



IDEA: Categories of Disabilities

Every year, the federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), serves millions of children with disabilities receive special services designed to meet their unique needs. Under IDEA, states are responsible for meeting the special needs of eligible children with disabilities.

Early intervention services in Oklahoma are provided through the *SoonerStart Early Intervention Program (SoonerStart)* to infants and toddlers with disabilities under three years of age and their families. For school-aged children and youth (aged 3 through 21), special education and related services are provided through the school system (local education agency - LEA). These services can be very important in helping children and youth with disabilities to develop, learn and succeed in school and other settings.

To find out if a child is eligible for services, he or she must first received a full and individual evaluation. This evaluation is free and has two purposes: **1)** to see if the child has a disability, as defined by IDEA and **2)** to learn in more detail what special education and related services he or she needs.

What are the Disability Categories for Children and Youth Aged 3 through 21?

IDEA lists thirteen (13) different disability categories under which 3 through 21 year olds may be eligible for services. The disability categories listed in IDEA are:

- 1) Autism;
- 2) Deaf-blindness;
- 3) Deafness;
- 4) Emotional disturbance;
- 5) Hearing impairment;
- 6) Intellectual disability;
- 7) Multiple disabilities;
- 8) Orthopedic impairment;
- 9) Other health impairment;
- 10) Specific learning disability;
- 11) Speech or language disability;
- 12) Traumatic brain injury; or
- 13) Visual impairment (including blindness).

Infants and Toddlers, Under 3 Years of Age

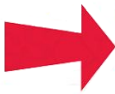
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Under IDEA, “infants and toddlers with disabilities” are defined as individuals under three years of age who need early intervention services because they:

 Are experiencing developmental delays, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas:

- Cognitive development;
- Physical development;
- Communication development;
- Social or emotional development; and adaptive development;

Or

 Have a diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in developmental delay.

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