

DISABILITY FACTS

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The disabilities listed below are generalizations of the characteristics that MAY be seen in children. Each child with a disability is an individual and should be seen that way... keeping in mind there are ranges in severity of disabilities.

Physical Disabilities

Motor disabilities can affect mobility, coordination, communication, and learning.

Muscular Dystrophy

"The muscular dystrophies (MD) are a group of genetic diseases characterized by progressive weakness and degeneration of the skeletal muscles which control movement." National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke www.ninds.nih.gov

Multiple Sclerosis

"Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is thought to be an autoimmune disease that affects the central nervous system (CNS). The CNS consists of the brain, spinal cord, and the optic nerves." Children may have decreased energy, weak muscles, and visual problems.

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society
<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/>

Spina Bifida

"Spina bifida, the incomplete formation of the spine, is a birth defect that occurs within the first month of pregnancy, often before women know they are pregnant... Children or adolescents with spina bifida and hydrocephalus may have problems with memory, comprehension, attention, impulsivity, sequencing, organization and reasoning."

Spinal Bifida Association of America <http://www.sbaa.org>

Cerebral Palsy

"Cerebral palsy is a term used to describe a group of chronic conditions affecting body movement and muscle coordination. It is caused by damage to one or more specific areas of the brain, usually occurring during fetal development; before, during, or shortly after birth; or during infancy." Children may have problems with cognitive skills, movement, and language skills.

Hemiplegia is weakness or paralysis of one side of body, either arm, leg or both. United Cerebral Palsy
<http://www.ucp.org>

Spinal Cord Injury

"Spinal cord injury (SCI) occurs when a traumatic event results in damage to cells within the spinal cord or severs the nerve tracts that relay signals up and down the spinal cord."

Spinal Cord Injury Information Page <http://www.sci-info-pages.com>

Tetraplegia (Quadraplegia) impairment or loss of motor and sensory functions with impairments in the arms, trunk, and legs.

Paraplegia impairment or loss of motor and sensory function in the legs and trunk.

International Standards for Neurological Classification of Spinal Cord Injury

Traumatic Brain Injury

"Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is an insult to the brain, not of a degenerative or congenital nature but caused by an external physical force, that may produce a diminished or altered state of consciousness, which results in an impairment of cognitive abilities or physical functioning. It can also result in the disturbance of behavioral or emotional functioning." Brain Injury Association of America
<http://www.biausa.org>

Cognitive Disabilities

Cognitive disabilities can affect understanding, memory, judgment, sequencing, and reasoning skills.

Down Syndrome

"Down syndrome is a mental retardation syndrome caused by a chromosomal problem that occurs at conception." Children may have delays in cognition, movement, language, and social skills. Association for Children with Down Syndrome, Inc <http://www.acds.org>

Fragile X

A genetic condition resulting in "mental impairments ranging from learning disabilities to mental retardation". Characteristic facial features may include a long face, large ears, and flat feet. Children may have delays in cognition, language skills, and they may have abnormal responses to different kinds of sensations.

Fragile X research Foundation <http://www.fraxa.org/>

Mental Retardation

"Mental retardation is a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behavior as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills." American Association of Mental Retardation <http://www.aamr.org>

Hydrocephaly

"Hydrocephalus is a medical condition which occurs when there is an imbalance between the production and the absorption of cerebral spinal fluid (CSF). Excessive CSF creates pressure on the brain tissues, which may in time cause an enlargement of the head, mental disturbances, other nervous system impairments and lags in physical and mental development including retardation." Children may have delays in motor, cognition, and communication.

National Hydrocephalus Foundation <http://nhfonline.org>

Learning Disabilities

"A learning disability is a neurological disorder that affects one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. The disability may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations." Learning Disabilities Association of America
<http://www.ldanatl.org>

Attention Deficit Disorder and Hyperactivity Disorder

"AD/HD is a neurobehavioral disorder characterized by differences in brain structure and function that affect behavior, thoughts and emotions." Children tend to have

difficulties focusing and attending, and they may have problems in school, despite their typically normal intelligence. Children and Adults with Attention Deficit Disorder <http://www.chadd.org>

Health Impaired

Health impaired can affect any or all systems in the body due to unknown or environmental causes.

