

EMOTIONAL BEHAVIORAL DISORDER ELIGIBILITY GUIDE

Purpose and General Guidance

Once the evaluation team decides to pursue, as part of the comprehensive evaluation, a determination of eligibility under the category of Emotional Behavioral Disorder, the team must gather evidence through historical information as well as formal and informal assessments to determine whether the student meets eligibility criteria. Written *Consent for Assessment* must be obtained prior to the administration of assessments.

Consider and Document Historical Information

1. Include documentation of general education interventions including the length of time used and the results.
 - a. Examples may include but are not limited to:
 - i. Formal interventions: Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), Counseling, Check-in/Check-out, Social skills or other group interventions, accommodations on a 504 Plan
 - ii. Informal interventions: Relationship-building with staff, positive behavior supports, increased oversight and proximity to the student for coaching
 - b. Teams should not delay evaluation in order to implement general education interventions. If immediate action is warranted and documented, teams should proceed with evaluation.
2. Document relevant social and medical history in the eligibility report.

One or more of the following characteristics (a – f) must be present.

Documented by one or more of the following: school psychologist, licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, physician, or certified social worker.

- a. an inability to learn that is not primarily the result of intellectual disability, hearing, vision, or motor impairment, or other health impairment

Definition: Inability to learn means that the condition must significantly interfere with the ability to benefit from instruction. It does not necessarily mean a total inability to learn. Reduced intellect or sensory or health impairment cannot be the primary cause of the behavioral/emotional problem. It must be established that there is an inability to learn rather than an unwillingness to learn.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- IQ testing or clear evidence of at least average cognitive ability
- Vision and hearing screening
- Medical history
- Academic performance history and data on current academic assessment

- b. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers

Definition: Patterns and problems of interpersonal relationships that result in the “inability to build or maintain” satisfactory relationships with peers, teachers, and others are pervasive and are characterized by conflict and chaos which create an inability to establish and maintain group membership. This also includes individuals who are profoundly withdrawn, have poor reality contact, or lack social skills but have the ability to learn them. This inability does not refer to students who have problems with a particular teacher or with one or more peers, nor does it include students who have appropriate, satisfactory relationships with peers in their subculture, yet violate community norms.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- Observations
- Behavior rating scales
- Parent and teacher reports
- External reports from clinical evaluation

- c. inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances

Definition: Students exhibit behavior that is incongruent to the situation or is highly changeable. Behavior would include bizarre verbalization, overreaction, repeated recitation of words, fetishes, and obsessive and compulsive behaviors. Other actions may include inappropriate sexual behaviors such as inappropriate touching of others, public masturbation, or unusual or provocative sexual verbalization. Inappropriate feelings include negative self-statements as well as feelings that are reflected in and inferred from observable behavior. Documentation must be obtained that persistent and significantly inappropriate feelings exist which are not justified by circumstances.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- Observations

- Behavior rating scales
- Parent and teacher reports
- External reports from clinical evaluation

d. a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression

Definition: Pervasive moods of unhappiness or depression may be manifested in different ways in different students and may include constant crying, withdrawal, boredom, and depression, as well as angry, aggressive, or agitated behavior. Also included are eating and sleeping problems, loss of interest in usual activities, as well as feelings of hopelessness. A desire to die or an intent to commit suicide signifies extremely troubled students. Feeling depressed about a death in the family or the divorce of parents is situation specific and, for the most part, a normal feeling that tends to be “resolvable” and not pervasive.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- Observations
- Behavior rating scales
- Parent and teacher reports
- External reports from clinical evaluation

e. a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems

Definition: Persistent physical symptoms are chronic, as opposed to acute reactions to some situation at home or school, and must have a negative impact on learning. They may include such reactions as headache, nausea, asthma, ulcers, and colitis. Data needs to be obtained across settings and over time, and medical evidence needs to be obtained to document that the problem does not have a physical origin. Although school phobia or refusal meets criteria for eligibility and certification as having an emotional disturbance, placement would probably not be recommended. Other less restrictive treatment interventions such as systematic desensitization are likely to resolve the problem.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- Observations
- Behavior rating scales
- Parent and teacher reports
- External reports from clinical evaluation

f. Schizophrenia

Definition: The DSM-V includes diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia. Students properly diagnosed with Schizophrenia by a qualified professional automatically meet the criteria of emotional behavioral disorder.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- Documentation of diagnosis from a qualified professional

BOTH of the following criteria (a and b) must also be met:

- a. for a long period of time (at least 6 months)

Definition: When determining whether a student exhibits emotional or behavioral problems over a long period of time, consider the following factors:

1. Transitory, situational problems that may be understandable, given the nature of the circumstances. For example, a death in the family, divorce, moving to a new school, financial crisis, or physical illness or injury may produce transitory behavior changes. In general, this is a temporary period of instability, bounded by times of greater stability and may not meet the standard of *a long period of time*.
2. Non-transitory circumstances, where behavior changes do not return to the adaptive state that existed prior to a precipitating event. Evidence of a baseline of appropriate behavior prior to a significant (negative) change in behavior may be needed.

Types of Supporting Evidence:

- Historical information
- School records
- Parent and teacher reports

- b. to a marked degree

Definition: A “marked degree” generally is concerned with pervasiveness and intensity of the characteristics. Evidence regarding duration, frequency, and intensity should be included in the observation reports. Results from standardized and/or norm-referenced rating scales and other instruments are used to substantiate “to a marked degree” but are not the sole source of information.

Considerations of Supporting Evidence:

To determine if the behavior is exhibited “to a marked degree,” consider the following questions using data from more than one knowledgeable observer and in more than one setting.

1. Is the behavior in question considered a significant problem by more than one observer and in more than one setting?
2. What is the frequency, intensity, and duration of the behavior? Is the frequency, intensity, and duration significantly different from that of a similar student in the same or similar circumstances?
3. In what setting(s) does the behavior occur?
4. Are there noticeable or predictable patterns to the behavior?
5. How does the behavior affect others?
6. Is the behavior identified as a concern by norm-referenced behavior measures?

Adverse Effect on Educational Performance

Definition: There must be evidence of a demonstrable relationship between the student’s behavior and educational performance which results in performance significantly and consistently below the level of similar age peers and prevents the student from benefiting from general education. Educational performance is not limited to academic performance but may also include interactions with peers or teachers, participation in class activities, and classroom conduct.

Considerations of Supporting Evidence:

Consider the following questions using observations, class work, team member input, and assessment results:

1. Is educational performance substantially within the range expected of a student based on his or her chronological age?
2. If the student is performing below academic expectations, is the probable cause behavioral and/or emotional problems?
3. Are the behavioral and/or emotional problems affecting educational performance of the student to a greater degree than similar problems affect the performance of peers?

4. Does the student achieve passing grades?
5. Does the student maintain regular academic growth?
6. Does the student demonstrate severe deficiencies in social skills or social competencies that obstruct learning?
7. Is the student frequently removed from general education classes or opportunities due to emotional and/or behavioral problems?
8. Is the student absent frequently? If so, how have grades been affected?

Need for Specially Designed Instruction

Definition: Does the student require adaptations to content, methodology, or delivery of instruction as appropriate to meet the student's unique needs?

Considerations of Supporting Evidence:

Consider the following questions using observations, class work, team member input, and assessment results:

1. Does the student require adaptations to classroom instruction?
2. Does the student require individual or group instruction to address social skills, anger or grief management, coping skills, or other skill deficits related to emotional and/or behavioral problems?