)

As defined under federal law at 34 CFR §300.7, the student exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance: 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 unhappiness or depression; or a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The determination of disability shall not be made solely because the student's behavior violates the school's discipline code, because the student is involved with a state court or social service agency, or because the student is socially maladjusted, unless the Team determines that the student has a serious emotional disturbance.

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/definitions.html>

“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.

<http://www.raising-special-kids.com/emotional-disorders.html>

- **Conduct disorder.** A disorder characterized by overt, aggressive, disruptive behavior or covert antisocial acts such as stealing, lying and fire setting; may include both overt and covert acts.
- **Affective disorder.** A disorder of mood or emotional tone characterized by depression or elation.
- **Anxiety disorder.** A disorder characterized by anxiety, fearfulness, and avoidance of ordinary activities because of anxiety of fear.
- **Externalizing.** Acting-out behavior; aggressive or disruptive behavior that is observable as behavior directed toward others.
- **Internalizing.** Acting-in behavior; anxiety, fearfulness, withdrawal, and other indications of an individual's mood or internal state.
- **Comorbidity.** Co-occurrence of two or more conditions in the same individual.
- **Schizophrenia.** A disorder characterized by psychotic behavior manifested by loss of contact with reality, distorted thought processes, and abnormal perceptions.
(Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 267-269)

Causations of disabilities (when known)

- Biological disorders and diseases
- Pathological family relationships
- Undesirable experiences at school
- Negative cultural influences
(Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 270)

Characteristics of disabilities

- **Aggression.** Behavior that intentionally causes others harm or that elicits escape for avoidance responses from others.
- **Enuresis.** Urinary incontinence; wetting oneself.
- **Encopresis.** Bowel incontinence; soiling oneself.
(Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 279-284)

What does a student with (specific disability) need from a teacher (regarding structure and organization, curriculum, expectations, special adaptations, transition, and/or social relationships with peers)?

- **Systematic, data-based interventions.** Interventions that are applied systematically and consistently and that are based on reliable research data, not unsubstantiated theory.
- **Continuous assessment and monitoring of progress.** Direct, Daily assessment of performance, with planning based on this monitoring.
- **Provision for practice of new skills.** Skills are not taught in isolation but are applied directly in everyday situations through modeling, rehearsal, and guided practice.
- **Treatment matched to the problem.** Interventions that are designed to meet the needs of individual students and their particular life circumstances, not general formulas that ignore the nature, complexity, and severity of the problem.
- **Multicomponent treatment.** As many different interventions as are necessary to meet the multiple needs of students (e.g., social skills training, academic retardation, medication, counseling or psychotherapy, and family treatment or parent training).
- **Programming for transfer and maintenance.** Interventions designed to promote transfer of learning to new situations, recognizing that quick fixes nearly always fail to produce generalized change.
- **Commitment to sustained intervention.** Interventions designed with the realization that many emotional or behavioral disorders are developmental disabilities and will not be eliminated entirely or cured. (Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 286-287)

Organizations that support, work for, or advocate for the disability

- [American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry](#) - Information on child and adolescent psychiatry including fact sheets for parents and caregivers, current research, practice guidelines and managed care.
- [American Society for Adolescent Psychiatry](#) - On line newsletter, links, research, book reviews and articles on teen, adolescence and young adult issues including depression and suicide.
- [Anna Freud Centre](#) - Offers clinical training, research and therapy services, as well as supporting children, young people and families experiencing emotional or behavioral difficulties.
- [The Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health](#) - UK organization that aims to further scientific study of the mental health of children, young people and their families, through conferences, meetings and its journals -- the JCPP and CAMH.
- [Center for Study and Prevention of Violence](#) - Research and general information on juvenile, adolescent and teen violence prevention.
- [Child and Adolescent Services Research Center](#) - Children's mental health issues, with a focus on children in public sector systems. Other topics include ADHD, Domestic violence, Racial disparities, Systems of care.
- [Child Trauma Academy](#) - A not-for-profit organization based in Houston, Texas, seeking to improve the lives of traumatized and maltreated children and their families. Educational, research, and advocacy materials.
- [Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health](#) - U.S. national parent-run organization supporting family-run programs to meet the needs of children and youth with emotional, behavioral or mental disorders. Information about the organization.
- [The Infant-Parent Institute](#) - Conducts counseling, training, and research related to infant mental health and family structure. Program information, workshop schedule, newsletter articles, and other resources. Based in Illinois.
- [International Society for Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology](#) - Organization of professionals working with troubled adolescents in various parts of the world. Organization information, newsletters, abstracts of conference technical papers, related links, and other resources.
- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#) - To raise the standard of care and improve access to services for traumatized children, their families, and communities throughout the United States.
- [Research & Training Center on Children's Mental Health](#) - Research and training information on supporting families and improving services to children and youth who have mental, emotional, or behavioral disorders.
- [The Research and Training Center for Children's Mental Health](#) - Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, University of South Florida. Dedicated to research aimed at improving outcomes for children with emotional and behavioral disturbances. Publications and current research findings.

- [Teen Challenge](http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Mental_Health/Child_and_Adolescent/Organizations/) - Worldwide Christian organization based in South Australia, providing help for young people with substance abuse problems, and those who are suicidal or homeless. Providing information to parents, and help finding missing teens.
[http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Mental Health/Child and Adolescent/Organizations/](http://www.dmoz.org/Health/Mental_Health/Child_and_Adolescent/Organizations/)

Long term implications of the disability on adolescents and adults

- Regular public high school classes
- Consultant teachers who work with general education teachers to provide individualized academic work and behavior management.
- Resource rooms and special self-contained classes to which students may be assigned for part or all of the school day.
- Work-study programs in which vocational education and job experience are combined with academic study.
- Special private or public schools that offer the regular high school curriculum in a different setting.
- Alternative schools that offer highly individualized programs that are nontraditional in both setting and content.
- Private or public residential schools
(Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 296)

Current trends

- **Functional behavior assessment (FBA).** Evaluation that consists of finding out the consequences (what purpose the behavior serves), antecedents (what triggers the behavior), and setting events (contextual factors) that maintain inappropriate behavior.
- **Curriculum-based measurement (CBM).** A formative evaluation method designed to evaluate performance in the curriculum to which students are exposed; usually involves giving students a small sample of items from the curriculum in use in their schools; proponents argue that CBM is preferable to comparing students with national norms or using tests that do not reflect the curriculum content learned by the students.
(Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 291-292)

Annotated bibliography of at least 6 resources (websites, booklist, articles) for each disability area

- The council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD) maintains a Website at www.ccbd.net
- The U.S. Surgeon General's 2001 report on children's mental health is found at www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/cmh
- For a site with links to articles about children's health, including emotional and behavior problems see www.mcleanhospital.org
- The home page of the PACER (Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights) Center is www.pacer.org
- For the Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health, see www.ffcmh.org
- Information about positive behavioral support and its role in schoolwide discipline and teaching may be obtained from www.pbis.org
- For information about juvenile justice and education, see www.edjj.org
- Resources for positive behavior management are increasingly available on the World Wide Web. Many sites are being developed, and most provide links to other sites. Following are some that you might want to access: The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice at www.edjj.org The Oregon Social Learning Center at www.oslc.org The Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at www.pbis.org
- For more information about antisocial children and youth and their management, see www.oslc.org
(Hallahan, Kauffman, and Pullen, 2009, p. 267-297)