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome

"Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) is an umbrella term describing the range of effects that can occur in an individual whose mother drank alcohol during pregnancy. These effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and/or learning disabilities with possible lifelong implications." National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome <http://www.nofas.org>

Epilepsy

"Epilepsy is a brain disorder in which clusters of nerve cells, or neurons, in the brain sometimes signal abnormally. In epilepsy, the normal pattern of neuronal activity becomes disturbed, causing strange sensations, emotions, and behavior or sometimes convulsions, muscle spasms, and loss of consciousness." National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke

www.ninds.nih.gov/health_and_medical/disorders/epilepsy
Epilepsy Foundation <http://www.epilepsyfoundation.org>

Pervasive Developmental Disorders

Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) is a category of disabilities that can affect areas of social interaction, communication and cognition. There is often a presence of stereotyped behaviors and interests commonly expressed among children with PDD.

Autism

"Autism is a complex developmental disability that affects an individual in the areas of social interaction and communication. Autism is a spectrum disorder that affects each individual differently and to varying degrees of severity." Children may have decreased social and language skills. They may be overly or underly responsive to different sensations. <http://www.autism-society.org/> Autism Society of America

Asperger's Syndrome

"Asperger's Syndrome is characterized by severe and sustained impairment in social interaction, development of restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, and activities. These characteristics result in clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning." Asperger's Syndrome <http://users.wpi.edu/~trek/aspergers.html>

Retts Syndrome

"Rett Syndrome is a complex developmental disorder resulting in a range of severe dysfunctions and disabilities. In its classic form, the disorder only appears in girls." Children may have deficits in movement skills, and other characteristics similar to autism. Socialstyrelsen www.sos.se/smkh/

Sensory Impairments

Sensory impairments can affect the body senses such as vision, hearing, vestibular, proprioceptive, and tactile processing.

Sensory Processing Disorders

"Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD) is a complex disorder of

the brain. People with SPD misinterpret everyday sensory information, such as touch, sound, and movement. This can lead to behavioral problems, difficulties with coordination, and many other issues." The SPD Network www.sinetwork.org/

Legal Blindness

Legal Blindness is "a central visual acuity for distance of 20/200 or poorer in the better eye with correction, or a field of vision no greater than 20 degrees in widest diameter."

Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted <http://www.csbps.com>

The National Federation of the Blind <http://www.nfb.org>

Low Vision

Low vision is "vision that cannot be further improved by corrective lenses or medical or surgical intervention, although low vision rehabilitation may help someone to use remaining sight more effectively." Community Services for the Blind and Partially Sighted www.csbps.com

Deaf

"Deaf" refers to those who are unable to hear well enough to rely on their hearing and use it as a means of processing information. National Association of the Deaf

<http://www.nad.org>

Hard of hearing

"Hard of hearing" refers to those who have some hearing, are able to use it for communication purposes, and who feel reasonably comfortable doing so. National Association of the Deaf <http://www.nad.org>

Social/Emotional Disorders

"Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have emotional disturbances include:

- Hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness);
- Aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting);
- Withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others; retreat from exchanges of social interaction, excessive fear or anxiety);
- Immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills); and
- Learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level)."

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities <http://www.nichcy.org>

Communication Disabilities

Communication disabilities can affect the ability to use expressive and receptive language with others.

Speech and Language Delay

"Speech and language disorders refer to problems in communication and related areas such as oral motor function. These delays and disorders range from simple sound substitutions to the inability to understand or use language or use the oral-motor mechanism for functional speech and feeding."

National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs11txt.htm>

NOAH

<http://www.noah-health.org/english/illness/neuro/speechlang>