

Meeting the Needs of Students with Physical Impairments:

Minnesota Definition, Eligibility, and Resources



Developed by Region 3 Physical/Health Disabilities Network

...Definition

- A physical disability is a medically diagnosed chronic physical impairment, either congenital or acquired, that may adversely affect physical or academic functioning and result in the need for special education and related services

...Definition

- Medical conditions commonly identified as physical impairments include cerebral palsy, spina bifida, spinal cord injury, muscular dystrophy, osteogenesis imperfecta, arthrogryposis, and spinal muscular atrophy

...Definition

- There is a great variability among physical disabilities and related educational needs for support, ranging from very mild (requiring minimal support) to more severe (requiring a significant level of support)
- Needs related to physical impairment may be met with specialized equipment, technology, and/or specialized instruction

...Student Characteristics

- Most students who meet criteria for Physically Impaired (PI) have difficulty with completion of tasks involving motor skills. In addition, many students have accompanying neurological impairments which may impact organization and independent work skills

...Student Characteristics

- Any of these characteristics can impair a student's ability to manage or complete the motor components of classroom tasks within the same time lines as peers
- It is not unusual for students who have physical impairments to have academic needs that result in atypical learning profiles

...Physical/Health Disabilities Services

- Teachers licensed in the area of Physical/Health Disabilities (P/HD) are a required member of the IEP team for students who meet State criteria under the Physical Impairment (PI) category. P/HD teachers participate in special education evaluations, and assist the team in identifying educational goals, modifications to the curriculum and/or the environment, and technology support.



...Physical/Health Disabilities Services and Early Childhood

- Children who receive Early Childhood Special Education Services and have a physical impairment should have a teacher licensed in Physical/Health Disabilities as a part of the education team to serve as a resource and assist with program transitions.

Physically Impaired and Early Childhood Activity

- Find a small group (4-5) and read over the provided scenarios and answer the questions
- Be prepared to share your discussions with the group



...Physical/Health Disabilities Services

- Teachers working with students with Physical/Health Disabilities may provide direct and/or indirect services (depending on the needs of the student) to address educational adaptations and instructional strategies unique to the student's physical impairment.

...Services, Continued

- Assist the team in developing goals and objectives
- Curriculum modifications, adaptations and/or accommodations to meet the individualized educational needs to the student
- Assist in training of teachers and paraprofessionals
- Utilize assistive technology to ensure access to curriculum and materials
- Assist in transition planning
- Provide disability-specific in-services and information to staff, students, and/or parents

...Common Educational Needs and Adaptations

- Instructional strategies for organization, attention, memory, and atypical learning styles
- Preferential seating and locker assignment
- Time extensions for assignment completion
- Assignment and/or test modification
- Assistive technology and adaptive equipment to compensate for motor and perceptual skill deficits
- Additional set of text books for home
- Provision of teacher or peer notes
- Additional time for transitions

...Common Educational Needs and Adaptations

- Students with physical limitations need to be provided with access to the same educational experiences and opportunities for success as peers



...Educational Needs Continued

- Emergency evacuation planning for building and bus (see handout)
- Development of an individualized health plan (IHP) with the school nurse
- Safety and mobility concerns in the educational environment

...P/HD Eligibility Criteria

- The IEP team shall determine that a student is eligible for and in need of special education instruction if the student meets criterion in **Item A** and *one* of the criteria in **Item B**

...Item A

- There must be documentation of a medically diagnosed physical impairment by a medical doctor

...Item B

- The pupil's:

B-1. Need for special education and service is supported by a lack of functional level in organization or independent work skills verified by a minimum of two or more documented, systematic observations in daily routine settings, one of which is completed by a teacher licensed in Physical/Health Disabilities;

...Item B

OR

- B-2. Need for special education instruction and service is supported by an inability to manage or complete motoric portions of classroom tasks within time constraints as verified by a minimum of two or more documented, systematic observations in daily routine settings, one of which is completed by a teacher licensed in Physical/Health Disabilities;

...Item B

OR

- B-3. Physical impairment interferes with educational performance as shown by an achievement deficit of 1.0 standard deviations (standard score of 85) or more below the mean on an individually administered nationally normed standardized evaluation of the pupil's academic achievement.

...Severely Multiply Impaired (SMI)

- See SMI criteria
- The P/HD teacher should be involved in the evaluation process whenever the category of PI is being considered as a component of the SMI criteria. The P/HD teacher should also assist the team in identifying appropriate educational adaptations as they relate to the physical impairment.

...Professional Resources

- To download a copy of the State PI criteria, manual, resource materials, and other information on technical assistance and training/workshop opportunities, go to the Metro ECSU website at www.ecsu.k12.mn.us and follow these links: Programs and Services/ Special Education/Physically Impaired/Resources.
- State PI Specialist, MN Low Incidence Projects
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Questions?



**“If you ever think we are too small
to make a difference, try spending
the night cooped up with a
mosquito.”**

-- Swahili proverb

