



Australian Capital Territory
EDUCATION, YOUTH & FAMILY SERVICES

ABN: 71 506 957 312

INTERIM ACT STUDENT DISABILITY CRITERIA FOR 2004

**For further information please contact
ACT Department of Education, Youth & Family Services
Special Education Section
Tel 62050088**

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

ELIGIBILITY

A student is considered to have an intellectual disability where:

- the student's score on an individual test of intelligence falls two standard deviations below the mean (IQ <70 + or -5)

and

- the student's score on a test of adaptive behaviour falls two standard deviations, or more, below the mean (AB <70)

and

- where the student demonstrates significant deficits in academic achievement (<2%ile)

Level 1 A mild intellectual disability is described as being: a full-scale IQ score two to three standard deviations below the mean and an adaptive behaviour score two to three standard deviations, or more, below the mean, and deficits in school performance consistent with the range of scores.

Level 2 A moderate intellectual disability is described as being: a full-scale IQ score three to four standard deviations below the mean and an adaptive behaviour score three to four standard deviations, or more, below the mean.

Level 3 A severe – profound intellectual disability is described as being: a full-scale IQ score four or more standard deviations below the mean and an adaptive behaviour score four or more, standard deviations below the mean.

EVIDENCE

- Formal diagnosis of intellectual disability using an approved individual test of intelligence. This assessment may be conducted by a registered psychologist, school counsellor, or in the case of severe/profound intellectual disability a statement from a paediatrician.

Note: Reports must be recent enough for a valid determination to be made.

LANGUAGE DISORDER

ELIGIBILITY

A student is considered to have a language disorder where:

- Impaired understanding or expression of language is having a significant and measurable impact on their learning

and

- The severity and nature of the language disability cannot be attributed to an intellectual, physical or sensory impairment or to social/emotional or socio-cultural factors.

This is demonstrated by:

- Scores obtained from a standardised individual test of expressive and/or receptive language development that falls two standard deviations below the average range, and
- A descriptive analysis of a student's communication profile (including comprehension, language production and use, speech processing and speech production) that demonstrates a substantial reduction of the student's capacity for communication, social interaction or learning.

EVIDENCE

- Formal assessment, by a speech pathologist including information from a standardised individual test which is not older than one year, detailing the severity of the disorder and the impact of the student's ability to achieve academically.
- There should also be a recent formal educational assessment by a Learning Assistance Teacher or a school counsellor that details the student's learning needs in the areas described above.

Note: These students will need a disability confirmation sheet to be completed annually.

PHYSICAL DISABILITY

ELIGIBILITY

A student is considered to have a physical disability where:

- the student has a current physical condition involving the motor system that significantly limits their level of functioning and independence in mobility or personal care

and

- their ability to physically undertake essential learning tasks.

Level 1 The student requires some assistance in at least one area of personal care or with mobility.

Level 2 The student requires significant assistance in two or more areas of personal care and with mobility. Gross-motor and fine motor development is significantly impaired.

Level 3 The student is totally or almost totally dependent on assistance for all area of personal care. Mobility is seriously restricted.

EVIDENCE

- A report from a specialist medical practitioner, and/or therapist, detailing the nature and extent of the student's condition, and the impact on the student's ability to participate at school.

Note: Reports must be recent enough for a valid determination to be made.

HEARING IMPAIRMENT OR DEAFNESS

ELIGIBILITY

A child or student is considered to have a hearing impairment where there is a sensorineural hearing loss or on-going conductive loss impacting on speech, language, auditory processing, cognitive, social and educational development.

Level 1 A hearing loss (unaided) greater than 30db.

Level 2 Deaf or functionally deaf. Students require alternative/augmentative methods of communication or rely on sign language – Auslan or signed English.

EVIDENCE

- An audiological report from the Australian Hearing Services or Nurse Audiometrist which is not more than six months old, including both a written statement and audiogram. An audiologist, otolaryngologist or Ear Nose and Throat Specialist may also provide this assessment.
- In addition, a functional report from a specialist teacher of the Deaf outlining the impact of the hearing impairment on the child's learning.

Note: Reports must be recent enough for a valid determination to be made.

VISION IMPAIRMENT OR BLINDNESS

ELIGIBILITY

The student is considered to have a vision impairment where there is a permanent vision loss in both eyes that impacts significantly on the student's learning:

- Level 1** Vision loss is 6/24 (corrected) or less in the better eye, or
Visual fields reduced to a measured arc of less than 20 degrees.
- Level 2** Blind or functionally blind. Student requires oral instruction and demonstrations in a non-visual format. Student requires all written work in Braille or auditory format.

EVIDENCE

- An assessment and report by an ophthalmologist, or a relevant agency
- In addition, a functional report from a specialist teacher of the Vision Impaired outlining the impact of the vision impairment on the child's learning.

Note: Reports must be recent enough for a valid determination to be made.

PERVASIVE DEVELOPMENTAL DISORDER

ELIGIBILITY

A student is considered to have a Pervasive Developmental Disorder where:

- their behaviour is characterised by the presence of stereotyped behaviour, interests and activities

and

- there is severe and pervasive impairment in reciprocal social interaction skills and communication skills

and

- the student displays behaviours distinctly below their development level or mental age with significant deficits in adaptive behaviour established by a score two standard deviations or more below the mean on two or more domains on an approved standardised test of adaptive behaviour.

The student must meet the eligibility criteria described in DSMIV or ICD 10 for the following Pervasive Developmental Disorders:

- Autism
- Rett's Disorder
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified.

EVIDENCE

Documented evidence provided by a psychologist, a child psychiatrist, paediatrician, child health medical officer, or other medical professional with expertise in Pervasive Developmental Disorders.

Note: Reports must be recent enough for a valid determination to be made.

MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER

ELIGIBILITY

A student is considered to have a mental health disorder where:

- They exhibit significantly disturbed behaviours diagnosed at a level of frequency, duration and intensity that seriously affects their educational functioning

and

- The condition requires ongoing intervention from a mental health specialist.

EVIDENCE

- A current report from a specialist medical practitioner or registered psychologist with appropriate clinical experience, or child psychiatrist, which details the diagnosis and nature of the behaviours.
- Documented evidence of ongoing individual intervention by a mental health practitioner or school counsellor.
- The behaviour/s must be evident in a range of environments.
- Evidence of the impact of the disorder on the student's educational functioning must be provided.

Note: These students will need a disability confirmation sheet to be completed annually.

CHRONIC MEDICAL CONDITION

ELIGIBILITY

A student is considered to have a disability due to a chronic medical condition where:

- their level of functioning and independence and ability to undertake essential learning tasks is significantly limited

and

- the student is highly dependent on others to access the learning environment.

EVIDENCE

- A written statement from a medical practitioner outlining the diagnosis and providing detail of the impact of the disorder on the student's educational functioning.
- A statement from a school counsellor or disability consultant on the impact of the medical condition on the student's learning.

Note: These students will need a disability confirmation sheet to be completed annually.