

# *Eligibility Determination Portfolio*

## *Student Suspected Of Having an Emotional Disturbance*

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Guidance Document

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_

This portfolio organizes the data collection process, provides a system to monitor timelines, and ensures that regulatory requirements for eligibility determination are followed.

Once the evaluation team decides to pursue, as part of the comprehensive evaluation, a determination of eligibility under the category of emotional disturbance, the process contained in this portfolio *must* be followed. Written parental consent for the evaluation must be obtained before the evaluation.

**I. Attach documentation of the general education interventions including the length of time used and the results.**

**II. Document relevant social and medical history and attach. Once this is completed, note the following and proceed to III.**

Verification: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By Whom: \_\_\_\_\_

**III. One or more of the following characteristics must be present and thoroughly documented. If none are present STOP here. If one or more are present, go to IV.**

A. An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors

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.

Data:

- 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

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- 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 This also includes individuals who are profoundly withdrawn, have poor reality contact, or lack social skills but have the ability to learn them.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.

**Data:**

- Observations, behavior scales
- Personality inventories
- Teacher and parent reports

**Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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- 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.

**Data:**

- Observations, behavior rating scales
- Personality inventories
- Parent and teacher reports

**Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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D. A generally 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.

**Data:**

- Observations, behavior rating scales
- Personality inventories
- Parent and teacher reports

**Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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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 a 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.

**Data:**

- Observations, behavior rating scales
- Personality inventory
- Parent and teacher reports

**Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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#### F. Schizophrenia

**Definition:** The DSM-IV includes diagnostic criteria for schizophrenia. Students properly diagnosed with schizophrenia automatically meet the characteristics and conditions of the emotionally disturbed criteria. Such students are entitled to services if they need special education or related services.

**Data:**

- Documentation

**Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### **IV. The characteristics must also meet the following. IF BOTH A and B are not met, STOP here! If both are present, go to V.**

#### A. Long period (at least 6 months)

**Definition:** When determining whether a student exhibits behavioral or emotional problems over a long period, 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.
- (2) Nontransitory 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 is needed. Historical information is important in order to do this.

**Data:**

- Written school documentation
- Historical information

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#### B. Marked Degree

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

**Data:** To determine if the behavior is exhibited “to a marked degree,” answer the following questions. The data must be from more than one knowledgeable observer in more than one setting. (Use a separate piece of paper if necessary.)

- (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 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?

**Verification:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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#### V. Adverse Effects on Educational Performance

**Definition:** There must be evidence of a demonstrable relationship between the student’s behavior and decreased educational performance. Keep in mind that educational performance is not limited to academic performance, but may also include interactions with peers or teachers, participation in class activities, and classroom conduct.

**Data:** Answer the following questions and document with observations, class work, and testing results:

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- (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 caused by emotional problems?
- (3) Are the 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 absent frequently? If so, how have grades been affected?

Verification: \_\_\_\_\_  
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