

Criteria for the Identification of a Student with an Emotional Disturbance

Recognizing the many factors involved in appropriately identifying students with Emotional Disturbances (ED), Middlesex County Public Schools' Office of Special Education, has established criteria to be used by eligibility committees for the purpose of decision-making.

State Definition:

Regulations Governing Special Education Programs For Children With Disabilities in Virginia (2009), defines "emotional disturbance" as "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; (B) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (C) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (D) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (E) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance.

Assessments:

If the student is suspected of having an Emotional Disturbance, then assessments should include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Psychological – Written report from a qualified school psychologist or other qualified professional based on the use of a battery of appropriate instruments which may assess cognition, emotionality, and processing performance.
- Educational – Written report describing current educational performance/achievement and identifying instructional strengths and weaknesses in academic skills and processing performance.
- Observation – Written report of the child's academic performance and behavior in the child's learning environment (including the general education classroom setting) to document the child's academic performance and behavior in the areas of difficulty. NOTE: This observation should take place in a class where perceived weaknesses are indicated. *In case of a child less than school age or out of school, a group member shall observe the child in an environment appropriate for a child of that age.
- Developmental (ages 2-5) – (when appropriate) Written report of an assessment of how the child functions in the major areas of physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, and/or adaptive development.
- Sociocultural – Written report from a qualified visiting teacher or school social worker based on the use of information collected through social appraisal instruments which will include background and social/adaptive behavior in the home, school, and community.

- Hearing Screening – Written report to assess the child’s hearing.
- Classroom Educational Documentation – Written report from classroom teacher(s) describing the child’s level of academic functioning including strengths, weaknesses, and other factors which affect educational performance.

Eligibility Criteria:

- _____ A. A documented, observed emotional condition (not solely misbehaviors) exists in more than one setting (i.e., school and home or school and community).
- _____ B. The student exhibits emotional problems which have not responded to documented attempted alternative actions which exceed the expectations of the instructional process. Supportive educational assistance has been exhausted.
- _____ C. The educational disability of an emotional disturbance will be manifested as one or more of the following:
1. An inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
 2. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
 3. Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
 4. A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
 5. A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.
 6. A clinical diagnosis of schizophrenia.
- _____ D. The prevalence of the observed, documented characteristic(s) has been exhibited a minimum of six months. (NOTE: The strict adherence to this timeline may be waived by eligibility consensus in rare, serious, emergency situations.)
- _____ E. The prevalence of the characteristic(s) has been exhibited to a marked degree. The characteristics escalated to an intensity above the norm for the child’s developmental age and remained constant despite interventions attempted at school to ameliorate the specific behavior(s). Frequency and duration of characteristics are also to a marked degree.
- _____ F. The prevalence of the characteristic(s) adversely affects educational performance. The student demonstrates an inability to cope within the classroom because of an emotional condition (e.g. The student cannot work, as opposed to will not work.).
- _____ G. The condition is not solely resultant from being socially maladjusted (refer to the attached Appendix).
- _____ H. The primary cause of the educational problem is not:
- sensory, health factors
 - cultural differences
 - mental retardation or specific learning disability

APPENDIX

Emotional Disturbed Characteristics

1. Early onset of problems. Delayed developmental milestones.
2. Unable to initiate appropriate interactions with peers and/or teachers, and unable to maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships in school.
3. Lack of capacity for pleasure.
4. Poor sense of reality.
5. Avoidance of people or severely withdrawn behavior.
6. Delusional thinking; i.e., feelings of being controlled.
7. Auditory hallucinations.
8. Marked illogical thinking.
9. Behavior that is grossly disorganized or bizarre.
10. Marked psychomotor deficits or self-stimulating behaviors.
11. Excessive inappropriate guilt.
12. Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.
13. Extreme inability to control impulses directed toward self or others.
14. Pervasive social problem at school and home or school and community.
15. Over-reliance on adults; lack of independence.
16. Unable to give or to receive affection.
17. Severely inadequate self-concept.
18. Not able to function appropriately in school because of an emotional disability.

Socially Maladjusted Characteristics

1. Lack of early onset. Normal developmental milestones.
2. Social problems often confined to home or school or community, but rarely all three.
3. Disregard of adult authority; extreme independence.
4. Capacity to form peer relationships with those who have the same social values.
5. Relatively adequate self-concept. Blames others for any difficulties.
6. Productivity is inconsistent. May have areas of high output when motivated.
7. Shows marked dislike for school.
8. Rebels against school routine and restrictions.
9. Lack of guilt; blames others.
10. Chooses to misbehave.
11. Ability to put up a good front to impress and exploit others.
12. Deviant social relationships.
13. Rejection of constituted authority and discipline/juvenile delinquent.
14. Stealing, habitual lying.
15. Substance abuse.