



INCLUSION
COLLABORATIVE

Characteristics, Signs, and Implications of Various Disabilities

Autism

Facts/characteristics about Autism

- Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are a group of developmental disabilities caused by a problem with the brain.
- The most affected areas are communication, behavior and social skills.

Possible signs of Autism

Child may...

- have challenges with social emotional, and communication skills.
- Have difficulty with transitions and with preferred activities.

Implications for learning environment

Child may...

- have trouble expressing needs or wants using typical words or motions
- have difficulty adapting to changes in school routine

Intellectual Disability (Mental Retardation)

Facts/characteristics about intellectual disability (mental retardation)

- intellectual disability (Mental Retardation) (MR) is a term used when there are limits to a child's ability to learn at an expected developmental level and to function appropriately in daily life
- Some common causes are:
 - Down Syndrome
 - Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)
 - birth defects and infections
 - TBI (traumatic brain injury)
 - post-drowning.

Possible signs of intellectual disability

Child may...

- learn and develop more slowly than other children of the same age and need assistance with daily living skills
- have inappropriate behavioral and social skills

Implications for learning environment: intellectual disability

Child may...

- have trouble with gross and fine motor activities
- have poor expressive and receptive language skills

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- have trouble understanding social rules- may need pictures as reminders

Language Disability

Facts about language disability

- More than 1 million of the children served in the public schools were categorized as having a speech or language impairment (effects 1 out of 10 individuals)
- Speech disorders refer to difficulties producing speech sounds or problems with voice quality
- Types of Language Disabilities
 - Stuttering (fluency disorder)
 - Problems with the way sounds are formed (articulation or phonological disorders)
 - Pitch, volume or quality of the voice'
 - Inability to understand words (receptive language)

Learning a second language is not a disability

Possible signs of language disability

Child may....

- not talk as much as their peers
- be unable to follow simple directions
 - Consider...
 - Be sure hearing has been checked
 - Frequent ear infections may impact both expressive and receptive language
- use 'baby talk' for prolonged periods
- Not be understood by familiar and unfamiliar adults
- use more gestures to communicate
- Jumble words together when speaking in sentences

Learning English is NOT a disability

Implications for learning environment: language disability

Child may...

- struggle with reading
- have difficulty understanding expressive language
- Lack adequate communication/ language skills which can result in acting out behaviors in the classroom
- Poor attention

Possible supports and adaptations

- Use short, clear sentences at child's eye level
- Pictures
- signs or picture symbols for understanding and communicating needs/wants
- Choice Boards
- Schedule boards
- Pictures around the room for commenting or choice making

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Visual Impairment

Facts/characteristics about visual impairment

- 85% of learning is visual
- vision probably not a primary channel for learning
- Motor skills might be initially delayed
- Relies on verbal, tactile and auditory information
- Fragmented learning
- What can see might be different per child

Types of impairment

- myopia (near-sightedness)
- hyperopia (far-sightedness)
- astigmatism (blurred vision)
- strabismus (crossed eyes)

Possible signs: visual impairment

Child may...

- hold objects close to face to see
- look at objects using peripheral vision
- squint or cover up one eyes
- Complain that it is hard to see
- Have watery, crusted, or swollen eyes

Implications for learning environment: visual impairment

- Potential lack of exploration of environment
- Uses other sensory modalities (verbal, tactile & auditory)
- Needs detailed verbal descriptions
- Extra time to explore all aspects of objects
- Adaptations: light board, Braille, contrasting colors, clearly defined centers and clutter free classroom

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Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Facts/characteristics about deafness and hard of hearing

Degrees of Hearing Loss (in decibels)

Sound	Intensity (db)	Degree of hearing loss
• Ticking of a Watch	• 20	• Slight (16- 25)
• Whisper	• 30	• Mild (26- 40)
• Normal Speech	• 50-60	
• Car Traffic	• 70	
• Alarm Clock	• 80	• Moderate (56- 70)
• Lawn Mower	• 95	• Severe (71-90)
• Chain Saw	• 110	• Profound (91 +)
• Jackhammer	• 120	
• Jet Engine	• 130	• Profound

Possible signs: hearing loss

Child does not...

- Turn to source of sounds from birth to 3-4 months of age
- Say single words such as “dada” or “mama” by 1 year of age
- Turns head when name is called
- Hears some sounds but not others

Implications for learning environment: deafness/hard of hearing

- Affects Speech and social skills
- Difficulty attending to others when they talk
- Adaptations: visual cues, sign language, lip reading, gestures
- Stand in front of the child & at child’s level when speaking
- Use more visual and tactile modalities for learning

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